

Virginia Beach VA250 Committee
Meeting Minutes
Approved March 12, 2026

12 February 2026, 5:30 PM
Department of Planning and Community Development
Building 3, 2403 Courthouse Drive, Conference Room 110

ATTENDEES

Members:

James B. Wood, Chair; Christi Lyons, Vice Chair; Bobbie Gribble, Secretary

C. Drummond Ball; Suzanne Camden; Al Chewning; William Curtis; Robert Dozier; Sharon Felton; Patrick Hannum; Kevin Kattwinkel; Becky Livas; Michael Winner

Council Liaison:

Worth Remick, Amelia Ross-Hammond

Staff Liaison:

Mark Reed

City Staff:

Ellie Dauernheim

Public:

Sandy Bowie
Brooks Hierstein
Bill Kelly
Florence Reese
William Younce

Welcome

Chair Jimmy Wood opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Beach Events – July 4 and VA250 Event Planning

William Younce, Director of Beach Events and IMGoing Events, spoke to the VB VA250 Committee about plans for events at the oceanfront in 2026.

Mr. Younce said for the fourth weekend in April, they are rebranding it as Stars, Stripes, and Spurs. They are moving the Bulls and Barrels Beach Rodeo from mid-April to the 4th weekend in April. They will also be launching the Oceanfront Concert Series on Friday and Saturday nights during the weekend. National country acts will be performing at the oceanfront.

In addition, USO weekend is moving from the first weekend in June to the 4th weekend in April. Mr. Younce said these events will have branding with the Virginia Beach VA250 design on it. The USO will be at 17th Street Park and there will be military displays and vendors on Atlantic Avenue from 17th to 20th Streets.

The event will celebrate the military and our community, especially military families. Mr. Younce said this celebration will be from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. It will be a great way to kick off the 250th.

Mr. Younce then discussed plans for July 4th, which is on a Saturday. He said they will have the Tidewater Winds at the 24th Street Park. All three oceanfront parks will be active. Mr. Younce said John Brewington will create a fife and drum component for the 24th Street Park. He said the goal is to have fife and drum shows beginning around 2:00 p.m. all the way up to when the Tidewater Winds show starts at 7:30 p.m. The fife and drum component will be walking up and down the Boardwalk.

Mr. Younce said they are having preliminary discussions with the DAR and SAR to have an interpretive encampment at 24th Street. At 9:30 p.m. will begin an extended and enhanced fireworks show.

Mr. Wood asked if there is anything needed from VB VA250. Mr. Younce said there is no financial assistance needed from the VB VA250 group.

Sharon Felton asked if they have reached out to the bands in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Mr. Younce said they had not since schools will be out for the summer. Ms. Felton said music instruction continues through the summer.

Jimmy Wood asked if there would be an opportunity for the Mayor to speak. Mr. Younce said it could happen on 24th Street.

Jimmy Wood suggested the DAR & SAR should create a plan for what participation they would envision for the 4th of July. We will discuss it at the next meeting.

Mr. Younce noted that Bill Kelly, the Resort Administrator with Virginia Beach, is here this evening. Mr. Kelly said they provide assistance with these large events. He said VB VA250 could have space if we would like for the April events. He said he would send an events schedule for the weekend.

Certificates of Appreciation

Mr. Wood noted that Pat Hannum had some certificates to hand out. Dr. Hannum said that the Norfolk SAR Chapter president had handed out certificates at the January meeting and some members were unable to attend. He said the SAR appreciates what these VB VA250 Committee members did for the Norfolk Chapter. The following members were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation - Sharon Felton, Bill Curtis, and Robert Dozier.

Drummond Ball said that he had given out a Battle at Kemp's Landing coin to members at the January meeting. He asked those who did not receive one in January to please see him after the meeting so he could give them a coin.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2026

Mr. Wood asked the members to review the minutes of the January 8 meeting and provide any additions or corrections. A motion was made by Christi Lyons to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Camden. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

July 4, 2026 Event/Activity Ideas

Mr. Wood said we heard a lot of information about the July 4th festivities that are being planned. He said we should think about that and see if we have any additional ideas. He said we should coordinate with the DAR and SAR to see how they would like to participate.

Upcoming Events

There was then discussion about upcoming events. Mr. Reed said the **Skirmish at James's Plantation Commemoration** is coming up on Saturday, February 14 at 11:00 a.m. It will be at the Nimmo United Methodist Church. It is being presented by the Great Bridge Chapter SAR and District 1 Chapters DAR.

Suzanne Camden said the battle took place approximately where Home Depot is near Nimmo Church. She said the involvement of Benedict Arnold in the area is an interesting story.

Mr. Reed said performances of **The Musical 1776** are coming up at the end of the month (February 27, 28 (2), and March 1). He said tickets are still available. Mr. Reed noted that the cast includes national, regional, and local actors, including VB 250's own Kevin Kattwinkel and a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Derek DuBay

Mr. Kattwinkel said if members would like the "friends and family" rate they can call Virginia Musical Theater and say you know Kevin Kattwinkel. He said you need to get tickets from VMT rather than from the box office or ticketmaster to get the rate.

Old Business

Under Old Business, there was a brief discussion of the draft letter to the Mayor and City Council requesting consideration for continuation of the VB VA250 Committee and extension of the term through 2031. The draft letter was included in the meeting packet. There were no recommended changes to the letter. Council Member Worth Remick said he felt City Council would give positive consideration for the extension request.

Mr. Reed discussed the Countdown to 250 initiative. He said he sent out a link with the meeting notice. (It is provided here.) <https://planning.virginiabeach.gov/boards-commissions/virginia-beach-va250-committee/historical-episodes> Mr. Reed said it is up and running with a new weekly episode uploaded to the City of Virginia Beach VB VA250 Committee website.

The Sail 250 Virginia event was discussed. There will be 88 ships docked outside the Lesner Bridge on Thursday, June 18. That night there will be a Captains meeting near there. Mr. Wood said we might be able to do something with the Sail 250 if we get some additional funding.

Mr. Wood said the Governor's event that we have talked about for two years looks to be on track again. He said Joel Rubin has met with the Sandler Center about having the event there. It could include two "older" governors, such as Lord Dunmore, and three more recent governors, such as McDonnell and Northam. They could talk about how the revolution impacted our history and governance, and the evolution over 250 years. Mr. Wood said it could happen in the next year.

Mr. Wood said he and Mayor Dyer met with Admiral Vandier, head of the NATO office here, and other French officers. Admiral Vandier was chief of naval operations before coming here. Mr. Wood said they are very committed to celebrations planned for September 5th. This date was chosen because the Battle of the Capes was a major naval victory over the British. Mr. Wood said they are using the event to celebrate both VA250 and the 400th anniversary of the French navy.

Mr. Wood said some of the plans underway include having the French Navy Band play at the Opera House in April prior to the Tattoo. They are working on doing a walking path and Memorial Garden at the deGrasse statue. He said they are planning on producing two books, one from the perspective of a cook from a French tall ship, a children's book, and the other is a history book.

Mr. Wood said they are not asking for anything from us at this time.

New Business

Under New Business, Mr. Reed said Chris Pieczynski asked to have sponsorship of the Family YMCA Independence Day Run considered for 2026. The silver sponsorship is \$2,500, which was the level we provided last year. There was some discussion about existing funding. Mr. Reed said our current balance is around \$7,500.

Mr. Reed noted that last year's event was our first one where we had swag to give out. He said that we do not have much swag on hand to give out. He suggested deferring a decision pending other decisions that are made for the funding. Ms. Camden made a motion to defer action on the YMCA run sponsorship. Mr. Ball seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The motion to defer passed.

Mr. Curtis informed the Committee about an event at Mount Trashmore on May 9 sponsored by Americans for Prosperity. He said they are asking VB VA250 to be a non-monetary sponsor. There was a brief discussion about the political nature of the organization. It was generally agreed to not participate.

Council Member Amelia Ross-Hammond asked if the Committee is doing anything with the Ethiopian Regiment. She said she is getting questions from the public. Mr. Wood said the 7th Virginia Regiment had looked for re-enactors to fill that role for the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event and they were not able to locate any.

There was discussion about the event the Virginia Beach History Museums had done. It was a virtual event with the museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia that had descendants of formerly enslaved loyalists. Dr. Hannum said there is very little research done on the Ethiopian Regiment. Most of the formerly enslaved that went to Canada, went through New York. Dr. Hannum said there is a new book coming out with scholarship on the Ethiopian Regiment. He said it will be expensive.

Council Member Ross-Hammond said there was a Virginia Opera production titled *Intelligence* about an enslaved lady who became a spy during the Civil War.

Ms. Felton said the School Board no longer allows commemorations of months, such as Black History Month. Members can still provide information and Ms. Felton said she informed the School Board about the historical markers the Historic Preservation Commission has been doing, and focused on the markers that document African American history. She thanked Mr. Reed for his assistance. Ms. Felton said she is planning to provide information like that each month.

Mr. Ball told the VB VA250 about articles that appeared in the recent issue of the local Sun Magazine, which goes to homes in Little Neck and Great Neck. He said Al Chewning wrote an article about Seaview Beach. He also noted that a couple of articles are attributed to the Virginia Beach VA250 Committee. Mr. Reed said Mr. Kattwinkel is primarily responsible for those articles.

Mr. Kattwinkel said the Hampton VA250 group worked with a local brewery to present the Ken Burns documentary on the American Revolution over several nights. The VB VA250 members thought that would be good to look into doing. Mr. Reed said we would need to find out how to get the rights to show the Ken Burns special and any technical requirements for showing it. Mr. Kattwinkel said he would look into finding out how to get the rights and related information.

Al Chewning said on Tuesday, February 17, the Historical Society is having a trivia challenge on Virginia Beach history from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Ocean Eddies. He said it is \$5 per person or \$10 per team.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The date of the next meeting is March 12th.

Submitted by,

Bobbie Gribble
Recording Secretary