

Hartford Town 250th Commemoration Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

1. Chairperson Gwen Tuson read the Hybrid Meeting Script and called to order at 5:32 pm. Present in person: Gwen Tuson, Cathy Melocik, Dennis Brown, Linda Miller, Matt Osborn. Present online: Earl Hatley and Pat Stark. Patti Crimmin-Greenan and Scott Davison arrived at 5:42.
2. Public Comments – no members of public present, so no comments.
3. Review, amend as needed, and accept minutes from June 26, 2025. Moved by Dennis Brown, seconded by Cathy Melocik. Minutes accepted.
4. Any items to add to the agenda? “What does the 250th mean...” cards we have asked people to complete. Gwen mentioned she has comments to add about the nature of history to add at the end. Gwen asked if the format for the minutes is working, and the group responded in the affirmative.
5. Announcements: Gwen has noticed more information related to the 250th anniversary. Cathy asked if the Hartford School District is doing anything, but Gwen related that to date there is no interest.
 - 5.1. Any agenda items to prioritize early in meeting? Move Timeline at the beginning of Reports.
6. Reports:
 - 6.1. Timeline and update events left to plan, spring and summer 2026 goals.
 - We will not have an HHS speaker for September and November related to the 250th, so Gwen has removed these from the Timeline.
 - Earl asked about having Bugbee attending any date except the 30th. Gwen responded no.
 - We know that there will be an event at the libraries in December. It’s up to the librarians to make the decision on what that will be. **ACTION:** Linda will follow up on this.
 - Cathy wondered if we might have a First Night to ring in the 250th. **ACTION:** Cathy will check this out.
 - The October Country Dance at the Wilder Clubhouse might still happen. The person Linda reached out to has been away. Dennis suggested this be an historical costume party wearing a costume from history. **ACTION:** Gwen, Patti and Linda will work on getting this on the calendar.
 - Dennis mentioned that Jonathan Schechtman said that the Theron Boyd property is leased for agricultural purposes, so this should be crossed off the timeline.
 - We discussed the Sugar House Open House to incorporate the Abenaki history. Commercial operation was in the 1900s. Linda wondered if we could write up some information to be distributed. **ACTION:** Earl will ask John Moody if he has something already done on this to share.
 - February Library Event has not been planned, but Gwen wondered if something centered on Presidents Day during school vacation week might work. **ACTION:** Linda will connect with the librarians for their thoughts.
 - Cross off January 18th Century Craft Demos.
 - Ghost Walk is going to take a lot of time to set up with scripts. Fun way to present history. We decided to find another anniversary to do this in the future so this is tabled.
 - Linda will contact the Alumni Association to ensure that they have a parade one more year.
 - Bugbee Senior Center may host a 50th Anniversary event in July 2026.
 - Gwen suggested we do a Post Mortem to review all events. Patti suggested keeping track after each event.
 - 6.2. Financial - Gwen spoke with the Vermont Historical Society about the Vermont Covered Grant, and she was reassured that the money can be used for paying for the deposit for the band for July 4, 2026. The logo will be included on P&R publicity.
 - 6.3. Publicity
 - 6.3.1. Banners – Dennis received a quote for \$2009.62 for 25 banners. Cathy checked with her contact who is less expensive, but he does not design banners, he only prints them. Motion made, seconded and passed to order the banners. Dennis needs help with putting them up and taking them down. Cathy said she would help. Dennis thinks the turnaround might be less than three weeks. **ACTION:** Dennis will call to see where they can be delivered in order to qualify for tax exempt status.

6.3.2. Abenaki Open House posters to distribute for August – to be put up two weeks before event. **ACTION:** Gwen will send Earl the PDF to be printed. Earl is working with Quechee Lakes Corp to post around. Scott took one for the Chamber Visitor Center. Cathy took five copies. Linda took three copies for the Hartford Library, the JAM lobby and the Lebanon Park. Earl will distribute at the West Hartford and Quechee Libraries. Gwen gave Matt the rest of the copies to post or make available to others.

6.3.3. Publicity: connecting with younger people via social media, etc.

- Cathy has a meeting with Samantha Davidson Green's from JAM to see how we can connect with younger people.
- Discussion of "What does the 250th Mean to Me...?" cards to date. Scott has only received two so far. **ACTION:** Scott will change the wording, change to the 250 America logo and distribute to group.
- Dennis mentioned that the Hartford High School Football team has a Patriot Game, and wondered if we could have a presence with these cards available.
- Cathy will post Abenaki Garden information on the Hartford Listserv.

6.4. Parks & Recreation/Youth

6.4.1. Report on P&R Youth Ventures Camp 2025 activities. Three guests gave participatory presentations to the Parks and Rec campers who seemed to enjoy the topics on General Washington's revolutionary spies, pioneer women and girls in Hartford during the revolution, and using printing press to spread revolutionary news. It was great fun to have them at the Garipay House for a Bingo looking for artifacts. Gwen hopes to get evaluative feedback from the camp staff at the end of summer camping and we'll be able to decide if we repeat similar programming for the summer 2026.

6.4.2. Encampment May 30th 2026. Gwen spoke with Scott Hausler and Izzy Provoncha about an event held about six years ago. The plan for May 2026 is Friday re-enactors would come in the morning, school groups would come in the afternoon, re-enactors spend the night. Saturday would be open to the Public with possible admission by donation. Possibility is to have crafters give demonstrations. (No Abenaki representation given Earl's comments later in the meeting.) Phil Sargent will be a volunteer coordinator. We may need food vendors.

6.5. Ceremonies – nothing to report. Dennis said the Veterans Council will meet in September. **ACTION:** Gwen and Dennis will get together to help plan this.

6.6. Presentations/Places

6.6.1. Hartford Historical Society events: Bingo, talks reported earlier. Gwen is working on a scavenger hunt with Marge Brown.

6.6.2. No resolution to fees for 250th committee to make copies to complete research needed for tour of 18th century buildings still standing in Hartford for the 250th commemoration. Mike Hoyt has not responded. Gwen has tried for a resolution with John Haverstock, but no luck. The group decided to remove this as a discussion item.

6.7. Community

6.7.1. No report on Hartford Library summer events. Wilder/Quechee events added to timeline.

6.7.2. Report of any planning with Bugbee Senior Center. Bugbee Senior Games in August. The Constitution and Declaration of Independence puzzles were finally accepted. They don't have a table for this, but plan to complete the puzzles, laminate and frame them for display at Bugbee.

7. Old Business

7.1. Still one place on Committee to fill.

7.2. Freedom Train update – Cathy has sent an email on this and will continue to pursue.

8. New Business

8.1. The consensus was to skip 250th meetings in November and December 2025 due to the conflict with the holidays. May need a wrap up meeting at end of July 2026, especially in regard of when to remove the Banners.

8.2. Gwen gave a passionate speech complete with costume about our history and how strongly she believes, despite some wanting to remain apolitical, the history of founding a country is political. Earl gave his point of view and was offended that we asked to have the tripod logo removed from the posters. Cathy and Linda

apologized to Earl for offending him but stated that we wished he had expressed this at the last meeting.

Scott gave a nice explanation of how our history is not always pretty, but there are ways to address this.

Linda stated that if this Committee becomes political, that she will tender her resignation. Dennis asked for the group to take a pause.

9. Next Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 27 at 5:30 pm.

10. Adjournment at 7:10 pm