

Hartford Town 250th Commemoration Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 24, 2025

1. Chair Gwen Tuson read the Hybrid Meeting Script and called the meeting to order at ~5:30 pm. Committee Members Present: Gwen Tuson, Linda Miller, Patti Crimmin-Greenan, Dennis Brown, Earl Hatley as well as Matt Osborn – Hartford Planning and Development, Scott Davison - Hartford Chamber of Commerce. Introductions made for guests: Brian Ware from the Lebanon Heritage Commission, Dennis Backus from the Hartford Veterans Council
2. Public Comments - none
3. Reviewed the minutes from August 27, 2025. **See attached minutes.** It was noted that there was a spelling error of librarian Laura Abrahamsen's last name. Dennis Brown moved to accept minutes as corrected, Patti seconded. Unanimously passed.
4. Any items to add to the agenda? 1) Gwen noted we have two guests. 2) Gwen added the wrap up of Abenaki Garden Open House to 6.5.2.
5. Announcements – Gwen asked for and would welcome feedback to her emails. Gwen mentioned the website for the American Association of State and Local History offers concise reminders of themes and why we are working on the 250th that seems inspirational at this point in the process. **ACTION:** Gwen suggested we look at AASLH.org
 - 5.1. Any agenda items to prioritize early in meeting? Move Abenaki Garden wrap up and the October Dance earlier as well as allow Brian Ware to tell us why he is present. Brian stated that the Lebanon Historical Society is lacking members, so they've had a slow start working on 250th commemoration events. The Heritage Commission is primarily looking at the preservation of Colburn Park and nobody has taken responsibility for the 250th commemoration. Hoping Lebanon Parks and Rec. might take a role. Currently no planned public events this year. Funding is a question and they will be looking to the City Council. Will most likely end up with some simple events with bands in Colburn Park. Expressed interest in hosting a joint event with Hartford. Gwen stated that Woodstock may be looking for collaboration. Gwen suggested that we might be able to share library activity ideas and similar. Dennis Brown asked if Lebanon were planning a fireworks display in 2026 and suggested this would be a good place to collaborate. Brian said the City Council said fireworks are too expensive and so for two years they had a laser show, but nothing in 2025. Patti suggested involving the Lebanon Opera House. Brian spoke about Friday Night at the Movies at Colburn Park. Gwen suggested that we plan a January 2026 session to include working with Lebanon. **ACTION:** Gwen will have a conversation Nichole Burley-Ford, Lebanon City Councilwomen and City Historian. Gwen will work with Brian to schedule a joint meeting on Wednesday, January 28.
6. Reports:
 - 6.1. Financial - We started with \$6,637.78 from the Hartford Historical Society and \$1,000 grant from the VHS Vermont Covered Grant. From these funds we have allocated \$5,434.60 monies spent and future expenditures for 2 banner frames, 10 banners, Street Beat Band room and the rest of their fee as well as the final payment for the Family Country Dance music fee. Therefore, we have \$1,203.18 unallocated.
 - 6.1.1. Fundraising – Gwen suggested it is entirely appropriate to have a cash receptacle at the Family Country Dance for donations to be used towards the 4th of July and May Encampment expenses.
 - 6.2. Publicity
 - 6.2.1. Banners – John Haverstock responded that there was no comment from Selectboard, so we shall go forth and order 10 banners and 2 brackets. Dennis mentioned that Pat Stark seemed confused recently about where the money was coming from, but Linda and Gwen replied that the funds were left over from the Hartford 250th celebration from 2011 held by the Hartford Historical Society, but they are not HHS's funds. Patti moved that Dennis should order the banners, Linda seconded. Motion carried.
 - 6.2.2. Poster Template working group – not discussed.
 - 6.2.3. Publicity: connecting with younger people via social media, etc. – not discussed.
 - 6.2.4. *What does 250th mean to you?* cards – not discussed.

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6.3. P&R/Youth

- 6.3.1. Report on P&R Youth Ventures Camp 2025 activities. Gwen read a thank you from Tatum Barnes of Parks and Recreation Department for all the 250th volunteers who contributed to the program. He especially noted the trip to the Hartford Historical Society and the scavenger hunt there as the highlight.
- 6.3.2. Veterans Day coloring contest – Gwen is working with Tatum to start on Indigenous Peoples Day and end on Veterans Day. Gwen asked for it to end sooner to enable a display for Veterans Day. It was suggested to have this inside Town Hall on Veterans Day. Because of the holiday, Town Hall will be closed so we may not be able to get into the building. Gwen suggested that Tatum send the pages to the libraries for distribution. Dennis Backus suggested an alternative would be to have a tent to display the entries. **Action:** Gwen awaits follow-up from Tatum Barnes.
- 6.3.3. Encampment May 30th 2026 – tabled until next meeting.
- 6.3.4. Fourth of July – Gwen introduced the topic saying we need to decide what the day to include so she knows what to ask of Scott Hausler and he can plan the budget. We also want to narrow down what we want for a timeline. Gwen also requested the committee for feedback on Scott's question as to whether or not the committee is planning our own fundraising. ON specific, Gwen would like to have Street Beat Band to play starting at 6 pm. As part of their set, they often meander through the crowd. They could do this while the Connipion Fits get ready to play at 8 pm. Some ideas for possible displays might be a photo contest (? borrow art display walls) or the "*What does the 250th mean to you?*" cards we have distributed in the past. **ACTION:** The group should be prepared to focus down our ideas for the next meeting.

6.4. Ceremonies

- 6.4.1. Veterans Day Tuesday, November 11. Dennis Brown introduced Dennis Backus, Commander of the Veterans Council. He explained that they generally have a ceremony that is similar to Memorial Day. Gwen and Dennis spoke about having a short embellishment to the program for the 250th. Dennis Brown stated that they go to Veterans Park, Town Hall and the Maple Street Cemetery (the reason for going to Maple Street is due to the Medal of Honor recipient, Samuel Pingree). Dennis Backus spoke about a handout describing the reason for the Geese Sculpture. A write-up is posted on the Veterans Park kiosk. Dennis Brown mentioned that he and Mary Kay met with Jeff Sass to add a sixth goose due to addition of the Space Force to the armed forces. **Action:** Dennis will schedule a meeting with Veterans Council and 250th Committee to write a specific program for the ceremony.
Dennis Backus also mentioned that the Delano Savage Cemetery at the end of Jericho Street and Route 14 has been cleaned up, but there is no way to know if the grave holds a veteran or not.
Follow up from Linda Miller: The assistant Town Clerk, Sherry West, compiled a list of known veterans' graves in the "Centerville Cemetery" believed to be the same location. Two veterans identified are Joseph Fenno, C 1757, Died 1822 at age 65 may be a Revolutionary War veteran. Also, Burpee Prouty C. 1762, Died 1849 at age 87. He too may be a Revolutionary War veteran.

6.5. Presentations/Places

- 6.5.1. Hartford Historical Society speakers – Mary Nadeau is really struggling to find a speaker for November. Someone suggested Joe Trottier speak about the Adventist Camp located on the Connecticut River behind Knight's Funeral Home. Linda asked Scott Davison if he could come up with a topic, and he will think about it. Gwen spoke about a Dartmouth Professor who might be able to speak in April 2026. The group brought up the possibility of Joe Trottier as a possible great storyteller but no one seemed to know him that well. **ACTION:** Gwen will follow up with Mary Nadeau on the professor and ask her husband Leonard if he knows Joe Trottier. Follow-up from Gwen Tuson: she is trying to meet Joe Trottier in person to explore Mr. Trottier's interest in HHS.

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6.5.2. Sugar House Open House and Abenaki information. Earl stated there were more than 100 people at the Garden Open House. It went very well, and he felt that it was well-received with a lot of new volunteers. He thanked everyone in attendance. Scott Davison shared an article from *The Vermont Standard* August 28 edition about the Garden.

Scott Davison shared his copy of *The Faithful Hunter Abenaki Stories as told by Joseph Bruchac. Illustrations by Kahionhes*. Earl received permission to use the maple syrup story if credit is given to the author and the illustrator. Earl explained that Gluskabe in the story was the first human being created and checked out that everything was good for the Creator. **ACTION:** Scott will put the story in a usable format to be distributed at Hartford sugarhouses in March.

6.5.3. Tour of 18th century buildings update on using Town Clerk's office – tabled for now.

6.5.4. DAR Thomas Chittenden Chapter – They have a 250th Committee within their chapter with 2026 plans for various towns. For Hartford, Gwen informed us they are hoping to host a display in the lobby of Northern Stage. She's given Becky Book the contact information for the DAR to follow up on this.

6.6. Community

6.6.1. Update on library events – Hartford Old Fashioned Holiday is being planned with a meeting on Monday, October 6th at 4 pm at the Hartford Library. The Hartford children's reading list for the Fall is still Revolutionary themed.

6.6.2. Family Dance October 3rd Wilder Clubhouse and Library. Gwen reminded group of what the committee volunteered to do. Posters are out. Linda posted on the Hartford, Event and Norwich Listservs. Will repeat every other day next week. **SEE ATTACHED PLANNING LIST**. Gwen and Patti will meet at the Clubhouse on Thursday, October 2nd at 2 pm to prepare onsite details. Dennis will join if possible.

6.6.3. Hartford High School Alumni Parade date is set for Saturday, June 27th to include community floats. The theme is the 250th Commemoration.

7. Old Business

7.1. Committee openings.

7.2. Goals for rest of 2025, spring and summer 2026 goals – Gwen asked attendees to prepare for the October meeting for what needs to be accomplished during November and December when we have no meetings.

8. New Business – not discussed.

9. Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 22nd at 5:30 pm. **ACTION:** Gwen will work on a Joint meeting with Lebanon to occur on January 28, 2026

10. Adjournment – Dennis moved to adjourn. Patti seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simon Miller