

Received 8/19/25
1:27 PM Jodi Moore, ATC

Town of Durham
America 250 Committee
Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
Meeting Room 2, Community Center, and Remote via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Recording

Passcode: d@TLe=2c

1. Call to order and roll call

Chair Sarah Atwell called the America 250 Committee of Tuesday, July 15, 2025, to order at 6:30 p.m. Also present: Jonathan Field, Bob Booz, Carolyn Havrda, First Selectman Rea, Brendan Rea Jr., Leah Gastler, Frances Augur, Chris Balay, Jaclyn Lehet (Zoom)

S. Atwell led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of the agenda

MOTION BY CHRIS BALAY, SECONDED BY FIRST SELECTMAN REA, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION OF (NEW) #4 ELECTION OF OFFICERS. VOTE: ALL AYE

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 9, 2025

MOTION BY BOB BOOZ, SECONDED BY CHRIS BALAY TO APPROVE THE JUNE 9, 2025, WITH ADDITIONS DISCUSSED.

Discussion: typo under agenda item #5 and First Selectman Rea added to Time Capsule Sub Committee.

VOTE: ALL AYE

4. Election of Officers

It was noted that Wendy Manemeit will be stepping down as Vice Chair.

MOTION BY CHRIS BALAY, SECONDED BY BOB BOOZ, TO NOMINATE BRENDAN REA JR., AS VICE CHAIR. VOTE: ALL AYE

5. Potential visit from Brian Blake (CRHS graduate/Dragon Member) to discuss event

Brian Blake, Corporal with the 2nd Regiment Continental Light Dragoons, was present to give a brief history on the Dragoons and to discuss a potential encampment event in 2026. B. Blake explained the Dragoons are part of America's 1st commissioned cavalry and serve the State of Connecticut as part of the Governors ceremonial guard. He added was raised in Middlefield and is a 2014 Coginchaug graduate, he still has family in town. He was very excited to potentially hold an event involving the Dragoons in town.

The Dragoons offer a variety of programs, with a focus on education first, including teaching communities about the American Revolution. Their cavalry unit includes horses and can conduct living history combat on both horse and foot.

The members discussed the following:

- a. Hold the event towards the end of October 2026
- b. Weekend event, attendee purchase tickets to attend
- c. Locations: prefer the fairgrounds, noted other locations would include Whites Farm or town green
- d. Estimated total stipend \$900 (approx. \$100 per unit)
 - i. This does not include the cost for food and water to be provided for the units
 - ii. Insurance costs
- e. Recommended to get invites out to the various units before the end of 2025
- f. B. Blake would like to see a multi-year event to 2033 (covers the 7-years of the Revolutionary War)
- g. Question the town needs to answer; policy on encampment, units staying overnight, zoning questions, etc.

The Committee thanked Brian for his attendance and presentation.

[A Short History of the 2nd Regiment Continental Light Dragoons, as it Relates to Durham, Connecticut, 1778-1779 by Corporal Brian F. Blake](#)

6. Subcommittee reports/discussion

a. Town Wide Picnic

Met on July 7th, minutes can be viewed [here](#).

- i. Town wide picnic date set for Saturday, May 30, 2026, from 4:00 p.m., to 8:00 p.m. on the town green
- ii. Members would like to request detour routes for Maint Street. First Selectman Rea noted this is an involved process and was not sure it would be feasible.
- iii. Land Craft Drum core

b. 4th of July Declaration reading and time capsule

- i. B. Rea Jr., the time capsule that was opened is still missing
- ii. 1976 capsule buried by the Garden Club surrounded by 200 tulips, looking to contact them.
- iii. Solution to not lose another capsule, bronze plaque with grid coordinates

c. Lecture series

- i. Dragoons
- ii. S. Atwell spoke with Kevin Johnson approximate fee \$300 fee; will follow up regarding his schedule
- iii. Lecture at Historic Society about road names/mapping names. B. Booze follow up.
- iv. Three cemetery tours throughout the year (10 to 15 per group)
- v. Tours of the town; green to cemetery discussing historical houses. S. Atwell will work with F. Korn; offer at least two tours.
- vi. Pest house
- vii. Lantern tour
- viii. B. Booz spoke about one book/one community. Alternate: Ken Burns' new series on the Revolutionary War; the Durham Public Library has access to promotional items and series. Committee liked this idea.

d. Youth

- i. Trash clean- up idea
- ii. How to involve Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts. First Selectman Rea and C. Havrda have contacts for both and will reach out.

e. Social media/communications

- i. Facebook/Instagram reminders
- ii. Website: what is being posted to draw people in. Calendar up soon, minutes/agenda and presentations.
- iii. Post: "Have u seen the Time Capsule??"
- iv. Idea of selling retro t-shirts

7. Identifying partners in the community for events

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, L. Gastler will speak with the Garden Club, B. Rea Jr., discussed idea from the VFW.

Discussion on speaking with Matt Thompson at Coginchaug about youth involvement.
Spelling bee idea.

8. Fundraising and checking account discussion

First Selectman Rea explained he is working with the Finance Department to set up an account. Will inquire about the tax deduction status and provide an update on fundraising at the next meeting.

9. Committee member comments

B. Rea Jr., talked to Middletown, the new Mayor is open considering a county wide parade which would fall on the same day as their fire work show, usually the week prior to July 4th weather dependent. Middletown could be looking for other towns to share in cost/infrastructure.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.,
Respectfully submitted,
Jaclyn Lehet