

Received 2/19/26 12:54pm Nicole Charest, TC

**Town of Durham
America 250 Committee
Tuesday, February 17th, 2026, at 6:30pm
Meeting Room 1, Community Center and Remote via Zoom
Meeting Minutes**

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/E-S5EAJGv4J9CUXap9sOyBRI4MQxkXF5CWsC3rT3kSu_Oco71eF688xaKYCwlbrl.iFk1xRhaZEywjlG1?startTime=1771371033000

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1. Call or order and roll call

- Sarah Atwell, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
- Committee members present: Brendan Rea, Jr., Sarah Atwell, Carolyn Havrda, Brendan Rea, Norm Hicks, Chris Balay, Frances Augur, Brian Medeiros, Leah Gastler, Jaclyn Lehet.
- Committee members excused: Jonathan Field, Fran Korn, Bob Booz, Aaliyah Watson
- Community members present: Tpr. Inglis from the Connecticut State Police, Maggie Peterson and Bill Hall from CVEF.

2. Motion made, seconded, and all approved the agenda.

3. Motion made, seconded, and all approved the minutes to the following meetings:

- Regular meeting November 18th, 2025
- Regular meeting January 20th, 2026
- Special meeting January 23rd, 2026

4. Special Guest: Maggie Peterson from CVEF.

- Discussed the upcoming Talk of the Towns event on Saturday, March 14th, 2026, from 7-9pm at the Galluzzo Theater (Independent Day School in Middlefield). The event will feature 4 speakers who will give a 10-minute presentation. The theme this year is history and America 250. Norm Hicks will be the MC of the event.
- Bill Hall is the co-chair with Maggie for this event. Bill has extensive experience with social media and is working on promotion.
- Maggie invited the 250 committee to have a table available at the event to promote events and hand out flyers. Chris Balay volunteered to staff this table.

- The four speakers will be Kristina Poznan, Brendan Rea, Jr., Diana Ross McCain, and John and Colleen Darnell.

5. Establish subcommittee meetings

- Tpr. Inglis was provided with Carolyn's handout on the picnic, and he is interested in participating in planning and helping out wherever he can with planning and will provide public safety related input.
- No dates have been established for subcommittee meetings as of today.
- Reviewed who is on the picnic committee, reviewed Carolyn's summary of topics.
 - Aiming for 3 or 4pm subcommittee meetings.
 - Star Banged Town Wide Picnic as the official name
 - Hours: 2-7:30pm or 8pm depending on concert
 - Art show, lecture co-sponsored by CVEF
 - Children's games by Recreation
 - Food available at a cost (just to cover the cost). Baked beans will be part of a baked bean contest. Wholesale hot dogs, etc. Encourage community members to bring their own picnic. This will be alcohol free.
 - Lyman's is providing pies for the pie eating contest and some guidelines that they have used in the past.
 - Symphonic orchestra at the end of the day and pop-up band (flash mob style). Mr. Fisher is interested in assisting with this.
 - Brian spoke with Erika Fisher today; there are many looking for volunteer hours at the high school. Next meeting will include community stakeholders.
 - RSD parking lots will alleviate need to use community center parking for activities. There will be handicapped parking available near the community center.
 - No questions from the committee on the picnic details shared.
 - Will establish March and April meeting dates for the subcommittee.
- No encampment subcommittee update at this time. RSVP for the units is March 1st. Will establish subcommittee meeting dates in March and April via email. Brian Blake suggested rebranding/renaming the encampment and coming up with a better name for marketing purposes. Discussed that there are over 900 people listed as interested on the Facebook event page for the encampment.

6. Finances

- Balance in the account is \$6,677.13.
- Fundraising update: Committee members continue to staff the Winter Markets. There are two remaining. A table with items to sell will be available at all lectures

and events. The order for the challenge coins has been placed but no invoice has been received yet. Will continue to review if/when pins need to be reordered.

- Discussed raffle for the town picnic for a fundraiser with donations from local organizations or businesses.
- Co-sponsored lecture with the library to cost the committee \$100.00.
- Brendan attended the Middlesex County Chamber meeting last week and handed out flyers.
- Business outreach letter: Committee members had reviewed letter prior to this meeting. Goal is to have this out to all local businesses by mid-March. Sarah to work with Jaclyn on printing, labels, and mailing.
- Grants: Discussed appealing to the Durham Fair Foundation for a grant. Chris discussed some of the grants that are awarded yearly and in the past. Agreed to a request for \$3,000.00 to be used specifically for the encampment as this is the higher cost event (CSP, making donations to groups that volunteer for parking, trash clean up). There is \$2,000 already earmarked by CVEF to put towards our \$8-10k budget. Chris will present this request and discuss it at the Fair Foundation meeting on March 3rd.
- Discussed that the town budget is ongoing and that this committee was represented by Sarah at a recent budget workshop where the request for \$10,000 from the town was discussed.

7. Events

- Discussed future event with the Wadsworth Chapter of the DAR and the Cemetery Company for a plaque dedication for General Wadsworth and possibly doing a ceremony for the veterans buried in the Old Cemetery.
- Reviewed town events that have been scheduled. There is something offered every month so far. Sarah asked committee members to think where we could be present at other town events.
- Carolyn has been collecting RSVPs for the lectures. People have also been calling in to sign up for the lectures. Reminded the committee that the America 250 bulletin board is updated and has been helpful for people looking for information. Jaclyn has updated the town's America 250 website with all events.
- Brendan, Jr. discussed selling pins at all the events to capitalize on this opportunity for fundraising and discussed that there are a lot of people interested in the events that have been posted on Facebook.
- Jaclyn can send an email blast out to residents and will include information on where to purchase the pins and upcoming events. That will go out on Wednesday.

Brendan also just recorded a selectman update that will be going out this week and featured America250 events.

8. Banners and ways to be more visible around town:

- Brendan Rea mentioned that the Washington Trail Road Race used to have a banner across Rt 17 near Strong School to advertise. Committee to investigate having an America250 banner made for greater visibility.
- Frankie reported that she and Aaliyah are putting together a PowerPoint to present to the students at Coginchaug during their weekly Advisory meeting on Mondays. They have also begun to discuss working on a float for the Memorial Day parade (and possibly the county wide parade) with the Art Club and with the shop teacher. She inquired about the budget for the project and will come up with an idea of cost with the teachers involved. Work being done on the float could be counted as community service for students.

9. Licensing update:

- An email was received approving the committee's application for use of the America250 logo and wording from the state CT250 committee.

10. Committee Comments

- Brendan Rea also suggested that we ask for time capsule suggestions from the students. It would need to be kept fairly small.

11. Public comments: None

12. Motion made, seconded, and all approved for adjournment at 7:13pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Atwell, Chair

