

**VA 250 Committee Meeting
Portsmouth Economic Development
Conference Room
July 11, 2024**

Present: Karen Washburn, Jarred Bobzien, Chessie Bray, Billie Cook, Angela Delosreyes, Councilman Mark Hugel, Wendy Mathias, James McCann, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Tom Sasso, and Audrey Lassiter

Absent: Rycy Godette, Dr. Michael Hogan, Jacqueline Johnson, Pam McKittrick, Dan Schmit, and Keith Toler

Mrs. Washburn, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. A motion was made by Councilman Hugel to approve the minutes. Mr. Bobzien, seconded the motion, and it was approved by all.

Lafayette Updates

Mrs. Washburn informed the group that she attempted to submit the applications for the Lafayette events and was told that the City Manager had to approve them. She has emailed Ms. Hogge for assistance. She added that Portsmouth Public Schools no longer plans to participate in the Lafayette events “due to new state mandates and the implementation of new Standards of Learning.” The Lafayette 2024: Return to Portsmouth committee will now reach out to the homeschool and private school communities instead.

She showed a presentation with the history surrounding the return of Lafayette and the events that are scheduled for the month of October. She added that Mr. James Cullen is working on the logistics for the bonfires.

Old Business/New Business:

Dr. Newby-Alexander suggested having a film crew to archive the event. She added that having microphones on the speakers as well as signed waivers would be important. Mrs. Washburn asked Dr. Newby-Alexander if she could contact Barbara Hamm Lee with WHRO to do an interview with James Fayette to promote the event.

Mrs. Washburn has reached out to the African-American Historical Society to do a presentation. Mrs. Cook told her that she has a meeting with them soon and would inquire.

Councilman Hugel told the committee that he will follow up with the city manager concerning the fireworks.

Mr. Bobzien suggested reaching out to the Community Youth Program through the Naval Support Activity or the Coast Guard to see if students could attend the October 25 events. He offered to give Mrs. Washburn contact information for the local ROTC to invite their Color Guard. He also suggested inviting a school band to participate in the ceremony.

Mr. Sasso added that although the event will be commemorating rather than reenacting the 1824 event, Honor Guard ceremonies were very different in the past and would require explanation to make sure that visitors didn't see it as disrespectful. He suggested using a more contemporary protocol.

Mrs. Washburn asked about getting the colleges involved for the October 25 events. Dr. Newby-Alexander suggested a public service announcement that can be shared on the Norfolk State University site. She added that Hampton University, Old Dominion University, and Norfolk State University have active Honors Colleges that may want to participate.

Mrs. Washburn added that the information for the Road to Revolution markers needs to be submitted soon. She has completed a draft for three of the five planned signs and will send them to Mr. Sasso and Dr. Newby-Alexander for review. She will have Mr. Toler reach out to them with the details to help them complete their task.

Mrs. Washburn explained that the next grant will be announced on July 17 and she is hoping for the requested \$10,000 which will require a \$10,000 match from the city.

Councilman Hugel suggested having Mr. Glagola with Marketing and Communications get coverage of the October events on the Hampton Roads Show. He noted that channel 3 and 10 have covered other Portsmouth events.

Dr. Newby-Alexander suggested having theatre groups such as the Hurrah Players come to the events in costume to be in the crowd. She added that Norfolk State University has

a fashion design program which includes researching and creating fashions. She will reach out to the professor now and suggest the students have this as their first project of the semester. Mr. Sasso suggested gearing the fashions to the 1776 era rather than 1824 so that they can be used for future events. Mr. Sasso also offered to do workshops on clothing if needed.

Mrs. Washburn told the group that Post Secondary Brewing on High Street is creating a special beer for the month of October. She added that tickets are on sale for the American Rover cruise with Lafayette on October 22. She explained that Norfolk has created a Lafayette Events Facebook page, and she will make sure Portsmouth has one soon.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Hugel. Mr. Bobzien seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 10 am in the Portsmouth Economic Development Conference Room.