

**VA 250 Committee Meeting**  
**Portsmouth City Hall Sixth Floor Conference Room**  
**January 8, 2026**

Present: Karen Washburn, Angela DelosReyes, Councilman Mark Hugel, Dr. John Joyce, James McCann, Dan Schmit, and Audrey Lassiter

Absent: Jared Bobzien, Chessie Bray, Billie Cook, CDR James Cullen, Dr. Michael Hogan, Wendy Mathias, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Kristine Troch, Karla Jakubowski, Jacqueline Johnson, Pam McKittrick, and Tom Sasso

Mrs. Washburn called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Since there was no quorum, the committee was not able to approve the November or December minutes.

**Road to Revolution: Signage Updates**

Mr. McCann shared the final copies of the six Road to Revolution signs which are in production they should be installed by the end of January or early February. The total cost was \$18,000 but will be paid for in part with a \$10,000 grant which has been approved by City Council. Mr. McCann explained that the deadline for the grant was December 31, 2025, however he was able to attain a one-time 90 day extension.

**SPPA Murals and Grant Update**

Dr. Joyce told the committee members that Support Portsmouth Public Art has received a \$5,000 grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts to install a mural honoring Portsmouth native, Richard Dale. Commodore Dale was an amazing hero who was captured several times, wounded, but still fought on the Bonhomme Richard with John Paul Jones. His adventures included digging a tunnel and escaping jail in an officer's uniform and fighting in the Barbary War. In 1783, Dale became an original member of the Pennsylvania [Society of the Cincinnati](#) which honored officer veterans of the Revolutionary War and is still in existence today. There are two monuments dedicated to him, one on North Street and one at the foot of the Churchland Bridge. Dr. Joyce added that there are several thousand dollars remaining from the Lafayette event and SPPA will match these funds. Dr. Joyce is working with local artist Sam Welty and they plan to create a nighttime battle scene with the *USS Bonhomme Richard* and the *HMS Serapis* strapped together. At that time in history, First Lieutenant, Richard Dale was 23 years old and had served aboard ships since the age of 12. The mural will also feature circles showing events from his life surrounding the main mural. These will include his boyhood on his family farm in what is now Waterview, through 1794 when the Gosport Shipyard was leased from the State of Virginia and Captain Richard Dale, who was to

have assumed command of the frigate Chesapeake, was appointed Superintendent. Dr. Joyce envisions a bench attached to the wall for photo ops as well as a scavenger hunt for symbols found in the mural. There would be a QR code that would educate people about his life and a coloring book created by That Art Store for school age children. Dr. Joyce also wants to host a reception during Sail250.

Since he has been unable to secure a location for the mural, Dr. Joyce asked Mrs. Washburn about the condos that overlook High Street Landing. He feels that would be a good site since everyone getting off of the ferry would see it. Mrs. Washburn will give Dr. Joyce the contact information.

Councilman Hugel spoke with the City Manager and told him the south wall of the Water Street Garage will soon be exposed. He suggested that it would be a wonderful location for a mural. He thinks Sail250 money could possibly assist with the cost of the reception. He will invite all of the military leadership.

Mrs. Washburn suggested having Mrs. Mathias assist with the history research and possibly a grant to assist with the reception.

Ms. Lassiter asked the committee if there are any events planned for July 4. She added that the Olde Towne Antique & Flea Market is scheduled for that day.

She also told the committee that Post Secondary Brewing will announce the first of their 12 beer Founders Series, Checks & Balances.

Mrs. Washburn told the group about the plans for Sail250 explaining that High Street will be closed from Effingham Street to the waterfront. Everything will be centered on High Street with a stage on Court Street. There will also be a ferris wheel on High Street. She will be meeting with the Mr. Glagola, Mayor Glover and Councilman Hugel on Tuesday at 10:30 am to review the plans thus far.

Mr Schmit said the Hill House will host interpreters featuring Capt. Henry Aberdeen, an African-American sea captain.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Research and Story Development:** Co-chairs: Dr. Newby-Alexander and Tom Sasso

No report.

**Education and School Outreach:** Co-chairs: Karla Jakubowski and Kristine Troch

No report.

**Museums, Public Art, and Exhibit Development:** Co-chairs: Dr. Michael Hogan, and Dan Schmit

No report.

**Events:** Co-chairs: Jacqueline Johnson and Audrey Lassiter

No report.

**Grants and Marketing:** Chair: Wendy Mathias

No report.

**Grass Roots Outreach:** Co-chairs: Councilman Mark Hugel and Billie Cook

**Sites and Signage:** Chair: Pam McKittrick

No report.

**Old Business/New Business**

**Election of Vice-Chair**

Mr. McCann reminded the committee that the committee needs a Vice-Chair to replace Mr. Toler.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.