

250th Committee Meeting

Minutes: February 20, 2024

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TOWN OF BURLINGTON

Location: Evelyn Haines Conference Room at Town Hall

Call to Order

Member Chris Sennott called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

All members present stood and stated the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll/Attendance

Members present: Vice-Chair Daniel Burns, Secretary Michele DeParasis, Treasurer Diana Saunders, Albert Chin, Taryn Gillis, John LaFauci, Gil Moreira, Chris Sennott, Tommy Tringale

Member absent: John LaFauci

Ex-Officio: Clancy Main (Town Manager)

Members via Zoom: Kelley Sardinia

Guests: Matt Ahearn (Grandmaster, Thomas Talbot Lodge), Isaac Wright-Lichter (Content Producer, BATV), Katherine Malgieri (Interim Planning Department Director), John Burrows (Selectboard Member)

Absent: Roy Frost (Police Chief), Robert Cole (Fire Chief), Robert Maynard (Director of Administrative Services), Dave Grubb (Recreation Director)

Chris Sennott announced that the 2/12/2025 meeting was illegal and that the proceedings were invalid.

Chris Sennott deferred to Vice-Chair Dan Burns, who chaired the meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to rescind the proceedings and all votes taken at the meeting. Discussion ensued.

Kelly Sardina stated that the meeting was posted 48 hours in advance and that the meeting was not illegal. She further noted that all members were notified by email within 48 hours of the meeting and that it was posted on the Town's website on Dec. 4.

Diana Saunders stated that she received text messages from six members before the meeting, which shows that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the members called for the meeting.

Vice-Chair Dan Burns stated that he had records of all communications and that the meeting was ruled invalid. As posted on the Feb 20th agenda, we would vote on reorganization during item 5.

The motion passed 8-2-0

Open Mic

Vice-Chair Dan Burns called for open mike comments.

Isaac Wright-Lichter (BATV) announced that on April 14, he will film the Tar and Feathering of Thomas Ditson at BATV.

Tommy Tringale shared a publication, *Muster Rols of the Participating Companies of American Militia and Minute-Men in the Battle of April 19, 1775*, compiled by Frank Warren Coburn. It listed all the individuals who participated in the Lexington and Concord marches. He asked for a public reading of all Billerica participants. (It was noted that the Billerica Minute Men and the Billerica Historical Society will read the list on April 20, 2025, and will address the committee at a future meeting.)

Matt Ahearn (Grand Master of Thomas Talbot Masonic Lodge) announced that the Masons will hold "*Honoring Billerica's Yankee Doodle*" on March 30th at 1:00 p.m. at the Ditson Elementary School at 39 Cook Street. He indicated that he had invited the Boy Scouts to post colors. His presentation will focus on who Thomas Ditson was, his participation in the Revolutionary War, and his contributions after the war. He stated that he believed the Billerica Colonial Minutemen would be present. He provided a graphic to be included on Social Media on Monday, 2/24.

Reorganization

Chairperson

A motion was made and seconded to nominate Chris Sennot for the chair position. Discussion ensued.

Secretary DeParasis asked Chris to comment on statements made when he attended his first meeting as a guest, at a subsequent Selectboard Meeting where he commented about the committee, and at his first meeting as a member. He answered committee members' concerns that he could include all Billerica residents. He then committed to attend the 250th Committee's proposed fundraising gala in a tuxedo if the Committee chooses to hold one.

The motion passed unanimously, 10-0-0

Chris Sennott assumed the chair position and continued the meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to elect a new Vice-Chair.

John LaFauci was nominated and seconded. (John LaFauci was not present at the meeting to accept the nomination.)

Al Chin was nominated and seconded. He stated that we already have a Vice-Chair and that he will not accept the nomination as long as Dan Burns is still in the position.

Secretary DeParasis asked why we are electing a Vice-Chair when we already have one and asked if Vice-Chair Burns had resigned. Vice-Chair Burns indicated that he did not resign but had been asked to elect a new Chair to fill the vacancy caused by

Anthony Ventresca's resignation and to elect a new Vice-Chair. He stated that because of disruptions caused by committee members and derogatory statements made toward the Billerica Minutemen, he considered resigning and discussed it with specific individuals. He declined to indicate who had requested the re-organization.

Taryn Gillis asked Dan if he would continue as Vice Chair. He indicated that he would be willing to do so.

Dan Burns was nominated and seconded.

Dan Burns was elected as Vice-Chair unanimously, 10-0-0.

Open Meeting Law Complaint

Chairman Sennott indicated that an Open Meeting Law violation had been made and opened the floor for discussion to respond. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made to refer the OML violation complaint to counsel for an opinion. Vice-chair Burns indicated that counsel would be speaking to the parties involved.

The motion passed 10-0-0

Minutes from the December 3 and Jan 8th Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to affirm the items discussed from the Dec. 3 meeting and the minutes of Jan. 8th. Discussion ensued.

Treasurer Saunders stated that the 12-3 Meeting was not official as the agenda had been posted too late. Vice-Chair Burns stated that members discussed ideas for events, but no votes were recorded on the items discussed. The Secretary submitted minutes as requested by then-Chair Ventresca. Treasurer Saunders stated that the meeting was all about memorials and the Minuteman statue, but the meeting minutes did not reflect this. Selectman Burrows stated that meeting notes can be very general.

Kelly Sardina stated that although some recorded items were incorrect, the minutes were generally thorough. The secretary requested input on correcting the faulty items, but none were submitted.

The motion passed 9-0-1

The February 6th minutes were moved to the next meeting agenda to give members time to review.

Meeting Schedule through December 2025

Chairman Sennott opened the floor for suggestions for the meeting schedule through December 2025. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made to have the meetings on the second Tuesday and the fourth Wednesday of each month. There were no conflicts for members or other scheduled municipal meetings.

The motion passed 10-0-0

Secretary DeParasis will list all meetings and forward them to the Town Manager, the Town Clerk, and all members. Clancy Main will forward the dates to Robert Maynard to add to the 250th Committee website.

Vote to reaffirm actions taken at the November 8, 2024, meeting

A motion was made to affirm the discussions taken at the Nov 18th meeting and seconded.

Tommy Tringale asked that the primary time frame be expanded to the end of October 1777 to coincide with the Saratoga Campaign. Taryn Gillis reiterated that the committee should not extend so much as to stretch the committee too thin.

Secretary DeParasis stated that Chairperson Ventresca had directed her to start the application process at the November and December meetings, as stated in the minutes submitted. At the December meeting, Chairperson Ventresca informed the committee that the application would be completed and submitted by December 30th. Taryn Gillis observed that the Community Funds Grant application must be submitted by the December 30th deadline and that the application is in, so it is now a moot point. Selectman Burrows read the application and stated that the stated activities in the application are inclusive and very general and that the committee could ask for permission to use funds for other activities.

The motion passed 7-0-2

Historical Tour

A motion was made and seconded to organize historical tours in town to visit historic sites and homes. Discussion ensued.

Chris Sennott shared that Kerry Clery forwarded information about a school staff member who would like to conduct tours. Vice-Chair Burns stated that three busses and tour guides would be needed for the suggested tours.

The motion passed 10-0-0

Historical Tour Committee

A motion was made and seconded to form a historic tour subcommittee, with the Chairperson assigning members.

The motion passed 10-0-0

Diana Saunders, Kelly Sardina, Isaac Wright-Lichtner, and Tommy Tringale requested to be placed on the committee.

Secretary DeParasis asked if the discussed map of historic locations suggested by the Historical Commission would be a separate subcommittee or if it would be part of the Historical Tour Committee.

Patriotic Movie nights

A motion was made and seconded to hold patriotic-themed movies at various locations throughout town during the spring and summer of 2025. Discussion ensued.

Members identified several organizations with summer movies and suggested requesting 250th-themed films during the celebration period.

Town Manager Mains stated that the high school never installed an anticipated AV system, and as technology changes so quickly, it would be better to rent equipment.

The motion passed 10-0-0

**Katherine Malgieri, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development,
Folk Art Mural**

Ms. Malgieri plans to continue attending to help share resources and partnerships for what the committee is planning. She shared that Eric Dowdle, an international folk art painter, creates town murals by researching significant stories and buildings. He is registered with America250 and is looking for towns in all 50 states as part of his 250th program called "Land That I Love." They are interested in featuring Billerica. If Billerica commissioned this artist, the costs would include a mural to be installed as public art somewhere in town, plus individual jigsaw puzzles of the imagery, which could be bought or raffled off. There are different mural sizes and quantities of puzzles available. Katherine offered to come back with more details on the package pricing. (50,000 minimum.)

On April 19, many towns are doing historic "The Regulars Are Coming" alerts (such as Horseriders or firing shots over the Merrimack River). Ms. Malgieri suggested using modern-day technology to reenact the landmark alert message instead, such as CodeRed phone calls, BATV, and town social media. The landmark message could also serve to advertise the next community event.

To add to the committee's ideas to involve youth in various contests, Ms. Malgieri suggested a Visual art contest that could be reprinted and hung on streetlight banners between November and May (Veteran banners have them reserved from May through November).

Local businesses can be highlighted and used through other programs, including them in townwide scavenger hunts, offering prizes made in Billerica, or hosting events at local businesses, such as a brunch event at the Country Club of Billerica.

Other Potential Activities

Chairperson Sennott opened the floor to discuss potential activities.

These included-

- A scavenger hunt in the style of National Treasure
- A haunted trolley tour
- Clean-Up Green-Up of historic sites
- Garden Club to decorate the Center with a patriotic theme
- Reach out to the Manning Association
- A fashion show and catwalk of historical garments
- Concerts on the Common include fife and drum bands
- Historic Trades Day
- Ring your bell
- Living History
- Challenge Coins
- 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- Lion's Club Speech Contest
- Billerica History Day in the Town Center with history and music
- 4-19 RE-Enactment of "The Regulars are Coming"
- Historic Alert using the Modern Alerting System
- Women's Suffrage for lunch at the Country Club or Manning Manse
- Art contest- kids Spirit of Revolution
- Made in Billerica (E-Ink, Pierogi, etc.) Katherine has a listing of all businesses to include.
- Work with Thomas Talbot Lodge to plant a Liberty Tree.
- Work with Sons of the American Revolution to train individuals to repair Patriotic grave markers in Billerica and clean and restore stones.
- "Epic Restoration" as done in Ipswich
- Jail Day
- Repair historic memorials and refresh the common
- Ask Don Jarvis about his planned Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Veteran's float events.
- Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitor Bureau (MCVB) has a corporate sponsorship matchmaking program to which the committee can submit their ideas.
- MCVB has a regional event calendar inviting people to submit their events for inclusion.
- Lexington & Concord event schedule is light on Sunday, April 20th. If Billerica does anything that day (note: Easter Sunday), then Katherine will let them know, and they might be able to include Billerica's event on their calendar.

- Billerica Adventures Series Corporation (BASC) is a local organization that hosts annual essay contests with the youth. The Committee might ask them to choose a theme aligned with the Spirit of Revolution.

Gil Moreira said we should ask the friends of the COA to sponsor some events.

Other Sub-Committees required

Secretary DeParasis asked for a Sub-Committee for school activities on the next agenda.

Diana Saunders requested a list of all subcommittees and members. Once the chair assigns them, Secretary DeParasis will submit a complete listing once the chair decides who will be on each committee.

Agenda Items for next meeting

Chairperson Sennott asked for all agenda items to be submitted 48 hours before the meeting agenda is posted (Thursday before the meeting as the Town Hall closes at 12 on Friday.)

Chairperson Report

No Report submitted

Town Manager Clancy Main Report

Town Manager Main stated that the committee could request funds through a warrant article at the spring town meeting and that he would assist us in preparing it. The Warrant Article will be voted on at the March 11th meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn

Motion passed 10-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08

Next scheduled meeting:

March 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Evelyn Haines Conference Room at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele DeParasis

2/23/2025