

**America 250 | PortlandCT Committee**  
**Special Organizational Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday March 31, 2025**

Members Present: Sarah Elliott-Caratasios, Terry Grady, Sharon Hoy-alt., Mary Maki, Samuel Newsom, Linda Prelli, Sara Rutter, Ben Srb

Members Absent:

Others Present: First Selectman Michael Pelton

1. First Selectman Call Meeting to Order

First Selectman Michael Pelton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Senior Center located at 7 Waverly Avenue, Portland, Connecticut.

2. Roll Call/Introduction of Members
3. First Selectman Nominates Chair and Vice Chair – *runs the meeting; submits the meeting calendar to town clerk; creates meeting agendas*

In accordance with the resolution, the First Selectmen selected Sarah Elliott-Caratasios to serve as the committee Chair and Terry Grady to serve as Vice Chair.

4. Committee Nominate Secretary – *records the meeting minutes*

After a brief discussion it was decided that Sam Newsom would serve as Secretary. Motion was made by Ben Srb and motion was seconded by Terry Grady. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Review FOIA, Meeting Procedures (Robert's Rules of Order)
6. Review/Discuss Committee's Charge as described in BOS Resolution 12/30/2024

First Selectman Pelton was brief but noted two things he expected from the committee.

1. A fantastic fireworks display
  2. To see about getting the bridge lit up
7. Set meeting dates for calendar year 2025

The committee set the following dates for their regular meetings in 2025:

- meeting dates were set on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 6pm in the Rice Room of the Waverly Center

April 14 April 28	May 12 (no meeting May 26 <sup>th</sup> due to the holiday)
June 9 June 23	July 14 July 28
August 11 August 25	September 8 September 22
(no meeting Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> due to the holiday) October 27	November 10 November 24
December 8 December 22	

8. Discuss:
- possible events;
  - ideas to promote committee/events;
  - determine funding needed;
  - revenue fundraisers

A discussion was held regarding fundraisers. Ideas of revolutionary war reenactments were discussed along with working with the summer music series. We started the discussion of T-shirts, and some sort of ceremony to hold on July 4, 2026 at the town hall. We also discussed a possible Taste of Portland festival or family day event, a time capsule, along with an essay and photo contest to go in the time capsule.

It was discussed whether we should get involved in East Hampton's Old Home Day as we were the same town in 1776, along with possibly getting a float in the parade. Also we decided to start planning at the culminating event on July 4, 2026 and plan backwards.

It was discussed updating the history of Portland booklet by the Historical Society and holding a possible 5k road race.

The group discussed getting with Tom Robinson to set up a payment system/Venmo account and QR code. We also revisited the discussion of one big event, maybe a family day at the riverfront park. The chairwoman said she would check the availability.

We floated the idea of getting a military band, and holding an essay contest for the schools with the grand prize getting their essay placed in the time capsule. It was also discussed having a plaque or monument made and installed at the town hall and sourcing brownstone for the job.

We discussed parades and possibly getting the school band. It was noted that summertime events would pose a challenge as school is out of session.

More general discussion about sponsors for riverfront day and t-shirts. Also brought up was in addition to the essay contest, having the school children have a t shirt design contest with the winner having their shirts printed for sale. Also discussed was remaking the vintage "I'm from Portland, CT" t-shirts and a Portland 250 t-shirt.

Terry Grady said there may be grant money available from humanities.

It was brought up getting donations from the round up option at Adam's grocery store. The meeting was summarized.

- July 4, 2026 plaque and time capsule ceremony with possible fireworks in the evening
- possible June 20th Family Day
- plan essay and t-shirt contest
- possible presence in May Memorial Day parade

At the next meeting we will discuss fundraising and dates for events along with possible fair involvement or having a banner or billboard placed on Ben Srb's property. We would contact Tom Robinson to set up a payment system and talk more on a t-shirt contest.

Next meeting was set for 4/14 at 6pm at the Senior/Waverly center.

9. Public comment

10. Adjourn

Ben Srb made motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Linda Prelli. Vote unanimous, meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel Newsom  
Committee Secretary