



George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee (GWBC)

Monday, January 19, 2026

7:00 PM

Lloyd House

220 N. Washington Street

Minutes

Attendance: Sue Johnson, Michele Longo, Peter Duggan, Jake Sweely (via Zoom), Edgar Bates, Colin Eilts, Carol Myers, Patrick Wilson, Kristen Eastlick, Casey Clark, Jeanne Jacob, Will Hannifan, Sebastian Feitl (new member), Sandra Welch.

Excused: Steve Konya, Tyler Vanice, Lauren Augustine, Hunter Ihrman

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. Sue recognized Will Hannifan (first in-person meeting) and Sebastian Feitl (new High School representative)
- 2) Motion to approve January 5, 2026, minutes made by Edgar Bates, second by Patrick Wilson. The committee approved the motion.
- 3) Chair's Report – Sue reported that she has contacted Bob Garbacz to present him his award for his years of service to the GWBC. Bob said that he would prefer to wait until after the GWB Parade to attend the GWBC meeting to receive his award.
- 4) Marketing and Public Relations Report – Sue sent our latest GWBC newsletter to approx. 1500 volunteers, sponsors, and parade participants. Newsletter announced the early bird parade registration cutoff date of Jan 14 and the new parade route, and called for volunteers. She also reported that our newsletter has an “open rate” average of 72%. She will also be sending a submission to *Zebra* this week for its February issue. The next GWBC newsletter will publicize the Jan 25 opening of the Cherry Challenge, the Jan 30 deadline for parade registration, and the start of the Hunt for Washington. Kristen Eastlick stated that she is continuing to update our social media with daily “day in the life” of George Washington (250 years ago). She is currently collecting images of Cherry Challenge dishes and has twenty-four restaurant participants to date. Deadline for restaurants to register for the Cherry Challenge is next Friday. This is the third year that Mount Vernon has sponsored the Cherry Challenge.
- 5) VA250, Alexandria250 (ALEX250), and other community reports – Sue reported that there was a Virtual ALEX250 meeting last week (Michele Longo and Edgar Bates attended). Alexandria City will have access to the Virginia 250 Mobile Museum. ALEXSail 250 event to include four ships moored in Alexandria on June 12, 13, and 14 is still on schedule. There was a discussion on getting a GWBC booth at this event (Waterfront Park) to promote the parade, recruit volunteers and fundraising. This discussion was tabled for a future meeting.
- 6) Unfinished Business
 - a) Distribution of business/resident flyers – Flyers and a flyer distribution plan were passed out to committee members. Committee members were instructed not to put flyers in mailboxes. Blue painters tape to attach flyers to doorways was passed out to committee members who needed it. Flyers should be distributed by Monday 26 Jan.
 - b) Preparations for adverse weather – Michele Longo stated that the Alexandria City Special Event Committee has approved our March 21 snow date. Sue mentioned that parade traditionally has

marched rain or shine, with the main concern being the safety of parade participants and spectators. Sue also explained the decision process in rescheduling the parade in case of inclement weather.

- c) Marching band/performance group update – Sue reported on marching bands and performance groups that have been asked to participate in the parade, and on those who have registered. The Washington Commanders marching band has agreed to participate, and the City is processing the Commanders agreement for approval.
- d) Parade participant registration update – There are currently forty-five parade participants. Sue is currently submitting applications for Washington Nationals, Washington Capitals, and George Washington University mascots. There will be a new Martha Washington for this year's parade, who is currently Martha Washington at Mount Vernon. Sue sent out parade invitations to all City dignitaries. Patrick Wilson sent out invitations to the VA governor, lieutenant governor, Senators, and Congressional representative. Michele Longo mentioned that the parade route parking plan had to be modified to accommodate three weddings that are scheduled at Saint Mary's on parade day.
- e) 2026 fundraising – sponsorship update/outreach – Sue stated that \$20,725 has been raised to date, however we are still waiting to receive several sponsor donations.
- f) Parade volunteers – Carol Myers completed volunteer sign up form. Volunteer opportunities have been announced in the newsletter and a link to the form is on our website. Sue will email all past volunteers. Sebastian Feitl will contact Bishop Ireton about reaching out to students that need to perform community service.
- g) Events schedule –
 - Mayor's Sponsor Appreciation Tea Reception is scheduled for Saturday 7 Feb 2-4 pm. Sue is still awaiting emails from sponsors identifying designated invitees. Patrick will send the invitations by Paperless Post.
 - Wreath Laying Ceremony: Sandra Welch stated that the Wreath Laying Ceremony is on schedule. SAR and DAR representatives will be at the event.
 - Hunt for Washington: Sue is working on new Clue Sheets. Event will open on 1 Feb. Sue mentioned that the George Washington Tours will not be on the schedule this year.
 - Post Parade Reception: Sue has met with Hotel AKA Alexandria, which will host the reception this year. Reception will be 4:30-6:30 on parade day. Sue will be sending out invitations to parade dignitaries, sponsors, volunteers, and parade unit leaders. Parade awards will be announced at the reception.

7. New Business

- a) February 10 City Council approval of GW Proclamation – 10 Feb @ 7 pm. Due to City Hall/Market Square renovation, City Council will be meeting at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

8. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:27. Motion made by Patrick Wilson, second by Edgar Bates.