



George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee (GWBC)

Monday, January 5, 2026

7:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Minutes

Attendance: Sue Johnson, Michele Longo, Peter Duggan, Jake Sweely, Lauren Augustine, Edgar Bates, Colin Eilts, Carol Myers, Steve Konya, Patrick Wilson, Kristen Eastlick, Casey Clark, Tyler Vanice, Jeanne Jacob, and Will Hannifan (new member).

Excused: Sandra Welch

Unexcused: Hunter Ihrman

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.
- 2) Motion to approve December 15, 2025 minutes made by Edgar Bates, Second by Kristen Eastlick. The committee approved the motion.
- 3) Chair's Report – The new Parade Route will be discussed during the meeting.
- 4) Marketing and Public Relations Report – Sue participated in an in-person interview with FOX 5 Wash DC. She also was contacted by Northern VA Magazine to provide photos for an article publicizing the parade in their Feb print issue. She is also preparing a submission for *Zebra* for their February print issue as well as submissions to Visit Alexandria for its winter rollout in January. Kristen Eastlick stated that she has about half dozen committed restaurants for the Cherry Challenge and she will prepare a press release when a dozen restaurants sign up. Due to the holidays, Kristin was unable to report social media statistics, however she feels viewership on all our social media accounts is increasing.
- 5) VA250, Alexandria250 (ALEX250), and other community reports – Next Alexandria250 meeting is scheduled for Jan 16th. Edgar Bates reported NTR for VA250 update. Sue and Michelle reported that they have ordered swag items for our volunteers (knit hats and stick pins) as well as tote bags and travel mugs for sponsors. They also ordered 50 Car magnets, some of which can be placed on parade vehicles, and will be ordering hand signs with “Alexandria Loves George” printed on them for parade participants since the parade will be on Valentine's Day.
- 6) Unfinished Business
 - a) Parade route – Sue informed the committee that due to the advanced timeline for Market Square construction, a modification of our parade route was requested by the City. Michelle Longo reviewed our new proposed parade route and staging area with the committee. The new route will be west of the previous route (nearer to Washington Street) and is four blocks shorter. The new route will be posted in our newsletter, social media, and in *Zebra*.
 - b) Preparations for adverse weather – Sue stated that since the new parade route does not interfere with Market Square construction that we will be able to ask the City for a “snow date” for the 250th Anniversary parade only. Patrick Wilson officially made motion that the Committee request that March 21, discussed in previous meetings, be the alternate parade date. Jeanne Jacob seconded motion. The committee approved the motion. Michelle Longo will formally ask the City for the alternate parade date of March 21.
 - c) Marching band/performance group update - US Army Old Guard Fifes and Drums and C.D. Hilton High School (Woodbridge, VA) have already registered for the parade. Jeanne Jacob has

contacted 25 High School marching bands, and only 1 band has responded. The committee discussed further outreach to performance groups.

- d) Parade participant registration update - Sue stated that 26 parade units have registered as of December 28. Early bird cutoff date is Jan 14, with cut off date for registration of Jan 30. Sue will send out newsletter next week with reminder of early bird registration cutoff date. Patrick Wilson has sent an invitation to the Virginia Governor-elect and will send invitations to the Lt. Governor-elect, Congressman Don Beyer and the two Virginia Senators this week. A photographer still is needed, and Municipal Media, who does sound for the parade, will also film the parade.
- e) Criteria for parade unit award trophy - Patrick Wilson is still putting together the parade unit award trophy. The committee felt that the trophy should be awarded as a "grand prize" for which all parade units would be eligible, and discussed where the trophy should be displayed during the year.
- f) 2026 fundraising – sponsorship update/outreach. Sue reported no new sponsorship commitments from Dec 15 to Dec 28. Total paid sponsorships are \$16,350 with an additional \$2,500 in committed sponsorships that have not yet been paid. Outreach to all previous sponsors has been made.
- g) Parade volunteers - Carol Myers is finalizing volunteer signup sheet which will be in the next newsletter and on our website. Sue will send emails to past volunteers. The committee discussed volunteer positions, and Sue asked for volunteers. Committee members that volunteered for various positions are Jake Sweely, Patrick Wilson, Colin Eilts, Will Hannifan, Steve Konya and Casey Clark.
- h) Events – Cherry Challenge, Hunt for Washington, Wreath-Laying Ceremony, Friendship Firehouse Breakfast, Birthday Dinner, Masonic events. Sue checked in with the points of contact for each event on the Events Schedule.

7) New Business

- a) January 24 Mayor's Sponsor Appreciation Tea - Mayor Gaskin has selected January 24 for the Mayor's Sponsor Appreciation Tea at Lloyd House from 2-4 pm with a snow date of February 7. Invitations still need to be sent out to sponsors. Sue is contacting Sponsors with a request for names of their designees to receive invitations.

- 8) For the Good of the Cause – Feb 10 at 7 pm is the scheduled George Washington Proclamation at City Hall. GWBCC members are encouraged to attend. Distribution of flyers to residents and businesses in the parade area announcing the parade and closed streets/parking restrictions will be ready for GWBCC members to pick up by Jan 16 at Gadsby's Tavern.

Edgar Bates wanted to formally document in the minutes that the SAR George Washington Chapter awarded a SAR Good Citizen Award Certificate and Medal to Sue Johnson for her years of work in supporting the Alexandria George Washington Birthday Parade. The certificate was awarded in recognition of notable services on behalf of our American principles and the medal's inscription reads, "Our inspiration is from the past, our duty is in the present, our hope is in the future."

Tyler Vanice mentioned there will be additional parking at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial for parade participants. Peter Duggan questioned if the First Virginia Regiment had permission to fire their muskets and cannon during the parade. The First Virginia Regiment had permission last year from the Alexandria Police Department to fire their muskets.

- 9) Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:34. Motion made by Jeanne Jacobs, second by Patrick Wilson.