

Mathews County VA250 Committee
Monthly Board meeting
January 25, 2024
Mathews Memorial Library

Chairman Fred Lyon called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. at Mathews Memorial Library. In attendance were: Fred Lyon, Sandy Warhol, Joe Syslo, Reed Lawson, Becky Barnhardt, Bobby Dobson, Tom Edwards, Sharon Frye, Tom Karow, Martha McCartney, Hunter Owens and Dee Russell. Absent were Angie Ingram, Kat Larkin, John Priest and Leslie Search. The minutes of the October 26, 2023, meetings were approved on a motion by Tom E., seconded by Sharon.

Fred introduced Laura Jones, candidate for membership, whose application will be presented at the February BOS meeting.

Fred brought the committee up to date on events since the last meeting in October. The financial account is set up with the county to receive tax-deductible donations, made payable to Treasurer, County of Mathews, with Mathews County VA250 on the memo line. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 853 or taken directly to the county Treasurer's Office. The Christmas parade was a success with thanks to Joe for supplying the children's costumes and leaflets for distribution. For 2024, the committee should be delineating tangible deliverables, recruiting new members and raising money. Fred will be meeting with MCPS Superintendent Dr. Daniel soon to discuss engaging the schools in MCVA250 events. The committee meeting schedule is: in odd months, we meet at the library on the last Thursday of the month, even months – same day and time - by Zoom.

The three-year Strategic Plan will be approved at the February meeting. Fred will circulate the document to the board in advance. The letter to area organizations is being finalized. Opportunities for members of the board to meet with county groups is encouraged. It was noted that grant money may be difficult to obtain, often requires a match and can have restrictions and entanglements. MCVA250 should be seeking unencumbered monies. Virginia Tourism Commission grants are specific to marketing. Virginia Humanities grants can cover research, lectures, concert series, celebrations and educational outreach.

Dee reported on her social media efforts. A plan is needed to address having a website and a presence on Facebook. Several concerns are having the need for an engager, establishing a domain name and having enough data to feed the sites. It may be possible to link with the county website. A subcommittee was formed to report at the February meeting. Dee is chair. Members are Laura, Hunter and Becky. Kat will be asked to participate. Dee moved; Tom K. seconded to form the subcommittee and place it under the Communications committee. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Cricket Hill – Tom E. reported on the celebration update given by Mike Cecere of the 7th Virginia Regiment. The festivities, to include the encampment, reenactment with the 1700s sloop ‘Luna’, ball/dance at the Gwynn’s Island Civic Center, etc., will amount to ~\$10,000. Staci Martin of VTC recommended applying for the marketing aspect of the events – print, ads, TV, etc. - through the tourism commission. Fred and Joe suggested applying for \$5,000. Laura suggested approaching the National Park Service/Dept. of the Interior for the actual festivities. She will investigate and report at the next meeting.

Research – Martha reported she has made progress with her research at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Communications – Sandy reported that plans are underway to set up sales of patriotic items during May Faire, on May 4th this year. Ideas suggested are: Jefferson-style cups with Bay School contacted, tee shirts supplied by Fred, Hunter Owens-produced CD of patriotic music, patriotic wreaths by Sandy, etc. It may be possible to market our wares at MCVIC. Re-creating the David Shuber/Judy Ward ‘Crickets on a Hill’ play for 2026 was discussed. Dee will contact Shawn Jaeger, president of Court House Players. A Rev War film series was suggested for Mathews Historical Museum Movie Nights.

Finance Committee – Joe reported that a county budget line item request for MCVA250 may not be possible, but he intends to approach the Mathews Economic Development Authority, of which he and Sandy are members, seeking \$5,000. Donations to the committee have been received in the amount of \$1,500. Thank-you notes and tax-receipt forms will be sent by Dee. Other sources of income may include the marketplace, appeals through rack cards, organizational visits and newspaper ads. The Capital Campaign, to be rolled out in April, seeks \$50,000 from large and small donors. The campaign will define targets and asks of institutions and individuals. The roll out will focus on newspaper and radio interviews, letters and emails, rack cards (template from VA250) and visits to organizations.

Old Business – Road to Revolution – All Virginia localities are asked to erect RtR signage. VTC will accept grant applications, due April 11th. Design and fabrication are their responsibility. Posting QR codes on all signage was suggested. Fred will follow up and report at the February meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m. The next meeting is February 29th via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Reed Lawson, Secretary

