



# MEMO

**TO:** Town of Waterbury Select Board  
**FROM:** Waterbury Historical Society  
**DATE:** July 18, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** VT 250<sup>th</sup> local committee resolution

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## **PURPOSE**

Waterbury Historical Society (WHS) is proposing a partnership with the Town of Waterbury to establish a Vermont 250 Waterbury Committee to encourage and coordinate programs, projects, and events during 2026 and 2027 to celebrate the United States' semisecular centennial and Vermonters' many contributions to the nation over the last 250 years. The committee will be composed of representatives from stakeholder organizations and businesses, along with interested citizens; all participation will be voluntary and no compensation is offered.

## **BACKGROUND**

Each of the next two calendar years, 2026 and 2027, mark an extraordinary 250 years in the histories of the United States and Vermont. In 2026, we will celebrate the formation of the United States of America with the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Vermonters were at the forefront of colonists' efforts to free themselves from British rule, and in 2027, we will mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Vermont.

Gov. Phil Scott signed *Executive Order No. 06-20* on December 15, 2020, creating the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission. Its purpose is to "plan, encourage, develop, coordinate, and promote observances and activities" across Vermont that are associated with celebrating these two historic beginnings and "the promising future of our State." The commission, in effect, serves as a central hub for all 250th-related activities undertaken by municipalities and organizations across the state. As part of its charge stated above, the commission also assists in fundraising efforts for these activities, from soliciting donations to pursuing grants.

## **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND PLAN OF WORK**

Committee membership shall be open to all interested members of the Waterbury community, either by self-selection or Select Board appointment. Additionally, WHS strongly encourages the following groups to select a representative to serve on the committee because their respective missions and typical program, project, and events efforts can tie in directly to the purpose and themes of 250th celebrations. This list is intended to serve as an invitation, not a mandate to participate, and is not exhaustive:

- Waterbury Historical Society
- Waterbury Recreation Department
- Revitalizing Waterbury
- Waterbury Public Library
- Waterbury Rotary Club

WHS also invites a member of the Select Board to serve in a liaison capacity.

Advertising and recruitment for volunteers would begin immediately upon Select Board approval. The committee will continue its work through December 31, 2027, in keeping with the timeline established for the state commission, and will meet no less than quarterly during this time. The central charge of the committee also parallels

that of the state commission, but at the local level: serve as a central development, coordination, and communication hub for all 250th-related activities to take place in Waterbury. It will maintain a calendar of events, promote projects, assist in fundraising, and communicate about key themes of this historic celebration.

Many organizations and businesses in town already produce regular events, presentations, and speaker series. Because these groups have established plans and budgets for such activities, including WHS, we do not expect this initiative to begin with a blank slate and empty purses. Rather, the committee will conduct outreach to encourage organizations and businesses in town to tailor existing event and project activities around 250 themes during this two-year period. The committee may develop independent programming and seek any needed funding through grants and donations. There is no request for funding from the Town except as deemed available by the Select Board or appropriated by voters.

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), of which WHS is a member organization, has produced a wealth of resources for commemorating the semisecular centennial of the nation, including a Field Guide to planning. In this guide, [Making History at 250](#), AASLH identifies five themes for framing commemorative activities and spurring discussion about how the roots of America's founding—and by extrapolation, the founding of the Republic of Vermont—continues to shape who we are today and what we envision for our future. The five themes are (pp. 12-16):

- **Unfinished revolutions**, helping us think about:
  - *How our founding documents are used to advocate for social, political, and economic change;*
  - *Where there are other revolutions moments in the history of our state and our communities;*
  - *When there has been progress and setbacks in the fight for rights, liberty, and justice; and*
  - *How different perspectives approach the process of becoming “a more perfect union.”*
- **Power of place**, helping us think about:
  - *What was happening in our community during the Revolutionary Era;*
  - *How our “place” has changed over time, including who gets to call this place home;*
  - *How the natural environment has shaped events;*
  - *How Indigenous peoples’ historic connection to places and environment inform our understanding of contemporary environmental challenges; and*
  - *What places are typically preserved for their historic value, and what kinds of stories they can tell.*
- **We the People**, helping us think about:
  - *How diverse people experienced and influenced the events of the American Revolution in different ways;*
  - *Who is an “American”—and a “Vermonters”—and who gets to decide;*
  - *How ideas about belonging have changed, and why;*
  - *When and how different groups gained citizenship or other rights previously denied them; and*
  - *Who has been excluded from full participation and representation in our democracy, and who remains excluded.*
- **American Experiment**, helping us think about:
  - *What was “revolutionary” about the American Revolution, and what kind of nation it created;*
  - *How local and state government is organized;*
  - *Who serves in local and state government, who does it serve, and who is excluded;*
  - *When and why the U.S. Constitution and the State Constitution has changed;*
  - *How different groups have engaged in civic action in the past and present; and*
  - *How understanding the origins of government informs civic engagement in the present.*

- **Doing History**, helping us think about:
  - *What history is, and how history differs from “the past;”*
  - *How history professionals use different sources to make sense of the past;*
  - *Whose stories are collected and preserved, and whose stories have been excluded;*
  - *How the available stories and perspectives of the past influence how we tell history; and*
  - *How we can use evidence from the Revolutionary era to learn about the lives of individuals traditionally silenced in the written record.*

The Waterbury’s Vermont 250th local committee will educate the community about these themes, encourage public discussion, and support local businesses and organizations in tailoring programs and events around one or more of these themes.

## CONCLUSION

Waterbury Historical Society is committed to pursuing these objectives within the scope of its own mission; however, we feel strongly that the effort should be coordinated at the community level and that we collectively participate in celebrating these momentous anniversaries as we collectively face the challenges and opportunities of the future. WHS thereby requests that the Select Board grant the formation of a Vermont 250 local committee by signing the appended resolution.

Cc: Roger Clapp, *Revitalizing Waterbury*  
Katarina Lisaius, *Department of Recreation*  
Rachel Muse, *Waterbury Public Library*  
Judi Byron, *Waterbury Public Library*  
Ariel Mondlak, *Waterbury Rotary*  
Tori Taravella, *Waterbury Rotary*



# VERMONT 250th ANNIVERSARY RESOLUTION

A resolution of the Town of Waterbury, State of Vermont, supporting the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission;

WHEREAS, Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed an executive order to create the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission on December 15, 2020, to plan, encourage, develop, coordinate, and promote observances and activities to be held in Vermont in commemoration of the historic events associated with the 250th anniversary of the 1776 signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War between 1775 and 1777, the founding of the Republic of Vermont in 1777, and the creation of the political foundations of the United States of America;

WHEREAS, the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission hopes to engage all 252 cities and towns through their many programs, projects, and events over the next several years, thereby inspiring future leaders and celebrating Vermonters' contributions to the nation over the last 250 years;

WHEREAS, by adoption of the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission, we hope to inspire Vermonters to learn from the history, legacy, and context of the past to build stronger communities for the future.

RESOLVED, the Town of Waterbury officially establishes a local committee made up of a diverse group of citizens or individuals to encourage and support local activities and liaise with the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission. The participant(s) of the Town of Waterbury are voluntary roles and there will be no compensation for participation.

RESOLVED, the Town the Waterbury may provide funding for planning or implementation of 250th related commemorations in their community or region as available.

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission.

ADOPTED by the Select Board of the Town of Waterbury, the State of Vermont, this day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

Select Board: \_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Alyssa Johnson

\_\_\_\_\_, Vice Chair  
Kane Sweeney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Roger Clapp

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Bard

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tori Taravella