

Minutes of the Montana 250th Commission Meeting
January 11, 2024

12:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M., MT Capitol Building, Room 152

ZOOM: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/84216548578?pwd=NVhwcEFRTTHU0QjI5QjVEczhHVXVOQT09>

WELCOME

- I. New staff introductions – Devon Malizia
- II. Roll Call:
 - **Attending Commissioners:** Marietta Croft, Jane Hamman, Linda Reksten, Molly Kruckenberg, Shannon O’Brien, Molly Stockdale, Deena Mansour, Chris Averill, Mike Jetty, Hal Stearns and Emily Arendt
 - **Staff:** Martha Kohl, Laura Marsh, Devon Malizia, Rennan Rieke
 - **Guests:** Dylan Klapmeier, Chris Lloyd, Diane Sands
 - **Not Present:** Rep. Linda Reksten
- III. Review and approval of minutes from 12.5.2023 meeting
 - Jane Hamman’s name is spelled incorrectly in Section 4
 - Section 4 should be Section 5
 - Minutes approved with corrections noted by Chris Averill

COMMISSION OVERVIEW

- I. Review and vote on bylaws - Molly Kruckenberg – motioned to approve by Jane Hamman, seconded by Mike Jetty
 - Comments on Bylaws:
 - Art V, Section E, second sentence. The committee should make regular reports to the Commission,
 - Art VI, Section F, implied reference to previous minutes
- II. Election of Officers
 - Chair – Christopher Averill accepted nomination, no additional nominations. Jane Hamman motioned, all in favor
 - Vice Chair – Molly Stockdale accepted nomination, no additional nominations. Christopher moved to close, Marietta seconded the vote, all in favor.
 - Molly Kruckenberg is appointed Secretary in accordance with the bylaws.

ESTABLISHING AREAS OF FOCUS

- I. Laura Marsh reported on concrete examples of nationwide 250 initiatives, as well as proposals from contactors who have contacted us with 250 ideas. Devon will continue to pass these along as they come through. See attached PDF of Laura’s PowerPoint.
- II. Devon Malizia reported on themes from AASLH, Montana’s Bicentennial Register of Activities, what other states are doing (examples included CT, NC), and showed examples of websites and planning guides of other states, will send links to commission members
- III. Ginny Sullivan gave an overview on fundraising, including tracking, identifying and cultivating opportunities, thanking donors, MTHS nonprofit status. She can also provide resources for pitching or presenting to potential donors.

- IV. Commission discussed theme ideas which will include the original legislation on page 2, Section B1 and B2:
- Civics:
 - Increasing youth proficiency in US, Montana government and history; Increasing youth proficiency in the distinct and unique history of American Indians
 - Drawing attention to achievements, honors and innovations and significance of Montanans
 - Recognizing vibrant indigenous cultures
 - Emphasizing service and sacrifice of veterans
- V. Montana's 250 theme and subthemes will be:
- ***Everything is Connected*** (main theme of inclusivity, in different tribal languages)
 - *Our Ongoing American Experiment* (includes *American Experiment, Unfinished Revolutions, We the People*)
 - *Power of Place*
 - *Doing History*
- VI. Ideas from commission:
- Marietta Croft: Citizenship tests and civic engagement
 - Molly Kruckenber: MTHS initiatives of the Heritage Center with branding them as 250 events; create guideline and plans for communities to do their own events in their local communities
 - Emily Arendt: Logo contest and scholarship competition, interpretive materials to be brought to all areas of state
 - Mike Jetty: Logo contest (students) for 250 branding and/or flag; Eastern Montana could host next meeting; Promote and highlight existing resources; "We Are One" – student video project with indigenous languages, perhaps on YouTube channel
 - Jane Hamman: Visit the graves/homes of the Daughters of the American Revolution that lived in Montana; Burma Shave-style road side signage of A250 logo, accompanying phrases; Childrens' coloring books; MT Liberty Bell is an exact replica of the US Liberty Bell, we could do something around this
 - Shannon O'Brien: Have a point of contact through the 56 counties and with tribal governments to give local control for them to do their own ideas; engage schools, students and teachers without creating additional burden; mini-grant program (local businesses, chamber of commerce, civics groups, schools, etc.) to fulfill their vision of MT250 events
 - Deena Mansour: Immigration test in high schools and higher education
 - Molly Stockdale: Survey what is already happening and partner with existing programs (National Civics Bee for middle schools, National History Day, IMLS 250, Humanities Montana) to bring more attention and focus to existing programs; 2026 Taylor Sheridan series called 1776
 - Hal Stearns: Humanities speakers can speak about 250 while they are already presenting; Chambers of Commerce, Rotary or Kiwanis boards, etc. speaking opportunities; use the resources that Martha Kohl has already created
 - Chris Averill: Essay contest around what the ideals of the American Revolution mean to people with a winner at each grade level; Kickoff in the rotunda before next meeting with indigenous leaders, public, press conference for civic engagement; develop website and workplan

- VII. Laura Marsh suggested some of the events (“tours”) that A250 is doing nationally, including bringing the Liberty Bell to various states, virtual campaign [“Their Story”](#)

SUBCOMMITTIES

- I. Commission established subcommittees:
 - Programming – Jane Hamman, Mike Jetty, Hal Stearns, Molly Stockdale (Jane Hamman and Mike Jetty will Co-Chair)
 - Fundraising – Emily Arendt, Shannon O’Brien, Molly Kruckenberg (Emily Arendt and Sen. Shannon O’Brien are co-chairs)
 - Communication – Deena Mansour, Marietta Croft, Chris Averill (Deena Mansour and Marietta Croft are co-chairs)
- II. Representative Reksten will need to choose a committee
- III. Committee meetings will be virtual, chairs will meet regularly with commission to update

PRESENTATIONS

- I. Martha Kohl presented on existing resources for teaching Montana history, which can be accessed through the MTHS website, and resources for teaching civics, which can be easily accessed via referenced Padlet (see slides)
- II. Chris Lloyd presented newspaper, book and timeline products offered by What On Earth Publishing, based out of UK, and proposed creating products for Montana state history. State history material will be supported by private donor Bruce Bartlett but will require additional state support. Commission will need to confirm interest and fundraising commitment by April. (\$40K for timeline, \$80k for book.)

APRIL MEETING & ONGOING LOGISTICS

- A. Meeting location, date and time of April meeting TBD (likely week of April 22nd in Helena)
- B. Request for agenda items to Molly Kruckenberg by late February, early March.
- C. Subcommittee meetings – Devon to contact subcommittees to coordinate meetings

COMMENTS

No public comments.

Motion to adjourn by Mike Jetty, seconded by Jane Hamman.

NEXT MEETING:

April 2024 Exact time and date to be determined poll.

Helena, Montana Devon to follow up with location.