

America 250 Oregon Commission Minutes of Meeting on January 29, 2026

Opening Comments and Attendance

Chair Tymchuk called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and welcomed Oregon 250 commissioners and the public.

The following commissioners were in attendance: Rep. Boomer Wright, Zachary Stocks, Katie Henry, Mary Lang Bishop, Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, Rep. Jules Walters, Mickie Derting, Sophorn Cheang, Lisa Itel, Treasurer Elizabeth Steiner, Natasha Haunsperger, Brad Parker, Tenneal Wetherell, Secretary Tobias Read, Dr. Nakeia Daniels, Alisha Babbstein, Shana Radford, Todd Braje.

Special Guests: Jason Hanson, America 250 Colorado, and Nicole Handy, America 250 Utah

Chair Tymchuk opened the meeting with a reminder of the Oregon 250 mission and guideposts that were established by the commission.

Budget and Oregon 250 Grants

Senate bill 1531, which established the Commission in 2024, allocated \$250,000 to the Oregon Historical Society (OHS) to support the Commission's work, along with an additional \$10,000 from the America 250 Federal Commission. The 2025 legislature provided an additional \$250,000 to OHS for a similar purpose.

From May 2024 through December 2025, total spent & reserved for grantmaking is approximately \$334,000, which does not include contracted or allocated amounts.

Chair Tymchuk reviewed the success of the Oregon250 grant program, which to date has awarded \$125,000 to 38 organizations across two funding cycles.

Chair Tymchuk announced a third funding cycle opening on March 4, 2026. A total of \$50,000 in funding is available in this third cycle, with 50% dedicated to rural communities. Eligible projects must support the mission of America 250 Oregon and align with one of the Commission's established guideposts.

Additionally, the National Endowment for the Arts has a *Grants for Arts Projects* to support public-facing arts and cultural activities.

Oregon 250/America 250 Programs and Partnerships

The Oregon 250 Commission shared the following programs and partnerships:

America's Potluck: Guest speaker Nicole Handy from America 250 Utah presented their national initiative, America's Potluck, taking place on Sunday, July 5, 2026. Toolkits and resources are available for the public and organizations who want to host a potluck as part of this event. The intent is for this to be a national day of connection and coming together as a community.

Moments that Made Us Print-On-Demand Traveling Exhibition: Guest speaker Jason Hanson from America 250 Colorado presented on their national initiative, *Moments that Made Us*, a print on demand traveling exhibit based on a temporary exhibition at History Colorado.

The project is organized around five themes from the Declaration of Independence and is explored through three "moments." Host organizations receive 23 ready-to-use branded panels, plus blank panels for adding local content, and a user guide. Spanish language translations are also available.

The Oregon 250 Commission has partnered with Idaho 250, and Washington 250 to create Pacific Northwest regional panels.

Sharing the Spirit of America: A nationwide, simultaneous reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, 2026, led by America 250 Hawaii. The Lewis & Clark Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will be participating at the Oregon Revolutionary War Memorial at the Veterans Memorial Park in Beaverton.

America Gives: An America 250 Commission initiative that challenges organizations to commit to increasing their level of volunteering and impact in 2026.

Great American State Fair: A Freedom 250 initiative to create a worlds-fair style celebration along the National Mall, featuring state pavilions, concerts, educational exhibitions, and classic fair events.

Freedom Plane: A National Archives traveling exhibition bringing seven original founding-era documents to eight U.S. cities in commemoration of America 250.

Freedom Trucks: Six mobile museums known as "Freedom Trucks" will travel nationwide bringing the story of American independence to students, families, and communities across the country.

National Flag Foundation: Created two initiatives for all Americans to come together around the American Flag. The first is Flag Sojourn 250, the journey of one flag to every U.S. State, Territory, and U.S. military cemetery overseas. And Light to Unite, inviting everyone to light up buildings and landmarks in red, white, and blue on the evening of July 4, 2026.

Great American Road Trip: The U.S. Department of Transportation invites the public to explore the nation's highways and byways in celebration of the 250th anniversary.

America 250 Time Capsule: On July 4, 2026, America 250 will bury the Semiquincentennial time capsule within Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia for 250 years until July 4, 2275. Each state and territory has been asked to submit original objects, made ideally of metal or on archival paper, to be included in the time capsule. The Oregon 250 commission is asking the public and other organizations to submit ideas for inclusion.

Oregon 250 Official Events and Programs:

Oregon Revolutionary War Memorial: The opening dedication is scheduled for April 19, 2026 at 1:30pm at the Veterans Memorial Park in Beaverton. This project is lead by the Sons of the American Revolution. Dave Witter walked the commission through the design of the memorial. William Cannon is the only known revolutionary war veteran buried in Oregon.

Two Traveling Exhibitions available: *The Power of Place & The Pursuit of Happiness* are two photographic traveling exhibitions available to rent at no cost through 2026. The images included in these traveling exhibitions are also available as digital exhibitions on Oregon250.org.

Oregon History Day: A statewide, student-directed program of National History Day®. Organized by the Oregon Historical Society, students in grades 6-12 research historical topics, analyze primary and secondary sources and present their work through various projects. Judges are needed for the event on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at Willamette University in Salem.

Hatfield Lecture Series: Presented by the Oregon Historical Society, the lecture series brings together the nation's top historians and award-winning authors for thought-provoking evenings of history. One of the four historians is Rick Atkinson, who is speaking on his book *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777-1780*.

As part of America 250 Oregon, Rick Atkinson will travel to the Tower Theatre in Bend, and Rogue Valley Country Club in Medford for additional speaking engagements. Funding courtesy of The Keller Foundation.

Oregon Connections Virtual Series: Presented by the Oregon Historical Society, this all-virtual program series features conversations among experts and with audience members focused on topics such as freedom of speech, citizenship, and due process.

America 250 Oregon Calendar of Events Highlight

Chair Tymchuk highlighted events currently listed on the Oregon250 website and encouraged community members to submit their events for recognition as an official Oregon 250 Events.

Chair Tymchuk also shared the AASLH America 250th Anniversary Program Handbook that provides organizations with low-cost program examples to help celebrate and commemorate the semiquincentennial.

Oregon 250 Commission Discussion

The U.S Mint has partnered with Oregon State Treasury as part of a national initiative to create state-specific silver dollars honoring an innovator from each state. For Oregon, world-renowned children's author Beverly Cleary was selected to be featured on the coin, which will be minted and released into circulation in 2027.

Oregon State Capitol Store is interested in selling Oregon 250 merchandise. The commission did not have any concerns. Tara Cole will follow up.

Commissioner Mary Lang Bishop shared some updates on George Washington's Mount Vernon and their events for the semiquincentennial.

Rep. Boomer Wright and Rep. Jules Walters also expressed their gratitude for the events that are happening around the state, and the work of the America 250 Oregon Commission.

Public Comment:

It was noted that the calendar submission process to the Oregon 250 Calendar of events was an easy process.

Mary Lang Bishop mentioned she sent a letter to the Governor's office to recognize February 22, 1732 as George Washington Day.

Conclusion:

Chair Tymchuk thanked Oregon Heritage Commission for helping with the Oregon 250 grant program. With no further business, the meeting concluded at 4:30pm.