

Ashburnham 250th Committee
Tuesday, October 2, 2012
Stevens Memorial Library

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Present: Susan Brennan, George Cornwall, Steve Coswell, Barbara DiVito, Bob Fichtel, Pat Frederick, Patty Johnson, Kate Mahoney and Linc Stiles. Sitting in on the meeting were Town Administrator Doug Briggs and prospective committee member Katelyn Spurr.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Co-Chair Steve Coswell. There was no Treasurer's report. Pat Frederick read the minutes from the September 20th meeting. Kate recommended that budgetary estimates included in the minutes be expressed as *approximate*, not final. Recommendation approved; the September 20th minutes will be amended accordingly.

Steve said representatives of Westminster and Templeton town anniversary committees told him to plan on such a celebration's costing not less than \$100,000. Engaging a high school band for a parade can cost from \$750 to \$2,000 (mainly for transportation).

Fireworks will cost approximately \$15,000, plus police and fire protection. Maybe we can enlist Monty Tech Jr. ROTC students and/or Scouts for cleanup and traffic direction help. If the fireworks show were at Oakmont, hot sparks might damage the artificial turf. Linc said, by 2015, the new elementary school may have a better playing field for the fireworks show.

Costs for the Dance Gala will include a live band, food, tables and chairs, tablecloths, promotion, and more. Expenses could come to around \$15,000. The venue is yet to be decided; we will ask Cushing Academy if they want to provide space and more.

Patty estimates that the box for the new Time Capsule might cost about \$500. Costume rental would add to expenses. Opening the old Time Capsule might be coordinated with Downtown Day; maybe Lions Club would provide a barbeque supper, with fireworks to follow, after dark.

A family fun, block party/ barn dance activity might cost around \$3,500, with a local band.

The other towns' committee members told Steve, merchandise sells poorly. Items such as car magnets and baseball caps with 250th logo probably sell as well as anything. Maybe T-shirts, too. To sell the Schoolboy statuettes, we should take advance orders with prepayments, to avoid ordering more than will sell. Bob will find out if there is a minimum order. Making the mold costs \$500; then each figure costs \$25 to cast. Committee members discussed what would be a reasonable price per statuette, to recoup cost and still make a profit.

Banners for lamp posts will be purchased in May or June, 2014. Present cost from Carrot Top Industries, if we order 24 or more, is \$78 per banner, plus \$43 per bracket to hold each banner (\$121 total per banner). Banners are two-sided, will display Bob's artwork, multi-color, on 30" by 60", 18oz. vinyl. Stan Herriott says AMLP will pay for the brackets for the 19 antique-style lamp posts in the Downtown block. There are 31 standard poles from River Styx Road to Old Nims Road. We plan to ask \$250 for a sponsor to have their name on a banner.

The Committee discussed whether banners on the more elegant poles in the Downtown should be allotted on a first-come, first-served, or other basis. No decision needed now.

George read the speech he plans to deliver at Town Meeting; the Committee approved it with enthusiasm, as the right tone to encourage voter support for our budget. Steve will deliver the Power Point presentation, showing anticipated costs and revenue, as well as information on funds already raised and already spent, and projected likely sources of revenue.

The presentation should show anticipated cost, likely revenue and revenue sources (ticket sales, sponsor support) for each planned event: Gala, Barn Dance, Time Capsule and Fireworks, and Parade. The Committee discussed some of these figures at length. Bob recommended we keep revenue estimates low, to be prepared for worst case. The cost of the Barn Dance will depend largely on venue: there may be a matter of liability insurance for the property owner, if the dance is in a privately owned barn.

Town Administrator Doug Briggs shared suggestions from his experience with Rutland's celebration. He recommended the Committee give the Selectmen and Advisory Board as many realistic budget figures as possible, before Town Meeting. There will need to be a Warrant Article: "To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of \$_____ from free cash to the 250th Anniversary Committee". He also said we need to tell town voters how we plan to use the money over the whole time period, year-by-year. The Committee will e-mail details to Select Board Chair Ed Vitone, and Advisory Board Chair Bill Johnson.

It appears the best estimates of amounts to request will be \$20,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013; \$25,000 for fiscal year 2013-2014, and perhaps \$10,000 for fiscal year 2014-2015 – unless we have raised enough from other sources by then, not to need more from Town funds.

Steve said we will be signing many contracts in the next year, incurring lots of administrative and promotional expenses, as well as larger expenses for program. He asked the Committee to meet again, Thursday October 25th at the library at 7:00. Agreed.

Prospective Committee member Katelyn Spurr introduced herself: she grew up in the Ashburnham, has a Master's degree in International Event Planning, and has just returned from working for the Olympics in the UK. She would like to help us plan events for the Celebration.

Kate moved that the meeting be adjourned. Motion accepted.

Patricia H. Frederick