

## **Arizona America250 Commission**

In person and virtually via Zoom

### **Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2026**

#### **1. Call to Order and roll call**

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chair Honorable Adrian Fontes

#### **Commission Members Present:**

Honorable Adrian Fontes, Chair  
Anna Needham

Marcus Carney  
Neil Giuliano

Sarah Webber  
Paul Tighe

#### **Commission Members Absent:**

Chairman Verlon Jose, Vice-Chair  
Senator Vince Leach  
Jay McCall

Ashley Harder  
Representative Justin Wilmeth

#### **2. Approval of February 2, 2026, Meeting Minutes**

Chair Fontes called for discussion and possible action on February 2, 2026, meeting minutes.

Chair Fontes called for a voice vote; all commissioners present voted in favor, none opposed, and the motion to approve the February 2, 2026, meeting minutes passed.

#### **3. Discussion, update, and possible action on Road to 250: Arizona Traveling Museum.**

##### **a. Budgetary Overview and Options**

Executive Director Laura Terech presented a budget overview for the Road to 250 traveling museum and potential tour extension. She reported:

Total raised: 1,449,500 dollars

Total received: 1,098,500 dollars

To be received: 351,000 dollars

Cash reserves: 69,569.79 dollars

Estimated overages: approximately 25,000 dollars to TAPAZ and approximately 65,000 dollars to MRA (mobile vehicle vendor)

Additional revenue is anticipated from merchandising.

Chair Fontes noted that while the Commission is not out of funds, extending the tour would bring the budget close to depletion and that preserving and protecting the traveling bell is a priority given observed wear and concerns about its condition.

AI from MRA presented four options for a potential extension:

- Option A: Four-week extension, trailer traveling throughout Arizona (15–20 locations), estimated 79,930 dollars.
- Option B: Four-week extension estimated 69,930 dollars.
- Option C: Three-week extension estimated 53,760 dollars.
- Option D: Static display (trailer and exhibit remaining in one location):
  - Two weeks: approximately 34,140 dollars
  - Three weeks: approximately 42,110 dollars
  - Four weeks: approximately 50,080 dollars.

Commissioner Carney asked about feedback regarding where the exhibit should return and whether there were strong preferences for additional locations. Executive Director Terech reported very positive feedback overall, but noted that Option A is cost-prohibitive because it would significantly deplete reserves.

Chair Fontes acknowledged that some communities were disappointed the exhibit did not visit their area and stated a personal preference for a static deployment at the state fairgrounds if an extension were pursued.

Commissioner Giuliano suggested exploring whether existing sponsors who are pleased with the project might consider making additional contributions and shared that efforts to secure more funds from two major donors were not successful. He emphasized that any additional support should likely come from sponsors rather than from communities appearing to “bid” to bring the bell to their areas.

Commissioner Carney indicated that Yuma would be willing to contribute funding, and Executive Director Terech clarified that any such funds would need to be deposited into the general fund rather than being tied to a specific community’s stop.

AI from MRA stated that a decision would be needed within about a week to pursue Option A, including securing the necessary funding within that time frame.

Chair Fontes observed that while the strong demand for the exhibit is a positive challenge, the Commission must balance interest with fiscal responsibility and the physical condition of the bell. He noted that a static extension at the state fairgrounds (Option D) could capture significant school field trip traffic between mid-April (shortly after the planned tour end around April 13) and May.

Commissioner Carney requested more details on Option C and asked about the seriousness of concerns around moving the bell, citing repeated dusting, rust, and wear on the headstock and base. Commissioner Webber asked what would happen if the bell could no longer travel and the tour had to be cancelled early; MRA indicated they could work out an arrangement and that some funds could be recouped if the tour is shortened. Executive Director Terech suggested that reserve funds could be used to refurbish the bell.

Commissioner Giuliano reflected that the tour has received a tremendous response and suggested the Commission may choose to acknowledge the success and allow the tour to conclude rather than extend it.

Chair Fontes invited a motion from the Commission to move forward with extending the tour or to proceed with promoting only the remaining scheduled stops. No commissioner offered a motion. The Commission took no action to extend the tour, and the traveling museum will conclude after its final scheduled stop in Lake Havasu.

#### **b-c. Additional Media Buy and Possible Tour Extension**

Additional media buy and possible tour extensions were listed on the agenda. These topics were incorporated into the broader budget and tour extension discussion, and no separate action was taken beyond the decision not to extend the tour beyond its final scheduled stop.

#### **4. Use of A250 AZ Logo for Fundraising Purposes**

General Counsel Kate Myers reviewed the logo licensing agreement. She explained that use of the A250 AZ logo is permissible so long as it is not used for political purposes or profit.

There was no discussion from the Commission. Chair Fontes called for a motion to approve the new logo use policy; Commissioner Giuliano moved approval, Commissioner Tighe seconded, there was no further discussion, all commissioners voted in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed.

#### **5. Fourth of July Activations**

Executive Director Terech opened discussion on potential America250-related activations for the Fourth of July and invited input on what commissioners would like to see.

Commissioner Carney suggested creating a “plug-and-play” kit for communities, including materials that could be used at existing events, building on the successful postcard campaign. Chair Fontes recommended including bookmarks, directing people to the website for more information on the initiative and the bell, and making available digital files of the traveling museum content for local printing.

Commissioner Needham suggested creating a booklet compiling content from the traveling museum. Chair Fontes also proposed including the text of the Declaration of Independence in the

booklet to enhance its educational value. No formal action was taken, and staff will continue developing concepts based on the discussion.

## **6. A250 AZ + Pepsi Amphitheater Mother Road Collaboration**

Executive Director Terech shared that Mother Road Brewery would like to add the AZ A250 logo to an existing ale product associated with the Pepsi Amphitheater collaboration.

Chair Fontes recommended tabling this item to allow additional discussion with legal counsel on appropriate next steps. If necessary, a special meeting will be scheduled for further consideration. No action was taken.

## **7. Commissioner Updates and Subcommittee Reports**

### **a. Arts, Museums & Cultural Institutions**

Commissioner Needham reported that the subcommittee met the prior week and discussed the development of “Stories250,” a concept to capture Arizonans’ oral histories and reflections related to America250 initiatives. The subcommittee is also exploring small grants for public art initiatives, and the Poet Laureate has expressed interest in participating at the Lake Havasu traveling museum stop.

### **b. Civic Engagement, Education & Community Service**

Commissioner Tighe reported that the subcommittee met last week and discussed an essay contest and distribution of pocket Constitutions. He noted a recent visit to the traveling museum stop at Grand Canyon University, highlighting strong public enthusiasm.

He provided updates on ongoing initiatives:

- Read250 continues to move forward.
- The postcard campaign remains very successful.
- “MyAmerica” results show Arizona maintaining the lead, with Rhode Island close behind.
- The scholarship application period closed on March 1.

### **c. Fundraising**

No specific fundraising report was provided beyond the tour budget discussion, and no action was taken under this item.

### **d. History, Heritage & Historic Preservation**

No formal report was provided, and no action was taken under this item.

### **e. Military & Veterans Affairs**

No formal report was provided, and no action was taken under this item.

## **f. Municipal Outreach & Tribal Affairs**

No formal report was provided, and no action was taken under this item.

## **g. Travel & Tourism**

Commissioner Webber reported that the Travel & Tourism Subcommittee met last week and highlighted the launch of “Outdoors250” in January, which already has over 1,200 participants signed up. The subcommittee is in conversation with the Office of Tourism regarding additional promotional opportunities, and the next subcommittee meeting will be held in person in April in Flagstaff.

Commissioner Carney added that Yuma was very enthusiastic about the traveling museum, noting that the stop occurred on a Tuesday, and some residents were unable to attend and would like the exhibit to return.

## **8. Report from Executive Director**

### **a. National Initiatives**

Executive Director Terech reported that further information on the Great American State Fair has been provided to the Arizona Office of Tourism, which the Commission will support. She noted that the fair will include a 30x30 space for a fair expo during the two weeks before and after the Fourth of July. The “Our American Story” Airstream may still make a stop in Arizona, though there is no confirmed information at this time.

### **b. Arizona Initiatives**

Executive Director Terech introduced Zulma from GoFish/Agital, who presented performance metrics for public relations, social media, and media campaigns from January through February. Highlights included:

- More than 25 earned media mentions
- Approximately 1.1 million impressions, with an estimated 75,000-dollar ad equivalency
- Social media (January–February): 154 posts (including stories), 105,783 organic impressions, 3,371 engagements, 680 new followers, approximately 3.2 percent engagement rate, and 312 shares of traveling museum content
- The most popular post was the Statehood Day video featuring the send-off event and the Prescott traveling museum stop.
- Broadcast, radio, display, meta, and search campaigns generated approximately 3.7 million digital impressions, 56,000 digital clicks, coverage on 16 radio stations, and 859 radio spots.

## **9. Call to the Public**

Chair Fontes opened the floor for public comment.

John Genette, co-founder of the Institute of Civil Dialogue, shared information about a staged reading of a historical novel based on Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense,” noting that the next performance is scheduled at the Holland Center’s Desert Foothills Theater on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and that the event is listed on the Commission’s event calendar.

No action was taken under this item, consistent with the Commission’s practice of limiting responses to directing staff to study matters, scheduling items for future consideration, or responding to criticism.

## **10. Adjournment**

Chair Fontes adjourned the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

DRAFT