

Arizona America250 Commission

Virtually via Zoom

Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2026

1. Call to Order and roll call

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

Commission Members Present:

Honorable Adrian Fontes, Chair
Anna Needham
Representative Justin Wilmeth

Ashley Harder
Paul Tighe
Sarah Webber

Marcus Carney
Jay McCall

Commission Members Absent:

Chairman Verlon Jose, Vice-Chair
Senator Vince Leach
Neil Giuliano

2. Discussion and possible action on meeting minutes for May 4, 2026.

The Commission considered the meeting minutes for June 1, 2026. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Paul Tighe and seconded by Commissioner Sarah Webber. The motion passed without objection.

3. Highlights and Remarks from the Executive Director.

Executive Director Laura Terech welcomed the Commission and presented a retrospective of Arizona America250's accomplishments over the past two years. Highlights included statewide use of the Arizona America250 logo, Passport 250, the traveling museum, arts and humanities programming, youth civic engagement initiatives, historic preservation efforts, Veterans and military programs, tourism campaigns, commemorative merchandise, and Arizona's participation in national America250 initiatives.

She also recognized the staff, volunteers, partners, and state leaders who contributed to the Commission's work and concluded with a video highlighting the creation of the new infrastructure supporting Arizona's replica Liberty Bell. Following the presentation, Commissioners Sarah Rose Webber, Justin Wilmeth, Paul Tighe, Marcus Carney, and Anna

Needham, along with Chair Fontes, offered remarks recognizing Executive Director Terech's leadership, dedication, and the Commission's accomplishments.

4. PR & Media update from Agital/Go Fish Digital.

A representative from Agital/Go Fish Digital presented an update on public relations, earned media, and social media performance. The presentation highlighted recent engagement and fiscal accomplishments, notable media placements and coverage, key social media metrics, and the top-performing posts during the reporting period. No questions were raised following the presentation.

5. Discussion and report on 4th of July Celebrations

Executive Director Terech reported that, although the Commission did not host a central Fourth of July event, it supported municipal celebrations through the community calendar, social media outreach, and participation in Avondale's event. Chair Fontes noted that the smaller-scale approach was effective, and Commissioner Tighe expressed appreciation to the Secretary of State's Office for its support.

6. Discussion and possible action on bell rededication ceremony, October 1, 2026.

The Commission discussed the bell rededication ceremony scheduled for October 1, 2026. Chair Fontes encouraged members to reserve the date.

7. Discussion and possible action on remaining A250 AZ funds.

Executive Director Terech reported that approximately \$1.4 million had been raised, approximately \$1.3 million had been expended, and approximately \$73,000 remained available. She reviewed projected expenses and additional considerations related to the bell rededication ceremony, as well as recommended allocations for remaining funds, including stickers, a community health fair, printing expenses, public art grants, the Historic Preservation Youth Council legacy project, the bell rededication, and scholarship programs.

Chair Fontes entertained a motion to authorize the remaining funds in accordance with the Executive Director's recommended allocations (below), totaling approximately \$58,000. Commissioner Tighe moved for approval, and Representative Justin Wilmeth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION To commemorate the semiquincentennial of the Declaration of Independence through recognition of the commissioners for their service and support for local community partners, this Commission hereby authorizes the Executive Director to expend the remaining funds pursuant to her proposed “Remaining A250 Fund Allocation – 7/13/26” plan, including:

- \$1201.25 for final 2500 sticker order for fall events, including Maricopa County Community Health Fair;
- \$2000 for miscellaneous expenses (printing expenses for the annual report for archival purposes, AZ time capsule objects, postage, etc);
- \$25,000 for public arts grants to the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the Flinn Foundation, or other appropriate community partner;
- \$15,000 to the Flinn Foundation to fund the Historic Preservation Youth Council legacy project;
- \$15,000 for bell rededication ceremony expenses, and;
- Remaining monies to scholarship programs with an appropriate local foundation such as the Dougherty Foundation.

8. Commissioner updates and possible action on subcommittee work.

Commissioner updates and subcommittee work were addressed during the Executive Director’s presentation.

9. Report from the Executive Director.

The Executive Director’s report, including national and Arizona initiatives, was incorporated into the earlier presentation.

10. Call to the Public.

During the call to the public, Matthew Meaker, representing Sundt Construction, expressed appreciation on behalf of the company for the opportunity to support the Commission’s work. Gerry Paulus, President of the Time Capsule Foundation, thanked the Commission for its partnership and provided additional updates regarding Arizona’s time capsule. Kathryn Leonard, representing the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, thanked the Commission, its staff, and leadership for their continued support of the Historic Preservation Youth Council. Rabbi Andrew Shaw introduced a proposed book and interactive public-engagement project planned for September 2027 and designed to span 250 days. Troy Campbell, representing Rotary, also expressed appreciation for the Commission’s work and its contributions to the statewide initiative.

11. Adjournment.

Chair Fontes adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m. and reminded attendees of the October 1 bell rededication ceremony.