

MINUTES
Approved by Council
America250 in Idaho Advisory Council
Monday, January 19, 2026
2:30 P.M.
Room EW20
Boise, Idaho

Members in attendance: Cochairs Representative Mitchell and Senator Adams; Representative Bruce, Senator Guthrie, Representative Galaviz, Julie Ellsworth, Treasurer; Janet Gallimore, Executive Director, Idaho Historical Society; Phil McGrane, Secretary of State. Absent/excused: Jeff Newgard, President/CEO, Bank of Idaho; and Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff: Terri Kondeff and Hayley Kaae-Domgaard.

NOTE: Presentations and handouts provided by the presenters/speakers are posted to the Idaho Legislature's website [usa Meeting Materials – Idaho State Legislature](#), and copies of those items are on file at the Legislative Services Office in the State Capitol. Recordings of the meeting may be available on the committee's website listing.

Opening Remarks/Minutes Approval

Cochair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. A silent roll call was taken. Cochair Mitchell thanked everyone for their time and efforts for the America250 celebration.

Treasurer Ellsworth moved to approve the minutes from October 21, 2025. Representative Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Representative Bruce motioned to approve the minutes from December 19, 2025. Cochair Adams seconded the motion.

The committee discussed the motion in the minutes regarding renewing *The Agency* contract, which employs Jane Perlaky on an hourly basis. Secretary McGrane expressed his support for the motion to approve the minutes and thought that the minutes accurately reflected the motion he made at the last meeting.

The motion passed by voice vote, with Treasurer Ellsworth voting nay on the motion.

America250 Financial Update

LSO Staff Hayley Kaae-Domgaard briefly reviewed financial documents that went over the balance of the Commemorative Fund, total expenditures made, and the balance of the Celebration Fund used to fund grants for cities and counties. She then concluded her comments.

Subcommittee Update

Project Coordinator Contract

Secretary McGrane wanted to clarify the motion made at the last meeting. He explained his understanding of the motion to be that Ms. Perlaky would still serve in a coordinating function between the subcommittee, the ambassador program, and other taskforce activities. The only change made was changing the contract to pay an hourly basis instead of a monthly one, with a monthly cap of \$8,600. Treasurer Ellsworth expressed concern about using Ms. Perlaky for coordinating efforts instead of project production efforts. The committee discussed methods for using the project coordinator and changing the practice to be more 'bid' based, where the group needing something produced can receive a bid from Ms. Perlaky, including the production cost and the time needed to produce the product requested.

Representative Bruce made a motion to retain Jane Perlaky on an as-needed basis at *The Agency's* hourly rate of \$125/hour, not to exceed \$8,600 per month, to continue to help with legacy projects. Secretary McGrane seconded the motion.

The committee discussed the idea of opening up the process to other vendors for competitive bids. Secretary McGrane spoke to the need for coordination due to everyone's time constraints and the demands of the legislative session. He said that having an hourly contract will help support those needs. The committee further discussed which party would create and manage the compensation of the contract on the committee's behalf.

The committee went at ease.

The committee came back to order.

Representative Bruce received unanimous consent to withdraw his motion.

Representative Bruce made a motion to retain Jane Perlaky on an as-needed basis at *The Agency's* rate of \$125/hour, not to exceed \$8,600 per month, to continue projects approved by the committee chairmen. Secretary McGrane seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Representative Bruce expressed his appreciation for Ms. Perlaky's work and wanted to emphasize that the discussion about the contract is not a reflection of Ms. Perlaky's work.

Celebration Grant Update

Secretary McGrane continued with an update on the Celebration Fund and its status. He shared that there have been a total of 74 applications to date. The 74 applications are made up of 61 city applicants and 13 county applicants. In total, 41 applications have been approved, with 22 in progress with the scoring committee. The remaining balance in the Celebration Fund was \$184,047.06.

Foundations of Freedom Tour and Civics Survey

Secretary McGrane introduced Deputy Secretary of State Matt Reiber to give an update on the efforts related to the Foundations of Freedom Tour and the Civics Survey. He shared statistics indicating that 44% of the population cannot identify which American document contains the phrase "We the people," and that there has been a dip in civics education scores across the country. Mr. Reiber explained that, in partnership with the Institute for Advancing American Values, efforts are underway to evaluate civics knowledge across Idaho's public in response to these statistics. The survey is designed to identify any gaps in Idaho public's knowledge of civics so that the committee can develop possible solutions to close those gaps.

Mr. Reiber then updated the committee on the status of the Foundations of Freedom Tour. The tour will be displaying an original reprinting of the Declaration of Independence from 1833, loaned by the McGrane Family. Fewer than 200 of these reprintings exist today. Mr. Reiber explained that the document is an authentic recast of the original Declaration of Independence, created by soaking the original document and pressing it onto a copper plate to transfer the original ink. That plate was then used to produce reproductions. This reprint will serve as the centerpiece of the tour, helping to promote education about 250 years of American history alongside a curated selection of additional artifacts from the McGrane Family Collection and the Idaho State Historical Society Collection.

In response to a question from the committee, Mr. Reiber confirmed that there were no funds needed and that this was just an update on how preapproved funds are being used. He then concluded his remarks.

Capitol Steps Celebration

Secretary McGrane then presented plans for the Capitol Step Celebration they would like to plan for July 4th, between the parade in the morning and the evening events. The presentation included

All renderings to illustrate the subcommittee's vision for the celebration. The subcommittee will collaborate with "We the People" and the 4th of July Parade to put on the event. Plans include reserving Cecil D. Andrus Park for the celebration and a 'super' float in the parade.

Once the parade has concluded, they would shut down the streets around the park and then surround it with the floats from the parade. The park would then have different vendors and food trucks within the park for the public to enjoy. They would also have two stages. One would be on the steps of the Capitol for the military band and different public speakers. The other would be for performers; the subcommittee would coordinate this in partnership with Treefort.

Secretary McGrane also shared the subcommittee's ideas for utilizing the rotundas of the Capitol building and the items from the Foundations of Freedom tour so the members of the public can see those artifacts. He also mentioned featuring other items, such as the Revolutionary Spuddy Buddies and the quilts from the Idaho Quilters Guild. Secretary McGrane then presented a proposed budget for the event for the committee to review. Treasurer Ellsworth shared the idea of having the Liberty Bell tour throughout the state after it returns from restoration. Secretary McGrane also shared that the 'super' float could potentially tour with the Liberty Bell as well. He also expressed how the event budget is a time-sensitive item and requested that it be considered as an action item at the next meeting. He then concluded his presentation.

Ambassador Program Update

Treasurer Ellsworth reported that the Liberty Bell will be boxed and shipped for restoration on January 30, 2026, and will tour Idaho counties upon its return, requiring additional fundraising. She noted that coordination and documentation of the *Veteran Ride* remain in progress.

She shared that the Idaho 250 song and music video have been completed and will be presented on the House and Senate floors, and that the 4,000 collected signatures will be displayed with the Declaration of Independence in the Capitol rotunda on January 22, 2026. Media collaboration and community co-branding efforts are underway. Treasurer Ellsworth also reported that the *Heritage Fountain* project is in progress, with logistics being finalized. Flags for the *Flags Across Idaho* project have been procured, flown over the U.S. Capitol, and will be presented to Idaho counties by the Congressional Delegation.

The Liberty Groves: Roots of Freedom project is progressing in coordination with the Idaho Department of Lands. Idaho Goldbacks is scheduled for release in late April 2026. The Service Challenge will launch on Thursday, January 22, 2026, and the *Liberty Quilts* display remains in progress.

Treasurer Ellsworth then made a motion to extend the approved \$30,000 spending authority for the ambassador program. Senator Guthrie seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Institute for Advancing American Values Update

The Director of the Institute for Advancing American Values, David Finstuen, updated the committee on the status of the State Board of Education initiative. He highlighted a theme he has noticed in several America250 efforts: pilgrimage. In collaboration with the State Board of Education, they have created a curriculum that will be extended to all the 4-year and 2-year educational institutions in the state. The curriculum focuses on civics education, discourse, and engagement. The America250 funding is to help kick off the initiative, with hopes for continuing the program over the next five years.

Mr. Finstuen then introduced the 'Reading the Republic' online resource. It is the basis for the American Heritage course. This is public-facing resource that is not exclusive to course students. The idea behind the website is to encourage online discourse about primary documents from the American Revolution period. Mr. Finstuen then concluded his presentation.

America250 State Agency Task Force Update

Director Gallimore updated the committee on upcoming events related to the state agency task force. She highlighted the exhibition in Statutory Hall in the Capitol Building on the history of the American Flag. She mentioned that on March 4th, they will be opening the 'United We Celebrate: Traditions that bring America Together' at the Idaho State Museum. She also reminded the committee of the upcoming opening of 'Four Score and Seven Years Before' in February. Director Gallimore mentioned that Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Lands are collaborating on an event on May 1st and 2nd to commemorate the initial point in Meridian, Idaho. This was the point in Idaho that the surveyor based the rest of the mapping of Idaho on. Ms. Gallimore concluded her presentation by mentioning the "TheirStory" partnership and reminded members to share their oral histories with constituents.

America250 National Update

State Historian HannaLore Hein updated the committee on the status of several national America250 initiatives.

America's Field Trip

- Nationwide content contest for 3rd-12th graders
- Contest open through March 31 for student submissions.
- 39 states have student submissions, including Idaho.
- 125 first place winners receive airfare and lodging for a 3-day, 2-night field trip to one of 16 locations
- 125 second place winners receive cash prizes.
- The teacher associated with the top-scoring students in each grade receives a \$1000 cash prize.

America Gives

- Federal initiative that challenges businesses, nonprofits, schools, youth groups, and faith-based organizations to commit to increasing their level of volunteering and impact in 2026.
- January 1st, America250 launched a new web portal for individuals and organizations to log in.
- To date, the program has recognized 554,652 volunteer hours nationwide.
- Sweepstakes for winners to select a nonprofit for donation of up to \$1 million.

America250 Official Store

- Merchandise store launched at www.store.america250.org featuring unique apparel and state-branded merchandise for all 50 states, Washington, DC, and five US territories.
- Idaho's America250-branded store will be linked to the federal website.

White House America250 Task Force & Freedom250

- New Year's Eve – Washington Monument Illumination
 - Live video feed of illumination and recorded programs displayed on the Washington Monument on New Year's Eve in 2025.

Federal Agencies

National Archives

- Time Capsule - States and territories will be asked to submit a single item representing them for inclusion in America's Time Capsule. There are several submission criteria and deadlines.

Grassroot Efforts

America's Potluck

- America's Potluck is an opportunity for neighbors to join with one another to share a fun, communal meal, creating a sense of connection and belonging and fostering interactions among people from all walks of life. This will occur on July 5th, 2026, and is coordinated by the State of Utah.

Sharing the Spirit of America

- The premise of 'Sharing the Spirit of America' is pretty simple, and its implementation is equally simple – and it has a limited cost in doing so. This is coordinated by the state of Hawaii.

Idaho Parks and Recreation

Director Susan Buxton updated the committee on America250 events that the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation has put together as well as future events they have planned. For previous events, she highlighted activities that occurred in several state parks that emphasized portions of Idaho's history and space exploration. She shared that they have collaborated with the *TheirStory* initiative that ISHS has coordinated.

Director Buxton then updated the committee on future events, including:

- Foster Families Event in Eagle Island State Park occurring on January 24th, 2026
- 4th of July celebrations that are occurring in many state parks
- The Move250 Initiative that encourages the public to explore Idaho
- The AmericaGives Initiative that supports volunteerism throughout the state.

She then concluded her presentation.

Grant Approvals

Cochair Adams motioned to approve the disbursement of grant reward amounts requested by:

Bingham County

Bonneville County

City of Basalt

City of Blackfoot

City of Carey

City of Coeur d'Alene

City of Dover

City of Elk River

City of Garden City

City of Hailey

City of Hollister

City of Irwin

City of Kooskia

City of Lewiston

City of Moscow

City of Parma

City of Weippe

Kootenai County

Latah County

Lincoln County

Twin Falls County

Senator Guthrie seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Discuss Next Meeting Date & Time

The committee discussed good times to meet and the importance of timelines in getting certain event budgets approved. The members expressed their appreciation for everyone's hard work on America250 in Idaho. Cochair Mitchell referred the committee to materials for a constituent's testimony related to the Liberty Bell restoration for them to review.

The committee adjourned at 3:57 pm.