

**Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial**  
Approved Meeting minutes – Special Session Ohio  
History Center  
Columbus, OH  
July 2, 2024

*Commission members present:*

- Doug Puisse (co-chair), Van Meter-Ashbrook
- State Sen. Hearcel Craig
- Christy Davis, Ohio Local History Alliance-immediate past president,
- Kathryn Dean-Dielman, Lorain County Historical Society-board president
- Kelly Falcone-Hall, Western Reserve Historical Society president & CEO
- Steve Hambley, Medina County Commissioner
- Thomas Hankins, Sons of the American Revolution/Committee to Rebuild Fort Laurens
- State Rep. Adam Holmes
- Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association-executive director
- Vincent Keeran, clerk of the Ohio Senate
- State Rep. Joe Miller
- Charley Moses, Ohio History Connection-board president
- Kim Murnieks, Office of Budget and Management-director
- Paul Oyaski, former Mayor of Euclid
- Ted Strickland, former Governor
- Sharetta Smith, mayor of Lima
- Samantha Turner, Youngstown City Council
- Sarah Wickham, TourismOhio director
- Mackensie Wittmer, National Aviation Heritage Area-executive director
- Megan Wood, Ohio History Connection executive director & CEO

*Absent:* Michael B. Coleman, Ice Miller; Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner; John Fleming, PhD, museum professional; Kathryn Dean-Dielman, Lorain County Historical Society; Thomas Hankins, Sons of the American Revolution/Committee to Rebuild Fort Laurens; State Senator George Lang; Adam Levine, Toledo Museum of Art executive director; Elizabeth Pierce, Cincinnati Museum Center executive director; Ginger Warner, Ohio Arts Council chair.

*Staff:* Todd Kleismit,  
executive director  
Quanta Brown, operations director  
Chris Hurtubise, communications director  
Molly Kreuzman, Ohio Goes to the Movies program director  
Taylor Tomu, community engagement specialist  
Abby Reynolds, executive assistant

Guests: Robert Horner, Ohio Supreme Court; Hillary Bates, Merrick Bates Consulting, LLC; Chuck Bluestone, Bluestone Law Group; Stephen George, Ohio History Connection; Charity Upshaw, City of Lima.

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Commission Co-Chair Doug Preisse called the Commission special session meeting to order at 2:07 pm.

Commission Secretary Megan Wood took the roll. There were (20) commissioners and (4) guests present, (10) commissioners were absent. Ms. Wood confirmed the presence of a quorum. Co-Chair Preisse asked if there were any suggested changes to the March 14, 2024 Commission minutes. There were no corrections or additions noted for the previous meeting's minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Stave Hambley made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 14, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Mayor Sharetta Smith. The motion passed.

**Review Proposed FY '25 Budget**

Todd Kleismit and Quanta Brown presented the FY25 Budget plan documents included in the Commission members' packets and discussion ensued. The highlights of the conversation include:

- The staff led a collaborative budget process and received requests from the six committees related to their FY25 needs. Funds are allocated to support 20 Commission programs/projects led by the committees.
- The programmatic portion of the budget is presented separately in the budget documents from the operations portion of the budget. The programmatic budget total is \$1.48M and the operations budget is \$1.5M, for an overall FY25 budget plan of approximately \$3M.
- The following items are accounted for in the FY25 operations budget:
  - Several committees requested staffing resources to support their projects.
  - Fundraising support resources.
  - 3% COLA increase for staff salaries.
  - Pay increase for the Ohio Goes to the Movies Program Director, which reflects the increase from 30 to 40 hours and the role's expanded scope of duties.
- The budget also includes support for several new projects including the 2025 River Roots Festival and a Women's Suffrage Memorial to be unveiled on the Ohio Statehouse Grounds in 2026.
- Ohio Goes to the Movies made the largest project budget request, which includes licensing of all the films that will be shown by venues across all 88 counties, grants for venues to host events that are free to the public, among other costs. There was discussion among Commission members about the Ohio Goes to the Movies program.

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Samantha Turner made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-02, the Resolution to approve the FY25 budget allocation. Seconded by Mayor Smith. The motion passed.

**MOTION:** Senator Hearcel Craig moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ted Strickland. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Reynolds on behalf of Megan Wood.

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**June 14, 2024 Commission Meeting Summary**

*The America 250-Ohio Commission gathered for the quarterly meeting on June 14, 2024 at Great Council State Park in Xenia, Ohio. Due to a lack of quorum, the meeting was informational only. The Commission received the following updates:*

**Executive Director & Staff Reports**

Todd Kleismit provided the following report:

- Commission members are encouraged to sign up to work a shift at the Ohio State Fair. AM250-OH will have a booth throughout the duration of the Fair (Jul 24 – Aug 2, 2024).
- The National America 250 Commission is convening all the state commission leaders in D.C. in July, and AM250-OH has been asked to play a leadership role in two sessions they are planning.
- The Barn Artist Scott Hagan completed the second AM250-OH barn painting. Located in Fremont, the painting depicts an agricultural scene.
- \$600,000 in grants were awarded in 61 communities across 37 counties in the spring 2024 round.
- Quanta Brown reviewed the FY24 budget YTD report:
  - Ms. Brown briefly reviewed the FY24 fiscal year accomplishments list.
  - The FY24 budget year-to-date expense report reflects the time period of July 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024, based on the available financial statements.
  - The FY24 budget is \$2,062,500 (includes \$62,500 carryover from FY23). Additionally, \$25,380 in donations has been received in FY24.
  - Ms. Brown reviewed the expenses to date and anticipated expenses. It's expected the Commission will spend \$1.9M by June 30, 2024, with a carryover of \$85,000 to FY25.

**Committee Reports:**

- Public Awareness: Chris Hurtubise presented on behalf of Elizabeth Pierce. Several program launches have occurred that required public relations support and generated media engagement. Ohio Goes to the Movies launched on May 1, 2024 and has generated eight new stories. The Ohio Air & Space Trail launched on May 9, 2024 at the WACO Air Museum in Troy. This resulted in 18 news stories and 1 million impressions generated. The 4<sup>th</sup> Grade History Pass launched in February 2024, and since the Commission last met, 40 partners are signed on and 61 news stories were generated.
- Education: Paul LaRue shared that the committee is partnering with Ohio courts and other stakeholders to present a Judicial Workshop for educators and students. This workshop will have statewide outreach. The committee is also developing a website with resources for Ohio's teachers. Taylor Tomu presented on a partnership opportunity with ServeOhio that involves piloting a service learning program for youth.

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- Signature Events & Programs: Melinda Huntley provided a brief update on the five projects the committee is leading: Public Art, Trails & Tales, Buckeye Train, Ohio Goes to the Movies and Homecoming Picnic. Ms. Huntley included a program overview in the Commission packets. Two of these projects had public launches since the Commission met last – Ohio Goes to the Movies on May 1 and Ohio Air & Space Trail on May 9. One of the Commission’s mandates is to spread awareness of Ohio’s stories and contributions to its citizens. America 250-Ohio and Ohio’s stories have been shared widely across the state so far, and 8.8M impressions have been generated since these programs have launched. The Trails & Tales working group is preparing for the next trail – Creativity – which launches this fall. The Public Art working group is promoting awareness of community murals across Ohio and is recognizing America 250-Ohio with those murals; they are also working on plans for a Women’s Suffrage monument.
  
- Undertold Stories: Kathy Dean-Dielman provided a brief update on the committee’s work. The committee is meeting monthly, and preparations are underway for the Underground Railroad Gathering, which will be held at the Ohio History Center on September 13, 2024. Ticket reservations will go live on June 19. The committee is also planning for a monthly blog series of Undertold Stories that will align with the 2026 “12 monthly themes,” and they are currently recruiting writers.
  
- Philanthropic Partners: Chuck Bluestone reported on the Philanthropic Partners committee’s progress since the last Commission meeting. In consultation with Hillary Bates, AM250-OH’s fundraising consultant, sponsorship and individual giving levels and corresponding benefits have been established. Doug Preisse and Commission staff are also in conversation with a potential Visionary Partner (\$500,000 Level). Staff have had five meetings with the potential sponsor to date, and it’s anticipated that the gift will be announced soon. On April 25, Commission member Megan Kvamme hosted a “friendraiser” event at the Columbus Club, and it was a well-attended, successful event. Mr. Bluestone asked the Commission members to share prospect names and contact information and to help make connections.
  
- 88-County Engagement: Taylor Tomu presented the committee update on behalf of Samantha Turner. The AM250-OH Communities program launched in December 2023 and as of June 13, 2024, 61 communities have signed up to be an official community. Ms. Tomu encouraged Commission members and attendees to share the AM250-OH Community program with their network. The Community program is also being featured in the next Ohio Municipal League newsletter edition.