Approved June 8, 2026

Burke County -- America 250 Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, May 11, 2026
Location: Burke County Commissioners Meeting Room
110 N. Green Street, Entrance E, Morganton
Time: 1:30 pm —2:37 pm

Members Present:				Guests Present:
Johnston, Laurie (Secretary)	✓	Patton, Robert		None
Corwin Keys	✓	Phillips, Ed (Chair)	✓	
Jones, Deborah		Stroud, Mike	✓	
Lindsey. Dr. Bryant	✓	Swan. Dr. Mike		
Lindsey, Dr. Linda	✓	Welch, Dr. Joel (Vice Chair)	✓	
McKesson, Dr. Leslie	✓	Wilkinson, Sam		
McSwain, Butch	✓	Woodie, Charles	✓	
Medford, Sylvia				

Call to Order

Committee Chairman, Ed Phillips, called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members. A quorum was present. Ed explained that Robert Patton would not be able to be in attendance at our regularly scheduled meetings due to health care that he is receiving over the next few months so his participation in events will be limited, and Deborah Jones' term on the committee has expired. No formal agenda was distributed.

Approval of Minutes from April 13, 2026

Minutes from the April meeting were sent by email and hardcopies were distributed at the meeting for discussion. Linda Lindsey moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Leslie McKesson. The minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.

Old Business

Community Letter

Regarding the email letter that was sent to a large number of businesses, organizations, and individuals last month to encourage participation and creation of America 250 themed events and activities, we have received almost no response. The News Herald editor, Virginia Annable, responded that TNH plans to do an America 150 special issue on June 13 and requested input.

New Business

1. Time Capsule Update

   Ed provided an update of the Time Capsule construction progress. The time capsule is being constructed by students at WPCC and has a frame of cherry wood with steel panels and will be on a pedestal. A recognition plaque has been ordered and it will probably be finished in the next couple weeks. When finished, we can bring it to the Visitors' Center to seriously talk about what can fit into it. With a visual representation of the Time Capsule, we will also be able to promote it and request submission ideas from the public for contents. It will definitely not be ready to seal by July 4 but we will make arrangements to seal the capsule later this year. It will be our job to consider and collect contents for the Time Capsule and decide which items will be included.

   Larry Clark, local historian, author, and retired educator from WPCC has been a great resource for the time capsule, as he has written a book on the subject. Ed has reviewed a copy of Larry's book for ideas on contents of the time capsule and consideration of the contents of other time capsules that have been opened in the past. Over time, materials in time capsules can suffer from moisture, chemical decay, and off-gassing, which damage the materials inside. We are striving to limit damage by hosting the Time Capsule in an environmentally controlled environment at the Burke County Register of Deeds office; it will not be buried. We will use materials such as acid free sleeves to protect paper and photographic items. These archival materials will be part of the cost of putting together the time capsule because they can be expensive. Laurie and Corwin offered to assist with choosing archival safe items to order.

   Ed has requested letters from mayors and Burke County school students and received a letter from the Mayor of Valdese and students from Draughn, and Freedom High Schools. He read one of the letters to the committee, and it was written partly with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence, which is a very timely topic currently. We suspect that in 50 years when the time capsule is opened, there will be a different world of AI.

It was suggested that we should solicit content from students at NCSD as well, and Ed agreed and will follow-up. Other items that have already been secured are copies of America 250 resolutions from the City of Morganton and Burke County Commissioners, photos of the Liberty tree site selection, dedication ceremony, and plaque. Joel Welch mentioned that he has a letter or letters to contribute from WPCC. There was some discussion about cultural artifacts such as a cell phone (that would not contain a battery nor be functional), a Stanley tumbler, etc. It was concluded that we do want to include artifact items, not just paper and photographs, but we need ideas on what to include. Joel suggested that these physical items need to represent the community, possibly including trails, hiking, Hurricane Helene, other items that help tell the story of the community. Leslie mentioned that we need to consider cultural items from diverse populations in Burke and she will get a list together of ideas. We should consider pop culture and items of nostalgia that might be of interest in the future.

Other potential items discussed for the time capsule include Joara artifacts/info, other historical site artifacts, music at the Courthouse, songs about Burke County, today's culture (iPad, online shopping, Amazon, prescription opioids container, Dollar General), and Little Guatemala coffee. Linda mentioned that there is an Our State magazine article on an artist, Omi, featured at the Arrowhead Gallery in Old Fort. She creates little glass birds made from salvage materials from Hurricane Helene damage. It was general consensus among the group that an item like that would be good to include. Linda will look into getting a bird made from Burke County Helene materials.

Another item mentioned include getting postcards from residents' vacation sites. Where do people come from who visit Burke? Murals, farm-to-table, fabrics, industrial/recycling of fabrics, food today such as craft beers locally, prices, Dubai chocolate, air fryer, sentimental items, NCSSM, handouts and programs from America250 events, consider music & culture like TGIF, Hmong New Year @Thanksgiving time.

Questions:
Do we need to find an intern who can help digitize materials?
Do we have anything from the Artemis moon mission?

1. Scheduling the Time Capsule sealing
   We can advertise for public submissions for time capsule contents, then final decisions about what will go in the time capsule will be made by this committee. We need to determine a deadline for submissions after July 4. Sealing may be held on stage at the Morganton Festival in September ($11^{th}/12^{th}$) because it would be nice for it to be public with a large crowd in attendance.

2. July 4 Reminders
   Reminder that on July 4, the Glen Alpine Parade is endorsed as the official America 250 parade for the county. Sign-ups are underway. Everyone participating in the parade has to register. The parade begins at 10am. Fireworks will be held in Morganton at Freedom Park and in Valdese at the Old Rock School.

3. Miscellaneous
   A large truckload of food contributed by Just Serve and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be delivered on Thursday, May 14 at 11 am at Burke United Christian Ministries as part of an America 250 commemoration. The church is donating 250 semi-truckloads of food across the country this year in honor of America 250, and BUCM was chosen as one of the sites. We were asked to make remarks at this delivery on behalf of the America 250 Committee, and Laurie will be speaking for the committee. Anyone else on the committee is encouraged to attend. See Attachment A.

   The Mayflower Society will be visiting Morganton in November. It is a lineage society of people who are descendants of original Mayflower settlers. This event could be tied to America 250.

   Art in the Hall, Schedule of exhibits at the Morganton City Hall, was distributed to committee members. These exhibits this year include America 250 as the theme. Committee members are encouraged to attend. See Attachment B.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37pm. The next meeting will be Monday, June 8 at 1:30 pm.

Submitted by Laurie Johnston, Secretary
June 6, 2026

Appendix:
Attachment A--Art in the Hall Schedule 2026
Attachment B--America 250 food donation

Attachment A

Art in the Hall
Lobby Display Schedule 2026
America 250

February and March **Robert Patton - American Flag Assemblage**

A special flag display has been installed at Morganton City Hall to launch a year-long series of displays celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary, which recognize the historic milestone of the United States' founding. The display serves as a sampling of more than 20 flags from Robert Patton's collection, which highlight American pride and encourage participation in the various commemorative shows, educational programs, and patriotic events scheduled throughout the year to honor the nation's history and heritage.

April and May **JoAnn Pippin – Love our Parks**

"Love our Parks" is an exhibition of the paintings of JoAnn Pippin, an accomplished watercolor artist who is able to use her painting skill and her love for travel to illustrate many of the public lands across the United States. After retiring, JoAnn sailed the east coast from Maine to Florida while living aboard a sailboat, eventually coming ashore to crisscross the US in a camper, always preferring to stay in scenic state and national parks. In order to learn more about the history and environment of the parks, she and her husband chose to volunteer at several national parks in the southwest and on the east coast. The ability to absorb the landscapes of these beautiful places inspired her paintings.

June and July **Foothills Painters – American Flag**

Foothills Painters is a group of area artists with diverse backgrounds, ages and styles, demonstrating the strength and variety which founded this nation. With the theme of the American flag, their combined talents and varied life experiences will result in a multifaceted art display that speaks to a wide audience. Their works have appeared in many venues, including Arts Culture Catawba, Burke County, Hiddenite Arts Center, Caldwell Arts and individually in many other venues.

August and September **Irina Khudyakov – Immigrant Inspiration**

Born and raised in Moscow, Soviet Union, Irina immigrated to the United States with her family in 1991. After living in NY, CT, VA, and MD, Irina has made her home in Hickory, NC since 1998. She has been inspired throughout her life through her travels of the US, Canada and Europe and in growing up in a large city, visiting museums, exhibitions and art shows. Irina has a degree in engineering but has taken classes wherever she lives to further her knowledge of art and painting. She is inspired by the Impressionists work and her love of architecture.

October and November **Burke Quilters Guild – America the Beautiful**

Original quilts by various quilters in the Burke Quilters Guild showcase American themes; America the Beautiful, flags, and eagles, to name a few. The purpose of the quilt guild is to preserve and promote the art of quilting and to provide opportunities for learning and sharing ideas through an active program of education and study. One way the guild pays it forward is to honor our Burke County Veterans by making patriotic and service themed quilts. In ceremonies at the Am-Vet Hall and other community events, our service veterans are awarded the quilts in recognition of their service and sacrifice.

December and January 2027 **Thomas Kelly Pauly – Patriot Portraits**

Thomas Kelly Pauley is a full-time portrait artist working from his home studio in York, SC. His work ranges from historic and contemporary, to historic fantasy. Through his paintings he hopes to enable the viewer to better connect the past and present to help them understand that what we did in the past affects us today and in the future. He attempts to reach beneath the surface to capture a moment in the life of his subject, and the world each inhabits. His portraits can be found in private collections and at Historic Sites and Museums in seven states.

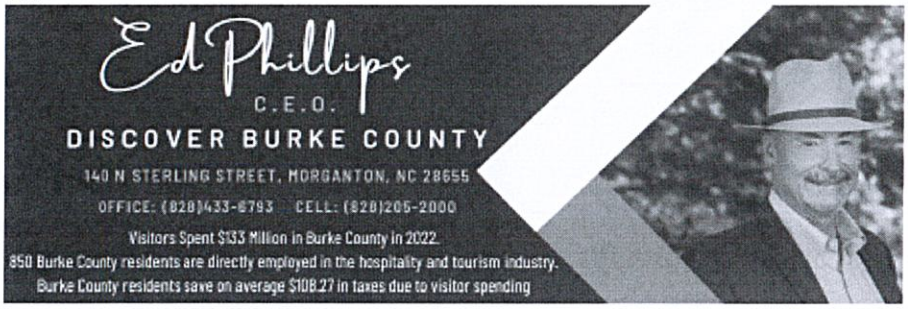
Art in the Hall is a juried art and display program located at Morganton City Hall
305 East Union Street, Suite A100, Morganton, NC.
City Hall is open 8AM-5PM Monday-Friday and closed on holidays.
Artists may submit a portfolio of work for display consideration to Michael Berley 828-438-5362.
Videos and photos of past shows may be seen on the City of Morganton website.
www.morgantonnc.gov/art

Attachment B

Please see the referenced letter and request for our attendance at a food delivery related to America 250. I am unavailable that date and time.
If you would like to attend, let me know and I will forward the information to the organizer.

Have a great weekend!

Ed



---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Brian King** <brking@comm.churchofjesuschrist.org>
Date: Fri, May 1, 2026 at 1:27 PM
Subject: America 250 Donation
To: Ed Phillips <director@discoverburkecounty.com>

Good afternoon, Mr. Phillips!

I am with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This year for America's 250th birthday our church has created a partnership with America 250 to deliver 250 tractor trailers of food to organizations across the United States. Burke County was selected for one of those deliveries. We are really excited for this opportunity and have chosen Burke United Christian Ministries for the drop.

We would really like to extend an invitation to the Burke County America 250 committee and have y'all there at the drop. We are hoping to make this a great event for Burke United Christian Ministries as well as Burke County. The drop was confirmed this week for 05/14. We are looking at an 11 a.m. drop.

I would love to bring our area communications director to come meet you and talk about this opportunity. Please let me know if Wednesday afternoon would work for you next week? 30 minutes max.

Thanks!

--
Brian S. King
Hickory North Carolina Stake
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Communications Specialist - Community Outreach
(828) 502-9993
ComeUntoChrist



Attachment B

Sample Media Coverage

TRUCKLOAD OF DONATED FOOD ARRIVES IN FARGO—ONE OF 250 DELIVERIES—AS PART OF NATIONWIDE EFFORT FROM AMERICA250 AND THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES FACING HUNGER

As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, America250 and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have donated 40,000 pounds of food, delivered on a JustServe-branded semi-truck to the Great Plains Food Bank. This donation will be distributed through Great Plains Food Bank's network of 205 partner food pantries, shelters, and meal sites, providing more than 48,000 meals to individuals and families across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota.



The delivery is part of a national collaboration kicked off in November 2025, in which 250 truckloads of food will be donated to communities in all 50 states. The 250 deliveries will provide approximately 10 million meals to families in need across the United States as a part of the America250's America Gives initiative.

The Church is using its established infrastructure, volunteer network, and humanitarian food resources to help bring America250 into neighborhoods throughout the nation including North Dakota, turning a national commemoration into local service.

"We believe in caring for our neighbors and love that we found an opportunity to give back to others," said Matt Hedquist with the North Dakota Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "This donation reflects our commitment to helping those in need. We are grateful to partner with these organizations to celebrate a big milestone for our country that brings food, relief, and hope to individuals and families."

JustServe is a community service platform sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that connects volunteers with local service opportunities. Its purpose is to help individuals and organizations strengthen their communities by serving together. Americans are invited to help make 2026 a record-setting year for volunteer service. To learn more and find opportunities, visit JustServe.org.

Through America250's *America Gives* initiative and the Church's JustServe platform, volunteers, local leaders, and community organizations are coming together to put service into action.

Attachment B