

**WARREN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL
CULTURAL & HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD**

500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue
Oxford, NJ 07863

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON
MAY 20, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rapisardi called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Laurie Rapisardi, Charles Fineran, Karin White, and Alex Ibarra

Members Absent: Richard Gardner, Jane Primerano, and Mark Young

Staff Present: Corey Tierney, Gina Rosseland, and Commissioner Lori Ciesla (arrived at 5:06 PM)

Staff Absent: Commissioner Lori Ciesla and Art Charlton

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Ms. Rapisardi read the opening statement.

MINUTES

The April 15, 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fineran made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. White. Mr. Ibarra abstained. Ms. Rapisardi, Mr. Fineran, and Ms. White voted in favor. Minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

CORRESPONDENCE

none

OLD BUSINESS

BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION:

- **WEBSITE** – The website is in progress.
- **HISTORIC MARKERS** – Ms. Ina Walls has been working on a historic marker for Mansfield Twp. Ms. Rosseland spoke to the mayor and clerk regarding writing a letter giving Ms. Walls the ability to do the sign in place of the municipality. Ms. Walls is in the process of obtaining a letter from the property owner. Ms. Rosseland recommended that Ms. Walls have an alternative plan for the sign's location (church across the street) in the event the property sells and the new owner does not want it on their property. Ms. Walls' application is in-process and should be ready in early June. Ms. Rosseland is waiting to hear back from Phillipsburg Area Historical Society about getting a historic marker and will reach out to the organization to see if they will be applying in this last round for this grant.
- Ms. Rosseland listed the organizations that she has provided rack cards and flyers for the Bicentennial: Washington Business Improvement District, Warren Co. Arts, Ramsaysburg

(concerts), Hope (in their grant-sponsored Kiosks at the museum and by the Duncan Donuts near Route 80), Hackettstown Historical Society and Hackettstown American Legion.

COUNTY MUSEUMS / CHPP GRANTS:

First payments are in the process of being distributed.

ARTS PROGRAMS / LAP GRANT:

First payments are in the process of being distributed. As of this date, there have been ten (10) Educator Mini-Grants and five (5) Regular Mini-Grants awarded for the Arts at this time. There is an eleventh educator's application to be assessed with approvals on Fridays.

The artist reception for the Warren County Senior Citizen Art Show and Reception was on Friday, 5/16. Art will be displayed in the main hall of the Administration Building until 8/21. Of the twelve artists that participated, seven were awarded first place, four received second place and one received third place. One artist was a new participant. Three professional artists adjudicated the show prior to the reception. Seven senior artists will represent the County at the State Art Show in the Fall.

There will be a pilot program called "Traveling Artists" with two artists visiting six assisted care facilities during the trial period, doing a one-hour session, twice a month, for a total of six each. There is also some money allocated for supplies up to a particular amount of money.

NEW BUSINESS

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION FESTIVAL [Sat. 6/28, 12pm-9pm, followed by fireworks (rain date Sun. 6/29) at WCCC]:

Ms. Rosseland provided an updated tabling list that includes non-profit organizations, County agencies, and authors.

Mr. Tierney stated that under the 40'x100' tent, the County can comfortably accommodate 52-60 tables, assign a numbered table so that the day of the event, each organization will know where they will be setting up. The County will provide parking passes (1-2) per organization in a parking area that will be cordoned off for the exhibitors. The parking area will be determined.

Although the spots are pretty much full, Mr. Tierney stated that some organizations have not submitted their applications although they stated they could attend. There is some space in the commercial vendor space (second tent) that can be used to accommodate the tabling organizations. If the space is not filled by the event planner, then the ten authors and five tables can be moved to that tent if need be.

Mr. Charlton previously provided Mr. Tierney a list of vendors from May 7th from the event planner. Commissioner Ciesla asked if there was still room for food vendors as someone reached out to her. Mr. Tierney said that there are seventeen food trucks, but there is room for twenty and that there is good variety of food. All of the musicians, performers, food trucks, and rides are arranged. The County Administrator and County Safety Director are coordinating the public safety, police, etc.

The Advisory Board was asked to promote the event as much as possible by distributing flyers, posters and rack cards. Board members can help at the Bicentennial table at the event. The County will be ordering t-shirts for sale, which will be handled directly by the staff. Board members and volunteers can help with t-shirts, distributing stickers and wooden nickels. The board members were

asked if everyone could commit to one hour at the table, as it is estimated that the busiest times will be from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM, before the fireworks. Mr. Fineran was asked if he would be working with one of the tabling organizations and if he would be available to help at the Bicentennial table. He said if there is enough people at organization's table, he would be available to help. There are about fifty groups participating. Commissioner Ciesla said she would ask the Economic Development Committee for volunteers to help as well.

There are 120 chairs, 60 tables, two tents (40'x100') rented by the Department of Land Preservation, with additional tables ordered by the event planner. Mr. Tierney said that he could order more tables and chairs, if necessary.

Ms. Rosseland mentioned that one of the County agencies that McKinney Vento may be interested in applying, they work with homeless children in schools. There are a few other community-based organizations that will be involved.

Ms. Rapisardi commended the staff members for their hard work with the planning of the event.

Regarding the etched wine glasses purchased for the gala last November, Ms. Rapisardi inquired if they would be for sale or given away to the tabling organizations as a thank you. Commissioner Ciesla asked that fifty be set aside for those who did not receive one from the Gala. Mr. Tierney will look into whether glass can be sold during the event, for safety reason, and will ask the Safety Director. If permitted to be sold, they can be wrapped and bagged to ensure they would not break, which would have to be ordered. Commissioner Ciesla would find out if the pins were ordered by Mr. Charlton.

Participation & Donations - Atlantic Health will be attending, but needs to submit their application and will need to have a corner spot for their truck. Mars Wrigley will not be able to attend, but will provide a donation of candy. Mr. Tierney offered assistance to have it transported from Hackettstown. Ms. Rapisardi also stated that Serve-Pro is donating ten cases of water for the event and will donate another ten cases. Mr. Tierney said the water can be stored at Land Preservation. Shop Rite is also donating ten cases of water. Later, the water will be transported to the County College. The total estimated count is 40 cases of 24 bottles per case. Calvin Inscho (Public Works) will be providing coolers for the water. The water will be primarily for the County staff, volunteers and public safety.

Balloon backdrop and stage balloons will be donated by Dalloons in Hackettstown and they will create a board for photographs with the logo and Bicentennial information. Mr. Charlton is working on banners for the stage. The colors will be determined. Ms. Rapisardi suggested different colors for the stage than elsewhere.

Promotions - The event signs are visible around the County, distributed by the Department of Public Works. Ms. White asked if she should have filled out the permit form for Blairstown, and the fee would be waived. Mr. Tierney provided a completed form for Ms. White. The Blairstown Clerk just needs a copy of the form on file.

Ms. Rapisardi asked for a list of where rack cards have been distributed. Ms. Rosseland has been providing her a list. Ms. White asked if she could distribute some in Blairstown and Hope. Mr. Rapisardi will send the list to the Board and staff members.

Ms. Rapisardi and Commissioner Ciesla were on WRNJ to discuss the event. The radio station will also have a remote site at the event. A social media post has been on Facebook, created by the promoter and is shareable.

Volunteer Staffing Event - Ms. Rapisardi revisited staffing the Bicentennial tent and suggested two-hour increments instead of one-hour from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Ms. Rapisardi said she would be available to help for the day. She asked what else is needed of the volunteer.

It was determined that volunteers should be on site at 9:00 AM for set-up and clean and pack-up between 9:00PM and 10:00 PM, during fireworks. Mr. Tierney said that volunteers will help direct people and with set up and break down for organizations. Tables, chairs and the tents will be set up a day before and numbers will be affixed to the tables. Set-up on the day of the event is from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

The County staff will wear bright yellow t-shirts and volunteers in bright orange. The t-shirts will have the Bicentennial logo.

Wooden nickels and stickers will be distributed on the day of the event. Mr. Tierney will order additional stickers.

Other - Commissioner Ciesla is considering smaller things during the remainder of the year (farm display) and possibly a memorial plaque for each municipality, to help segue into the Semiquincentennial in 2026 so that the towns can do their own celebrations. She also mentioned a state grant that the municipalities may apply for through RevolutionaryNJ and will speak with them about it. The Semiquincentennial celebrations will be left up to the towns to plan their own events.

Other Community Events - Allamuchy is doing a fireworks display on July 19th and Mayor Tuohy wants to celebrate the Bicentennial at their event. On July 4th, Washington Celebrates America is having their parade and they asked if anyone would participate and Ms. Rapisardi said she would be available. Commissioner Ciesla mentioned Phillipsburg's Halloween parade on October 26th.

Mr. Fineran asked if he could use the Bicentennial banner for the Delaware River Sojourn on June 18th as well as materials that could be distributed. It is estimated that 500 people will be in attendance. Stops are segmented and there are a few stops along the river in Warren County, and Mr. Fineran said possibly Phillipsburg.

Mr. Ibarra said that Phillipsburg is doing their Old Town event on June 14th and asked if anyone would table that event. Usually Explore Warren tables that event.

Planning - Other things still being planned for the event include a masters of ceremonies, speakers, WRNJ (live event), and will try to invite other media sources. Cathy Miller, photographer, will be there, and possibly a County staff member.

There has not been a decision made yet about the event planner using a drone for aerial footage as this will be restricted airspace.

Commissioner Ciesla also would like to interview former Freeholders (Commissioners) either on video or audio during the remainder of the year. Another thing discussed was the possibility of a time capsule, in a water-resistant metal container, for the County with coordinates of the location.

An artist rendering of Dr. Joseph Warren's portrait is in process and when completed, it will be framed and displayed.

PUBLIC COMMENT (open)

none

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held June 17, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fineran made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ibarra. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gina Rosseland,
Assistant Administrator
Division of Cultural & Heritage Affairs