

80 Nourse Street
Westborough, MA 01581
March 30, 2022

Westborough Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials
34 Main Street
Westborough, MA 01581

Att: Mr. Ian Johnson, Select Board Member

Re: Westborough's Two Forgotten Revolutionary War Militia Companies

Dear Trustees:

I refer to the Report and Findings of Alexander Cain dated March 6, 2022, ("Cain") and the Report of J.L. Bell dated February 21, 2022, ("Bell"), both received from Richard Passler by email on March 9, 2022.

These reports were commissioned in response to Tony Vaver's recommendation to the Town's Select Board on July 8, 2021, that an independent expert in American history and the American Revolution be hired to "verify the significance of [my] research", to "ensure that other resources that could potentially uncover even more names" were consulted and to "ensure the accuracy of our rich history".

I believe these reports resolve the following issues concerning my proposal for a new memorial in Minuteman Park honoring the 101 men of Westborough who marched in response to the Lexington Alarm of April 19, 1775:

1) Validation of my research concerning Westborough's response to the Alarm:

Both the Cain and Bell reports have validated my conclusion that two militia companies in addition to the minute company, a total of 101 men, responded to the Alarm. The Cain report, which dealt with the specific request to "evaluate" my research, stated that my proposal was "well-researched and carefully thought out", that my research and conclusions are "accurate and complete", that the information in my report was "both detailed and supported by important primary and secondary sources". (page 24). It concluded that my findings "can be relied upon when revising the town's Revolutionary War monument". The Bell report, which dealt with the meaning of "minute men" in the context of Westborough's Minuteman Park, confirmed that my research was "thorough". (page 5)

2) There were no additional responders beyond the three companies of militia:

The Cain report refers to the Town's Alarm List Company, stating that "Although this unit of older men did muster on April 19, 1775, it did not leave town." (page 25) It recommends that "the town not include the alarm list men as they did not respond to the Lexington Alarm nor

support the Siege of Boston.” (page 26) In any event, I am not aware that the Town has any listing of the men in the Alarm List Company at the time of the Alarm.

No other potential responders have been identified.

3) The minutemen did **not** have any special status in the Town:

The Bell report discusses the origin of the minutemen and the history of their requests for special treatment, which were repeated at various times during 1775 and 1775 but rejected by the Town. The report states that “the official Westborough definition of ‘minute men’ was that those men were no different from other members of the militia”. (page 1) Referring to the minutemen being the only company mentioned by the DeForest and Bates *History of Westborough*, the report states: “Based upon the official record of their discussions in 1774-75, the men of Westborough would not have approved of singling out that one company.”

4) Joseph Baker should be recognized as Captain of the second militia company:

The Bell report, in a Postscript, raises a question about George Baker, who is listed as the Captain of the second militia company. It notes that Joseph Baker (1736-1811) “makes many appearances...in Westborough’s town records” but that George Baker is listed only on “this muster roll and compilations based on it....” (page 6)

This is a valid point. I have been unable to find any references to a George Baker in the available records:

- a) Although the vital records for Westborough show the birth of many Bakers, including Joseph Baker on May 11, 1736, there is no listing for the birth of any George Baker.
- b) The Westborough marriage records show that Joseph Baker and Martha Dearth were married on November 15, 1758, but there is no record of marriage for any George Baker.
- c) The handwritten list of Male Inhabitants over 16 in Westborough as of January 1, 1777, lists Joseph Baker, Esq. but no George Baker.
- d) The Dr. James Hawes list of all persons in Westborough on March 20, 1776, shows Joseph Baker, Esq. and a family of 20 but no George Baker.
- e) The Charles H. Reed list of Westborough men who fought in the Revolutionary War lists Joseph Baker as a Captain. There is no reference to George Baker.

The muster roll for the second company of militia (Exhibit C to my Report of April 2, 2021) has a caption reading “A Muster Roll of the Militia under Capt. Baker who Marched April 19, 1775, from the Westborough”. Although the list of names shows George Baker as Captain, the muster roll was verified by Joseph Baker on December 23, 1775.

The Bell report suggests that a company clerk may have inadvertently picked up the first name of the company’s 1st Lieutenant in preparing the muster roll. (page 6) This is certainly a plausible explanation for the inconsistency. Given the lack of any evidence that a George Baker of Westborough ever existed, I recommend that we should accept that the person verifying the

muster roll was the actual commander and memorialize the company as commanded by Joseph Baker rather than George Baker.

Expose Signs & Graphics, Inc.'s estimate:

With the above issues now out of the way, I have followed up with Expose Signs & Graphics, Inc. about its June 28, 2021, estimate for a "Custom Fabricated Plaque" in the amount of \$4,306.75 and installation on a designated stone, in the amount of \$1,300.00 or a total of \$5,875.92. I am advised by Josh Clark, Expose's salesperson, that the cost of bronze has increased in the past year as has the cost of labor. The new estimate, a copy of which is enclosed, is for construction of a cast bronze plaque for \$5,105.15 and for sandblasting and mounting of the plaque on a designated boulder for \$1,455.00. The total cost is now \$6,879.22, an increase of \$1,003.30. This revised estimate, although still dated 6/28/21, was received today. I am advised that, in view of the volatile market for bronze, this quotation is good for only 30 days.

Please note that Expose's estimate does not include moving the stone on which the plaque is to be mounted. Finding an appropriate boulder and moving it to Minuteman Park is the logical next task in this project. I recommend that it be discussed with the Town's DPW.

Funding for the project:

I strongly believe that funding for the erection of this new memorial in Minuteman Park should not be borne by the Town's citizens, through an increase in their taxes, but instead should be obtained from contributions. In order to provide an appropriate mechanism for contributions, the Trustees should be authorized to accept funds for this project. I request that appropriate steps be taken for this so that any requests for contributions can specify the Trustees as the proper party to receive funds.

I have taken preliminary steps concerning fund raising which I would like to discuss with the Trustees at their next meeting.

Sincerely

David A. Nourse

Encl: Expose Signs & Graphics, Inc. revised estimate for \$6,879.22.