



BRISTOL HISTORICAL AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

48 Court St., P.O. Box 356, Bristol, RI 02809

Telephone (401) 253-7223

www.bhpsri.org

April 17, 2026

To: The Bristol Town Council

Re: Funding for a traveling cover for the Nathaniel Byfield flag

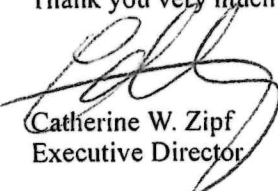
In honor of the RI250 and at the request of the Town Administrator, the Bristol Historical & Preservation Society would like to host a showing of the Nathaniel Byfield flag. At present, the plan is to house the flag flat on a table in the climate controlled gymnasium at the Reynolds School on May 23 for hours as yet to be determined. The flag will have a protective cover that will be secured to the table. The showing will be offered in conjunction with a living history event depicting life in Bristol in 1776 that will be held on the Town Common that day from 9 to 3. The flag will be accompanied by its primary conservator, Maria Vazquez, who is an expert in historic military textiles.

As the oldest flag in America, the Byfield flag is a National Treasure; we are thrilled that Bristol is the proud owner of such an important historic artifact. We are also grateful to the Varnum Armory for the extraordinary efforts they have put towards its restoration, all of which have been at no cost to either the Town of Bristol or the BH&PS. That said, the flag's location in Warwick presents challenges for Bristolians in getting to see it in person. This proposed showing is intended to give Bristol residents the opportunity to view, experience, and learn about the flag without cost and without having to travel.

The Bristol Historical & Preservation Society respectfully requests \$1000 to cover the costs of a new acrylic cover that will allow the flag to travel safely from its current storage at the Varnum Armory and to protect it during the showing. The current cover is both heavy in weight and badly damaged, and therefore cannot move with the flag during transit. The new, lighter cover will address these concerns and will make the processes involved in transporting and displaying the flag much easier.

Per the direction of textile expert Maria Vazquez, the cover will be ordered from Laird Plastics, in Warwick, RI. Ms. Vazquez and the Varnum Armory have considerable experience working with Laird Plastics and have offered a high recommendation for their work. The BH&PS will facilitate their efforts and ensure that this funding is used appropriately and responsibly.

Thank you very much for your consideration.



Catherine W. Zipf
Executive Director