

STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD (SHRAB) MEETING
JUNE 17, 2010
11:00 AM

A meeting of the State Historical Records Advisory Board was held on June 17 in Room G-24 of the State Museum Building. The following board members attended: Lee Arnold, James Beidler, Michael Dabrishus, James Gerencser, Susan Hamburger, David Haury, June Lloyd, Laurie Rofini, and Pamela Whitenack. PHMC staff who attended were: Barbara Franco, David Shoff, Cynthia Bendroth, Susan Hartman, George Ellis, Linda Ries, Joshua Stahlman, and Teresa Clouser. Absent were board members Douglas Hill and Heidi Mays.

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Haury at 11:00 AM who welcomed all attending members. Since three new members, Mr. Gerencser, Ms. Hamburger, and Ms. Lloyd, were attending their first meeting, introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 10, 2009 MEETING

The minutes of the December 10, 2009 meeting were reviewed; there was a motion to accept the minutes without any changes by Ms. Whitenack, and Ms. Hamburger seconded the motion. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

PROGRESS OF ITINERANT ARCHIVIST PROJECT

Mr. Ellis informed the board that Heather Heckman, Itinerant Archivist, finished the northeastern counties early this spring. Wayne County was the most prepared for the project having a strong chief clerk who made certain that all individuals were involved. Six to eight spaces that were used as records storage areas in the basement were cleaned out. Monroe County had an awareness of space needs, but was reluctant to change the floor plan of their jail to make it more suitable and efficient for records storage. The county also would have preferred a new building, but they decided to contract for a space study in which Ms. Heckman would have some input. It was noted that many counties are using old jail cells to store records. Some have also hired archivists but it was found that not all are interested in records management. Northampton County gave up its old storage space and opted for leasing space at an Iron Mountain facility in Lehigh County. The report on the project is being finalized for submission to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Ms. Franco suggested that the final report be tailored to the legislative districts to make legislators aware of how PHMC is helping their constituents and that public records are a major issue that they need to be aware of.

Dr. Haury and Mr. Shoff told the board that the project exceeded all of their expectations and that it was so successful that NHPRC will use it as a model program. Ms. Heckman was very popular in all counties that participated in the program and the feedback was very positive. As a result of the project, records officers have a greater capacity for effective work. Over five thousand cubic feet of records past their retention period were purged during the project. All counties indicated that they would like a visit from Ms. Heckman in the future to critique their progress since she left.

Ms. Hartman briefly explained the project to the new members, the basis of which is: county records are very important and valuable while, at the same time, resources to those counties are very limited; the grant provided valuable archival and records management expertise in the form of a full-time itinerant archivist for a six to eight week period. Ms. Hartman distributed copies of a survey of the project to members. The good news is that PHMC's request from the NHPRC to continue with the program for another eighteen-month period has been approved. This will allow other parts of the state to participate in the project if they wish. It was noted that Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are out of scope for this project because of their size and the short timeframe of six to eight weeks. Information was sent out to forty county commissioners across the state to gauge their interest. It is estimated that an additional five or six counties would be able to participate in the program. Mr. Shoff stated that applications are due by July 1 and would be disseminated to the board to rank. Ms. Heckman is expected to begin traveling again to the counties sometime in the fall of this year.

Ms. Hamburger asked if Pennsylvania would consider a fee bill to support the program in future years similar to that of New Jersey and Virginia. However, Dr. Haury stated that the political climate in the state, at this time, is not conducive to adding another fee and the counties would probably oppose it. Several counties have asked Ms. Hartman and Mr. Ellis for their advice on what the best use of the current county fee would be, but many counties choose to use the current funds for technology-based needs or imaging.

REPORT ON THE NHPRC REAUTHORIZATION HEARING

Ms. Franco informed the board of her experience in Washington, D. C. during the recent hearing regarding the reauthorization of the NHPRC. Historians, researchers, and organizations representing three panels testified as to the importance of records, history, democracy, how the NHPRC creates jobs, etc. She was there representing the Association for American State and Local History (AASLH). There was some drama in the beginning of the hearing when it was noted that some forms were not filled out properly and it was suggested that the testimony be thrown out, but this crisis was averted. Dr. Haury noted that the proposed Senate authorization is for only \$10 million and the House is considering \$20 million, but they are hoping for a compromise at \$15 million. It was also noted that the authorized level is not a guaranteed appropriation. Testimony was also provided on the formula based Preserving the American Historical Record (PAHR) program. Pennsylvania is due to receive about 5% of the funds, which could be as much as \$20 million. Thus PHMC could possibly obtain about one-half million to one million dollars which would be distributed through the SHRAB to grant recipients. Recipients would have to provide 50/50 matching funds or cost sharing.

REPORT ON THE IPER INITIATIVE

Dr. Haury explained to the board that the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) received \$2.5 million from FEMA for the Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER) project, to provide training around the country on identifying and preserving essential records. Two pilot webinars have been held so far which included an overview of the COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) laws. "Train the Trainer" seminars will be held for the southern states in July and for the eastern states in late August. Mr. Ellis and Mr. Stahlman are planning on traveling to Connecticut in August to attend such training which will include instructions on using the software to run the webinars. Discussions are underway to decide how to promote the training and who should attend.

Every state is required to train at least thirty people, but the PHMC thinks that perhaps ten times this amount is achievable. Each course, adapted from curriculum designed by the National Archives, will be broken down into four sessions, each lasting approximately one and one-half to two hours. Dr. Haury pointed out that much of the NARA material was remodeled for local and state government standards. Logistics of the training need to be worked out as well. FEMA is also funding a new website where all disaster planning and related records management material will be contained on one site rather than multiple sites.

Dr. Haury also informed the board of a national initiative to update the manual on the preservation of state governors' records with the greater focus being on electronic records. There will be plenty of new governors coming into office next January and New York is taking the lead on the initiative. Dr. Haury has been working with the Manuscript Society and CoSA on government records that are being bought and sold. A meeting on this subject was held last October and a template of an agreement was drawn up regarding the policy on the sale of governors' records. Due diligence should be a part of the agreement between the dealer, buyer, and seller. Also, the seller and the State Archives need to have an on-going working relationship and open communications since lots of sales are anonymous. Mr. Arnold asked how often the State Archives receives cold calls about the selling of documents. Mr. Shoff answered that while the Archives only receives a handful of calls per year, that number may increase since the Archives has developed some educational and publicity tools that have been placed on its website and in a printed brochure. Ms. Hamburger asked if a local government forfeits its rights to reclaim alienated records that were at one time simply thrown in the trash. Dr. Haury stated that some states, such as North Carolina, have very strong laws that make it illegal to personally own any governmental records, no matter how they were obtained. Dr. Haury continued by relaying the story of how three 1791 documents were stolen from the State Archives in 1988 and the amazing trail of ownership that followed over the next 22 years. Mr. Dabrishus stated that many dealers may not realize what constitutes a government record.

Ms. Franco replied that in Pennsylvania, governors do not have to turn over records to the State Archives and sometimes the next generation of relatives sells them off. Dr. Haury stated that the law on governors' records varies from state to state, but Pennsylvania and a few other states still give their governors discretion on whether to turn them over; it is also quite tough to persuade a public official at that level to turn over records often viewed as their own personal records. Dr. Haury has sent Governor Rendell a letter seeking his records once he vacates office in January, 2011, but has yet to hear of a decision; however, the PHMC will be obtaining all of the Governor's audio-visual records through Commonwealth Media Services. Mr. Dabrishus asked if the PHMC would be seeking the governor's electronic records. Beyond the audio-visual records, which are all electronic, this has not been determined. The State Archives has very limited capabilities to manage other electronic records. Ms. Bendroth reported that the Office of General Counsel is very supportive of the PHMC, which is encouraging. Dr. Haury also reported that many of Governor Ridge's records were not received by the State Archives because the governor had someone go through them and remove what he didn't want turned over to the State Archives. The boxes delivered to the State Archives are closed and the Archives does not have listings of what is in the boxes. Governor Ridge has a contact for those seeking information on the holdings. The State Archives also has Governor Casey records, and a portion of them are closed for twenty years. If anyone wants to see the closed materials, they must obtain approval from the Casey's representatives.

STATE ARCHIVES REPORT

Dr. Haury announced that the State Archives received both of its grant requests from the NHPRC: cataloging the backlog of records at the State Archives which amounts to 26,000 cubic feet, and the continuation of the Itinerant Archivist Program which was mentioned earlier. He also congratulated Mr. Arnold on the Historical Society of Pennsylvania receiving its grant request. Pennsylvania did very well in receiving grant funding from the NHPRC this year. It was noted that the Heinz Center withdrew their grant request so it was not funded; perhaps it will be revised and resubmitted at a later date.

A major reorganization has occurred at the State Archives in which seven or eight staff now have new assignments and supervisors caused by the extensive furloughs that the agency was forced to implement last year as a result of funding cuts. The Bureau of Archives and History went from sixty-three full-time staff down to thirty-three full-time staff and from eight part-time staff down to three. Out of the thirty-three remaining full-time staff, only twenty-five are funded by general government operating funds and eight are funded by preservation funds which are fee-based. In this economic climate it's hard to determine how long the fee-based positions will be able to be sustained. The PHMC grant program has all but been eliminated; the scholars-in-residence program is gone and so is the funding for interns. However, the PHMC has been able to obtain unpaid interns nonetheless, and the bureau has roughly the same number of interns working this summer as it has in the past. The bureau is continuing to evaluate its work procedures and refocus. As part of the reorganization, a newly developed division called Digital Archives and Records Division was created, however, the effort is mostly symbolic because of pressure from the administration to collect electronic records without proper monetary resources, but it indicates PHMC is serious about the responsibility. Currently the PHMC has no capability of storing Commonwealth electronic records and accessibility issues need to be worked out as well.

The State Archives is also meeting with agencies who have not complied with their retention schedule in giving the Archives certain records. In meeting with those agencies, the bureau is hoping to reinvigorate the program. The State Archives is also meeting with agencies which have restricted records in the archives. Memorandums of Understanding agreements need to be initiated with each agency as to which records will be restricted and how access will be controlled. The Department of Banking is governed by a law in which there is no accessibility to its examination records. As a result of this law, it was decided that the PHMC would only keep the Department's extremely limited records before the law came into effect.

Mr. Shoff stated that grants proposals for the SHRAB to review were received from the City of Philadelphia and Athanaeum in Philadelphia. He said that July 21 will be the deadline to receive grant application comments back from the board as he needs to submit the summary report to the NHPRC in August. Mr. Arnold commented that these grant applications entailed worthy projects, but noted that the applications themselves were very sloppy and wondered who wrote them. The application from the Office of City Representative in Philadelphia elicited several comments from the board. That office is asking for \$360,000 to digitize 8,500 images which depict mostly 20th century public relations photos at the time Governor Rendell was mayor. The formulas used to calculate the costs of the project just didn't add up. Nothing was mentioned about digitizing earlier dated photos or what storage method would be used for the digitized images. The project also seemed to be heavily padded with equipment needs and for the use of commercial vendors. Also, the project is seeking to maintain a second website with these digitized images and backing up the

data on DVDs. The board noted that maintaining a second website is often problematic and that backing up 8,500 images on DVDs just isn't practical. Storing the images on a hard drive is much less expensive. Dr. Haury asked the board to note all of their comments on the forms and to make sure they are submitted to Mr. Shoff by the deadline. Digitization of records is a relatively new category of grant for the NHPRC and they acknowledge that they are experiencing some growing pains with this new category. Ms. Lloyd asked what the guidelines were on preservation or microfilming and Dr. Haury replied that NHPRC's assumption is that the institution keeps the original record after it is digitized. The NHPRC's next meeting will be in November and by then they will be working on the next grant cycle. At this time, NHPRC cannot fund many large projects because there isn't enough money to go around and the number of applications has increased, so grants are extremely competitive.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Ries and Mr. Ellis distributed the new *Archives Without Tears* brochure to the board and asked them to please share with those who might have an interest in attending the workshops. The next three classes that are scheduled are completely booked. The plan is to continue these workshops depending upon the availability of resources for next year. It was noted that on the evaluations of the first round of training, not even one negative comment was received from class participants.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) will be held from November 11-13 in Harrisburg and there is a possibility the next SHRAB meeting will be held at the same time. Ms. Whitenack announced that Jackson Taylor would be the lunch speaker and will talk about 20th century life in Harrisburg, which is the subject of his book. Ms. Ries is hoping that he will acknowledge how archival records helped him in this endeavor. Kathleen Rowe will conduct the plenary session. Ms. Hamburger said there will also be tours of the Capitol Building, the Hershey Archives, the State Archives, and Joseph Priestley House, as well as others.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 PM.