

State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB)

Meeting Minutes

Hershey Lodge, Hershey PA

April 12, 2018

1:00 p.m. – 300 p.m.

Board Members Present: David Carmicheal, Nancy Avolese, John Paul Deley, Heidi Mays, Marilyn Parrish, Martina Soden, Heidi Abbey Moyer, Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh

Staff Attending: Cindy Bendroth, Josh Stahlman, Tyler Stump

Members of the Public: Sierra Green, Carly Lough, Justin McHenry

The meeting began at 1:06 p.m. David Carmicheal (DWC) welcomed the members of the Board and took roll call.

DWC reviewed the previous meeting's minutes and called for approval. John Paul Deley (JPD) asked about the HARC Grant timeline that was mentioned on page 3. He asked it was ever sent out to SHRAB members. DWC said it was not but will be. JPD asked to remove the question mark from this item on the previous minutes and all agreed to this change. There was not a quorum of board members present so DWC said that the Board would vote on previous minutes at the next meeting.

DWC then gave an update on the State Archives.

-The State Archives is still making progress with its new building in Harrisburg. The design is finished and waiting approval from the Department of General Services. After that there will be no more major design changes to the building. JPD asked if there would be any public comment meetings for the new building? DWC said there were none planned, though PHMC staff will be meeting with Harrisburg residents and city leaders to discuss the impact of the new building on them. DWC said that he hoped to have a ground breaking in Harrisburg this coming summer and that according to the current schedule the building will be finished in late 2021 or 2022. DWC noted that he has been very pleased with how the new building is looking in the plans. JPD asked if SHRAB members and other dignitaries could be present at the groundbreaking or other celebratory building events and DWC said he intended to invite them, though it would not be an official SHRAB activity. Heidi Abbey Moyer (HAM) asked if there would be parking at the new building. DWC said there would be free off street parking, plus underground staff parking.

-The State Archives recently restarted its Scholars in Residence program, which was dormant since 2009. The archives has raised the money to fund two academic scholars for 4 weeks each this coming summer. The State Archives received 14 applications and hopes that the program will continue to grow in the future.

-Last year the State Archives hosted a salvage training session with the help of CCAHA at the State Records Center in Harrisburg. State government officials and PHMC employees were trained on how to assist in the event of natural disasters that threaten records. DWC mentioned that he intends this training to be a part of a growing network of disaster response resources in Central Pennsylvania.

-Last March the State Archives celebrated Charter Day and had the 1681 Charter of Pennsylvania on display in the State Museum in Harrisburg. Along with the Charter, several PA Indian deeds were also displayed. There were 1728 visitors that Sunday, and DWC cited a Smart Talk interview the day before as one reason why so much public interest was generated in the event. There were many more visitors than there had been in previous years.

-The State Archives had a popular booth at the PA Farm Show in January. This year the archives partnered with Ancestry.com to give free family history searches. DWC estimated that about 10,000 visitors took advantage of the genealogy services at the booth throughout the week. Previous years had seen only a dozen or so people inquiring about the State Archives, so the difference was dramatic.

-DWC said that in preparation for the move, the State Archives is digitizing microfilm and putting it into the PA Power Library. JPD asked about digitized collections of microfilm in other repositories around the state. He asked if there was any value in having a statewide archival microfilm database, to avoid different repositories digitizing the same film twice. He mentioned that it would be helpful to know who is reformatting what films, and if it is available online. DWC mentioned that the State Archives has 20,000 reels of microfilm in the State Archives, however, many belong to county governments and will not be put online. Marilyn Parish (MP) asked if the Power Library was connected to DPLA. DWC said it is. MP said that Penn State is working on a large newspaper digitization project with the Library of Congress (Chronicling America) and that the Power Library could be useful for that project. DWC agreed and said that SHRAB should also urge other PA repositories to put their digitized collections in the Power Library, even if they're put online elsewhere too. HAM said that she would ask her digital preservation specialist for updates or other thoughts on this matter.

DWC then discussed some news and issues with SHRAB grants. He noted that SHRAB is advisory body of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and that the board was created to help review grants in Pennsylvania before they're submitted to the NHPRC.

Josh Stahlman (JS) then spoke about current SHRAB initiatives. Archives Without Tears (AWOT) workshops were created by the State Archives in 2009 and based off of the AASLH basics of archives course. AWOT is designed to get local groups and historical societies training in archives basics so that they're ready to apply for grants and use the funds efficiently. It is a 2-day program and since 2009 has had over 600 registrants. Last year there were two workshops in Old Economy Village and Williamsport. This year AWOT will be held in Erie and Chambersburg in June. DWC said that AWOT was one of SHRAB's most important programs without a doubt and that even if this program lost its federal funding he

would like to find a way to keep it going. JS said that he currently advertises AWOT with a mailing list. Nancy Avolese (NA) asked if there was a website to learn more about AWOT? JS said no but SHRAB has talked about a website in the past. NA asked where she could refer anyone for more information about AWOT? DWC said that more information will be put on the State Archives website. Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh (RGR) also said that she would share AWOT information with the PA Caucus of the Mid Atlantic Regional Archives Conference as well. HAM asked if AWOT would be held in the Harrisburg area soon? JS said that it hasn't been in the area for a few years, but it could be next year. MP said that SHRAB should help with organizing a Harrisburg region AWOT and all agreed that was a good idea. HAM also asked if there could be an "AWOT II" that teaches advanced training for those who know the basics of archives. All agreed this would be helpful and DWC said that the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) is redoing their basics of archives class (which AWOT was based on) and that could be helpful as well.

Sierra Greene (SG) of the Heinz Center and JPD brought up a Pittsburgh-area archives service called "Three Rivers Archives" (TWA) that has been active for the last few years. TWA invites small local historical society and organizations to bring small collections which are then processed and described by professional archivists. This has been very successful and rewarding. JPS said a good thing about TWA has been its intimate and personal interactions. RGR agreed and said that TWA archivists have been able to accomplish a lot in a short amount of time. The next TWA is scheduled for May 10th and JPD said they'll advertise the next Erie AWOT training there. DWC said that TWA should make a video or some other product to share and encourage others to start their own similar projects. Everyone agreed this was a good idea.

HAM asked if there were any Pennsylvania-wide group meetings of archives directors (or at least representatives of institutions). No one in the group thought that any such group currently existed in the state. JPD, backed up by several other board members, said that there was a critical need to let small local historical groups know about the resources in Pennsylvania that are available to them.

JS then discussed current work with HARC grants. The State Archives is planning to put out a call for applications for grants that will last between May 1st and August 1st. He said that there is currently \$100,000 for two grant cycles. Applicants can request up to \$5,000 without a match or up to \$15,000 with a match from their institution or another organization. DWC said that he will be asking SHRAB members to review grant applications. NA asked if information about the HARC grants and the application process will be online? DWC said yes it will be. JS said that HAM's previous suggestions for guidelines are being included in the grant application. MP asked if the HARC grants were encouraging digitization? JS said that the grants are access-oriented, and digitization is a component of that.

DWC said that the HARC grants have two funding sources, and that most of the funds must be used for collections care and preservation. He said that he hopes that this grant project will continue after the first two years. JPD said that he hopes that by encouraging matching grants, it will help promote and expand the program.

HAM pointed out that many small local historical groups don't have experience in grant writing. Where could they get help? JPD said that SHRAB members could organize regional grant writing workshops. JS said that CCAHA does have online resources that could be helpful. DWC also suggested SAA. RGR also said that Carnegie Mellon has a grant writing center that could assist. Cindy Bendroth (CB) asked if it would be a good idea to put links to grant writing resources on the HARC grant website? Everyone said that would be fantastic. DWC also thought it would be good to put on a grant writing webinar this coming fall. JPD said that we need this first year to have some very high quality and successful grants to help build future momentum. He also said that we don't want to have to turn down lots of people and cautioned against too many applications for HARC grants. DWC agreed and said that a good balance between experienced applicants and small locals who need money for basic projects would be ideal.

RGR asked if there was any pressure to include grant applicants from diverse geographical areas in the state? DWC said maybe, but PHMC will deal with any political pressure. SHRAB doesn't need to worry about this.

MP asked if or when SHRAB would meet again to discuss HARC grant applications? CB and JS said that the applications are online, and they hoped to have SHRAB members make their decisions via email. Heidi Mays (HM) and MP said they would prefer to discuss applications in person. DWC said we could meet in person if necessary, but also suggested a phone conference instead.

JS then moved forward to discuss the Archives and Records Management (ARM) seminar. It is scheduled for October 23rd. PDF/A technology and policy is a big focus of this year's seminar. Last spring the state issued a new policy allowing state agencies and county governments to keep permanent electronic records in PDF/A format. JS said that the State Archives is still looking for a speaker who can talk about disaster planning. JS also said that this year's seminar will be a webinar/live audience hybrid. JPD asked if Adobe has any speakers in the area who would be available? JS said that he and CB have reached out to one of Adobe's people and didn't get a response. He wants someone to talk about practical guidance and how to follow/implement the current Commonwealth policy. JPD said that there are good case studies in the US court system and that he would try to help find a good contact there. JS also said that an important issue for a speaker to address is the disconnect that can occur between IT and records management staff during PDF/A implementation. *Update since the meeting: We have secured a PDF/A speaker, Stephen Levenson (creator of the PDF/A standard), for the ARM seminar.*

DWC said that the State Archives is going to expand their PDF/A policy to municipal governments soon and really needs some good examples to help municipal officers as they adopt the policy.

DWC also asked if any SHRAB members wanted to host satellite viewing locations for the ARM seminar. JPD offered the Heinz Center and asked for seminar information far in advance to he has enough time to advertise.

JS then talked about Archives Month plans. The State Archives will not make a poster like it has the past 3 years. Instead, content from the last 3 posters will be condensed into a comic book and distributed in *PA Heritage*. The State Archives will also be participating in "Ask an Archivist" on social media which has proven to be popular and easy to organize in the past.

DWC then opened the floor to SHRAB members to discuss their own work and provide feedback regarding current SHRAB projects.

DWC started this conversation by asking “What challenges are you facing?” Justin McHenry (JM) of the Franklin County Archives said that it has been a challenge to spread the word about what his institution has and to encourage the public to use their resources. DWC asked if he had any support from county officials or politicians? JM said yes, there is some support from elderly elected officials who are interested in history but that’s it.

SG said that the Heinz Center needs more staff to help carry out their basic functions. Outreach and preservation are their biggest needs. JM asked if they had interns available to help? SG said yes, but they could use more. She noted that having her archives connected with a museum has been helpful in attracting volunteers. MP suggested reaching out to students who need experience for jobs. NA also recommended reaching out to older folks who appreciate history and historical items. MP said that institutions looking for student help should look for computer science students too, they need practical experience for their portfolios and have lots of knowledge about computer systems.

HAM asked about the discoverability of PA institutions on ArchivesGrid? It is a free OCLC resource, a national clearing house for finding aids. She suggested that everyone contribute their archives’ finding aids to ArchivesGrid and begin using it.

DWC asked how SHRAB can best serve repositories across Pennsylvania? Especially with its limited funds? SG said that a survey of how people want SHRAB to best help them would be good. CB added that SHRAB did a survey 2 years ago. DWC said that he liked the idea of an online, self-reporting survey of all Pennsylvania repositories and their collections. NA said that the current SHRAB website is really underutilized and we need to find a way to use the website to our advantage. MP suggested using conferences and ARM to promote the use of the website. JPS added that a database of repositories would be better. It could contain a list of each repository, collection areas/highlights, contact information, and address. NA recommended using a database to create a network to communicate information about grants, training, etc. It could also be used to easily find speakers and other experts when needed by SHRAB. SG mentioned that Jack McCarthy worked on a similar project in the Philadelphia area with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. JPS said that a database would need to be updated regularly to be effective. DWC said that if SHRAB makes a database of PA repositories, the State Archives will put it on their website. JPD said he would write up a proposal by May 15. DWC said that the database could have a private backend with personal contact information as well. He also recommended starting the database out simply, and then expanding it later. Also, a self-reported narrative and topic check boxes (agriculture, labor, Amish, etc.) would be easy for users. RGR agreed and that the Pennsylvania Historical Association would probably be interested in assisting with this project.

DWC asked how to do we increase funding and accessibility of archives across Pennsylvania? HAM asked about lottery funds or some other large revenue source? An option on taxes to give money to historical programs in the state? How could we mass solicit donations? DWC said that it is very difficult to implement any kind of fees state wide. MP asked about friend’s groups? DWC said that the PHMC does

have a foundation and the State Museum has a friend's group. He also said that when the new archives building is done his staff will work more with donor groups.

MP said it was nice to have several guests at this SHRAB meeting and asked if board members could personally invite people to attend future SHRAB meetings? All agreed it was a good idea.

HAM said that PALA is currently working on podcast interviews with librarians, it would be good to do the same with archivists. DWC asked her to share more information with the group and she said she would.

JPD asked about the next meeting of SHRAB? JS said that there would be a phone conference in the fall and the board would meet again in the spring. DWC confirmed that the next meeting will be by phone.

DWC adjourned the meeting at 2:55.