

MINUTES

State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) Meeting

December 14, 2018

9:00 – 10:10

Teleconference

Participants: Stacey Peebles; Heidi Abbey Moyer; Nancy Avolese; Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh; Ben Goldman; Jim Beidler; Marilyn Parrish; Heidi Mays; Jack McCarthy; Martina Soden

Not participating: John Paul Deley; Ed Galloway; Sally Flaherty

David Carmicheal (DWC) began the meeting at 9:00 by calling roll. He then brought up the minutes from the meeting last April and asked for any corrections or comments. There were none. He called for a motion to approve the minutes. Nancy Avolese (NA) moved to approve and Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh (RGR) seconded. All voted to approve the minutes.

DWC then moved on to discuss old business, first with an update on the new State Archives building. Architects are continuing design and just completed interim construction. Drawings are due March 5 (bid documents) and he is expecting to break ground summer 2019. Construction is scheduled to be complete late 2021, though he suspects 2022 is more realistic. DWC will let all SHRAB members know when the ground breaking is in case any would like to attend.

DWC also discussed an upcoming State Archives booth at the PA Farm Show. The archives will be closed the week of January 10th so staff can work at the booth. The archives has doubled space from last year and will include 8 computers to provide free Ancestry searches to Farm Show visitors.

NA asked if the State Archives would like help for Farm Show from SHRAB members. DWC said we can always use an extra person. NA said she was willing to help. Heidi Abbey Moyer (HAM), also said DWC could sign her up. RGR also said she was available and asked if there was free parking? DWC said he would investigate and let SHRAB members know by email what shifts need more help. Marilyn Parrish (MP) also volunteered to help.

DWC then discussed Charter Day, being held Sunday, March 10th. The 1681 Pennsylvania Charter will go on display on Friday, March 8. There will be a special photo-op sessions with legislators on Monday and Tuesday. There are many new legislators so DWC is expecting a good turnout. Documents related to Pennsylvania's ratification of the 19th amendment will accompany the Charter.

NA mentioned she was pleased with how the ARM seminar went this past fall, and liked that Steve Levinson was a speaker.

DWC then discussed speaking/outreach events State Archives staff are participating in in 2019:

-Josh Stahlman (JS) will be presenting at the Hazelton Public Library: Personal/Family Archiving, modeled after the "Aunt Edna" booklet.

-JS will be presenting three three-hour sessions, and Tyler Stump (TS) one session on Records Management with the State Association of Boroughs. This presentation covers protecting and preserving essential municipal records, as well as educating local government officials about the Municipal Records Manual, and the PDF/A policy. Dates: April 16 Centre Co.; April 30 Northampton Co.; May 21 Allegheny Co. May 30; Delaware Co.

-TS will be speaking at the Clerk of Courts/Prothonotary Association annual conference in June about Records Management and PDF/A in Erie.

-TS will be speaking to Lancaster County staff about Records Retention and PDF/A in April.

JS then gave an overview of NHPRC Grant-funded activities that occurred since the last SHRAB meeting.

The Archives and Records Management (ARM) seminar was held in October and had 250 registrants online/in person this year. Sessions included "Why PDF/A?" by Stephen Levenson, and Building Blocks for Records Readiness by Josh Stahlman and Samantha Forsko.

DWC thanked the Heinz History Center for hosting a successful remote viewing event in their building. State Archives plans on conducting another ARM seminar next year. DWC asked for any SHRAB members with ideas about speakers, topics, etc. to let him know.

JS then mentioned the Archives Without Tears (AWOT) workshops that were held in June- one at the Erie Maritime Museum (19 registrants from 16 unique organizations) and the other at the Franklin County Historical Society (43 registrants from 30 unique organizations). Attendees from Waltervliet, Michigan and Austin, Texas traveled all the way to Pennsylvania just to attend these workshops. To date 736 registrants have participated in AWOT workshops, representing 485 different organizations. In 2019 AWOT will likely be held in Harrisburg and somewhere in the northern part of the state (possibly near Bradford?) JS asked SHRAB members to let him know if there were any locations they recommended holding workshops.

JS said that a new grant (2019 – 2021) was approved for \$19,567, including an additional \$3,000 per year for expanded funding for the ARM seminar to pay for speakers. The State Archives is also planning on creating Archival Awareness videos--short snippets to post on YouTube and social media.

DWC said with more money the next ARM could have remote speakers. Hopefully Commonwealth Media Services could assist with this.

Cindy Bendroth (CB) then talked about the Historic Archives and Records Care (HARC) Grants. This was the first year for the program. PHMC provided \$100k a year for two years. The call for applications was issued in May and closed in August. PHMC received 62 applications and 60 were eligible. A SHRAB subcommittee of 4 members: RGR, Jim Biedler (JB), Martina Soden (MS), and NA reviewed the grant applications. Since there were 60 they were divided into two panels.

This review process went ok but had some issues and should be revised for next year. Lots of lessons learned. Scoring was done through a rubric sheet. Scores were matched one-to-one between panels.

CB mentioned many applications came from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh based organizations. To foster geographic diversity the panels elected to split up a small portion of the money across the state. PHMC also graciously provided almost \$10k additional funding to fund a total of 16 grants.

CB noted that the subcommittee panel makes the funding determination on behalf of the Board.

CB said the next steps are pushing through financial services. Letters of acceptance/rejection will go out to applicants in January. DWC asked all SHRAB members to not make any announcements about who received grants until it is announced through the Governor's office.

CB also stated there was a question about if SHRAB members' organizations can apply for HARC grants. The question has gone to PHMC's counsel who is researching an answer.

The next HARC grant cycle will offer an increased \$150,000. PHMC was very pleased with the response to the grant program this year and the commissioners and executive director wanted to increase the funds for the next round of applicants.

CB will be working on eligibility requirements to clarify (both for panelists and applicants). She hopes to have that done in January or February and will send out for SHRAB review.

DWC said he would like to create short and concise webinars on the application process. These will be available for prospective applicants to view before the grant announcement is released in 2019. He noted that the State Archives may seek SHRAB assistance—will be working on early spring to have these available for May. CB also said TS is working on a guide for prospective applicants that shows examples of good applications from this current cycle.

CB asked everyone how we can determine the review panel structure for next cycle. She said there may be some money this year for review panelists. DWC said this would likely be for travel and does not know if reviewers could be paid a stipend. He has \$1000 for panels to come to Harrisburg to meet and review grants.

DWC said what happened this year is typical when splitting applications amongst reviewers. One panel scored more leniently than the other. Panel A more lenient—if scored by panel B, perhaps they would have been in middle instead of top. Need to think about how to reduce number of applications each reviewer has to review to reasonable amount and how to get the same group reading all the grants. He asked for suggestions from board members.

Jack McCarthy (JM) asked if there were separate categories for local government versus other repositories? Were they separate as in the past? DWC said no—we only had one funding stream this year. JM said it was handy in the past to break total funding into two pots. Then review panels could be broken down by categories. This was helpful to catch specific needs. Provides continuity and objectivity.

CB asked if counties had to provide funds from their improvement fund when some HARC grants used to be earmarked for them? JM said he didn't recall that but thought not. Jim Beidler (JM) also didn't remember any such stipulations.

DWC suggested that local government applicants should be encouraged to use matching from that pot next year.

RGR said in hindsight, she would have liked a way to streamline application—answer form questions and less free-form. Check off boxes would also be easier. There was lots of inconsistency between how applicants provided information. DWC agreed and said we would look to see how we can improve the application next time. RGR also suggested we supply applicants with sample application. There were a lot of applications, particularly small organizations, who were unfamiliar with writing grants—may have had a good project, but difficult to place because of writing.

NA added that the application sections on organization staff and how staff would be implemented to achieve grant project goals were confusing. Like RGR mentioned, it would be better to include a field to list all staff who will be working on projects. Would favor including job descriptions over resumes.

RGR also suggested less free ability for uploads. Maybe just a box that says: “list staff and qualifications as pertain to this project.” It should be less ambiguous. CB said the application could have a reduced narrative part.

NA said there could have been a check box for outcomes deliverables, and requirements.

CB said even though there were some difficulties in the application and review process, she was pleased with results and excited for next year. DWC added that next year we will be advertising \$150k. If excellent pool of applicants, may be able to expand. Anticipate even more funding the third year—conceivably up to 200k. The goal is to get great applications for next year. He thanked everyone for their work on the project.

NA said she thought SHRAB members shouldn't receive any stipends for reviewing future HARC grants. SHRAB participation is volunteer. She would rather money go to grant projects instead. RGR shared the sentiment. NA said this money should just be for travel, not for review time. DWC said he would take this into consideration.

DWC then moved on to discuss new business, beginning with a potential Pennsylvania Repository Grant (HAPI) that so far has been spearheaded by John Paul Deley (JPD).

DWC read some notes from JPD written this fall: JPD would like to create a grant proposal to create an online tool for repositories to self-report about their collections. This would also contain non-public information that could be used for disaster response or mitigation. The public could use this tool to find repositories or specific collections around the state. JPD noted the following on next steps:

- This grant (and the future project in general) will need dedicated and continual advocacy from SHRAB members.

- It would more efficient to have a grant manager. JPD has already contacted the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation (PHF) to be this grant's funding mechanism but has

not heard back as of yet. PHF is currently without an executive director and will be better able to respond when one is hired. DWC said he is confident that PHF would be willing to receive/manage funds for SHRAB but mentioned that they take 10% cut of all funds. Some granting agencies will not allow management fee of that amount. He thinks it's worth the fee for them to manage the grant, but this is up to Board.

-This grant needs a funding source. JPD believes that funding is feasible, but there are questions about sustainability. DWC added that if you send a letter or postcard to most organizations annually they will be reminded to report.

-This grant proposal needs to be refined into a final form and then SHRAB members can search for possible fund-granting organizations to get involved.

DWC asked JM and Ben Goldman (BG) to share any comments they had based on their previous experience on similar projects.

JM said he is happy to serve on committee to move along. He noted that some smaller repositories and local government offices will need a lot of hand holding for reporting. Will require a lot of work from grant administrator. Not sure that how JPD has it structured allows for enough staff time. Perhaps something to hash out as a subcommittee.

HM mentioned that this summer she looked at doing a pilot in Cumberland and Perry counties. CB and she talked about teasing out info from a survey back in 1999. She looked at Ben Goldman's list, Perry County specifically. Only two major organizations in town, Perry County Historical Society (they operate historic sites in the county) and Perry Historians, have most of the information. Thereunder there are smaller groups, townships, boroughs, etc.... She mentioned an issue where small groups may exist online, Facebook, for example, but do not have a physical location. County prothonotary, county commissioners, etc... were groups not previously considered. HM thought they'd be searching for just historical repositories, but social media, local government, non-historical organizations with historical records, etc. complicates their original scope.

JM said using a previous Historical Society of Pennsylvania project as model could help. When it began, it was focused on the 5-county Philadelphia area. The project originally was restricted to just history-based institutions (primary mission). Realized early on that there was a breadth of repositories with historical materials that are not historically focused groups. For example, LGBGT service agency in Philadelphia is *THE* repository for LGBGT history in Philadelphia. The project expanded to include non-history organizations, if they had archival materials and were non-profit—to include lots of important collections. JM continued to say that this HAPPI project has a lot of technicalities to parse out about who is included. Can't survey every non-profit in Pennsylvania but want to make certain as many relevant groups are represented too. Determination can probably be done at committee level. We need to carefully decide who to include.

DWC agreed and said a lot of details should be ironed out by a smaller group. He hoped that BG can bring to bear the experience with the project he is working on.

BG said his project at Penn State grew out of research to map climate-change vulnerabilities. He started with Archives Grid, which is not representative of all repositories. His group knew data exists on these repositories and went about collecting data where it existed. He got data from

archival/historical societies/organizations such as PHMC, PACSCL, MARAC, Three Rivers Archivists. His project was particularly inclusive and tried not to judge if an organization was “archival.” You can make the case that organizations have historical significance even if they’re not explicitly historical. It is a difficult question. How do you track and characterize? Data is out there, but it’s messy, hard to manage, difficult to get arms around. He suggested that this project decide up front what to include. BG said he would be happy to serve committee.

CB asked BG if his Penn State project contacted the repositories individually? BG said they contacted over 150 professional groups rather than individual repositories. 100 provided data on membership (institutional). He has not gotten through data yet. To date about they have identified 20,000 repositories across the US. Only worked through about 2/3 of sources.

DWC asked if anyone else would volunteer to work on the project with BG, JM, and JPD?

NA said she would be glad to as long as she doesn’t have to go to Pittsburgh. She worked on a similar task in the past on groups serving neglected and delinquent children—now with wolf sanctuaries.

JM said there are so many issues, maybe a planning grant would be best to first establish foundational work?

HAM agreed and said she would volunteer to take part in this project. She asked if other states have done similar projects? Are there any best practices we could consult?

BG said it’s all over the place, a veritable wild west.

DWC suspects any best practices might have to be found outside the archives community. Not sure who that would be. He also said the board would be open to subcommittee recommendations.

DWC continued: I want this project to benefit from BG’s experience. We at the State Archives had brief conversation with Samantha Forsko at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts. There is a remote possibility of getting FEMA grant money to consider how to mitigate risks to records repositories. One idea is to plot them in a GIS system. If going to do that, need to know who/what/where. This ties back in to this proposal. We are working on a list of potential outcomes. Talking with PEMA later in December. We have to convince PEMA that this is worthwhile. Will keep informed and see if can be tied back to HAPPI.

DWC asked for any further comments on HAPPI? There were none.

DWC moved on to mention JPD had suggested the next Pennsylvania Historical Association (PHA) meeting (Indiana, PA) in October should have a SHRAB panel about repositories across the state. DWC is willing to be a speaker, but it’s up to JPD and the Board. If Board is interested in submitting a proposal let JPD know so that he can proceed.

JM said he has a standard presentation on the earlier HSP project that could be adapted for this session and would be willing to participate.

Stacey Peoples (SP) also said she is willing to participate. DWC said that if anyone else is interested let JPD know as soon as possible.

DWC asked if there was any further new business or anything anybody wanted to report on?

MP announced Millersville is having a public signing with WGAL for their 1949-1979 film archive (6 pallets worth of material), which is coming to Millersville. Not yet public but will be on January 30. She also mentioned she went to Association of Moving Images Archivists conference in Portland this year. Next year it will be in Baltimore. Great conference to go to, highly recommended.

JM said he is directing a new project funded by the Pew Charitable Trust to create a Philadelphia Jazz archive. Philadelphia's rich jazz history and materials are mostly in care of musicians and their families. The project is currently conducting a survey. The next phase is to establish a Jazz archive. Pew has indicated support. It will likely affiliated with a university.

RGR shared news on PA photos and Documents through the State Library. It now has a timeline for migration to islandora (from ContentDM). Cutting off soon for uploads to Content DM. Between now and April, collections will migrate to islandora. All new collections post April—will be in islandora. Will be great to move out of clunky ContentDM.

DWC said he is looking forward to other side of the migration and noted that the State Archives continues adding collections. First info, then images. Currently adding 10 collections per week (only information currently, not yet images). State Archives is making Power Library the focus of its online assets.

HM reported the House of Representatives Archives is moving its entire collection across the street—out of the Forum Building to Irvis Office Building, 6th floor. DWC also indicated that the State Library is moving out of that building. Impacting many information resources.

With no further business, DWC called for adjournment. MP made the motion and NA seconded.

The meeting concluded at 10:10.