

## **State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB)**

### **Zoom Meeting**

**February 1, 2022**

**10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

**Board Members Present:** Cathy Boyer, Molly Tighe, Dr. Barbara Zaborowski, Robert O. Stakeley, Celia Caust-Ellenbogen, Adam Bentz, Richard Jenkins, John (Jack) Ertell, Nancy Avolese, Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh, Jack McCarthy

**Board Members Not Present:** Martina Soden, Carolyn Boyce

**PA State Archives Staff Attending:** David Carmicheal, Cindy Bendroth, Josh Stahlman, Tyler Stump

The meeting began at 10:15. David Carmicheal (DWC) took attendance and asked all members to introduce themselves briefly to new SHRAB members Cathy Boyer, Molly Tighe, and Dr. Barbara Zaborowski.

DWC then began discussing recent news and developments from the Historical and Archival Care Grants (HARC) program. Josh Stahlman (JS) thanked all SHRAB members who volunteered to review grant applications last year. 70 applications were submitted and PHMC ended up funding 34 of them for a total of \$175,280 in funds (48% of applicants approved). The grants were formally approved by the PHMC commissioners at their December meeting and grantees will receive funds and begin their projects this year in the summer.

JS also reported last summer the first cycle of HARC grants came to a close (2019-2021). He has compiled metrics from that cycle and distributed a summary HARC program report to SHRAB members. Since the program started PHMC has funded 110 projects, averaging 28 annually for a total of \$672,007 in funding. Projects have been funded in a majority of Pennsylvania counties, though there are several areas (mostly northern and central PA) that have not had any funded projects yet. Overall, the Board is satisfied with the geographic distribution of grants.

Nancy Avolese (NA) said she liked the grant distribution map and asked if SHRAB is planning on doing anything to reach out to unrepresented counties? DWC reminded everyone that geography is taken into account when PHMC and SHRAB reviews grants. DWC asked Board members to reach out to repositories and people they know in these areas and encourage them to apply in the next round as we're eager to approve grants for good projects in those areas.

Jack McCarthy (JM) said it would be nice if we could make a heat map to see where the bulk of grants are going (instead of just geographic coverage by county). He asked if most grants were going to higher population areas where there are more repositories. Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh (RGR) would like to see the repository budgets of all grantees to see if the program is really reaching small repositories as it is intended. She reminded everyone that a \$5,000 grant is far more substantial to a small organization.

JM asked if all Pennsylvania counties have a county historical society? Perhaps the historical societies in unrepresented counties could help reach potential applicants? JS wasn't sure but thought that most but not all counties have active county-level historical societies. [NOTE: Cindy Bendroth (CB) reached out to

Rusty Baker from PA Museums with this question, and he said there are roughly 60 PA counties with historical societies, though not all of them are currently active).

CB reminded everyone that funds given to HARC grantees comes from Keystone funds. PHMC's executive director decides how much money the program will get annually, though in recent years SHRAB has been able to get more than the allotted amount to help fund a handful of applications that were good and provided geographic diversity but didn't make the top of the list. The 2022 call for applications will indicate that \$150,000 is available.

DWC asked for volunteers to review this next cycle of HARC grant applications. Reviewing will be in September and October. Reviewers will be divided into three groups by applicant's repository type: government, academic, and historical repositories.

CB briefly spoke about efforts to create a state-wide historical repository directory. She has been investigating PA SHARE as a potential host for the repository directory since PHMC already has the system and a large contract with the vendor who created it. She is currently working with the State Historical Preservation Office to determine technical requirements and metadata to collect from repositories. The intention would be to have the directory's information available to the public, with some internal information stored internally but not public (for use in assisting with disasters, etc.). CB hopes to get a quote from the PA SHARE vendor to share with SHRAB.

DWC then moved on to talk about the upcoming NHPRC grant application for the State Archives and SHRAB. The application is due June 8<sup>th</sup>. JS said that all current SHRAB activities (AWOT workshops, ARM seminar, CHD events, Archives Month poster, CoSA dues, SHRAB meetings, etc.) are funded by this grant. The grant has two levels of funding this time- up to \$12,000 (level one) or up to \$80,000 (level two). Since the funds from this grant would become available in July 2023, the State Archives would like to include funding for programming in the new State Archives building in the application as well. RGR said "education for the general public" is part of SHRAB's mission statement so including programming funds in the grant application is a good idea. She would like to see that be a focus for future grant-funded SHRAB activities.

Cathy Boyer asked about partnering with PCN (Pennsylvania Cable Network) to promote the State Archives and its resources- could we invite them to come to the new building and film a show about it? DWC said PCN did a show on the current archives building a few years ago so it would be easy to contact them for this again once the new building is open. He liked this idea. DWC asked other SHRAB members to let him know if they think of any more programming ideas over email.

DWC then moved on to talk about SHRAB's end-of-year report and strategic plan. NA and Adam Bentz (AB) have been working a lot on this. NA led a group discussion about the strategic plan. She and AB reviewed the most recent SHRAB needs assessment (2016) and it is still viable. BZ noted that the world had changed since 2016 and that we may have very different results. She suggested having focus groups to update the survey data. NA and AB wrote an end-of-year report to report on what SHRAB has done and how its achieving its goals. Goals are based off of the most recent SHRAB strategic plan, which is 20 years old, which they think could be an issue when applying to future grants and funding.

NA asked if everyone else was satisfied with the current strategic plan and needs assessments, or if they should be redone/updated? RGR said she would like to see a more targeted strategic plan for SHRAB, something with goals that can be achieved within 3 or 5 years (not an overly ambitious plan like the

previous one). NA agreed. Barb Zaborowski (BZ) said if a needs assessment were done today you'd get very different answers regarding use and access of archival materials than in 2016. An updated needs assessment is a good idea. She also suggested using focus groups instead of general surveys. JM suggested using the historical repository directory to shape SHRAB's strategic plan- once the contact information for all repositories is gathered ask them what their needs and concerns are. DWC said that the directory will initially just be gathering basic information about repositories so this might not be feasible until later.

Jack Ertell suggested having an annual SHRAB meeting exclusively about strategic planning- making sure that goals are being met, what to do if they aren't, etc. NA liked this idea and asked if SHRAB could have a meeting outside of the two regular meetings each year. Its hard to work on strategic planning when it's a small part of the general meetings. Can SHRAB members meet on their own (non-quorum) to work on strategic planning outside of regular SHRAB meetings? PSA staff will check with the PHMC attorney.

Cathy Boyer said she liked reading the end-of-year report from NA and AB. It was useful in understanding SHRAB's current work and goals. She suggested any future plans have a timeline in order to set priorities and deadlines. This will help make sure nothing is missed. NA agreed and said that even though she'd been in SHRAB for several years she still feels like she doesn't entirely understand SHRAB's direction or what she should be doing as a board member. SHRAB's mission statement indicates the board should be more active than it currently is, but at present State Archives staff seem to be doing the bulk of the work.

DWC said that SHRAB working on strategic planning is a good thing. He reported that PHMC had just completed a new strategic plan and that the Archives has specific goals within that plan. He reminded everyone that SHRAB is an advisory board though the members might give advice as to how PSA can meet its goals within the PHMC strategic plan. He said he would send a summary ((See Attached) of those to the Board.

NA and AB volunteered to create a committee or something similar to work on a strategic plan for the next two years. She invited any other members who are interested to let her know and they'd like to have a meeting in May or June. AB said he'd like the strategic planning group to be organic- it will grow over time.

DWC asked CB to get a list of all currently active historical societies in PA to give to AB for use in strategic planning.

TS idea: see if a SHRAB member could attend county historical society board meetings?  
To tell them about SHRAB, etc.?

NA asked if everyone wanted to have an end of year report for 2021 now? Or wait until strategic planning is more done? JM and Cathy Boyer both said they would like the report now.

DWC thanked NA and AB for their work on SHRAB's strategic plan and moved on to ask for SHRAB to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Jack Ertell so moved, and AB seconded. All SHRAB members voted to approve the minutes.

DWC then briefly gave some updates on the new State Archives building: construction is on schedule and the building is nearing completion. Shelving will be installed in February. He is hoping to begin moving archives collections on September 19<sup>th</sup>, and the archives will be closed during that move. AB

asked if there are any plans for the current archives building? DWC said PHMC owns the building and is currently doing a feasibility study for the building right now. It might store collections in the tower and use offices for education space, though there are no definite plans at this time. NA asked for a special SHRAB tour of the new building once it's done. DWC said we'll have an in-person SHRAB meeting in the building as soon as we can, pandemic or not.

With no other questions, comments, or concerns, DWC adjourned the meeting at 11:27.

**Summary of the PHMC Strategic Plan for the State Archives**

### 1. By February 2021

	2.E.2. By 12/31/2021, engage two digital archivists.			DC/DB
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(2E2) planned for Feb and Dec 2021

### 2. By June 2021 - SHRAB

	1.A.1. By 06/30/2021, create parameters and database format/infrastructure.			DC
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SHRAB begin by proposing database model? Parameters for inclusion and identification of information collected (institution name, location, etc.) PA museums parameters for museums and historical societies. Parameters for verification.

### 3. By June 2021

	2.A. By 6/30/2021, create or update desk guides or wikis for all positions to ensure key responsibilities and processes are documented and accessible.			
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Probably we'll need to have lists by then where we've prioritized what guides we're working on and what is next

### 4/5. By June 2021

	2.E.1. By 06/30/2021, develop a plan to create a digital Archives in collaboration with OA/IT.			DC
	2.F.1. By 06/30/2021, develop the plan to augment the uploading to the POWER Library.			DC ongoing

This is (2E1) ongoing and on schedule; and (2F1) our ongoing efforts to increase the speed of our uploads to Power Library.

### By September 2021

	1.A.1. By 09/30/2021, develop a plan to identify best practices, prioritize legacy collections for review and update of records to make collections findable, retrievable, and usable through increasingly efficient cataloging and crowd sourcing to enable physical and intellectual access.			
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In progress | Argus, Finding Aids, PA-SHARE. June 30 to develop plan. List of terms - searchable and legacy. Curators group.

This is our effort to include appropriate keywords/search terms in our finding aids for diverse audiences (what terms would someone use to search for LGBTQ collections, for example?); and also crowdsourcing efforts to transcribe documents, and to tag collections, photos, etc. (not yet begun—is Power Library adding such a tool?).

**6. By December 2021**

	2.E.2. By 12/31/2021, engage two digital archivists.			DC/DB
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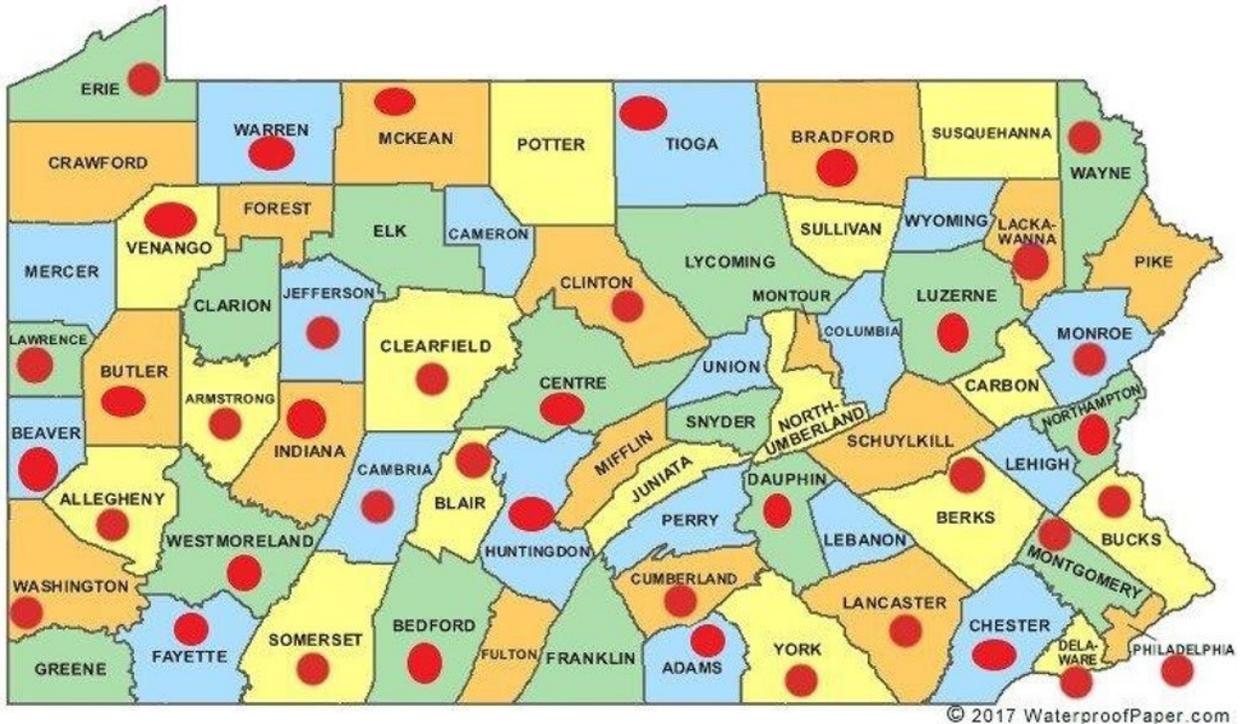
2E2) planned for Feb and Dec 2021

**By December 2021**

	2.B.1. <b>12/31/2021</b> , develop an internal Agency discussion group to determine the nature of the guidance needed. (i.e., regulation, management directives)			DC
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This is our discussion with Gerard re: whether we need to issue Records Management regulations or a Management Directive, etc.

Cumulative HARC grant distribution through the 2021 cycle.



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Grant Cycle	Applicants	Funded	% of applicants funded	Amount Awarded
2018 Alfred (2019 - 2021 projects)	60	16	26%	109,550
2019 Bert (2020 - 2022 projects)	54	29	48%	189,295
2020 Clyde (2021 - 2023 projects)	61	31	51%	197,952
2021 Dudley (2022 - 2024 projects)	70	34	48%	175,280
2022 Edna (2023 - 2025 projects)	tbd	tbd	tbd	tbd
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>avg: 43%</b>	<b>672,077</b>