

# 29 October 2004

## From OHRAB

Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, October 29, 2004 Ohio Historical Center, Columbus

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Laurie A. Gemmill; Charles Arp; Roland M. Baumann; John Fleming; Raimund Goerler; James Oda; Kermit Pike; Carol Tomer

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: William K. Laidlaw, Jr.; Barbara Floyd; Julie McMaster

OHS STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Tooker, James Strider, Betsy Butler

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### I. Call to Order

In State Coordinator William K. Laidlaw, Jr.'s absence, Rachel Tooker called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. After expressing Mr. Laidlaw's regret in not being able to attend today's meeting, Ms. Tooker explained that today's agenda reflects an effort to present items requesting action and advice from board members first. Then, reports and updates on board initiatives will occur.

### II. Approval of Minutes of August 20, 2004 Meeting

Board members suggested that academic titles for board members be replaced with general prefixes in future meeting minutes. It was moved by Roland M. Baumann and seconded by John Fleming that the August 20, 2004 meeting minutes be approved as presented, after that change is made.

Following discussion of the August meeting minutes, Charles Arp gave some updates including the fact that the beta version for the Basics of Archives workshop was presented during the weekend of October 22, 2004. The project, funded by the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), should be accomplished by the end of the year. Mr. Arp also mentioned that OHRAB members will receive a packet of materials pertaining to giving or sponsoring Archives 101 workshops for county and historical societies.



### III. Review and Discussion of Grant Proposals

To begin discussion of the NHPRC grant proposals from the American Jewish Archives and the University of Toledo, Laurie Gemmill provided an overview of what OHRAB's responsibilities are in reviewing and commenting on grant proposals. Then, Ms. Gemmill summarized the board's earlier recommendations and comments regarding the preliminary versions of both proposals.

After the board discussed the merits and challenges of both proposals, Ms. Tooker reminded the board that Ms. Gemmill should receive their written evaluations by November 15, 2004.

To conclude the board's discussion of these grant proposals, Mr. Fleming distributed handouts summarizing ideas being considered at the Cincinnati Museum Center for projects that may be proposed as future NHPRC grant

applications.

OHRAB members discussed two ways to improve its future review and discussion of grant proposals. First, copies of the reviews would be provided to all reviewers. Second, after a grant applicant presents the initial proposal to the board and receives feedback from board members about how it could be strengthened, OHRAB will ask the applicant to provide a summary of how the revised application has been changed to reflect the board's comments and advice. This will facilitate the board's review of the revised application.

#### IV(a). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Review Letter to Records Repositories

Ms. Tooker then turned the board's attention to review of activities relating to its 2005-2007 strategic plan. In the plan, OHRAB is charged to increase the number and quality of grant applications to NHRPC for historical records projects in Ohio. To accomplish this goal, members agreed that the board should distribute a letter and accompanying brochure to selected Ohio records repositories about the availability of NHRPC grants, encouraging them to work with OHRAB in submitting proposals for those funding opportunities.

Ms. Tooker requested that the board discuss not only institutions to receive this mailing, but also whether the letter and brochure match the board's expectations. After mentioning that both documents have been shared with NHRPC, Ms. Gemmill led the discussion of this topic.

Since Ohio-based grants are something the board strives to encourage, it wishes to engage in discussions with institutions before they have fully developed their grant proposals. Messrs. Oda and Arp suggested that the letter should emphasize that if an institution is serious about pursuing an NHRPC grant, it should consider collections with national importance. Mr. Fleming agreed, stating that the letter should be encouraging, yet should also emphasize that projects should be backed with strong funding. Stressing the rigorous nature of the board's evaluations and its willingness to help the grant-seeker through the process would also enhance the letter.

Board members also suggested that the cover letter:

- Encourage organizations to attend workshops to help them design a successful grant project, such as those offered by the Society of Ohio Archivists and cosponsored by OHRAB
- Emphasize collaborative projects
- Suggest that mid-size institutions contact OHRAB to see whether their collections are relevant for this opportunity.

The board decided that the mailing should be sent before the board's January 2005 meeting.

#### IV(b). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Ohio Electronic Records Committee Update

One of the goals listed in OHRAB's strategic plan advocates for the board to assist public and private entities throughout the state in dealing with electronic records challenges. To accomplish this task, OHRAB will collaborate with the Ohio Electronic Records Committee (OERC) to develop best practices for electronic records, facilitate training for archivists on electronic records issues, and establish an official representative to the committee.

To begin discussion of ways OHRAB can partner with OERC, Ms. Gemmill updated members on the group's challenging, but productive, year. Recently, OERC re-evaluated its purpose, how its guidelines could be implemented, how its membership and committees evolve, and its relationship with the Ohio Historical Society. Ms. Gemmill relayed that its mission is not to enforce policies, but to be an organization that helps to form best practices. To carry out this mission, OERC will not only conduct a survey to determine its goals and needs, but also

secure more local government representation.

Ms. Gemmill reported that the September 15th meeting resulted in her becoming chair of the ERC and a new partnership. The ERC is now a joint effort of the Ohio Historical Society and Ohio State University, through its John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy.

Ms. Tooker then asked the board to name an official representative to OERC that would provide OERC reports at future OHRAB meetings. Barbara Floyd was previously mentioned as a fitting candidate for this position and has agreed to serve. Mr. Arp moved that Ms. Floyd be named the board's designate to OERC. Mr. Oda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### IV(c). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: OHRAB Appointments

To improve its effectiveness, OHRAB is charged to clarify its organizational procedures and structure. Therefore, board members were asked to begin thinking about skills, qualities and experience of individuals best suited to membership on the board.

Ms. Tooker reminded the board that two of its vacancies were not to be filled until the draft of the new strategic plan had been accomplished. Additionally, three positions are approaching renewal on March 31, 2005. Therefore, she proposed forming a nominating committee to work with Ms. Gemmill to compile a list of names and qualifications of potential board members that would be forwarded to Coordinator Laidlaw.

Mr. Goerler mentioned that one of the board's recent successes was the conference it held in September 2003. He suggested looking at what expertise or constituencies the board needs to have represented, then whether it is possible to fill those matches from those who attended that conference. Mr. Oda concurred, advocating for broad representation of constituencies on the board.

Several board members emphasized the importance of nurturing new board members, such as by encouraging them to contribute thoughts and ideas to board meetings, clarifying their responsibilities as board members, demonstrating board productivity, and developing opportunities for veteran board members to mentor new board members. An orientation program, a board retreat, and rotation options for board members were also suggested.

After Ms. Tooker requested volunteers for the nominating committee, Mr. Pike, Ms. Tomer, Mr. Baumann, and Mr. Fleming agreed to serve, with Ms. Gemmill as coordinator. Mr. Pike asked for clarification of the committee's purpose; Ms. Tooker answered that the committee should study the board's strategic plan, identify fitting candidates for board positions through networking and recruitment, share those recommendations with fellow board members, and then present a final, rank-ordered list of names to Mr. Laidlaw for his review. As state coordinator, Mr. Laidlaw would then forward a final list to the governor's office for action.

Since the board has strong representation by archivists and historical societies, members discussed the need to add individuals who represent the constituencies that OHRAB serves, particularly public libraries, the Ohio Newspaper Association, the County Commissioners Association, and other related organizations to reflect what OHRAB hopes to accomplish in the future.

#### IV(d). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Public Records Subcommittee Update

At OHRAB's August 20, 2004 meeting, board members agreed that developing funding for records activities was critically important. Therefore, a public records subcommittee was established that would not only explore these funding options, but also advocate the improvement of state and local records management programs and the accessibility of public records.

As chair of this committee, Mr. Arp notified the board that Ms. Gemmill had inquired of Rep. W. Scott Oelslager how OHRAB could assist him with public records legislation that he is working on. Rep. Oelslager welcomes the board's participation when the bill is introduced.

Mr. Arp also reported that he had recently spoken with a member of the Ohio Attorney General's staff regarding the definition of a public record, electronic records, requests for public records, training for public officials, and legislation introduced.

Mr. Strider concluded discussion of this topic by stressing that developing relationships with Rep. Oelslager and Attorney General Petro are critically important to the future of public records.

#### V. Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Bylaws Subcommittee Update

Mr. Oda described his and Mr. Strider's initial efforts to clarify OHRAB's organizational procedures, define its structure, and create bylaws.

After reviewing the board's draft bylaws, its original rules and regulations, and governing documents and provisions from other state historical records advisory boards, both gentlemen concluded that OHRAB is an entity that operates under unique restrictions and guidelines. They plan to present a draft of OHRAB's governing documents for review and approval at the board's January 2005 meeting. The Ohio Historical Society's legal counsel, Fred J. Milligan, will also review these bylaws.

This report led to a group discussion of the concept of ex officio board members — those individuals who are part of OHRAB by virtue of their position in an organization in order to represent the board's constituencies. They are able to provide opinions and relay information, but do not have voting privileges. The board agreed that exploring the possibility of ex officio members is a valid recruiting tool to identify individuals who demonstrate an interest in OHRAB.

Ms. Tomer observed that progress on drafting these bylaws affects the nominating committee's task. Therefore, she encouraged the board to think about individuals that might be suited as either ex officio or official board members.

#### VI. Next Steps: Constituent Advocacy

Before OHRAB can create effective programs for its constituents, the board must define those constituents and regularly assess their needs. To prepare for discussion at OHRAB's January 2005 meeting, Ms. Tooker and Mr. Strider asked board members to consider ways that OHRAB might identify and assess those constituent needs.

Mr. Goerler concurred, suggesting that when the board developed its September 2003 conference, *The Future of Our Past: Ohio's Historical Records at 200 Years*, it defined its constituents in three categories: records creators, records keepers, and records users.

Mr. Baumann suggested the possibility of a re-granting project by making the SHRAB an agency to administer money, re-granting can bring in new constituent interests, provide collaborative opportunities, and reshape past programming for the 21st century.

#### VII. Updates: Open Meetings Act

During its August 2004 meeting, OHRAB members discussed whether meetings should be conducted in ways similar to other open meetings of public bodies. Although OHRAB posts its meeting dates and minutes like other

public bodies do, some OHRAB practices would change if OHRAB opted to follow all provisions of the Open Meetings Act, such as evaluation of grant proposals and subcommittee activities.

Mr. Strider updated the board on the potential impact of state sunshine laws on OHRAB. Since OHRAB is not identified in the state code and works through a federal process, OHRAB does not fall under sunshine laws. However, it could establish a policy to be open in the conduct of its activities and such a policy could be included in its bylaws.

#### VIII. Updates: OHRAB Administrative Grant

Ms. Gemmill notified the board that OHRAB's administrative grant application was submitted to the NHPRC on September 1, 2004. A decision will be made at NHPRC's November 16 meeting, and OHRAB will be notified shortly thereafter. The grant would be effective December 1, 2004.

To conclude the meeting, Mr. Strider mentioned that over 600 people have registered for the upcoming Building Connections conference, taking place in Columbus November 4-6, 2004. He encouraged participation by the board and those in their respective organizations.

Ms. Tomer inquired whether OHRAB could sponsor the conference, and suggested that it present a session about NHPRC grant opportunities.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 1:00 p.m.

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