

24 April 2009

From OHRAB

OHIO HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD Meeting Minutes

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Laidlaw, Jelain Chubb, Janet Carleton, Judy Cetina, Dan Noonan, John Runion, Jill Tatem, Galen Wilson, Lauren Lubow, Pam Speis, Dawne Dewey, Bob Keener

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Bernie Quilter, Nikki Taylor

OHS STAFF PRESENT: Sharon Dean, Pari Swift, Patty Davis, Todd Kleismit

1. Welcome

Bill Laidlaw called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and thanked the members for attending.

2. Appointments and requirements of OHRAB members

Laidlaw announced the reappointment of Janet Carleton, John Runion, and Nikki Taylor and introduced newly appointed members Bob Keener, Dawne Dewey, Pam Speis, and Lauren Lubow. All board members introduced themselves.

3. Approval of January 23, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Laidlaw asked for a motion to approve the January minutes. Judy Cetina motioned for approval, Galen Wilson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

4. NHPRC Update

4a. SNAP Grant Application

Jelain Chubb announced that the State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) grant application was submitted to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) on March 4. She gave a brief review of the grant, explaining what projects the requested funds would help support. The Commission will meet in late May to review all grant proposals and the board should know if the grant was approved shortly afterwards.

4b. NHPRC Reauthorization and budget

Chubb informed the board that the NHPRC reauthorization and budget, which must be approved by Congress, should be voted on shortly. The House version of the bill would increase the NHPRC budget cap from \$10 to \$20 million. The bill has not been introduced into the Senate yet, but a Senator from Delaware is looking for supporters. Chubb found a copy of a letter from Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown supporting records initiatives and specifically mentioning NHPRC. Chubb encouraged the board to send, call, fax, or email letters to Brown and their representatives. Chubb noted that the reauthorization of NHPRC is critical – without it OHRAB cannot receive funding.

Dan Noonan asked if there was a conflict between NHPRC reauthorization and PAHR funding. Chubb explained that PAHR would provide a specific amount of money to each state for records projects on an annual basis. NHPRC grants are competitive and focus on projects that have more national significance or serve as models. PAHR would allow for funding of locally important collections. Jill Tatem noted that members could argue that PAHR leverages NHPRC funds.

4c. NHPRC Grant Reviews

Members were given both board and peer reviews of the NHPRC grants for Ohio University and Wright State University in order to understand the process, as well as to compare the board summary against peer reviewers for stronger board reviews in the future. Judy Cetina noted that the board provided comprehensive comments, while the peer reviews looked at single portions of the applications. Chubb stated that peer reviewers were chosen as subject specialists, so they are likely to be more critical of certain parts of applications. Tatem noticed that peer reviewers looked at certain key, which if presented to future applicants, will assist in better proposals in the future. She asked the board if the key points would be good information to add in workshops.

The board began to discuss grant-writing workshops. Chubb noted that OHRAB sent a proposal for a presentation on NHPRC grants to the Society of Ohio Archivists (SOA) for their spring meeting. The SOA program committee combined the presentation with other grant-centric segments to form a workshop, held separately from the meeting and with a separate fee. Chubb asked how the board felt about charging a fee for the workshop, and if the board should make it a policy in the future to present workshops only when no fees are attached, other than main conference fees. Tatem felt that because of the outreach benefits of workshops, charged or otherwise, outweigh the detriments. Cetina noted that because of financial difficulties, free regional workshops put on by board members could be beneficial, as people who are not able to attend large conferences are the most in need of the grants. Speis felt that a combination of paid, free and web workshops will attract the largest audience.

Noonan asked if it would be possible to repurpose workshop materials into online tutorials. Chubb noted that this could be part of the website development that is outlined in the SNAP grant application. Wilson noted that online workshops may be beneficial; “workshops” could be presented online where interaction (voting, questions, etc.) could occur simultaneously with the presentation.

Chubb stated that if OHRAB would like to present more workshops members will need to be involved. A possibility would be to establish a committee to address grant writing and workshop opportunities, both general and online, and asked Speis to join the committee to add another viewpoint. Speis agreed to join. Wilson agreed to chair the committee. The Workshop Committee consisting of Wilson, Noonan, Dewey, and Speis will report at the next meeting.

5. Impact of the Financial Crisis on Archives

Laidlaw reviewed the funding cuts by the governor’s office that will affect the Ohio Historical Society (OHS). To deal with the cuts, OHS has developed a new plan, which focuses on collections (including archives) and sites, outreach and field services, and access for research and education.

The General Assembly made increases to the State Archives budget in FY2007-2008, and when reductions have occurred, they have been less in the line item for that contains State Archives. Beginning in October, the reading room will increase its operations from 24 to 40 hours, and there will be increases in processing and digitization. The Society is also aiming to hire more staff in the State Archives.

Collections Division Director Sharon Dean explained that teams from every department, including State Archives,

were traveling on a weekly basis to OHS sites to conduct inventories of collections as sites enter management agreements with local parties. Chubb stated that because State Archives staff members are either in the field conducting inventories, or off from working on Saturday, the State Archives is essentially closed on Mondays. Until the inventories are completed, hiring and training of new staff, new projects, and other activities are on hold.

Tatem asked what impact the inventories would have on the board's strategic plan. Chubb noted that because Assistant State Archivist Pari Swift is leaving the State Archives to accept a position at the Attorney General's office, and because Government Records Archivist Patty Davis is involved in the inventories, the State Archives support for the board will need to be reduced.

Wilson asked Chubb and Laidlaw to what degree are they comfortable with less OHS/State Archives support of the board. Chubb noted that, for the most part, board members ran the task forces and committees making the board more member than staff driven. She asked that when they authored reports, or when the decisions affected the State Archives, she be able to review and make suggestions for revisions.

Runion asked how the inventories would affect the Local Government Records (LGR) program. Chubb stated that the LGR workshops for the summer have been cancelled. Noonan was concerned about the cancelation of the workshops and asked if they could be worked around inventories. Chubb noted that the reason the workshops were cancelled had to do with the experience of the LGR archivist, as well as the inventories. The current LGR Archivist has only been in her position for approximately 5 months, and is not experienced in presenting the LGR workshops. The success of the presentations is dependent on staff knowledge and experience, as the workshops involve answering questions from attendees. Swift has more than 8 years experience and with her departure Chubb was concerned that attendees would not get the same level of expertise from the current LGR Archivist.

Lauren Lubow asked if the Attorney General's office public records workshops could assist in the lack of records management workshops. Chubb noted that in the past there had been partnership workshops with the Auditor, Attorney General, and State Archives however the other offices could not provide information on the specifics of responsibilities of the State Archives.

The board diverted from the topic of the financial crisis, and reviewed the Records Management case statement crafted by members to address the lack of proper Records Management at the State level. Laidlaw noted that it needed to be written to address people's problems not "our" problems. He asked that personal stories be used and that they note what has happened where records are not available, and be phrased to indicate how records management will affect the ultimate user.

Keener felt the case statement as written was very strong and that it was directed at the user. He also noted that the more it was expanded the less it would be read. Keener thought that the target audience would be twofold – those who are elected, and those who will advocate to officials. He also thought the document was aimed at those who worked with records, and it may need readjustment to address government officials. Speis stated that it was exactly something that would be beneficial to hand to officials – she also stated that officials would not read the executive summary or the stories. Cetina asked if the stories could be removed and put on a separate sheet – Keener noted they could be on the opposite side of the statement.

Cetina stated that the committee would reform to review how the information could be better packaged and would report at the next meeting.

6. Advocating for Ohio's Documentary Heritage

6a. Local Records Task Force/ Fee Fund

In February, Swift and Chubb met with the association of county commissioners to discuss the fee fund. The commissioners seemed interested and participated in discussions. In March, they met with the county records association's executive committee. The executive committee expressed concerns about the affect the fund would have on general revenue. Swift and Chubb emphasized that the legislation could be crafted to cover their concerns.

Todd Kleismit stated that he had attended the meetings, and is optimistic that something will come out of the talks. Laidlaw noted that the State Archives has tried in the past to secure a fee fund, and there was great reluctance, but recently the organizations involved have been more receptive, as the fees would be outside of general revenue, making them more appealing.

Chubb noted that the county commissioners realize that records are an issue, but they do not have enough money to deal with them. If they have funding to take care of the records outside of the general revenue, they are supportive. However, they do not want funds going to the State Archives, as they feel it is giving money to "the state". Chubb and Swift have been appealing to make these offices understand the benefits of what the State Archives can do to assist in their records problems.

Swift think the clerks of courts might support the fee fund, however they will need to get the support from the judges. Chubb noted that if the fund goes through the clerks of courts, the fees would only be attached to court records and the focus would have to be on those files.

6b. Statehood Day Recap

Kleismit noted that Statehood Day had a huge impact on state legislators. There were about 250 people in attendance this year, which has grown from the previous two years. Around 70 or 80 visits with senators and/or representatives were conducted. The date for next year will be either March 2 or 3. In the future, attendees may be asked to set up their own groups and meetings with representatives and/or senators, OHS will provide support if necessary.

6c. Preserving the American Historical Record (PAHR) Act

Chubb noted that next week the PAHR bill will be reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. Next Thursday, she and Kleismit have meetings with staff from Representatives Boccherie, Fudge, Kucinich, and Sutton's district offices. OHRAB members Runion and Cetina and other local government records employees will join Chubb and Kleismit at meetings in their congressional offices. Kleismit is also trying to arrange a meeting with Representative Steve Dreihaus' office in Cincinnati. The purpose of the visits is to get supporters for PAHR, with a secondary issue of NHPRC reauthorization. Members were asked to contact their representatives in support of both measures.

7. Ohio Electronic Records Committee (OERC)

Runion announced that Noonan is the new chair of the OERC. The board then discussed the anticipated SNAP grant funding of OERC workshops. The workshops, which will be held in different regions of the state, will highlight best practices and how the OERC can help. The only fees would be for lunches.

After some general closing remarks, Laidlaw presented Swift with a certificate of appreciation and thanked her for her years of service to the board. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01pm.

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