

OHIO HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Minutes, May 6, 2016

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephen Badenhop (arrived at 11:45 a.m.), Ron Davidson, Sara Harrington, Dan Noonan (arrived at 11:11 a.m.), Liz Plummer (ex officio), Fred Previts (ex officio), Pari Swift, Rhonda Freeze and Galen Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Burt Logan (ex officio), Dawne Dewey,

OHS STAFF PRESENT: Theresa Hopewood, Megan Wood (arrived at 10:06 a.m., left at 10:26 a.m.), and Mark Sundlov (arrived at 11:00 a.m., left at 12:05 p.m.)

GUESTS: None

1. Welcome

Swift called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Previts introduced Theresa Hopewood, new Administrative Assistant for the Museums and Library Services Division. Board members introduced themselves.

2. Consent Agenda

Swift asked if there were any changes to the draft of the January 29 meeting minutes. With no changes, Wilson moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Harrington. None opposed. Consent agenda for Friday, May 6, 2016 was approved.

3. Strategic Discussion

a. OHRAB Grant Budget (Fred Previts)

Previts presented the board with the 2015 and 2016 budgets. The 2015 budget includes the expenses for the meetings held in January and March 2016 to foster grant collaboration. The board received an extension on the 2015 grant to host these meetings. Swift inquired if the unspent money had to be returned. Previts responded that it did. Freeze asked for the total amount not spent. Previts responded that it is about \$570. The board then looked at the 2016 budget. The major expense is the regrant program. The board distributed a little under \$14,000 out of the \$18,000 that was available. There is still about \$4,500 for the regrant program and this will be discussed later in the meeting. Wilson asked about the in-kind contributions for the regrants since not all of the regrant funding was distributed. Previts responded that it won't be known for sure until the end of the year how much match was provided by the regrant recipients but in the past years the recipients always provided more than a one-to-one match on the grant projects. Davidson added that he recalls one of the grant recipient's match was much greater than one-to-one.

b. Ohio History Connection Update (Megan Wood)

Wood mentioned that she would like to provide the board regular updates on the activities of the Museums and Library Services Division. Since Todd Kleismit was not able to attend, Wood shared an update on the Ohio History Fund grant program. Tax check-off programs need to meet a minimum threshold of \$150,000 in donations in order to remain on the tax form. If it falls under the \$150,000 two years in a row the History Fund will be removed from the tax check-off program. Kleismit is working with other tax check-off programs to see if either the \$150,000 threshold could be lowered or if it could be changed from two years under the threshold to five years. Harrington asked what would be an appropriate threshold. Wood responded they're looking at \$50,000. Board members mentioned that it is difficult to make the tax refund contributions with the online filing system.

Wood mentioned the Governor's capital budget. It includes about \$3 million to convert the Ohio History Center's stationary shelving on the 3rd and 5th floors to compact shelving. The budget still has to be approved by the legislature. In addition, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission has \$1 million in their budget to study a new collections facility. Wood stated she would keep the board updated and Previts is involved in the project.

Wood shared the opening for Gallery 3, which will focus on artifacts from the 88 counties, will take place the weekend of May 28. This is the same weekend Ohio Village will be opening. There will be a photography exhibit that connects to the 1950's exhibit opening in the fall.

Wilson inquired if the Ohio History Connection is the only organization in the tax check-off program that is a membership organization as opposed to being a government agency. Wood believed that was true. Wood mentioned that the majority of the funds generated by the tax check-off program are distributed to other historical organizations. Only a small amount is retained by the Ohio History Connection to administer the program. Wilson inquired about the types of grant recipients and Wood replied that they are local organizations, such as historical societies and libraries. Wood stated that the Museums and Library Services staff members reviewed 20 to 30 applications this year and the program has always had more applicants than available funds.

Wilson inquired if Wood could return to the meeting later for further discussion. Wood replied that she could not but she would try to find someone who could join the meeting from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Wood left the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

c. Membership Update (Fred Previts)

Previts reported that Freeze was reappointed by the Governor in March. The vacant positions have not been filled by the Governor's Office yet. Previts contacted Meghan Hays at the Shaker Heights Public Library about filling the position formerly held by Heidi Samuel. Hays agreed to serve on the board. Swift inquired if Hays received a letter from the Governor's Office. Previts doesn't know but can check. Swift reported that she had seen and heard about some discord between OHC and another board's Governor appointments. She was wondering if, since OHRAB's appointments go to the Governor's Office through the same contact, that could be confusing and inadvertently delaying OHRAB's appointments. Wilson stated that he and Dan Noonan had talked about the membership and the by-laws yesterday and they would have more to share under new business.

d. Historical and Records Management Organizations Updates (Pari Swift)

Swift reported on the County Archivists and Records Managers Association meeting held April 8 at the Ohio History Center. There were approximately 40 attendees, with several counties having multiple representatives. The meeting included updates from the Records Management Manual Committee and the Retention Schedule Committee. Swift provided an update on pending records management legislation and Noonan gave a presentation on electronic records migration and preservation.

Previts reported on the Ohio Electronic Records Committee (OhioERC) that met April 13 at the Ohio History Connection. The OhioERC is developing a Scanning Feasibility Tool to guide government offices as they consider digitizing records. OhioERC members Nathan Owens, Bill Lavin and Dan Johnson developed the tool and will be giving a presentation on it at the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators conference in July. The OhioERC would also like to host a workshop on digitization in 2017 that would highlight the tool and has requested \$1,000 from OHRAB to support this.

e. Committee and Task Force Update (Pari Swift)

- i. **Awards Committee:** Swift reported on the board's History Day Awards which were presented on April 30. Five applicants applied for the awards given for the best use of Ohio primary sources in either a paper or website. Jane Nilson won the award in the junior category for her paper "A Violent Encounter: Cleveland's Hough Riots." She used a number of primary sources including interviews, speeches and grand jury reports. Elizabeth Coulter won the award in the senior category for her website "Ohio Penitentiary Fire." Coulter used primary source material such as photographs and newspaper articles as well as records from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections.

Swift expressed that the Awards Committee was concerned about the lack of primary sources used in the projects. Wilson asked if the board should try to assist students in selecting topics that might connect better to primary sources.

Davidson and Freeze agreed. Swift cited Nilson's paper on the Hough Riots as an example of a local topic but could connect to events at the national level.

- ii. **Survey Task Force:** Davidson then reported on the archives survey. He said an introductory statement was added. Discussion followed on what the board is going to learn from the survey, in particular from the questions about budget and collection size. Swift replied that the survey can help guide the board on what our priorities and projects will be. Wilson added that it could be a State of the State for archives in Ohio and the board can then make plans that are grounded in reality. Further discussion on the survey was tabled as Mark Sundlov, the Manager of the Ohio History Connection's Local History Department, joined the meeting to continue discussion of the Ohio History Connection's History Fund grant program.

f. History Fund/OHRAB Re-grant Discussion

Swift stated that OHRAB has seen a decline in both the quantity and quality of the applications to the regrant program. Perhaps the History Fund program could offer some suggestions. Sundlov described the History Fund grant program and the review process. Grant applications are first reviewed by Ohio History Connection staff and then a panel recruited from across the state. Plummer asked if Ohio History Connection staff are on the panel and Sundlov answered that they are not, the reviewers are from outside the organization. Sundlov then gave an overview of the types of projects that can be funded and the amounts that can be requested. There are two stipulations: the organization must either be a non-profit or a public entity, such as a public library. Freeze asked if information on the grants was distributed only through the Ohio History Connection's website. Sundlov replied that the History Fund is advertised through TV commercials, brochures and fliers. This marketing primarily focuses on advertising the tax check-off opportunity. Wilson inquired about the funding for the advertising. Sundlov replied that the Ohio History Connection receives 20% of the money raised for the History Fund for administrative costs to run the program and some of the advertising is covered by that. Additional advertising funding is provided by the Ohio History Connection's Marketing Department.

Wilson inquired about the amount of the average grant request. Sundlov did not know the amount but added that requests are wide ranging. Collections care, for both two dimensional and three dimensional objects, is frequently requested. Sundlov added that with donations to the tax check-off program falling short of the \$150,000 threshold, the Ohio History Connection has been looking for ways to invest money into the program, perhaps through corporate sponsorships. The Ohio History Connection is also open to potential partnerships.

Wilson commented that the Ohio History Fund's minimum amount for a grant is OHRAB's maximum. Sundlov responded that perhaps the History Fund's grant amounts could be lowered to give out more grants. Davidson replied that OHRAB had considered that when looking at its maximum amount for grants.

Swift said that collaboration between the two grant programs was an interesting idea. Wilson asked if the application process for the two programs could be merged with OHRAB funding some of the proposals and the Ohio History Fund supporting others. This could also reduce the applicants' efforts. Sundlov suggested perhaps applicants could choose what grant they applied for. Wilson thought it would be more efficient if they did not have to apply for a specific grant because the applicant would be more concerned with receiving the funding, not necessarily who was funding it. Sundlov suggested that perhaps after the History Fund has reviewed the grant applications, if there are good archival proposals that can't be funded due to a lack of money, these could be sent to OHRAB.

Freeze inquired if there was a limit to how many proposals in each project category are funded. Sundlov replied that currently all of the applicants are pooled together. Noonan expressed concern over the timing of the grant programs since the OHRAB program doesn't start until January and needs to end in December. Wilson stated one of the issues OHRAB has is not receiving good applications. If the application processes were merged into a larger field, this could improve the quality of the applications. Freeze commented that the Ohio History Fund already has a review process in place. Plummer added that OHRAB had to turn down applicants because they charge admission to view the records. Davidson suggested that additional marketing of OHRAB's regrant program, such as through bookmarks, could help increase applications. Noonan stated that there is no guarantee year after year that there will be a grants program.

Sundlov asked about the timing of OHRAB's regrants. Wilson replied that if the board knew by late November how much money it will receive from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the board could proceed. Sundlov thought that the timing could allow OHRAB to take part in the History Fund review process. Noonan stated that if the History Fund had good archival proposals they couldn't fund due to a lack of money, they could be referred to OHRAB.

Previts asked if the timing would work out to allow History Fund applicants to apply for the OHRAB regrants since the History Fund recipients are announced on March 1st and the OHRAB applications are due at the end of February. Sundlov stated the History Fund recipients know in February. Wilson commented that he still supported having one application process because it would be easier for applicants. Sundlov then reported the schedule of the History Fund application and review process. Swift asked if all projects had to be completed in two years or if smaller projects had one year. Sundlov replied that all projects were for two years. Wilson stated that OHRAB grant

projects had one year to be completed and Noonan expressed concern over those differences and the impact that could have on a joint grant program.

Noonan asked how the History Fund, given its limited funds, treated multiple applications from the same entity. Sundlov replied that the review team would only choose one. Discussion followed about possibly asking applicants to choose whether to apply for a History Fund or OHRAB grant. Previts inquired about the matching requirements for the History Fund grants. Sundlov replied that it varied from 20% to 40% depending on the project. Wilson added that OHRAB grant applicants have to provide a 50% match.

Sundlov concluded that this will be a good discussion to continue as the History Fund looks for new revenue sources. Plummer added that it would be helpful if it was easier for the public to find where they can donate to the History Fund on the tax form. Sundlov mentioned that Andy Verhoff is the History Fund coordinator and gave Previts two of Verhoff's business cards.

Sundlov left the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Board adjourned for lunch at 12:06 p.m.

Noonan reconvened meeting at 12:43 p.m.

g. Committee and Task Force Update (resumed)

- i. **Survey Task Force (resumed):** The archives survey discussion continued. Swift asked about the next steps for the survey. Noonan suggested that it should be a Google form so the board members could have access to the survey results. Noonan asked Swift if she could access the OHRAB activity log which is also a Google form. Noonan will update the activity form and resend the link to the board.

Noonan suggested posting a link to the survey on OHRAB's website and sending it to the Society of Ohio Archivists (SOA) listserv. Stephen Badenhop offered to send it to the County Archivists and Records Managers Association (CARMA) listserv. Previts will send it to the Ohio Local History Alliance. Swift asked if there is an OHRAB email address. Previts and Noonan replied that there isn't but Previts will check about creating one. Davidson suggested creating a flier for the survey that can be distributed at the SOA Conference on May 20. Plummer suggested that the survey be sent to the Ohio Digital Interest Group. Swift asked if the Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS) would be willing to send the survey to its members. Plummer stated she could contact OGS. Swift stated the board needs additional communication tools, such as a Facebook page.

Swift asked about the purpose of the survey. Davidson responded that the survey could help in preparing national grant applications. Badenhop offered

that the survey could help refine the regrant program. Wilson stated it could help with both. Noonan asked if it was necessary to know the institution's operating budget on the survey. Wilson said it could be useful to know how much money was spent on collections in the last year.

Discussion followed on surveying the number of full time employees. Noonan asked about the purpose of that question. Plummer stated it could say if the organization has the staff to take care of the collection. Wilson inquired if the survey should ask about the budget for acquisition and preservation rather than just operating budget. Freeze expressed concern that people won't complete the survey if it takes too long. Plummer stated it shouldn't take more than five minutes if the board wanted it to be completed. Swift suggested something should be stated at the beginning regarding the length of time to complete the survey.

Swift asked about adding religious institutions as a type of institution and it was agreed to add that as a category.

- ii. **Digitalization Workshops:** Noonan asked what the estimated date is for these workshops to be held. Wilson replied that the Dayton Public Library is still interested in hosting them but is still being remodeled. Previts added that the final report for the 2015 grant is due in June.
- iii. **Exploration on Fostering NHPRC Grant Submissions:** Swift reported that another meeting was held in March for counties that are interested in collaborating on a grant application to the NHPRC. She added the focus of the project will be on manumission records. Currently three counties have committed to the project: Greene, Montgomery and Warren. Mercer County has expressed an interest in the project and it is hoped that additional counties will be involved as well. The Ohio History Connection and Wright State University also hold manumission records and have been invited to participate. Robin Heise of Greene County attended the Ohio Genealogical Society Conference where Deborah Abbott spoke. Abbott expressed an interest in the manumission records project. Plummer added that Abbott would be a good supporter to have for the project.
- iv. **Grants committee:** Davidson reported that the number of applicants to the regrant program have declined. In 2014 there were 30 applicants, in 2015 there were 20 applicants, and in 2016 there were 15 applicants. Davidson suggested that the board should consider providing non-funded applicants with an explanation on why they were rejected because that could encourage them to apply the following year. Harrington asked if the regrants committee used a rubric to review and grade the grant applicants. Noonan said a rubric was not used but could be considered.

4. New Business/Announcements

a. Re-grant Program residual 2016 funds and program priorities for 2017

Noonan stated that the board had to decide on what, if any, changes should be made to the regrants program for the 2017 grant application to the NHPRC. Wilson asked how specific the application had to be. Previts responded that the total amount requested and the maximum amount of the individual grant awards had to be determined. Also, is the program going to focus on both preservation and digitization projects? He added that most of the concerns with the 2016 grant applications were for digitization projects. Wilson responded that the board should request the same total amount in regrant funding as this year.

Noonan suggested that the application could state that the regrant funding will be used for “policy development and/or access and/or preservation oriented activities” and this could be refined when the results of the survey are known. Davidson agreed. Freeze made a motion to raise the maximum amount of an individual grant award to \$5,000 and Davidson seconded. All voted in favor.

The board then discussed the \$4,500 in regrant funding that was not awarded in 2016. Wilson suggested asking the NHPRC if that money could be used towards the 2017 regrants. Noonan said the board should offer a second round of regrants this year, possibly just one grant of \$4,500. Plummer asked about contacting the applicants who did not receive funding in the first round of regrants. Noonan and Previts both replied that the opportunity should be offered to all Ohio archival repositories. Previts will check with the NHPRC if the \$4,500 could be used for 2017 regrant funding or if one grant of \$4,500 could be awarded this year.

b. July Meeting

Noonan stated that he will not be able to attend the meeting on July 22. After discussion, consensus was reached to reschedule the meeting for July 29.

c. Board membership and Bylaws

Noonan stated that yesterday he and Wilson had discussed the board’s membership and the by-laws. There are currently five vacancies on the board that have not been filled by the Governor’s Office. Wilson and Noonan will be leaving the board in 2017 due to term limits so there will be potentially seven vacancies then. Noonan suggested that the board consider changing its by-laws. He offered that membership could consist of twelve to fourteen members with two of these members appointed by the governor’s office. The other members would be appointed based on the position they hold or the organization they represent, such as a representative from the Ohio Electronic Records Committee. This would allow the board to function better and accomplish its work.

Freeze suggested the board should have sixteen members, with eight of them appointed by the Governor’s Office. Badenhop asked if the Governor’s Office has rejected

appointees. Noonan and Wilson replied that it has. Badenhop suggested nominating members to the board and have them serve unless they are rejected by the Governor's Office. Noonan replied that board members could be left in an awkward position if later rejected. Harrington mentioned that the board should try to maintain a good relationship with the Governor's Office. Wilson replied that he did not think the Governor's Office would be concerned if the number of gubernatorial appointments changed. Harrington suggested that Todd Kleismit should be consulted. Freeze said any changes to the by-laws should be carefully considered. Swift stated that this has been an issue with every Governor's Administration since she has been associated with the board.

Freeze left the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Wilson said he and Noonan only started talking about this yesterday at 9 a.m. so board members should continue to think about it.

d. Other new business

Noonan asked for any further new business. Plummer asked when the archival survey will be completed. Noonan replied that he should have a revised survey to share with the board in a week or so.

Davidson asked for a volunteer to mentor the Ted Lewis Museum in Circleville with its OHRAB regrant. The mentor's primary duty is to remind the grant recipient to submit their reports in August and January. Harrington volunteered to serve as the mentor. Badenhop asked if all the regrant recipients turned in their award paperwork. Previts replied that there are a couple of regrant recipients that have not.

Wilson left the meeting at 2:22 p.m.

With no further new business, Swift motioned to adjourn the meeting and Noonan seconded the motion. None opposed. The meeting concluded at 2:23 p.m.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Friday, July 29, 2016 in the Education and Outreach Conference Room at the Ohio Historical Center from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

ACTION ITEM: Noonan to update OHRAB activity log and send link to the board.

ACTION ITEM: Noonan to look into the feasibility of a Google form for the archives survey.

ACTION ITEM: Previts to look into an OHRAB email address.

ACTION ITEM: Previts to contact the NHPRC about using the approximately \$4,500 in regrant funding that was not spent.