

21 January 2005

From OHRAB

Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, January 21, 2005

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William K. Laidlaw, Jr.; Laurie A. Gemmill; Charles Arp; Roland M. Baumann; John Fleming; Barbara Floyd; Raimund Goerler; Julie McMaster; Kermit Pike.

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Carol Tomer, James Oda.

STAFF PRESENT: James Strider, Todd Kleismit, Pari Swift, Betsy Butler.

1. Welcome

After calling the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., Mr. Laidlaw introduced Todd Kleismit, the Ohio Historical Society's government relations consultant, who attended a portion of today's meeting in order to participate in the Public Records Subcommittee's discussion.

Mr. Laidlaw also mentioned Laurie Gemmill's upcoming departure from the Ohio Historical Society in order to assume a position as Digital Project Specialist at OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). He recognized Ms. Gemmill's work in organizing the materials for today's meeting.

Then, Mr. Laidlaw announced that Mr. Baumann will be participating in his last meeting today, since his term on the board expires in March. In recognition of Mr. Baumann's service and dedication to the board, Mr. Laidlaw presented him with a certificate of appreciation.

2. Approval of minutes of October 29, 2004 meeting

Mr. Laidlaw requested a motion to approve the minutes from the board's October 29, 2004 meeting. Mr. Goerler made a motion, Mr. Fleming seconded the motion, all board members approved, and the motion passed unanimously.

3 (a). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Public Records Subcommittee Update

Mr. Arp summarized his efforts to survey local government records programs in other states. For example, nine statewide programs have instituted filing fees to fund local government records programs that are fairly successful in meeting constituent needs. Additionally, Michigan and South Carolina are also exploring filing fees; Michigan has written a white paper detailing how the state will approach the initiative. Mr. Arp promised to distribute the document to the group when it is complete.

Mr. Goerler presented a summary of H.B. 9 and introduced the position paper he developed for the board to review regarding this legislation. He concluded that the bill was positive. It also presented an opportunity to bring attention to a neglected situation: the access to and management of public records. Mr. Goerler recommended that OHRAB approach Representative Oelslager in order to continue discussions about this legislation.

Mr. Goerler suggested two ways to achieve more effective funding for management of public records. First, a revenue stream based on a county filing fee would facilitate funding for the management of local government records and could resurrect the local government records program. Another revenue stream could be applied to the state records through some form of fee on license plates.

Mr. Arp observed that this was a common approach to funding local government records programs. However, the Supreme Court already has a technology filing fee that has been used for records management-related purposes. The fee applies to all court documents, paid by anyone who submits such a document.

Mr. Laidlaw asked the board what it would take to establish a county filing fee. Mr. Arp responded that it is important to obtain the support of statewide professional associations for county clerks, recorders, and county commissioners.

Ms. Floyd inquired whether there would be a problem with collecting a fee at the county level, since part of the need is among municipalities. Mr. Arp responded that it presents a subsidiary problem, but there are ways to deal with it, such as offering grants to municipalities.

Mr. Kleismit stated that the license plate fee would be extremely difficult since there is already use of pressure to tap that fee for transportation purposes and that not much progress has been made for non-transportation purposes. He suggested that the board draft a letter to Rep. Oelslager expressing some of its concerns and indicating that it has a substantive proposal that would strengthen the bill, follow up with him later, and attempt to set up a meeting. Continuing his thoughts, Mr. Kleismit stated that a recorder's fee was a very possible approach. Such a fee is the trend, and would resonate well with this legislature. He also noted that Rep. Oelslager was the state's chairman of transportation when he was in the Senate, so he is very knowledgeable about transportation and licensing.

Following Mr. Laidlaw's request for a motion, Mr. Goerler moved that the subcommittee communicate with Rep. Oelslager through Mr. Kleismit requesting a meeting to discuss H.B. 9 using Mr. Goerler's report as a general discussion guide. After Mr. Arp seconded the motion, Ms. Gemmill interjected a request to identify economic benefits in the plan, and also to start collecting stories about how records have changed lives and the importance of records management, and include some of those examples in the letter.

Then, Mr. Arp suggested that it would be important to contact others in state government, such as Greg Jackson, the state's chief information officer. Ms. Floyd recommended sharing the proposal with those in county records management. Ms. Swift agreed that county records managers would appreciate that opportunity, and would be likely to support the board's efforts. She suggested e-mailing them a copy of the letter through its listserv in order to receive feedback quickly.

Following Mr. Laidlaw's request for a vote on the motion, Mr. Pike inquired whether OHS was comfortable with the board sending the letter to Rep. Oelslager, given that the responsibility for the State Archives rests with the Ohio Historical Society. Messrs. Laidlaw and Strider responded affirmatively. Mr. Arp suggested that Mr. Laidlaw accompany board representatives on the meeting with Rep. Oelslager, since it is important for OHS to show support and interest in this at the highest level. After this observation, the board approved the motion unanimously.

3 (b). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Nomination Subcommittee Update

Mr. Pike reported that the subcommittee held two meetings via conference call to discuss the charge of the committee and the makeup of a representative group to add to the board in order to complement existing board members and replace those who will be leaving. The group contacted and identified a number of highly qualified

and competent individuals, and presented a list of nominees to State Coordinator Laidlaw.

After noting that the subcommittee's advice was very helpful, Mr. Laidlaw asked how the group would evaluate potential nominees with respect to the constituencies they serve, such as public libraries, the county commissioners' association, and the Ohio Newspaper Association. Mr. Pike responded that academics were underrepresented on the board. He also observed that the user perspective is important.

Mr. Goerler observed that since some time had been spent talking about public records issues and the need to gain influence in this area, we should give serious considerations to candidates with experience relevant to that issue. He also stated that he appreciated the need for having professional historians on the board. They bring a different set of experiences and connections to the board, and the board has an opportunity to help educate those individuals about the cultural importance of records.

Mr. Laidlaw expressed his appreciation for the committee's hard work and stated that he would use their guidance in making his decisions regarding whom to recommend to the Governor.

3 (c). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Cincinnati Museum Center Grant Proposals

Mr. Fleming presented the Cincinnati Museum Center's two potential grant proposals. The first project would preserve and promote access to a select group of approximately a dozen of the Cincinnati Historical Society Library's most significant 19th century manuscript collections. The second project would preserve and provide access to three major photographic collections currently held in backlog by the Cincinnati Historical Society Library.

The discussion also covered a related potential topic. Other institutions are in the same situation with their photographic collections. Evaluating large collections and coming up with a reasonable plan to establish appraisal guidelines like those for congressional collections and constituent correspondence is a challenge. NHPRC or IMLS would be interested in appraisal guidelines because of opportunities for collaboration with other institutions.

3 (d). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Kenyon College Grant Proposal

Ms. Gemmill provided a brief overview of the project overview submitted by Tom House of Kenyon College. This one- to two-year project will establish a records management program and reorganize the college archives at Kenyon College. Although the college has approximately 750 cubic feet of college archives-related material, Kenyon has no formal records management program. Therefore, this project would involve surveying records across campus, developing records retention schedules, and establishing procedures for appraising records and depositing those of historical significance in the college archives.

After reviewing the proposal, it was agreed that Roland Baumann would be pleased to serve as a mentor to Tom House and Kenyon College in their grant proposal process.

3 (e). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Grant Proposal Activities

Ms. Gemmill reported that handouts regarding the April 13, 2005 OHRAB-sponsored grant-writing workshop to be held during the Society of Ohio Archivists conference were distributed at the Fall 2004 Building Connections conference. Announcements of the conference went to the SOA, OPLIN, ALAO, Ohio Memory, and Archives & Archivists listservs. It was also included with the general announcement in SOA's Fall newsletter and the January MAC newsletter.

Beginning today, specific announcements will be appearing on the listservs mentioned above. The workshop will

also be announced in OAHSM's Local Historian and the Ohio Museum Association's newsletter.

The board discussed a mentoring program; Charlie Arp indicated he could attend the workshop to serve as a possible mentor to people interested in submitting NHRPC grant proposals.

Mr. Baumann suggested that the board invite NHRPC's Richard Cameron to attend a future OHRAB meeting in order to hear about recent changes at the organization and its current priorities. Ms. Floyd agreed, recognizing the challenge in writing a grant when NHRPC's priorities are unknown.

Ms. McMaster inquired whether it would be possible to ask Mr. Cameron to come to Ohio in Fall 2005 or Spring 2006 and schedule the Society of Ohio Archivists' meeting concurrently. Ms. Floyd suggested that he might offer a keynote address the following day.

Mr. Laidlaw invited discussion of the second action step mentioned during this portion of the meeting: mentoring grant applicants. After Mr. Laidlaw inquired how mentorship would work, what time period is involved, and what activities are envisioned, Mr. Arp suggested that when a grant was submitted to the board, it would be assigned to a specific board member who would shepherd it through the process.

Mr. Pike asked whether there was an objection to the process that the board has been following. Mr. Goerler responded that when a grant-seeker came before the board, it would be helpful if the proposal had been reviewed and would be more polished, particularly because sometimes there is very little time between when the grant-seeker comes to the board and the deadline for the proposal.

Mr. Fleming noted that it would be helpful upon a proposal's review if the board clearly outlined the comments and recommendations to the person writing the proposal. The next time the proposal comes before the board, the applicant should show the board how criticism and objections have been met. The applicant should not present to the board again until they are able to articulate how they have addressed the board's concerns.

3 (f). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: Ohio Electronic Records Committee Update

Ms. Floyd reported that the Ohio Electronic Records Committee met on December 6, 2004, with Ms. Gemmill serving as chair. Much of the meeting was focused on a presentation by Christian Selch of the Office of Information Technology on how that office adopts technology policy. Following the presentation, the group discussed the bylaws that had been adopted by this committee. Mr. Goerler was instrumental in adopting of those bylaws, which will provide a structure under which the ERC will work.

Ms. Floyd also mentioned that the committee has undertaken a survey of local governments to see whether they have used ERC guidelines to develop electronic records policies. Messrs. Arp and Goerler stated that the results of that survey could be valuable when OHRAB representatives speak with Rep. Oelslager.

Ms. Floyd mentioned that she will ask Ms. Swift to send minutes of future ERC meetings to the board.

3 (g). Review of Strategic Plan Activities: National Funding Initiative Update

Ms. Gemmill described COSHRC's efforts in working with SAA, AASLH, and NAGARA to obtain increased federal funding for more records projects. During the last NAGARA/COSHRC meeting, participants discussed various approaches to funding, such as making each state applicable, basing funding amounts on population, or percentages. Most were supportive of the initiative.

Mr. Pike suggested that the group should explore the opportunity to collaborate with IMLS as a way to include

archives. Mr. Pike responded that archives must become more publicly responsive and accessible.

The group reviewed and discussed correspondence from George Bain, head of the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives & Special Collections at Ohio University Libraries, communicating his support of the AASLH funding initiative.

Mr. Goerler inquired whether a formal document existed about this initiative, as it is difficult to approach legislators without something in writing. Ms. Gemmill responded that it was difficult to find something appropriate. Ms. Floyd suggested that when the board had a more concrete view of what the proposal is, then it could act on it.

4 (a). State Archivist Search

Mr. Laidlaw expressed his pleasure in working with Ms. Gemmill, particularly her ability to ensure that board meetings are well organized. He stated that her efforts were very much appreciated and that she would be missed.

To begin discussion about the search for a new State Archivist, Mr. Strider distributed a copy of the job description, as it was when Ms. Gemmill filled the position. He expressed his appreciation of the board's thoughts about the types of individuals to be looking for, and hoped that the board will participate in the selection process. He mentioned that OHS will be conducting a national search.

4 (b). OHRAB Administrative Grant Update

Ms. Gemmill updated the board that OHRAB's \$10,000 administrative grant application was submitted to NHPRC on September 1, 2004. In December 2004, an official acceptance letter from NHPRC was received, so those funds can now be spent.

Ms. Gemmill thanked the board members for submitting their individual grant evaluations to her by November 15, 2004. Grant evaluations and summary evaluations were submitted to NHPRC December 15, 2004. NHPRC staff communicates questions and concerns to applicants during February and March. In May, the Commission meets and determines funding. Successful applicants are notified within two days; unsuccessful applicants are notified within two weeks.

4 (c). Member Institutional Updates

During this portion of the meeting, OHRAB members provided updates of recent activities and accomplishments at their organizations.

To conclude, Ms. Gemmill mentioned that State Archives recently submitted information on Ohio's state archives and records management programs for the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC) Survey. This is an in-depth survey and assessment of state archives and records programs and the State Historical Records Advisory Boards (SHRABs) in each state and territory. This project will build on previous surveys and reports conducted by COSHRC and other organizations to document current conditions and needs. It will also be used to create a system for regularly assessing state archival programs, measuring progress and effectiveness, and articulating a national strategic direction to ensure preservation of and access to our nation's historical records.

After announcing that the next OHRAB meeting will be held May 6 at the Cincinnati Museum Center, Mr. Laidlaw asked for feedback about how these meetings are organized and run so that they can be valuable in moving the group forward.

5. Conclusion

After thanking Mr. Baumann and Ms. Gemmill for their efforts and wishing them well for their future endeavors, Mr. Laidlaw concluded the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

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