

OHIO HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Minutes, October 24, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tina Ratcliff, Helen Conger, Virginia Dressler, Brenda Ransom, Chris Shaw, Lisa Smilnak, Linda Swanson, Michelle Sweetser, Fred Previts, Connie Conner

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Tami Kelly, Greta Suiter, Megan Wood

I. Welcome

- a. Ratcliff called the virtual meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

II. Consent Agenda

- a. Sweetser moved to approve the consent agenda and Conger seconded. All approved.
- b. Ratcliff referred to the board meeting packet which included the consent agenda and a report from the Ohio Electronic Records Committee.
- c. Dates for 2026 meetings are last Fridays of the month: January 30, April 24, July 31, and October 30. Any schedule conflicts should be reported to Ratcliff.

III. Strategic Discussion

- a. OHRAB Budget: Previts reported that budget is in good shape, with plaques for the Achievement and Citizen Archivist award recipients yet to pay for. He asked the board to use any unspent travel funds to cover any additional preservation kit costs that a grant may not cover. Shaw moved to use surplus travel OHRAB funds to pay for shipping of preservation kits and Ransom seconded the motion. Monies not spent for scholarships, teacher education, and printing in 2025 can still be spent in 2026 for these line items.
- b. We will ask the Governor for suggestions for two vacant gubernatorial appointees, then offer our recommendations to fill the two vacancies. The Society of Ohio Archivists will let us know who will replace Modrow as their professional organization appointment. Dressler, Kelly, Ratcliff and Sweetser are in their last terms, and their positions will also need to be filled.
- c. Committee and Organizational Updates: Ratcliff reported that on November 6 John Emler will be presented with the Citizen Archivist award for his work for the Licking County Archives on Children's Home records. There were four good nominees for the award this year. Sweetser will present the Archival Achievement Award to Williams County Public Library, which built a building for genealogy and local history, and added digital content to Ohio Memory. She asked when the announcement for professional development awards should go out as Midwest Archives Conference is in May. The board agreed that the announcement could go out the second week of January, with a deadline of March 1.

The Regrant announcement will be posted in the beginning of February, and the deadline will be March 31. Committee members were reminded that grant recipients' final reports are due January 31.

For the Advocacy Committee, Sweetser suggested that language for award nominations request a photo of the nominee. She also asked if there a centralized place to find America 250 events to highlight on Facebook. Shaw suggested the America 250-Ohio events page. Board members can direct information about other events to Sweetser for posting. New board members will also be highlighted in Facebook posts.

Dressler shared that we have received thirty-one applications to date for preservation kits. The application deadline is October 31st. Marcella Estevez, conservator at Ohio State University, will be doing a webinar on December 2 to go through the kit and share preservation basics. Attendees will have the opportunity to submit questions ahead of time.

Previts reported that OHRAB funding to support Ohio History Day regional events was given to Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board for an event before the end of the year in the amount of \$300. Remaining funds will be used for regional events held in 2026. Ratcliff issued a History Day challenge to solicit information from archival repositories with collections that fit the History Day theme and received 10 submissions. The Ohio State University Medical Heritage Center won a family history kit for its entry. The submissions were included in the Ohio History Day (OHD) theme packet sent out by OHD staff. Ratcliff suggested soliciting submissions again next year.

Ratcliff shared that the Ohio CARMA (County Archivists and Records Managers Association) / OhioERC (Ohio Electronic Records Committee) / OHRAB Digital Initiatives and Standards Committee (DISC) has committees working on a paper that can serve as a guide for local governments and elected officials. Dressler reported that the Standards Committee is making progress. Ratcliff shared that the Security Committee has not yet met, but the Microfilm Committee has their portion of the paper drafted.

IV. New Business

- a. Ratcliff shared that the Fellowship program was postponed for 2026 and we now need a chair to select and supervise a student fellow to look for manumission records in Southeast Ohio. The previous project work was mostly online to identify records, and the coming year will find those records that were identified. Swanson expressed interest in the project, and Conner and Ratcliff mentioned academic contacts at Ohio University that might offer help with the project.
- b. The board discussed whether they should plan something more active to support America 250. Shaw shared a variety of projects around the state and suggested that members could become involved individually.
- c. Previts shared a statement about Ohio History Connection's reduction in force and reorganization. Ratcliff offered support of OHRAB if it would be helpful.
- d. The Board will need to elect a new chair and vice chair at the next meeting. Ransom was willing to be nominated as vice chair, but not as chair.
- e. Smilnak thanked Swanson and the Ohio Genealogical Society for hosting Ohio DIG (Digital Interest Group).

- f. Ratcliff ended the meeting by sharing a spooky story about a research request pertaining to a haunted house. The house at one time was home to a couple prominent in the gypsy community. Later, the property was transferred to Anna Haugh from her husband, Oliver C. Haugh, a convicted serial killer, prior to his incarceration.
- V. **Closing:** Sweetser moved to adjourn and Dressler seconded. All approved the motion, and the meeting concluded at 11:20 a.m.