



Maine Historical Records Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022

3:00pm – 4:00pm

Location: Zoom

Board Members Present: Earle Shettleworth, Howard Lowell, Pat Dunn, Larissa Vigue Picard, Kevin Johnson, Steve Bromage, Donald Soctomah, Kat Stefko and Anna Faherty.

Board Members Absent: Jill Piekut Roy

MSA Staff Members Present: Kate McBrien (ex-officio), Tammy Marks, Sam Howes

Meeting called to order at 3:03 pm by Kate McBrien.

Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

Kate McBrien welcomed everyone to the meeting and recited the land acknowledgment which is offered by the Maine State Archives at each Maine Historical Records Advisory Board meeting.

Welcome

Kate welcomed everyone to the meeting, did a roll call and recognized a quorum.

MHRAB Funding

Kate tried to find MHRAB funding for the Board. It was determined that there isn't any funding available.

MHRAB Priorities

Thank you to Kat and Larissa on the Roving Archivist positions that is used by other states. Kat was not able to speak to her contact in MA but will be speaking with her on March 23rd. They have an application process, there is criteria about who can apply, a lot of what they do is networking with organizations. They do have a bit of money for supplies that they are able to give organizations. They help organizations work towards steps for certification in terms of best practices standards. Looking at the NHPRC grant they encourage collaborative grants that the Board could investigate.

Larissa mentioned there are two people in VT, Sally and Rachael that are roving archivists. Rachael started in MA as a roving archivist and moved to VT. It is more informal in VT as it's a smaller state, they have fewer requests and do not have an application request. Both staff people are full time and are on the payroll for VT State Archives. Pre-pandemic they spent funding on trainings and workshops for people around the state. They have also spent funding on equipment to rent out. Mobile digitization unit they travel with and bring to someone's site. They take information from the phone and email and gather information that way. Most sites visits are spring through fall due to the weather. They would like to have an application like MA has. They assess needs by going to the site. The number one challenge is that these people know what their problem is and what they need, they don't have the resources for it. Feedback was that people feel like they have hope and some place to turn and helps them prioritize and network more. They started to offer new hours and tried to reach out. New Hampshire is reestablishing its board and may be interested in establishing a roving archivist program, there is a movement out in the Midwest to do this and Sally is very interested in trying to create a network.

Kate added that there was a flurry of messages over the CoSA regarding SHRABs looking to do statewide assessments. Everyone was saying they were looking to get their board together and were looking for examples.

Steve mentioned it was great information to hear about the roving archivist. It made him think about the importance of having a strategic plan in place setting and an agenda to lead for the state. Working off the bicentennial and looking towards America 250 as a hook.

Donald suggested the idea of sending roving archivists to all counties, but only one town in each county to make it more manageable.

Howard agreed with Steve on needing a strategic plan first. Earle also agreed with the roving archivist concept and felt a strategic plan was necessary to start as a foundation.

Kate mentioned that MAM did a survey of all museums and archives in the state and tried to capture many if not all of them. Larissa confirmed that there was a substantive list of the holdings. Larissa mentioned it would be worth checking with them so that we do not duplicate efforts.

Anna dropped a link into the chat of the map, and you can search the different institutions. Howard stated that there was a map done through CERC.

Kate came across a four-page survey from 1996 that was sent out by MHRAB. At the end of the survey, it asks about needs and priorities. Kate suggested using that survey as a template to start with.

Kate suggested that requested funding be for a strategic plan and at the same time as doing a statewide assessment. Would this be enough of a community impact for funding? Howard suggested asking for the one-year grant funding to give a year to write a grant for 2023 based on the information gathered and needs identified.

Pat mentioned that many historical societies that have archival records, need to sit down, and do their strategic plan. Many of them do not know what they have.

Kevin suggested looking at a website called The History Trust (<http://historytrust.org>) of Hancock County which may give the Board some ideas. They are creating a framework of all collecting institutions in Hancock County and have an online platform contributing finding aids that link back to their sites.

Kate asked the group what they wanted to apply for regarding federal funding. Statewide assessment of some kind, to get an idea of what's out there. This could be done at the same time as the strategic plan with that visioning and planning in mind for the following year so we would have an idea of what we need to do the programming which could be done conjunction with MAM as part of a collaboration piece that was talked about.

Kat mentioned the unfortunate timing of the grants. Survey results wouldn't be received in time during the next grant cycle. She would caution that whatever is applied for should be thought of as a self-contained project and could be successful after twelve months because no additional funding is guaranteed.

Earle mentioned sending a questionnaire to local historical societies and museums using the form that was used in the past. He asked the group if this is something that could be done in the next few months. Kate felt that there were ways to do some of it.

Kevin mentioned asking for funds to conduct a strategic plan and to also have a small amount of money on hand to assist institutions that have pending projects. Kate thought that this might strengthen the application.

The two types of grants available are Level 1, for one year and up to \$12,000 then there is a Level 2, for one year which is for \$40,000 or for two years at \$80,000. Several Board members expressed interest in the Level 1 grant for one year allowing them to submit a strong application while they figure out what they want to do and then apply for a larger one when they are ready. Kate will reach out to Dan Stokes at NHPRC and let will report back to the Board when she receives a response.

Other Business

MSA Grant Proposal - Maine State Archives applied for a grant to digitize the Department of Indian Affairs collection, to be a collaborative program with the Wabanaki communities to incorporate traditional knowledge labels into the cataloging process. Unfortunately, we did not get the funding. Thank you to Steve for writing a support letter for it. It was a good try, and the response was there were only 15 grants awarded and they went to groups with a wider reach than what we would have had in Maine. We will keep trying.

Odiorne Trust Fund - Kate reported that this trust fund is a re-granting program that use archives for archaeology projects. The Maine State Archives received one application requesting funds for their project, which Kate shared with the Board. There is about \$90,000 available in this fund. The applicant's project provides information about archaeological and historic sites. Earle suggested reaching out to Bernard Fishman at the Museum and Kirk Mohny at Maine Historic Preservation as well to make sure the project presented is sound. Kate will do some footwork and bring this matter of business back at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 27th at 3:00 pm.

Adjournment

The group agreed to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 4:06 pm.