

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board

Minutes of Meeting – September 8, 2004

Rhode Island State Archives

Providence, R.I.

Attending: Jane Civins, David Maslyn, Marilyn Massaro, Donna DiMichele, Allison Cywin, and Gwenn Stearn, Coordinator.

Not Attending: Stephen Grimes, Leonard Panaggio, Mark Brown, Marlene Lopes, Jonathan Galli, and Marie Bennett.

Meeting called to order 10.15 a.m.

I Minutes of the meeting – June 9, 2004

Due to the lack of a quorum, approval of the meeting minutes from June 9, 2004 was deferred until the November meeting.

II 2005 meeting Dates

Stearn presented proposed dates for 2005 Board meetings, in addition to the remaining 2004 dates: October 6, 2004 (if needed to review grant applications), November 3, 2004, January 5, 2005, March 2, 2005, May 4, 2005 (if required), September 7, 2005, October 5, 2005

(if necessary) and November 2, 2005. Stearn will send an email to all Board members with the agreed 2005 dates.

Stearn asked members for suggestions on an alternative site for the May meeting. Massaro suggested the new Exeter Public Library scheduled for opening on September 25th. DiMichele suggested the Cranston Historical Society. The Board endorsed a spring meeting outside of Providence, preferably at an institution that holds historical records.

III Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC)

DiMichele distributed a report on the COSHRC session “Archives, Assessment, and Advocacy” from the Society of America Archivists recent conference in Boston. DiMichele commented on several items relative to a proposed federal grant/regrant program to the states for historical records purposes. Federal grant money would ultimately supplant the current grant programs under the proposal. She commented that administering federal grant funds takes much time and effort and eventually a political decision could be made to fold the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) into the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) because of duplication of services. DiMichele also mentioned that the proposed grant/regrant program plan is similar to the program for public libraries and that it works well for the library community.

Discussion follows regarding ideas and methods for local and national advocacy for archives programs.

Stearn, mentioning the COSHRC sponsored sessions during the National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators (NAGARA) July conference, discussed the materials she had received by mail, since she was unable to attend. This included a pre-conference survey, the A*Census and other recent surveys, as well as an overview of the Basics of Archives Continuing Education Project. She also mentioned that a new State Coordinators Manual had been issued, which members are encouraged to review.

IV Rhode Island Archives Week 2004

Stearn presented to the Board a mock-up of the poster to be distributed for Rhode Island Archives Week (November 7-13). Discussion took place regarding elements in the poster and an attendant flyer/handout. The flyer depicts the poster on one side. The reverse shows the names of all repositories listed in the Directory of RI Historical Records Repositories, and directs people to the RIHRAB website for more detailed information.

Stearn reported that she had received a letter from the New England Archivists Outreach Committee about requesting a Proclamation from the Governor to proclaim November 7-13, 2004 as Archives Week.

She will prepare the text for a Proclamation and contact the Governor's office.

V Old Business—Local Government Grants to City and Town Clerks

Stearn reported on the success of the first Historical Records Trust Fund Grants to City and Town Clerks. Applications were sent to the 39 municipal Clerks, the Providence and Warwick City Archivists, and the Providence Recorder of Deeds. Stearn enumerated the grants awarded and expects that a greater number of Clerks will apply next year.

VI News and Announcements

DiMichele mentioned several news items including the joint Office of Library & Information Services (OLIS) and URI sponsored workshop on disaster recovery to be presented by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, a Genealogy workshop, also sponsored by OLIS, and to be presented by RI State Archives staff, and that the Jamestown Historical Society was looking for intellectual support for a digitization project including information on vendors.

Stearn reported that a FY2005 NHPRC appropriation of \$3 million is currently being considered in Congress. This would constitute a severe reduction from its present \$10 million budget. Support is needed to restore the full appropriation. The Commission adopted a

new mission, vision, and goals statement at their June meeting (copies distributed). Also at the June meeting \$5.9 million in grants were awarded—a listing of which is available.

▪ The Providence School Dept. has received a Teaching American History Grant of \$871,632. In partnership with URI and other RI organizations they will provide 27 one-day seminars for high school teachers of American history in a low-performing, high-poverty area.

▪ URI has applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant to process portions of Senator Pell’s papers. The grant for a 2-year \$360,000 project requires a 50-50 cost share, of which the Pell family would contribute \$75,000. NEH grant awards are decided in April.

▪ Information is available on a new project by several university libraries to develop an “Archivists’ Toolkit”.

▪ The National Archives in partnership with the PBS NOVA program has been produced a new film, “ Preserving the Charters of Freedom” which depicts their recent preservation and re-encasement.

An 18-minute version can be seen at the National Archives, and a one-hour documentary version will be broadcast on PBS in February.

▪ Question 6, a bond referendum on the November ballot, would provide \$12.3 million to restore the Cranston Street Armory for use as the State Archives and Records Center.

▪ The New England Archivists fall meeting will take place October 15-16 at the University of New England’s Biddeford, Maine

campus. Information is available.

IV Adjournment

Meeting adjourns at 11:45 a.m.

Read and approved January 5, 2005.