



## Maine Historical Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes  
January 10, 2024  
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Location: Zoom

**Board Members Present:** Earle Shettleworth, Larissa Vigue Picard, Pat Dunn, Kat Stefko, Anna Faherty

**Board Members Absent:** Howard Lowell, Jill Piekut Roy, Steve Bromage, Kevin Johnson

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

**Public Attendance:** Eva Holmes

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 pm by Kate McBrien

### **Welcome**

Kate welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized a quorum. Kate recited the land acknowledgment the Maine State Archives offers at each Maine Historical Records Advisory Board meeting.

**MHRAB Funding** - Kate verified that the MHRAB funding available was \$360.

### **Grant Update**

Kate asked about the requirements for receiving grants and funding from the NHPRC. She informed that they have received an official letter announcing the approval of their grant application, which has granted them \$40,000 for a regrating program. This amount will be added to the \$20,000 that was awarded by the state legislature as a matching grant. However, the board is still formalizing our long-term plans for a more

formal program, such as re-granting or a roving archivist program. Once they receive the official letters and financial acknowledgments, they will be able to implement the funds. The board is planning to announce the grant applications in late January or early February, with applications due on March 15th. Although they have not yet received the money, all the official paperwork has been signed.

Kate mentioned that she has submitted the final grant report. We couldn't host a workshop for disaster planning due to scheduling issues. Instead, she posted resources on the MHRAB page of the website. These resources have been referred to since the past few storms. Two organizations, the Maine Old Cemetery Association, and a genealogical society, had their stored items damaged due to flooded basements. So, Kate sent them resources on how to respond to and care for wet documents, provided the NEDCC hotline number, and offered to review the collection. The resources have already proved helpful, and Kate put out a notice on social media about resources for storm preparation.

Kate also informed that she has met with the NHPRC executive director with the Council of State Archivists to discuss their ongoing search for a state coordinator for their program. They had to reopen the search three times due to federal mistakes, but they are still aiming to facilitate faster grant fund release and award letters.

### **Strategic Plan**

Kate recently led a discussion with the board regarding their strategic plan and the need for more personnel. They came to a decision to put out a call for more team members and began considering other aspects of the board, such as re-granting as time is ticking. The board further discussed their grant funding and plans for crafting a specific application process for organizations.

Kate presented the grant strategic plan and project description to the board. The proposed plan is to issue one grant cycle with applications due on March 15, 2024. The applicants must be nonprofit repositories or local governments. The grant funds will solely be used for preservation assessments, collections, or item assessments focusing on planning collections rather than just supplies. A 25% match will be required, either through cash or time. The funds will be allocated for town offices, non-profit records collecting, and organizations.

The board suggested they should get an assessment range on what could be needed for a grant. They also discussed the need for a budget to approve projects, as they may receive small projects with a budget of \$3,000 and larger ones with a budget of \$10,000.

Larissa agreed with providing a sense of what people might be thinking of, as they might get calls and questions about the amount they can apply for. Anna suggested that up to \$10,000 would be a good idea to avoid people asking for the entire amount and to give to at least six people.

Kate made several suggestions about the grant announcements. She recommended that they be more concise, stating that grants with a total fund of \$60,000 will be issued. Kat suggested that the total pot should be divided into 6-10 grants, which could be a more practical approach. The deadline for applications is March 15th.

Furthermore, Kate proposed to move the March 13th meeting back by one or two weeks to review applications. She suggested aiming for 6-10 grants, as these are not large applications and proposed a review by the end of March.

Kate also discussed the criteria for evaluating grant applications based on examples from past grant programs. They have developed a review framework and application process for collections assessments and preservation reviews, which she will share with everyone. They anticipate engaging professional archivists to assess the collection and offer technical expertise or advice. They can provide a list of organizations or resources for finding these professionals. Kate plans to make a list of consultants or organizations to refer to. The project completion timeframe is one year, with a six-month update to report progress. They don't need a final review, but they would like to give a year for some projects to complete their assessments and reports. They hope to make announcements in May. The goal is to ensure the funding is committed and the projects are completed within the agreed timeframe.

Kate mentioned the requirement for a final report at the end of assessments and a 6-month check-in update on grants. Kat suggested an open office call to encourage dialogue and understanding among the group. Pat agreed, suggesting similar conferences for grant applicants. Kat suggested scheduling a call in early mid-February to discuss potential projects and questions. The goal is to help new organizations understand the process and provide guidance on their projects.

Kate and Anna discussed the strategic plan, which mainly focuses on raising awareness and improving communication. During their conversation, they discussed the need for funding for various programs and services, such as the NHPRC grant application and developing a roving archivist program. The Secretary of State has provided funding for a website redesign, which they believe will help in presenting the content and resources to the public in a better way.

The board is considering creating an annual budget for these programs and services, focusing on the roving archivist program. Ana proposes inviting Rachel from Vermont to talk about her roving archivist program. Kate agrees that this is an excellent way to start, and as they move forward, they will determine if it works or needs to be adjusted.

Kat thinks working in a small group can make these goals more achievable. One suggestion is to develop a plan for the grant application, which could be done in the future. Another suggestion is to create website content with a specific presence based on the state's timeline. The third suggestion is to handle the review of grant applications, making the work more manageable for the group.

Pat agrees this is an excellent place to start, but they will continue exploring different strategies and approaches as needed.

Earl questioned the development of the state flag commission that Kate mentioned, which was previously given the responsibility by the last legislature. Kate clarifies that the bill passed in the last session aimed to consider a new flag design, which would go to a public referendum. The Secretary of State was instructed to create a design for the public to vote on. The bill is vague and does not specify a commission, but the Secretary of State is instructed to work on it. Earl believes she is wise and that others in the state know about the issue. Kate is unsure about the timeframe for the commission's creation but assumes it won't be on the ballot in November due to the current timeframe.

Kate expressed enthusiasm for creating an annual plan and calendar of activities for three groups but is unsure if she is ready to implement it. The State Archives is preparing to move back into the building, which is expected to begin in January 2025. Kate is hesitant about planning and committing to too many public events during that period. Kate mentioned that the board said they would participate in three statewide conversations to help plan for roving archivists and/or gather public input on website content. Kate suggested contacting Community Alliance of Maine (CAM) to facilitate community conversations specifically about the grant.

During the meeting, Kate asked the board members for their input and feedback on the strategic plan and their interest in volunteering for various subcommittees. The subcommittees discussed included roving archivist planning, website content creation, and grant review. Anna expressed her interest in contributing to the roving archivist planning and website content development, Earl offered to help review grants. Pat and Larissa volunteered to assist with the grants review. Kat expressed her willingness to contribute to the roving archivist program and website content development. Kate will reach out to the other board members and ask if they would like to be part of a subcommittee and provide a deadline for responding. Once everyone is named to a subcommittee a chair will be assigned to each subcommittee.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:53 pm. The next meeting will meet again on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm.