

# Maine Historical Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes January 8, 2025

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm Location: Zoom

**Board Members Present:** Kat Stefko, Pat Dunn, Larissa Vigue Picard, Steve Bromage, Anna Flaherty, Jill Piekut Roy

**Board Members Absent:** Earle Shettleworth, Kevin Johnson

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

# Public Attendance: None

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 pm.

# Welcome

Tammy welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized a quorum.

# Announcements

Steve Bromage and the rest of the Board congratulated Kate McBrien on her new position as Chief Deputy Secretary of State. Kate introduced Christian Cotz as the interim State Archivist, officially titled Deputy Secretary of State for Archives. Christian shared his background, including being Director of the First Amendment Museum (2020–2023) and 20 years at James Madison’s Montpelier in central Virginia, focusing on public programming. He has also been involved in nonprofit consulting. Kate, the outgoing Maine State Archivist, expressed enthusiasm for his arrival, and Christian conveyed his excitement for the new role.

# Approval of September 11, 2024, meeting minutes

It was moved and seconded that the September 11, 2024, meeting minutes be approved as presented. The motion was approved unanimously by the Board.

# MHRAB Funding

Kate verified MHRAB's total fund of $40,000, which includes an award from NHPRC and a $20,000 match from the state legislature. The first round of Grants awarded $33,000, and the current grant fund has $27.000 available.

# Grant Application Update

The Board discussed reviewing 28 grant applications, with a total requested amount of $137,000. However, only $27,000 was available for distribution. Pat, Larissa, and Tammy—reviewed the applications, ensuring they met the criteria, had sufficient detail, and were geographically diverse, aiming to support urban and rural areas across the state.

The committee narrowed the applications to 13 organizations and projects, awarding nearly $27,000. Some applicants received partial funding due to less detailed applications, while others were fully supported because their proposals were well-defined and feasible.

The process was efficient, and the committee was pleasantly surprised by how aligned they were in their decisions. The group also noted that some applications focused on digital equipment, which would provide long- term benefits by helping organizations digitize their collections. The Board unanimously approved of the 13 selected applicants.

# Update on State Archivist Position Search

Kate informed the Board that Christian will begin as the interim State Archivist, assisting with operations until a national search for a permanent archivist is conducted, starting by February and requiring State legislature confirmation. Two Board seats are vacant following the departures of Howard Lowell and Donald Soctomah, with reappointment requests sent to the Governor’s office. The NHPRC has updated its grant program to standardize deadlines in May, offer two years of funding, and drop the cost-share requirement, focusing on State historic records and roving archivist programs. Kate will reduce her meeting attendance due to time constraints, with Christian assuming primary support for the Board and Steve providing administrative assistance.

# Reports of Sub-Committees

During the recent meeting, committee members Kat Stefko, Jill Piekut Roy, and Anna Flaherty discussed their ongoing efforts to apply for a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The proposed funding would support a part-time consulting position for a roving archivist and include funds for equipment, travel, and re-granting purposes, with a total request of approximately $120,000 over two years. The committee emphasized the importance of sustainability in the program, particularly considering the upcoming transition in the State Archivist position and the need for strategic planning to secure ongoing support beyond the initial grant period. The conversation also highlighted the necessity of maintaining momentum in their application efforts and the potential for future budget discussions with the state legislature.

**The Website Content Planning Sub-Committee**

Tammy informed the committee that the website content is currently at a standstill due to delays in the Secretary of State's office regarding the website's restructuring. This delay has prevented the subcommittee from moving forward with their plans. Tammy mentioned that updates were expected by May, which would include necessary training and activities, but no new information has emerged.

However, there is hope for progress now that Kate is in the Secretary of State's office, which could potentially lead to the launch of a new website. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting.

# Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:44 pm.