



Archives Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2025
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
Location: Zoom

Board Members Present: Eric Stout, Shelly Crosby, Paige Lilly, Brenda Kielty, Jennifer Tarr, James E. Frances, Steve Collins

Board Members Absent: Adelaide Solomon-Jordan, Greg Zinser, Shirley Browne

MSA Staff Members Present: Christian Cotz (ex-officio), Tammy Marks, Heather Moran, and Tiffany Tattan-Awley

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm.

Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

Christian Cotz welcomed everyone to the meeting and recited the land acknowledgment provided by the Maine State Archives at each Archives Advisory Board meeting.

Welcome

James welcomed the Board and acknowledged a quorum.

Approval of January 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Paige Lilly made a motion to accept the meeting minutes with edits. Steve Collins seconded the motion. Tammy made a roll call of the following: Board members voted as follows: Eric Stout, yes; Steve Collins, yes; Jennifer Tarr, yes; Paige Lilly, yes; Shelly Crosby, yes; James Francis, abstained. The meeting was approved unanimously with the requested edits.

Consideration of Records Schedule

- Corporations, Elections & Commissions
 - Marriage Officiant Applications: Paper, 3 years in agency, 5 years in Record Center, then Destroy

Paige Lilly made a motion to accept the new schedule as written, Steve Collins seconded the motion. Board members voted as follows: Eric Stout, yes; Steve Collins, yes; Jennifer Tarr, yes;

Paige Lilly, yes; Shelly Crosby, yes; James Francis, yes. The new schedule was approved unanimously.

- Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
 - Statewide Drought Task Force reports: Digital, 5 years in agency, 25 years in Record Center, Archival

Steve Collins made a motion to accept the new schedule series as written, Eric Stout seconded the motion. Board members voted as follows: Eric Stout, yes; Steve Collins, yes; Jennifer Tarr, yes; Shelly Crosby, yes; Paige Lilly, yes; James Francis, yes. The new schedule was approved unanimously.

Update By-Laws

The board discussed revising the bylaws, specifically regarding term limits and officer elections. The board agrees that keeping term limits is essential. They felt it helps prevent any one person from holding too much power for too long and protects staff from potentially complex leadership dynamics.

Christian suggested changing the current one-year officer term to a two-year term, with the option to serve a second consecutive term. After that, the officer would need to take a one-year break before being eligible to run again. Most members supported this idea, as it would give officers more time to accomplish meaningful goals while still ensuring that leadership rotates regularly.

The board also acknowledged that elections haven't been happening on a set schedule, even though the original by-laws seem to have intended that. Boards have just continued in their roles without a formal vote. To fix this, members supported setting a clear election schedule, possibly holding elections every two years during the March meeting. That way, everyone knows what to expect, making leadership transitions smoother and more transparent.

Eric Stout provided historical context, explaining that the board was formed in May 2021 and had not yet held formal elections for officers as outlined in the original bylaws. Instead, leadership had continued informally. He recalled that the bylaws initially envisioned one-year terms, renewable for up to three years, but without a set election schedule, the board had defaulted to continuation. Shelley Crosby echoed his concerns, stating that the absence of a defined process created awkwardness and uncertainty. She advocated for a set election date and more transparent procedures to ensure transparency and smooth transitions.

Christian suggested adding a designated election month, such as January or March, into the bylaws, allowing time to identify and prepare candidates. Shelley recommended that Christian, as archivist, could oversee the nomination process. She proposed a 30-day nomination window before the election, allowing members to nominate themselves or others in writing. Christian agreed to this responsibility and shared that he had prior experience managing both formal and informal nomination processes.

Paige Lilly reminded the board that any procedural changes would need to be written into the bylaws. She offered to work with Christian to draft updated language. Christian suggested researching how other boards handle elections to see if better models exist. James supported holding elections annually, which aligned with Eric's earlier comment about officers serving up to three consecutive one-year terms, followed by a break. The board moved toward consensus on that framework.

The board agreed that Paige and Christian would collaborate on revising the bylaw language to formalize the election process. The board decided to table the broader bylaw discussion until a new draft could be reviewed. Before adjourning the topic, the board addressed another matter formally adding a representative seat for journalism. The board confirmed that Steve Collins met the criteria, having been nominated by the Maine Press Association, and passed a motion to update Article 2, Section 3, Letter H of the bylaws accordingly.

Shelly Crosby made a motion to accept the new article 2, section 3 letter H written. Paige Lilly seconded the motion. Board members voted as follows: Eric Stout, yes; Jennifer Tarr, yes; Shelly Crosby, yes; Paige Lilly, yes; James Francis, yes; Brenda Kielty, yes. The new by-laws article 2, section 3 letter H was approved unanimously.

State Archivist Report

Christian updated the board on his first three months as Interim State Archivist, noting that he has been learning the role and adjusting to leading a state agency, with strong support from the team. He shared that he's in the final stages of securing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission and the University of Maine to preserve tribal records. He reported significant structural issues at the Records Center, including cracks, mold, and failing doors, and noted that the Bureau of General Services (BGS) is now aware and taking action. Christian has also been drafting legislative testimony for the Secretary of State on several topics, including place names, constitutional commissions, railroad crossing renaming, a mobile history lab, and the future of microfilm.

Heather updated the board on the Cultural Building, noting that although staff prepared for a potential March 17 move, delays related to fire suppression, door locks, and HVAC balancing have put the project on hold possibly taking place in May. She highlighted progress, including the installation of new shelving, sealed flooring, and office setup, as well as ongoing efforts to plan public art and launch a new public asset access database.

Tammy updated the board on the process of consolidating digital collections into LibNova's (Libsafe) platform, based in Spain with an office in Miami. The Archives are currently migrating data from existing systems, such as Digital Commons and OnBase, with 98% and 99% of MSA collections, respectively, ready for transfer. The final integration will involve the ArchivesSpace cataloging program, with a target completion date of summer to facilitate public and state agency access. An ongoing API issue is the only holdup. Additionally, the Maine State Archives will incorporate commission documents related to a tragedy in Lewiston, ensuring public access to non-confidential records and secure handling of others. The migration and integration efforts are slightly delayed due to a relocation to a new building, which complicates the timeline.

Report of Standing and Special Committees

There is currently no report available.

Potential agenda items for future meetings

The board discussed several detailed actions for future agendas, with a focus on enhancing the management of municipal records. They discussed revisiting and refining the subcategories within the schedules, particularly for the water, wastewater, sewer, and landfill departments, to ensure these schedules more accurately reflect departmental functions. The board also discussed organizing targeted educational sessions or workshops to help these departments better understand and utilize the new schedules effectively. Adding clear disclaimers or

additional guidance within the schedules was proposed to help departments identify where specific types of records, such as financial records or sewer liens, can be found. Establishing a systematic feedback mechanism to gather continuous input from the departments affected by these schedules was also considered. Finally, maintaining and enhancing collaboration with the Maine State Archives was suggested to leverage their expertise in ensuring the schedules are legally compliant and practically applicable.

Adjournment

Steve Collins made a motion to adjourn, and Paige Lilly seconded the motion. The Meeting adjourned at 2:17 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 22nd at 1:00 p.m.