



Maine Historical Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2025
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Location: Zoom

Board Members Present: Kat Stefko, Kevin Johnson, Steve Bromage, Anna Faherty, Jill Piekut Roy

Board Members Absent: Larissa Vigue Picard, Earle Shettleworth

MSA Staff Present: Christian Cotz, Heather Moran, Tammy Marks

Public Attendance: None

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm by Christian Cotz.

Call to Order and Land Acknowledgment

Christian 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 and Roll Call

Attendance was taken. A quorum was confirmed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2025, was made by Pat and seconded by Steve. The motion passed unanimously.

Archives Relocation Update

Christian provided an update on the ongoing relocation process. Christian, Heather, and Tammy reported that the relocation of historical collections to the Cultural Building is halfway complete, with the staff office relocation expected to occur within the next week. Shelving will be reinstalled throughout the summer to accommodate additional materials stored off-site. Also added that the movers have been careful and efficient, making the transition smoother despite logistical challenges.

Replevin Efforts

Christian updated the board on two active replevin efforts: 1. Several Third Maine uniform equipment books, held by reenactors, are expected to be returned to the Archives shortly. 2. Vitals records from Gouldsboro and Hancock were identified on an estate auction website. After an intervention, the auction house removed the listings. Christian is consulting with the Attorney General's office on the appropriate next step for recovery.

Grant Updates

Christian reported to the board that one Odiorne Grant was awarded to Fort Western for processing archaeological collections related to multiple forts along the Kennebec River. Larissa and Kevin participated in the review process alongside Leith Smith of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Christian also noted that four nominations to fill board vacancies were submitted to the Governor's Office: Rainy Bench, Michelle Landry, James Francis, and Zeke Crofton-MacDonald. Additionally, he confirmed that the NHPRC grant application had been submitted, requesting funds to support a part-time Roving Archivist and to regrant efforts over two years. Christian thanked Kat and Jill for their help in editing the proposal.

Sub-Committee Reports and Additional Updates

Jill and Anna shared progress on the University of Southern Maine's ArchivesSpace migration and the Franco-American Collection's digitization project, which is funded by the NHPRC. Anna and Jill also reported on their attendance at the Maine Library Association Conference and discussed the Sustainable Libraries Initiative. The board expressed interest in monitoring the development of a similar archive's initiative.

Christian and Heather gave an update on the Open Access platform (LibSafe). Over 75% of uploads are complete, with training for records officers expected to begin in June. Public access is expected to be available by mid-July. Plans are underway to develop digital exhibits for the site.

Roving Archivist Program

The goal is to secure federal funding first to pilot the program, then advocate for state funding later based on demonstrated value and success. If the grant is not awarded, MSA will explore delivering limited services in-house.

Update on State Archivist Position Search and Other Business

Christian announced that he had been offered the full-time position of State Archivist, contingent upon legislative confirmation. He expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunity to continue leading the Archives' work.

Other items discussed: A potential fall ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Archives is being planned. Christian mentioned plans to digitize 1950s-era Sound Scriber discs related to a historical homicide investigation. Steve offered to host an upcoming MHRAB meeting at the Maine Historical Society or the collections facility, with a tour and social gathering.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2025 at the Cultural Building.