

Indiana State Historic Records Advisory Board
Minutes – Thursday May 25, 2007
The Garrison – Fort Benjamin Harrison

I. Call To Order

Meeting Called to Order at 10:00 am by State Coordinator Jim Corridan

II. Roll Call

Present: Tom Krasean, Phil Bantin, Sammie Morris, Curt Witcher, Jim Corridan,

Guests: Jeff Roeder, Deputy Director, ICPR

Absent: Nancy Schuckman, Steve McShane

III. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2007 at the State Library.

IV. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 20, 2006 minutes were discussed. Motion to approve the minutes as presented passed. KRASEAN - WITCHER

V. State Coordinator's Report

- A. Jim Corridan briefly discussed ICPR's work to reduce the number of Record Series in the state. He reported a success of about 3% reduction since the beginning of the year.
- B. Jim Corridan stated that he would be attending the NAGARA/COSA conference in Kansas City in July.
- C. The ICPR initiative to make counties accountable through metrics is working. More counties are holding their annual records meeting, sending naturalization records to the State Archives and overall paying more attention to their records. A portion of this improvement is due to educating counties on their responsibilities.
- D. Phil Bantin asked about the current status of newspapers around the state being microfilmed. Mr. Corridan explained that the Indiana Historical Society is no longer filming these newspapers and that the Indiana State Library has taken over those duties, using ICPR's micrographics lab. A request was made for better dissemination of that information.

VI. New Business

A. Open Discussion Regarding Priorities

1. The overwhelming priority in Indiana is establishing clear benchmarks and standards for our records and institutions that hold our records
 - a. Minimum Standards for Archives

The Board agreed that operational standards should be established by the Board/ICPR and made publicly available. These would be recommended best practices. The group hopes that these standards will

aid smaller archives in appealing to the community and donors with specific items and goals they are trying to accomplish. These best practices would include storage environment for the records (humidity and temperature control, out of basements/attics, etc.), fire suppression systems, base level of staffing, accessibility guidelines, funding resources, and plans to achieve self sustainability if government funds are reallocated.

b. Electronic Records

The SHRAB identified electronic records, both those born digitally and those scanned into systems as another area of significant concern. The expansion of electronic records and lack of information concerning their retention has combined to create a potentially destructive situation for retaining these documents. The SHRAB wants to clearly define electronic records and widely spread information on their proper retention. This includes establishing clear guidelines on which systems should be used for retention, how these systems will be backed up, the archiving of the information in the systems, plans for upgrades and conversions to new future systems and creating a list of “approved” formats and technologies. State plans were identified in Ohio, Minnesota, and Michigan that could be excellent resources to begin the Indiana standards.

c. Disaster Planning

The group next discussed both the preparation and the execution of emergency plans, ie; a natural or man-made disaster was to strike a local or state archives. The SHRAB suggested that the ICPR construct a model plan that local entities could use as a resource when planning. Critical elements of the plan included identification of the most critical records to reestablishing government and people’s lives, creating backups of original material in an offsite location, identifying local, state or national resources for recovery of documents and training of archives staff to know how to execute the created plan.

d. Overall

The SHRAB members believe it is critical for their Board, in conjunction with ICPR become the clearing house for information and best practices for these plans. To do this, clear standards must be written and widely disseminated to those in the field.

2. Institutional Priorities

a. Focus on County Archives

The SHRAB discussion turned to which entities were the highest priority in addressing and establishing standards. The county archives and office holders were top priority for a number of reasons

1. Value of accessibility to local residents.
2. Demand on local officeholders to house these records in small offices.
3. Demand for space with the high turnover in office holders could lead to the accidental destruction of

records before the completion of their retention schedule.

4. Demand on local officials to reduce costs and stretch tax dollars has led to a reduction of funding for the preservation and conservation of important documents.

b. Local Historical Societies

Local Historical Societies were also highlighted as institutions that the SHRAB should focus on supporting. While the likelihood of the destruction of permanent or historically significant records is less likely by a historical society, these institutions typically have little to no public funding and are staffed by volunteers. The lack of reliable funding can become a significant issue if standards are not preserved by these institutions.

c. Local Libraries

Local Libraries are a great source of local history and documents. Their funding is typically secure. Libraries have a different and distinct function; some have established themselves as archives in the community, but not all serve this function, nor are all parts of the state served by a local library district. The decision was that some libraries may fall within the SHRAB's goals, but they should not be particularly targeted as areas in need.

d. Potential Creation of Regional Repositories

1. Overview

The idea emerged from these discussions of regional archives throughout Indiana. The concept is to combine resources to eliminate redundancy and consolidate collections to create greater levels of funding and more resources to adequately serve the community and preserve local history. Ohio and Minnesota were both identified as states that had worked on a similar program and their efforts could aid Indiana in its development of the idea.

2. Advantages

Regional archives would be able to serve the communities that pool their resources and documents at a "nearer to home" level, rather than directing patrons to drive to Indianapolis. The combination of smaller archives spread throughout regions would enable a pooling of resources that eliminates waste and allows for greater purchasing power and tourism appeal. The networking of those involved in preservation and conservation throughout these regions will allow for greater

communication resulting in collaboration and innovation. One idea emerged to enlist state universities and colleges to host these regional archives due to their regional locations, state owned land and pools of resources that could get this project off of the ground. This on campus resource could increase the usage of the records and result in the development of a greater breadth of Indiana's history.

3. Potential Pitfalls

The Board also identified potential pitfalls that could slow or even stop this concept from moving forward. It first identified the need for local archives to have buy-in with the program and input in its development. Without the local groups, the regional archives would not have the documentation to serve the public, nor provide the significant cost savings to the community. The lack of space needed to serve all areas of the state, as well as the lack of a funding source for these regional centers, was the other major concerns looking forward. The SHRAB reinforced that despite these potential setback, the idea should be fully explored.

3. SHRAB's Next Step

There are a number of major projects the SHRAB would like to see completed.

1. Creation of a grant application for submission to SHRAB. While funding for projects throughout the state was still small, the group decided it would be good to establish a process for distributing money and identify the potential grantees that are out there.

2. The SHRAB wanted to have drafted and adopted state guidelines for records management, disaster plans, electronic records management and overall best practices for local institutions. The group then wanted to focus on the dissemination of these new policies throughout the state.

B. NHPRC Sub-Grant Application

Jim Corridan announced that the Indiana Commission on Public Records has applied for a NHPRC Grant that will give the SHRAB money to reduce the cost to counties to have their county commission minutes and naturalization records microfilmed and scanned for better accessibility and preservation. Referencing the discussions throughout the day, the group believed that priority projects should be based on the current condition of the records/condition of their holding areas and their age. For future grants, it was suggested to look for funding that would defray cost of professional preservation assessments to let local groups know how at risk

the documents are and give the SHRAB a better understanding of what material is in local repositories and its current state.

C. SHRAB connection to Society of Indiana Archivists

- a. Jim Corridan began the discussion of how the SIA and the SHRAB can continue to grow and develop together. All of the members acknowledged that the strength of the SIA will directly influence the success of the SHRAB. Sammie Morris appreciated the interest of the SHRAB and stated that the SIA is also working in collaboration. She did state that there is some concern over the group losing its independence if it became too heavily intertwined with the SHRAB.
- b. Going forward the SHRAB would like to help the SIA be successful in any way it can.

VII. Adjournment

The board adjourned at 1:38 p.m.