

**MINUTES
OF THE
ALABAMA HISTORICAL RECORDS
ADVISORY BOARD
July 16, 2008**

The Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board (HRB) met on July 16, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. in the Regions Board Room at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH). Members present were Ed Bridges, Chairman, representing the Department of Archives and History; David Tuck, representing the Black Heritage Council; Wayne Coleman, representing the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; Elizabeth Wells, representing the Alabama Genealogical Society; Ashley Penhale, representing the Alabama League of Municipalities; Iva Nelson, representing the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators; Rickey Best, representing the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries; Lyn Frazer, representing the Society of Alabama Archivists; and Leonard Wilson, representing the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Member organizations not represented at the meeting were the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association, the Alabama Historical Association, the Alabama Library Association, the Alabama Press Association; the Probate Judges Association; and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Archives staff members present included Tracey Berezansky, Tom Turley, Frank Brown, and Corlis Floyd.

Ed Bridges called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. He confirmed the presence of a quorum, noted that the meeting had been properly announced as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Law, welcomed those present, and introduced Iva Nelson and Ashley Penhale as interim representatives for the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators and the Alabama League of Municipalities, respectively.

Dr. Bridges requested the agenda be amended to add a new Item X: a discussion of proposed federal legislation entitled "Preserving the American Historical Record." A motion to adopt the agenda as amended was made by Rickey Best and seconded by Leonard Wilson. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion to dispense with the reading of minutes of the October 24, 2007, meeting, and for their approval, was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Elizabeth Wells. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Review and Approval of Statewide Plan for Historical Records Preservation (copy attached)

Board members were provided with detailed notes from the plan committee's February 4 meeting, along with a copy of the final statewide plan for review and approval. Tracey Berezansky offered a page-by-page review of the draft plan. She informed the Board that under our NHPRC "SNAP" Grant (see below), the Government Records Division has hired two students to begin compiling an online directory of Alabama records repositories and "best practices" in records preservation.

Dr. Bridges noted a need to correct the spelling of David Tuck's name in the meeting notes of February 4. Rickey Best requested that local boards of education be included in the database of historical records repositories being created by the two student employees.

A motion to approve the statewide plan was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Best. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

NHPRC “SNAP” Grant: Approval of Regrant Program Guidelines, Forms, and Procedures
(copies attached)

Ms. Berezansky reviewed the board’s successful application to the NHPRC for a State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) Grant to implement its statewide plan. The HRAB received an award of \$66,964, of which \$50,000 will be available as regrants to local government agencies and historical entities for records preservation projects. Ms. Berezansky and Dr. Turley presented the draft regrant program guidelines, procedures, and application form. During a lengthy discussion, board members considered what types of projects should be eligible, the limits to be placed on grant awards, whether funds should be awarded in one or two grant cycles, what percentage of matching funds should be required from grant applicants, and how to simplify the application process. The board requested the following changes to the draft application guidelines and procedures:

1. There will be only one regrant cycle, with January 31, 2009, as the application deadline. Awards will be announced on April 1; projects are to be completed within six months.
2. There will be a \$3,000 limit on individual awards.
3. A local match—50% of the total project budget—is required for each award. The match may consist of either direct financial contributions or cost-sharing. (For example, volunteer hours devoted to a project may be counted at a rate of \$8.00 per hour.)
4. Proposals to catalog, index, or prepare finding aids to historical records were added to the list of eligible projects. The board also added specific items of equipment (such as computers, scanners, indexing software, and hygrothermographs) to the list of items eligible to be purchased with grant funds. Finally, because ADAH will participate in a forthcoming disaster planning training program for localities (sponsored by the Council of State Archivists [CoSA] and the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]), the board decided that disaster planning projects will not be eligible under this grant program.
5. The board asked for the draft regrant application form (which was based on the version used during our earlier regrant program) to be considerably simplified, ideally becoming a one- or two-page form. Ms. Berezansky suggested using South Carolina’s form as a model. Fringe benefits will be deleted from the form.

The board empowered HRAB staff to make the agreed-upon corrections to grant guidelines, procedures, and application form. The final documents will be reviewed and approved by the grant review committee on behalf of the whole board.

A motion to adopt the preceding directives of the board was made by Mr. Best and seconded by Mr. Wilson. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Dr. Bridges asked for volunteers to serve on the grant review committee. Board members Rickey Best, Wayne Coleman, Lyn Frazer, Elizabeth Wells, Leonard Wilson, and the soon-to-be-appointed representative for the Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators agreed to serve. The committee will schedule a meeting by early August to review the regrant materials, as well as the next agenda item (see below).

Board Action on ADAH Digitizing Grant Application to NHPRC (copy attached)

Ms. Berezansky introduced a grant proposed for funding by the NHPRC: “Digitizing Alabama’s Civil War State Records.” She explained that Archives staff will work with staff of Ancestry.com to digitize 1,153,600 images of Civil War regimental histories, muster rolls, censuses of Confederate soldiers and widows, and Confederate pension records that are held by ADAH. The project will make these collections freely available online (via the ADAH and Ancestry.com websites), providing materials to support the teaching of history in K-12 classrooms—an avowed goal of the HRAB.

The board agreed that the grant review committee could act on its behalf in regard to this proposal. Because the application is due to the NHPRC by August 15, Dr. Bridges asked Corlis Floyd to coordinate logistics for a meeting of the grant review committee within the next few days.

Approval of Board Informational Brochures (copies attached)

The board reviewed two draft informational brochures designed by ADAH staff: a general brochure on HRAB programs and another specific to the regrant program. They will be used for publicity and education purposes. Members offered suggestions to improve the brochures’ appearance and utility by increasing type size, changing color schemes, and including information about HRAB training programs. Staff agreed to incorporate these changes prior to making the brochures available to the public, via the HRAB’s web page or U.S. mail.

“Preserving the American Historical Record”

Ms. Berezansky informed the board of a bill in Washington, currently in Congressional committee, that would authorize the creation of a grant program to preserve America’s historical records. Other legislation would be required to fund the project. If funded, Alabama’s share would be \$783,668 annually. Ms. Berezansky encouraged HRAB members to contact their Congressmen (two of whom serve on the responsible committee) to ask them to support this bill. She agreed to send everyone an e-mail message later this week providing details of the bill.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Historical Records Advisory Board will be scheduled shortly after the regrant application deadline (January 2009), so that the board may make decisions on awards. Members will be notified by mail of the exact date and time.

Ms. Berezansky reminded the board that letters requesting re-appointment of members whose terms expire on August 31, 2008, will be mailed on August 1.

