

**MINUTES  
OF THE  
ALABAMA HISTORICAL RECORDS  
ADVISORY BOARD  
October 24, 2007**

The Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board (HRB) met on October 24, 2007, at 1:30 p.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; Roger Powell of the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association; Elizabeth Wells, representing the Alabama Genealogical Society; David Alsobrook, representing the Alabama Historical Association; Lori Lein of the Alabama League of Municipalities; Clark Center, representing the Alabama Library Association; Rickey Best, representing the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries; Bob Davis, representing the Alabama Press Association; Lyn Frazer, representing the Society of Alabama Archivists; and Leonard Wilson, representing the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Board members not present at the meeting were Donna Llewellyn of the Association of County Commissions, Geniece Johnson of the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators, Sherrie Phillips of the Probate Judges Association, and Mary Norman, representing the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

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

Pending the arrival of a quorum of the membership, Dr. Bridges asked Tracey Berezanky to give the members present an informal overview of the CoSA Disaster Planning Grant Project (Agenda Item X.).

Upon arrival of three more members of the board, Ed Bridges called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. He confirmed the presence of a quorum and noted that the meeting had been properly announced, as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Law. Dr. Bridges welcomed those present and introduced David Alsobrook as the Alabama Historical Association's newly appointed representative to the board.

Because several additional agenda items were added after the meeting packets had been mailed to members of the board, each member received a revised agenda at the meeting. A motion to adopt the agenda as updated was made by Rickey Best and seconded by Leonard Wilson. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the February 21, 2007, meeting, and for their approval, was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Clark Center. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

**Approval and Adoption of By-laws:** (copy attached)

Geniece Johnson, Lori Lein, and Mary Norman served on the By-laws Committee, assisted by ADAH staff member Tom Turley. A copy of the final version of the by-laws was given to each member for review.

A motion to approve and adopt the by-laws as submitted was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Lori Lein. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

**Plan Development Report** (copy attached)

Wayne Coleman reviewed the Plan Committee's work in developing a strategic planning process. With our survey of users and repositories completed, the next step is to create focus groups, which will discuss historical records issues identified in the surveys and recommend those that the board may want to address in the statewide plan. Our proposed timeline calls for the focus groups to meet in November and the full board to meet in December or January to finalize the statewide plan.

Ms. Berezansky highlighted the results of information she had gathered from other states that have developed strategic plans and objectives after establishing their historical records advisory boards. This information should prove useful to the focus groups in developing Alabama's plan.

**Review of Summary Report on Surveys Conducted during Summer 2007:** (copy attached)

Ms. Berezansky provided the board with a summary report of responses to the HRB's user and repository surveys, which were completed on July 31. We received 60 completed surveys from repositories of historical records, and 738 responses from users of such records. With a total survey population of 7,330 (the combined membership of agencies represented on the HRB), the response rate was slightly more than 10%. Highlights of the surveys were as follows:

- *User Survey.* About 88% of survey respondents described themselves as genealogists; others included local historians and scholarly researchers. They were most concerned about preserving local government records, funeral home and cemetery records, church records, vital records, and family records. Access issues were cited as the most pressing problem facing Alabama's historical records, followed by storage/preservation issues and funding. A significant number of respondents wanted more historical records available on-line.
- *Repository Survey.* The top three types of respondents were college and university archives, genealogical societies, and historical societies. Local history and genealogy were the top two subjects in their holdings. Fifty-seven percent saw unprocessed collections as the chief impediment to use of their collections. Other problems included lack of space or inadequate facilities, preservation concerns, the need to digitize collections, and a lack of institutional commitment.

The survey responses should provide the board with excellent information about the most critical issues involved in preserving Alabama's historical records as it develops the statewide plan.

**Focus Group Meeting Recommendations:** (copy attached)

Ms. Berezansky provided more detailed information on plans for the focus groups. Each will consist of 6-10 participants. We have compiled a preliminary list from survey responses, but members of the board were asked to recommend additional candidates. Focus group meetings will be conducted by a facilitator and will last approximately three hours. They will be held at a location convenient to

a majority of the group's members. Mileage and per diem, as well as the facilitator's fee, will be paid from HRB grant funds. (At an informal meeting of the Plan Committee, held after the full board meeting, it was agreed to increase the number of focus groups from two to three.)

**NHPRC Administrative Grant Extension/Grant Deadlines and Board Review Process:** (copy attached)

The current NHPRC grant for the HRB was scheduled to end on September 30, 2007. Ms. Berezansky applied for a grant extension in order to complete Alabama's strategic planning process, and NHPRC granted the extension on September 27. Our final financial and narrative reports will now be due to NHPRC on February 29, 2008.

In preparation for the board's future work of reviewing NHPRC grant applications, Dr. Turley researched the grant review process and NHPRC's current procedures for submitting applications. These have changed considerably since our first NHPRC regrant program was conducted in the 1990s. Announcements for various categories of grant applications are issued throughout the year, with most deadlines falling in June and October. All grant applications must now be made on-line. The HRB's Grants Committee will need to meet approximately one month after each major application deadline to review the grants submitted and make funding recommendations to NHPRC.

**Date of Future Meeting to Create Board Plan:**

The next meeting of the Historical Records Advisory Board was tentatively scheduled for early January. Members will be contacted as to a more specific date and time.

**CoSA Disaster Planning Grant Project:**

This agenda item was discussed as general information at the beginning of the meeting.

**Reimbursement Forms:**

All members were provided with the necessary forms to sign for travel reimbursement and should receive their reimbursement checks within the next two weeks.

**Adjournment:**

Dr. Bridges declared the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

---

Corlis Floyd, Secretary  
Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board

Date

Edwin C. Bridges, State Coordinator

---

Date

Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board