

MINUTES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS COMMISSION
October 24, 2003

The Local Government Records Commission met at 1:30 p.m., on Friday, October 24, 2003, at the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Members present were Ed Bridges, Chairman, representing the Department of Archives and History; Linda Barrontine, representing the Examiner of Public Accounts; Peggy Bates, City Clerk for the City of Pelham; Greg Dorr, representing the University of Alabama; Jeff Jakeman, representing Auburn University; Eliza Marshall, representing the Secretary of State; Glenda Morgan, City Clerk for the City of Mobile; and Carol Jean Smith, representing the Attorney General. Others present included Gregg Everett, representing the Alabama Hospital Association; Joe Campbell, representing the Huntsville Health Care Authority; Nancy Worley, Secretary of State; and Regenia Blanchette of Mobile, Alabama.

Government Records staff present included Tracey Berezansky, Tom Turley, Frank Brown, Richard Wang, and Corlis Floyd.

Dr. Bridges called the meeting to order, welcomed those present, and introduced Dr. Dorr as the newly appointed member to the commission representing the University of Alabama.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2003, meeting was made by Glenda Morgan and seconded by Peggy Bates. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Old Business

- Loose Records Program Update (copy attached):

Tom Turley reported that 23 counties have completed filming their records and 14 more counties are either filming records or have completed processing records for filming. We currently have three couples working in the Archives building who are assisting us with processing and filming ADAH's county records of genealogical significance. Dr. Turley provided the commission with a current map of Alabama that depicts the status of each county project, along with a brief summary of project developments this quarter.

- Legislative Update—State Historical Records Advisory Board:

Frank Brown reported that ADAH's bill to create a State Historical Records Advisory Board will be introduced again in the next legislative session. The state budgetary crisis and other, more pressing legislation hindered the bill's passage in the previous two sessions, but we expect its passage in both houses during the upcoming session.

- Proposed Change in Retention for Records Common to Most Local Records Jurisdictions (copy attached):

The commission members had received a memorandum, dated September 25, 2003, outlining retention changes requested for three local government record series. Dr. Turley stated that changes determined by the commission at this meeting would be made to each local RDA as it is scheduled for revision. In the meantime, staff will send a letter to all local government agencies to inform them of the changes and allow them to implement the new retention periods in destruction notices prior to revision of each RDA. Dr. Bridges suggested that the commission discuss and approve each record series on an individual basis.

1. Short-Term Financial Records

This agenda item, which had been held over from the July meeting, resulted from discussions between the local records staff and the Examiners of Public Accounts.

A motion to revise the retention period for short-term financial records, and other records with a disposition of “5 years after the end of the fiscal year” in which they were created, to: “Retain 2 years following audit” was made by Jeff Jakeman and seconded by Linda Barrontine. It was unanimously approved by the commission.

2. General Ledgers/Detailed Year-end Trial Balances

After a lengthy discussion, the commission decided that, for clarification purposes, a distinction needed to be made between records created manually (General Ledgers) and those created electronically (Detailed Year-end Trial Balances). The proposed requirement was:

A. Manually-Created General Ledgers. Disposition: PERMANENT.

B. Electronically-Created Detailed Year-End Trial Balances. Disposition: Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

A motion to approve the revised retention periods for General Ledgers and Detailed Year-end Trial Balances was made by Glenda Morgan, seconded by Greg Dorr, and unanimously approved by the commission.

3. Employee Personnel Files

Last year, these files were reappraised with a retention period of “25 years after separation of employee,” in order to document employment for retirement purposes. Due to agency protests and the fact that Wage and Tax Statements also provide long-term (50-year) documentation of employment, staff proposed to return to the previous requirement for employee personnel files: “Retain 6 years after separation of employee.”

A motion to revise the disposition of Employee Personnel Files to “**Retain 6 years after separation of employee**” was made by Dr. Jakeman and seconded by Peggy Bates. It was unanimously approved by the commission.

New Business

- Proposed Plan for Future Local Government Records Commission Activities:

Ms. Berezansky informed the commission that ADAH recently lost staff member Lyn Frazer, who accepted the position of Montgomery County Archivist. Tracey stated that Ms. Frazer's transfer to the county, along with the recent state budget cuts, will force us to re-evaluate local records program priorities and perhaps result in some of the new initiatives proposed to the commission last quarter being put on hold.

Records Disposition Authority

- Health Care Authorities (new):

Ms. Berezansky pointed out the minor changes made to the draft RDA since the July commission meeting and asked that additional changes be added before the commission voted on approval of the RDA:

Page 2-1, Patient Medical Records (2.01): Add the sentence: "The records for minors should be retained until the individual reaches the age of 21 or for 10 years, whichever is longer."

Page 3, Patient Medical Records, add to the disposition: "**Retain 10 years or until individual reaches age 21, whichever is longer.**"

The commission also directed that the changes in retention already approved for Short-term Financial Records, General Ledgers and Detailed Year-end Trial Balances, and Employee Personnel Files would also apply to the health care authorities' RDA.

The draft of an annual reporting form developed specifically for the health care authorities to report their records activities was also reviewed by the commission.

A motion to approve the RDA as amended was made by Ms. Barrontine, seconded by Ms. Morgan, and unanimously approved by the commission.

- County Boards of Registrars (unscheduled proposal for revision)

Secretary of State Nancy Worley asked the commission for assistance with a problem her office had encountered because of the new voter identification requirements. In the current boards of registrars' RDA, voter update cards are classified as temporary records and are eligible for destruction. Since the voter identification law was passed, the cards are now considered to be legal documents verifying voter history and should be maintained permanently. After discussion, the commission decided that a letter will be drafted for Dr. Bridges' signature, supporting Ms. Worley's direction that the county boards of registrars cease destroying voter update cards,

pending formal revision of their RDA at the commission's January meeting. Also, in response to a recent request from a county board of registrars, disposition in the RDA will be provided for incomplete voter applications.

A motion approving this plan was made by Ms. Morgan and seconded by Dr. Jakeman. It was unanimously approved by the commission.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Local Government Records Commission is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2004, at 1:30 p.m. For planning purposes, the April meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2004.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Corlis Floyd, Secretary
Local Government Records Commission

Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman
Local Government Records Commission