

SHRAB Meeting Notes – March 3, 2025 2:00pm

Present: Greg Crawford, Chad Owen, Debbie Harvey, Angela Rice, Steve Landes, Heidi Barshinger, Ervin Jordan, Ruth Welch, Chaz Haywood, Heather Bollinger, Zachery Hottel

Absent: Bernadette Battle, Chris Bissex

Greg Crawford called the meeting to order at 2:00 and began with brief introductions all around.

SHRAB Background

Greg shared the document appointing SHRAB originally in June 1976 by Governor Mills Godwin as part of the national Bicentennial celebration through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and followed by reviewing the “Purpose, Powers, and Duties” of SHRAB. Four of the seven “Purpose, Powers, and Duties” of SHRAB pertain directly to the NHPRC. The NHPRC used to require each state SHRAB review grants from their own states to make recommendations going forward; NHPRC no longer requires SHRAB review for grants. NHPRC used to offer SNAP grants to the local SHRABs to support grants for workshops, support for SHRAB meetings, or direct regrants for preservation. NHPRC in recent years has not had anyone in position to review or provide SNAP grants. LVA has no full time staff to oversee a grants program so funding workshops or providing regrants from within LVA is difficult or impossible, especially for the small amount of money on offer from NHPRC.

The goal for now is to concentrate on SHRAB’s advocacy role to promote an understanding of the role of historical records, and to that end, the plan is to have two meetings a year, one in the spring coinciding with Records Management Month in April and one in the fall coinciding with Archives Month in October.

Dr. Jordan noted that in his previous experience with SHRAB, a great portion of their efforts were trying to convince Virginia repositories to apply for NHPRC grants, and in his latter years he was somewhat frustrated that such grants were sometimes poorly written, poorly focused, but occasionally were not being funded at the federal level even after passing Virginia SHRAB review.

Greg noted that as of about the past four to five years we have not received any grants to review at all. He posed the question to the group, what can we as SHRAB do to promote awareness of the purpose and value of historical records, particularly with the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence approaching next year, and asked the group to ponder that question between now and the next meeting.

Debbie noted that FamilySearch has digitized a great deal of Commonwealth records, but some localities have agreements that preclude their records from being presented online. She encouraged the Board to consider working as a liaison between local repositories and court clerks to make such records available.

Chaz noted that the Code limits what the court clerks can do with certain records, but records can be obtained directly from the courts for \$0.50 (mandatory charge per the Code) whereas the state Vital Statistics charges \$14 for similar searches. Greg indicated willingness to research possible

options for making records available that are past the over-100 year mark. Heather raised the issue that Code still restricts judges' signatures, creating a redaction requirement for things being made widely available.

Greg pointed out the need for many organizations to have a workshop or similar educational opportunity to learn how to write a good grant. Ruth volunteered her experience in grant writing – that it requires patience, careful reading, and solid general writing ability. Greg emphasized that there are lots of grant opportunities out there, possibly even more than we have identified on our web site.

Zach asked if we would be prevented from reviewing grants. Greg said his understanding was the opposite; SHRAB would be absolutely willing to review any grants, NHPRC or no, to offer help to our local repositories as long as the members are willing and available following through. Zach admitted that this was the point of his question, to engage SHRAB in a leadership role in helping our communities whether with NHPRC or any other funding opportunities.

ARVAS

Greg brought up the [ARVAS – Archival Resources of the Virginias](#) site. A handful of Board members were already familiar with it; UVA hosts the various finding aids on its servers. Greg noted that the chair of ARVAS is now a member of his staff at the LVA and asked if SHRAB would sponsor or host a virtual town hall introducing ARVAS to smaller historical societies across the Commonwealth. Considering ARVAS makes finding aids available online free of charge, it may be an opportunity for many smaller repositories to make their resources available online and get more eyes on their collections. ARVAS is offering a town hall on May 6th at 2pm; Greg asked if SHRAB was interested in collaborating.

Ruth indicated that she thought it was a wonderful idea. So many smaller repositories don't have the resources on their own to make their collections available, or even to apply for grants because they don't have the resources to manage them. This could be a very helpful partnership for them. Chaz agreed and asked how we could get the information out there; Greg noted that he had a contact list for local repositories and could also leverage LVA's social media presence. He encouraged Board members to use their own social media to assist. Zach moved and Heather seconded that SHRAB assist ARVAS in this town hall, and the Board unanimously approved.

Closing

In closing, Greg encouraged the members to think about SHRAB's mission and what we can do to further promote the valuable historical resources of the Commonwealth.

The meeting was concluded at 2:56pm.