

Council Minutes

August 26, 1997

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President Nicholas Burckel called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m., Tuesday, August 26, 1997. Present besides Burckel were: Vice President William Maher, Treasurer Leon Stout, and Council members: Valerie Browne, Bruce Bruemmer, Susan Davis, Anne Gilliland-Swetland, Lori Hefner, Steven Hensen, Peter Hirtle, and Sharon Gibbs Thibodeau. Sharron Uhler was unable to attend due to a death in the family. Also present was incoming Vice President Luciana Duranti, Treasurer Bob Sink and incoming Council members Fynnette Eaton, Karen Jefferson and Helen Tibbo. Deputy Archivist Lewis Bellardo participated via conference call and Debra Mills, Meetings Consultant, appeared briefly to discuss future meeting sites.

Motion to Adopt the Agenda

Bruemmer moved and Browne seconded the motion to adopt the agenda. PASSED.

Motion to Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Stout moved and Davis seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the June 8-9, 1997 meeting as amended. PASSED.

Report of the Executive Committee

Davis reviewed the Council meeting agenda as discussed in the Executive Committee.

Report of the President

Burckel said he had little to report and that most of his prior items were discussed via the Council listserv.

Report of the Vice President

Maher distributed the draft vision statement. After Council discussion and revision, Maher said he hoped the document could be available for distribution by the end of the day or by the end of the Saturday Council meeting.

Maher then distributed a list of completed committee appointments. He thanked Eaton and Fox for their help in identifying appointees. He said it was a very time consuming process but despite having invested much time it was an appropriate activity for an incoming president. He said it put him in touch with members and subsequently gave him a good sense of issues of concern among the various constituencies. He described his appointment process in light of pending recommendations for unit dissolution resulting from the Task Force on Organizational Effectiveness (TFOE) report. He said he extended appointments for one year for those on bodies which would likely disband by year's end. He gave the mandate for affected groups to devise new guidelines for council to adopt in order to implement TFOE recommendations.

Maher said he appointed a task group to work on a statement to augment SAA's support of the National Humanities Alliance Statement of the Principles on Fair Use. He said Peter Hirtle, Tim Ericson and Wanda Finney comprised the group, which would give an archival gloss on the NHA principles. The group was charged to develop a draft document for Council discussion by mid to late September. Such policy statements are one of the key areas in which SAA was moving.

Report of the Treasurer

Stout reviewed the FY97 final figures. Due to a surplus realized from economical production of *The American Archivist* and due to personnel changes, the Society would realize a small gain. He reviewed changes incurred from new Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) regulations which mandated program based personnel accounting. He also reviewed the treasurer's report he would deliver at the business meeting.

Report of the Executive Director

Fox gave a brief report on 1997 registration figures, with pre-registration at approximately 1,000. She said she hoped to match or exceed record figures attained at the Washington, D.C. meeting, which had a high attendance of 1,300.

Mills then discussed 2001 meetings dates, presenting information on Birmingham and Mobile, Alabama as possible sites. Council then engaged in a discussion examining the possibility of holding annual meetings on a regular basis in target cities guaranteed to deliver high attendance (Chicago, Washington/Baltimore, New York).

Hefner said that she supported the idea of every third or fourth year holding the annual meeting in Western states. She supported the idea of holding the meeting in the Baltimore area in 2001 in order to mitigate the low attendance anticipated for meetings held prior to that time.

Maher expressed his concern about meeting during Labor Day weekend. He said years ago the Society adopted a rotation schedule outside of the Labor Day schedule. By meeting outside of major market cities it may enable SAA to meet at alternative times thereby potentially boosting attendance figures. He requested this option be explored if the Society chose either Birmingham or Baltimore as sites.

Davis moved and Bruemmer seconded the motion that if SAA chose a site in Alabama it would be Birmingham. PASSED.

Stout proposed a joint SAA-NAGARA meeting for 2001 in Alabama in order to celebrate the archives centennial in that state.

Maher identified two issues to be resolved: one, the need to confer with Ed Bridges and the Alabama archivists to determine how strong an interest they had in having SAA meet in Birmingham and two, someone needed to speak to NAGARA to see if they had an interest in a joint meeting in Birmingham. It would be important to determine the strength of the support that could be brought to a meeting in Alabama.

Hensen said he would like to see some projection of the attendance numbers for a Birmingham meeting and the impact on the SAA budget of having a series of meetings in areas which generate lesser revenues.

Gilliland-Swetland said Fox should also look at the timing of the meeting. Birmingham was a college town and it would be putting a great deal of strain on them for SAA to be there around Labor Day.

Browne moved that SAA hold the 2001 meeting in the Baltimore/Washington area with the idea that SAA would seriously consider Birmingham in 2002. Stout seconded the motion. PASSED, with Maher and Hirtle against.

Hensen moved that SAA hold the 2002 meeting in Birmingham. Stout seconded the motion. PASSED.

Fox concluded her report with a brief update on personnel transitions and a potential office move in March 1998.

Report of Council Committee on Committees

Hensen said he had nothing current to report. He said his committees would be meeting and discussing the TFOE recommendations. Davis inquired about the Standards Board, which TFOE recommended incorporate the Committee on Archival Information Exchange (CAIE) as a subcommittee. Hensen said that Linda Evans, Standards Board Chair, disagreed with the recommendation, but that CAIE did agree. The Standards Board and CAIE would come back to Council in January with a charge for the recommended incorporation.

Bruemmer moved adoption of revised guidelines for the SAA/ARMA Joint Committee. Hefner seconded the motion. PASSED.

Report of Council Committee on Sections and Roundtables

Thibodeau said she had communicated with her assigned units and no major issues had surfaced. She said there was a great deal of support for the planned Leadership Luncheon and some lingering response to the TFOE recommendations. She said a group of perennial concerns needed to be addressed: infrastructure issues, lapses in memory on the part of group leaders regarding whether or not they can receive fiscal support for their work, how to proceed to bring about a name change for their group, disconnects in expectations on the part of the units and the SAA office, especially regarding publishing newsletters and directories. Thibodeau volunteered to develop a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for future distribution.

Bruemmer said Council had a crucial role in connecting units with the Chicago office. He said he heard many amorphous complaints about the office which were never specific enough to address adequately.

Hefner said that she appreciated the "heads-up" provided by Fox when units expressed dissatisfaction over policies, which enabled her to better prepare for discussions.

Committee on Task Forces, Boards, and Representatives

Davis said she had nothing to report. Browne said the Standards Board had no recommendations regarding the PACE Guidelines but that they would have one for the August 30 Council meeting.

Hefner presented a draft charge for establishing a task force on diversity. Gilliland-Swetland said there were several diversity aspects involved in several different discussions currently underway in the Society, including salary, recruitment, meeting

rotation, etc. Hefner said she, Gilliland-Swetland and Jefferson pared an initially too broad charge into essential questions for the Society to consider.

Maher expressed basic concerns. He said that while the areas for the task force to examine had been narrowed, which helped reduce the lack of focus of the original proposal, he saw a pragmatic problem in trying to explain to the task force what it is that Council meant by diversity. He did not believe the charge identified or clarified diversity and that the very definition of the word was a political issue. He also identified concern regarding the manageability of a task force of eight members and a concern that the Society might be taking on too much activity to add a third task force to the two already established for the year.

Jefferson said that while it is not an easy answer to try to define diversity; it could not be accomplished around the Council table and therefore it was important to have a task force address the issue. She said diversity is an issue the Society should be interested in, how the issue is approached is the reason to have a task force recommend approaches. She said she personally would wonder why SAA would be reluctant to address the issue and bring it into discussion.

Davis expressed difficulty with the timing of the task force and the level of risk incurred with all the other initiatives engaging the Society's effort and attention. The task force introduced the possibility SAA would not be able to act on its recommendations. She suggested this may not be the year to establish the task force and that it might be better to wait until the TFOE changes are established and the other two task forces conclude their work. At that time it might be possible to come up with specific recommendations which could be implemented.

Bruemmer said he saw it as a Gordian knot, which is true of all committees -- Council sets people on tasks, deliberates on their recommendations, then ignores their advice, which engenders hard feelings. One way around that, he suggested, is to be very specific. Diversity, however, was not an issue which could be easily specified.

Jefferson said the issue was already in discussion among members of the Society. She said the task force report may not necessarily recommend implementable items, but describe what issues exist.

Hefner said that addressing diversity would never be a smooth matter and it was one SAA would need to face. She noted the perception that SAA was dominated by a straight, white, middle class and the fact that the Society will always face a very full agenda.

Fox inquired whether or not the subcommittee would request funds for a meeting of the task force. Hefner said no funds were expected, that all work of the task force would be accomplished without a midyear meeting.

Duranti suggested an alternative, to direct each SAA unit to issue a short report on how they address or whether they consider the issue of diversity at all in the course of their business. Council could then receive the reports and decide what steps to take.

Hensen saw this as an unwieldy approach. He said it would be natural for a task force to address the issue rather than funneling through Council. He said he was comfortable with the charge as it was phrased.

Gilliland-Swetland noted that diversity issues were highly relevant to the Task Force on the Annual Meeting and the Task Force on Dues and Member Benefits.

Sink said he saw the charge as very narrow. Define what diversity is to SAA. Eight people could do that, then leave it open where to proceed from there.

Hefner moved adoption of the charge establishing a Task Force on Diversity. Gilliland-Swetland seconded the motion. PASSED.

Hirtle agreed with Sink. He offered an amendment to the charge to change the wording of the background statement to investigate how and to what extent issues of diversity are being addressed by the Society. Then it would be up to Council to decide next steps.

Hirtle moved to amend the charge. Browne seconded the motion. PASSED.

Burckel asked if the understanding was that as part of the information gathering portion of the work the task force would go out to groups and ask them what they had done to incorporate issues of diversity and to be sensitive to these issues? He said he wanted some mechanism in place which would place the burden on all SAA members to think about and address the issue, not just on a task force.

Hefner moved adoption of the charge as amended. Gilliland-Swetland seconded. PASSED.

Conference Call with Lewis Bellardo, Deputy Archivist of the United States

Burckel reviewed with Council the suggested agenda for the conference call with Lewis Bellardo, Deputy Archivist of the United States. The ensuing discussion with Bellardo included receiving current information regarding litigation against the National Archives (GRS 20, IRS); status of FY99 appropriation for NARA and NHPRC; status of the NARA strategic planning process; and methods of strengthening the relationship between NARA and SAA. Burckel thanked Bellardo for taking time from his busy schedule to speak with Council.

NHPRC Blue Ribbon Committee

Burckel gave background of the proposed issue to establish a Blue Ribbon Committee for NHPRC to address how to increase funding for the Founding Fathers documentary editions and how to expedite their publication schedule. He said SAA's representative to NHPRC, Anne Kenney, had suggested the Association of Documentary Editors (ADE) take on the project, as its goals relate directly to their work. The sense of Council was that there was no need for a commission at this point in time and therefore it was appropriate that it be managed outside NHPRC by ADE as recommended by Kenney.

NCC

Burckel said both the outgoing and incoming executive committees would be meeting with Page Putnam Miller, Executive Director of the National Coordinating Coalition for the Promotion of History (NCC) later in the week. He said the purpose of the meeting was to clarify expectations SAA had in participating in the NCC coalition and to request that Miller keep the Society informed of archival issues raised by historians early on in order to open up the dialogue between the two professions.

Burckel said Miller had presented a list of recommended actions for Council to consider:

Letter to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees re Proposed World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty

Hirtle said it was important for SAA to be cognizant of issues involving encryption systems which would have distinctly archival concerns. He recommended that the executive committee communicate to Miller that SAA opposes the proposed WIPO treaty.

Fox said she would construct a first draft of the letter to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees expressing SAA's opposition.

Letter to Senate Treasury Appropriation Subcommittee re NHPRC Funding

Hefner moved and Browne seconded the motion that SAA send a letter in support of the House version of the appropriation. PASSED.

The sense of Council was that a letter to the House and Senate Oversight Committees regarding recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation to the United States Department of State was not needed at that time because the issues were well stated by the Advisory Committee itself.

Statement on the Use of Electronic Mailing Lists by SAA

Bruemmer introduced the following statement:

"In January 1997, Council decided against the implementation of an SAA electronic mailing list, preferring to use the SAA Web site and *Archival Outlook* as the primary channels of communication between the Society and its members. Historically, SAA has severely limited its participation in other electronic mailing lists because of the danger in appearing to adopt them as another formal channel of communication, a channel in which SAA could not assure any level of quality. Yet SAA's silence on existing mailing lists is not in the interests of its strategic plan or its members. The use of electronic mailing lists relating to archives, preservation, and records management is an inexpensive and effective means of communication to members, potential members, and others who look to SAA for leadership in the profession.

"In the future, SAA will use relevant electronic mailing lists in conjunction with postal mailings, fax, and other mechanisms used to disseminate information to both members and non-members of SAA. Such information should include announcements of public policy issues formally adopted by SAA. The intent is not to use electronic mailing lists to engage the Society in a dialogue, which would be fraught with impracticalities. Rather, SAA recognizes the need to disseminate information to all individuals who participate in the profession or who are allied with it."

Bruemmer then moved adoption of the statement for insertion in the Council Handbook. Stout seconded the motion. PASSED.

Maher noted that when posting to listservs the Chicago office will need to develop a paragraph that communicates SAA does not engage in debate of policy statements.

Hefner concurred, saying that the intent is to receive feedback, but to keep the discussion at a higher level.

Maher said that as a practical matter he preferred the statements be posted only by the Chicago office, the President or Council, however his distinct preference was for the postings to come only from the Chicago office. Council expressed strong agreement.

Inquiry Re SAA Assuming Ownership of Archives Listserv

Fox relayed an inquiry from John Harlan regarding whether or not SAA would want to take over management of the Archives and Archivists listserv. Maher said he received a very similar inquiry from H-Net asking whether or not SAA wished to establish a listserv there as well. Therefore, he said, the question of SAA's involvement in an archives listserv would need to be taken in context. The Society had an opportunity to consider whether or not to engage in a moderated or unmoderated listserv or not to engage in one at all. Burckel raised a third option of establishing a members-only list.

Hirtle said he did not see H-Net as really being an option because of the mechanics involved in administering the list. He considered the Harlan inquiry more feasible but that assuming ownership would depend on whether or not the list could still be maintained out of the Miami U. system.

Maher said Council needed more information on what would be involved in owning the list, time and maintenance requirements.

Bruemmer said he would call Harlan and explore the range of options.

Hefner said she wanted to assess the financial implications as well. Hirtle said he would like to see the listserv farmed out to members who have institutional support and not have it operating out of the Chicago office with staff responsibility.

Bruemmer said Council needed a business plan in order to respond to the inquiries. He said he would develop a plan for the winter Council meeting. Fox agreed to work with him.

Leadership Luncheon

Burckel led a discussion about logistics of the Leadership Luncheon scheduled for later in the week. He said the main purpose of the luncheon was to listen and to bring feedback obtained from SAA leadership to the Council list-serv for further discussion.

Involving Past Presidents/Leaders

Burckel relayed a conversation held with Linda Ederly regarding the fact that the Society may be losing talented people due to a lack of engagement. He solicited Council opinion.

Maher said that in the case of past officers and unsuccessful candidates, SAA may well be losing their attention, interest and contributions. He suggested developing a list of past presidents and publishing it in a basic membership publication such as the directory as a means of creating ready access to leadership from the past 25 years.

Hensen said he was not sure he shared the overall perception, although the case was certainly true of unsuccessful presidential candidates. At the same time, he said, there was a need to balance engaging past leaders with the need to engage newer members and those who hadn't been actively involved. He said the perception was in fact that leadership revolved around a very few people.

Burckel noted that SAA membership size had declined and now there was a different population from which to draw. He said there was a need to tap into existing resources and the issue was more relevant now than ten years ago because the SAA population was stabilizing.

Eaton said there needed to be a balance to consider the expertise from ex-presidents and to involve those who have been inactive for a while.

Jefferson suggested this would be an item for the appointments committee to consider.

Burckel said the fellows might also be an appropriate forum to engage the discussion.

TFOE Implementation

Burckel said that assuming the Business Meeting passed the revised Constitution and Bylaws, Council needed to consider the next steps in implementing TFOE's recommendations.

Maher said that a number of items in the TFOE report recommended change. Unless Council systematically worked with the report and made a conscientious effort to implement them it would be likely the recommendations would never be realized.

He said he would place the recommendations in matrix form and suggest a product needed in order to bring the recommendation before Council as a January discussion item.

Hirtle said it would also be necessary to give serious examination of the Membership Interest Group (MIG) proposal and to decide how that would be constituted as a new set of guidelines. He noted a strong connection between the proposal and the Task Force on Dues and Membership Benefits charge to examine a proposed cafeteria plan dues structure.

Maier said that he saw the next steps then being for Council to develop motions on TFOE recommendations for the Winter council meeting. He said a business and organization plan for the MIG proposal would need to be developed for consideration by the Task Force on Dues and Member Benefits.

Bruemmer recommended that on the Saturday meeting Council should formally endorse all TFOE recommendations except those concerning Sections and Roundtables. Hefner and others opposed the recommendation, saying that leadership had committed to thoroughly discussing the TFOE report with membership.

Resolutions Committee

Eaton and Thibodeau agreed to serve on the Council Resolutions Committee to receive items for consideration at the Business Meeting.

Vision Statement

Maier introduced a position statement on Archival Roles for the New Millennium and moved its adoption. After Council discussion and revision, Hirtle seconded the motion. PASSED.

Lindeberg Declaration

Davis presented a request received from an Australian archivist requesting SAA to take a position condemning actions on the part of a provincial justice commission in an issue concerning records destruction. She described the context of the request.

Stout said that the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) had already spoken to the issue and he saw no need for U.S. involvement.

Maier agreed, saying it was not an American issue and that it had already been addressed by the professional society in the country of its jurisdiction. He noted that Council did not have enough information to come to a coherent decision on it.

The sense of Council was not to become involved in the controversy.

Burckel expressed his pleasure at working with Council during the year. He said it was a good group, very cordial, and although they had had their share of animated discussions throughout the year, they were also able to reach consensus and disclosure with relative ease. He said Maier would continue to benefit from the group's good work.

Stout read the To Do list.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.