

# **Council Minutes**

*June 25-26, 2000*

*Midland Hotel, Chicago, IL*

President H. Thomas Hickerson called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Present: Vice President Lee Stout, Treasurer Robert Sink, and Council members Fynnette Eaton, Mark Greene, Becky Haglund-Tousey, Dennis Harrison, Karen Jefferson, Jane Kenamore, Richard Pearce-Moses, Helen Tibbo, and Wilda Logan Willis. Also present: incoming Treasurer Elizabeth Adkins, incoming Council members Tom Connors and Jackie Dooley, Executive Director Susan Fox and Meetings Director Debra Nolan.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Stout moved and Eaton seconded adoption of the agenda as amended. PASSED.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Harrison moved and Greene seconded approval of the January 2000 minutes as amended. PASSED, with Tibbo and Jefferson abstaining.

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Jefferson reported that the Executive Committee approved submission of a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of work in cooperation with the Canadian Council on Archives and the Canadian Committee on Archival Description to develop a single standard for archival description in North America. The funds would support editorial work on the standards and meetings of a U.S./Canadian Task Force on Archival Description. Total project funds requested: \$198,984 (including shared costs). The Executive Committee held some concern about the strictly North American focus of the proposed work, but thought overall it was a good proposal.

Jefferson said the \$51,247 proposal to NHPRC in support of the work of the EAD Working Group had also received funding, starting July 1, 2000.

## **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

Hickerson said SAA was doing well in attracting exhibitors the Denver annual meeting. Council members and staff should think creatively about the types of exhibitors to bring into the fold. He had good success with the people he'd approached to date. He had success in obtaining corporate sponsorship for program activities which decreased ticket costs or eliminated them altogether. He urged all to create a more organized approach to potential funders and to leverage this year's success into the future.

He expressed his appreciation to the 2000 Program Committee, particularly Committee Chair Jackie Dooley and to the 2000 Host Committee and Co-Chairs Steve Fisher and Joan Howard, who had to deal with a particularly difficult set of dynamics. He further expressed appreciation to Debra Nolan in her excellent work in managing the overall process of producing an annual meeting. He also planned to attend the Archives and Archivists of Color Roundtable Meeting to express his appreciation for their work this year as well.

He then reviewed past actions of Council regarding fundraising for the Society, which resulted in a particularly successful year for contributions. SAA raised over \$6,000 in general membership contributions for FY00. The Fellows solicitation achieved a 50% participation rate, with an average contribution of \$100 per Fellow. Council also achieved a 100% participation rate.

Harrison inquired whether or not there was a need for a formal resolution adopting the 100% participation rate on an annual basis. Greene said the first time Council voted to endorse 100% participation in SAA fundraising, it bound incoming members who had not been able to participate in the vote. If Council chose to adopt another mandate, it should apply only to the individuals who were currently members of Council. He said he had no issue with Council declaring that all members participate, but he was fundamentally opposed to the idea that this obligation should be mandated upon Council any more than it could be mandated on the rest of membership.

Hickerson recommended a motion be put forth in order to proceed with discussion. Sink moved that Council continue its policy of 100% Council member participation in the annual giving campaign for another year.

Eaton suggested taking the issue up at the winter rather than the summer meeting so that all people affected would be at the table.

Tousey asked if there was a way to achieve 100% participation without mandating it.

Hickerson said Council could vote the issue in September as the new class began, which would allow for inclusion in the fall general membership solicitation.

Council agreed to table the motion and to include the issue on the August meeting agenda. Greene noted current Council consensus was to achieve 100% participation in Calendar Year 2000.

Hickerson said Archivist of the US John Carlin had copied him on a letter he had written to International Council on Archives (ICA) leadership opposing the creation of new regions within the ICA. He said he would invite SAA's Representative to the ICA Section on Professional Associations, Karen Benedict, to give a report at the August meeting so that Council may learn more about the issues behind the proposed reorganization.

#### **REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**

Stout reported that he named approximately 20% of his appointments. He made contact with current committee chairs, and was working to finish the 2001 Program Committee appointments. He thanked Council for their suggestions and encouraged more.

#### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Fox said the meeting of the Task Force on Continuing Education was an excellent one. She commended the work of all the task force members.

Reneta Webb, Interim Education Director, had obtained a new position, but would be able to assist SAA through the annual meeting.

Fox reported that the Publications Board also held a successful meeting which resulted in significant advancement of its agenda. Several contracts with authors were in the pipeline, with publication of Rand Jimerson's archive reader scheduled for August.

Nolan gave a status report of potential cities for the 2004 meeting. New York City was out of the question because of high rates. Boston looked promising. She was also investigating Chicago. Connors reminded Council that ICA would meet again in 2004.

Jefferson said SAA should let members know that every third meeting or so must meet in Boston, Chicago, or DC in order to bring in sufficient revenues to offset budgetary pressures. Council agreed that Nolan should consider Boston in early August, as well as New York and Chicago.

Fox presented the SAA-ARMA Joint Committee request that it be allowed to occupy a guaranteed program session slot at each SAA annual meeting. The joint committee had difficulties conforming to both the SAA and ARMA timetables and deadlines for program submissions and made this request to ease the process. The joint committee noted that ARMA had already reserved a slot for them.

Hickerson said he was disinclined to go along with the joint committee's request. He said the ALA-SAA Joint Committee had a similar agreement with ALA, which also reserved a program slot for a joint committee session, but SAA had not allowed that joint committee to do the same because it had always been the Program Committee's prerogative to choose sessions. He held to the view that all proposals must compete on merit against other proposals and that competition made for better sessions. Council concurred.

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Sink introduced two proposed FY01 budgets, one reflecting fiscal projections if Council accepted the Task Force on Continuing Education's recommendations, and one reflecting status quo.

Council engaged in an extended discussion expressing deep concern about the amount budgeted for computer support, a result of the high degree of difficulty experienced in the Chicago office implementing the new association management software. Because of these difficulties, the actual figure for FY99 came in at \$50,000, substantially higher than budgeted. Greene said that if the costs for computer support did not substantially decrease in FY01/02, then Council would need to be ready to act and to make the decision of going to another software system.

Hickerson said he was also concerned about the loss in staff productivity as well as the cost and its impact on efficient provision of member services.

Sink said the old system was dreadful and there were many inefficiencies and hidden costs to its operation, SAA was losing money and opportunities that were not immediately apparent. He said by December Council would know how costs were running for the current fiscal year and if they continued to run high then Council could come to a decision on how to respond.

Fox said SAA suffered from a merger within the association management software industry. The original contractor, from whom SAA purchased the new system, sold out to a larger firm, which had provided SAA's original system. SAA's software was over 10 years old at the time of the purchase and unable to function on contemporary operating systems. That older software was part of the motivation to move to the new system, in order to move away from exceptionally high support fees.

The merger caused significant service disruptions just at the time SAA transitioned to the new software. The office was unable to secure continuity in project managers from either the old or new firm. At that time the new firm also introduced a mandatory, major product upgrade. The upgrade created additional operating difficulties and re-created problems initially resolved in the prior six months.

Fox echoed Council's dismay at the situation. She believed the staff — who deserved great praise for their hard work and tenacity in coping with an untenable situation — had resolved some of the most difficult issues. She believed the computer support costs would decrease substantially in the coming fiscal year, although they would always remain a significant budgetary item.

### **TASK FORCE REPORT ON CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Willis presented the final report of the Task Force on Continuing Education, which recommended a major shift in the Society's education program, primarily by supporting a move from offering basic workshops to offering online courses. The report gave a rationale for this focus, the cost factors related to online course offerings, the support of an Education Officer position, and educational goals and their ongoing evaluation.

Stout moved acceptance of the report, with appreciation to each task force member for their excellent service. Pearce-Moses seconded. PASSED.

Council engaged in discussion of SAA's role in providing basic vs. advanced workshops. Greene said it was difficult to discern which workshops were basic or advanced, because of the difficulty of defining which is which along the continuum. This was an issue the Committee on Education and Professional Development could never truly resolve.

Hickerson suggested that SAA develop an NHPRC proposal to develop a set of advanced archival courses to be delivered online. He said it was important to act and act quickly.

Sink agreed, saying that developing a proposal would help Council think through issues raised by the Task Force report and to develop some answers. He said it would be important to come to a collective understanding about how far the Society should invest time and resources in online course development and delivery.

Hickerson said he saw Council agreement that SAA should focus its energies on developing new advanced and/or specialized educational programs, including online delivery, but that Council also recognized a need for targeted basic archival education.

Greene moved that SAA hire an education director with responsibilities and goals as outlined in the task force report, namely: steering, advocating, publishing materials for, and teaching in the education program; that SAA intends that the education director will develop online courses to a significant degree as part of the continuing education program; that the priority need is to develop new advanced/specialized archival programs while still ensuring access to basic archival education; that SAA actively collaborate with other organizations and institutions in the shaping and developing of archival continuing education. Stout seconded. PASSED.

Pearce-Moses agreed to draft a proposal to the NHPRC in time for the October 1 deadline to support development of online courses.

Kenamore moved that Council very much appreciated Pearce-Moses for all his work on behalf of the Society. Eaton seconded. PASSED.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Pearce-Moses introduced the draft strategic plan with the suggestion of not calling it a strategic plan, but instead a "statement on goals and priorities," which he believed to be more accurate. He saw a need to address the grassroots in SAA. He believed the statement could be structured for comment and response in order to involve all SAA members.

Eaton expressed appreciation for Pearce-Moses' role in bringing the statement together and creating a coherent document.

Jefferson asked if Council was in agreement on how the document was going to be used and implemented. She said it needed to be a document the Sections and Roundtables would own, so that all of SAA could work collectively on all the goals.

Council engaged in a general discussion of potential purposes and use of the plan. Pearce-Moses saw it as a map and thought it was important to communicate with membership Council's vision and to insure that all were rowing in the same direction. Stout said his perception was that unless the plan was tied to the budget it would not be an entirely effective instrument. Hickerson saw it as an expansion of SAA's mission statement and that it would guide the Society's primary activities. The objectives of the plan, he said, were less clear. It would be important for Council to decide which objectives received priority. He saw it as an informational document to incorporate into Council planning.

Greene suggested that Council develop a document based on the goals contained in the draft plan, defining priorities for the next two years, including items with budget implications. Council could then pick out the tasks that were new or deserved renewed attention and prioritize. Greene volunteered to put together a discussion document. He saw it as more focused, less broad, and shorter than the current draft.

Hickerson said he saw the current draft's list of goals, rationale and objectives as a good statement of SAA's current mission and activities. This would be especially valuable to those new to the Society. He advocated creating an annual or biannual statement of current focus. The statement could be diverse enough to emphasize the most important areas the Society should address, but not specific actions.

Council agreed that it would be good to post the goals contained in the draft plan on the web as a guide to SAA activities.

**JUNE 26, 2000**

### **ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES**

Hickerson welcomed Archivist of the US John Carlin, and Deputy Archivist Lew Bellardo, who were participating in the meeting via conference call. Hickerson thanked Carlin for taking time from his busy schedule to participate in the meeting.

Carlin said he appreciated the opportunity to speak with Council and that he valued the chance to share news of NARA on a regular basis.

Carlin expressed concern about the delay in any congressional action on the NARA budget due to the election year cycle. Unfortunately, with NARA situated within the Treasury-Postal Service Subcommittee, the agency had to compete against several larger agencies for a slice of a diminishing pie. It created a real challenge.

However, he expressed optimism about agency progress in a number of areas. The electronic records archives was moving forward and in the right direction. Bellardo was working hard to get both the schedule and a set of projects off the ground.

Bellardo reported on progress with the archival research catalog. The product will be a library/cataloging software with advanced hierarchical capabilities, such as representing records in the form of the hierarchy in which they were a part, allowing users to create a file of administrative histories which will be fuller than a strict authority record. The fact that they will be working with an off-the-shelf rather than a customized program is also a strength.

Hickerson inquired about NARA's position regarding the International Council of Archive's proposed regional reorganization.

Carlin spoke to ICA's draft strategic plan, his desire to see a more open process in developing the plan, and his work with colleagues to gain an understanding of the plan before the international congress in Seville, Spain. Bellardo said he would like to see more diversity on the ICA executive board.

Hickerson said that Stout, Adkins and Connors would be attending the Seville meeting. He suggested that they communicate with Carlin prior to the meeting so that SAA and NARA could establish common interests and present them in Seville.

Eaton inquired about the status of NARA's reimbursable system.

Carlin said that they had made steady progress in the first year but still had a way to go before they would have a fine tuned machine. Given the relatively short period of time to put it together, and the fact that it was a significant change from the old system, overall he felt very good about where they were at that point. He saw a need to automate more and make more use of technology. He said NARA rolled out a modest improvement on the web and they could now use technology for what were once more manual tasks. He said they were serious about providing a sophisticated level of service and they were giving it high priority.

Bellardo thanked SAA and ARMA for their support of the standards issues involved in transitioning to a reimbursable system. He said the National Fire Protection Board came out with a similar set of standards to NARA's, which would help protect the agency from pressure to water them down.

Stout asked about the San Diego Supercomputing project and if Carlin would expand on electronic records issues in general.

Carlin said the effort was larger than the San Diego component. NARA was also working with individuals from the Georgia Institute of Technology. They had some rudimentary systems developing in-house and they would continue to work with in-house systems and electronic records until the Electronic Records Act (ERA) is functional. He expected that gradually over the next few years NARA would increase capacity so that when the ERA was in effect the agency could deal with different formats and generations. It was a huge challenge which would require a great deal of support and interest in the part of SAA and others and it would be a major budget item for FY2002. For all those interested in electronic records and archives, it was his hope that he could educate enough people to have a large supportive following in ultimately implementing the directive.

Bellardo said the in-house issues relating to electronic records management and recordkeeping were twofold. One, NARA needed to begin to prototype how the agency would implement an electronic recordkeeping system and two, what would NARA be able to offer other agencies? A small group of NARA employees would serve as testers for evaluating which product to use in implementing the system. They would then use lessons learned to decide whether or not NARA would go agency-wide with an electronic recordkeeping system.

Connors said he had been attending the Forum for Information Records Managers (FIRM) Council and especially appreciated Ken Thibodeau's presentation on the electronic records project at NARA. He said the presentations were lively and the meetings well attended. What did Carlin think of the organization?

Carlin said he appreciated receiving feedback from the group and communicating with people he could work with on a day-to-day basis. Bellardo said he was pleased the organization was created and saw it as generally a very healthy development.

Hickerson noted the importance of NARA leadership on electronic records issues, not only because of the technology issues involved, but also to help raise electronic records as a national issue. SAA could be helpful in that process and the results would be mutually beneficial. If a legislative initiative raised the profile, it would subsequently raise the profile of all involved, much like the American Memory Project at the Library of Congress raised the profile of digital libraries across the nation. He saw parallels between that effort and NARA's to educate the public about electronic records.

Eaton asked Carlin to summarize his thoughts about the direction of the NHPRC.

Carlin said that NHPRC needed to build a solid justification to demonstrate the need for additional resources. He said the commission needed a clear understanding stated in bullet form what the justification might be, citing both the positives and the negatives.

Hickerson expressed his personal appreciation and that of Council for having the opportunity to engage in communication with Carlin on a regular basis.

Carlin thanked Hickerson for his extraordinary leadership and said he looked forward to working with incoming President Lee Stout in the coming year.

#### **ELECTION OF A COUNCIL MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Council conducted a paper ballot and elected Kenamore to serve on the executive committee for 2000-2001. Harrison and Willis would serve as Council representatives to the 2000 Nominating Committee.

#### **APPROVAL OF BUDGET FOR FY01**

Sink presented the proposed budget which contained the fiscal impact of incorporating recommendations from the Task Force on Continuing Education. He gave high praise to Carroll Dendler, SAA's Director of Financial Operations, for her work in preparing and helping him present the budget detail.

He noted that one significant change between the status quo budget and the task force budget was the elimination of a .5 FTE education office assistant and using that slot to create a full time webmaster position. At present SAA was outsourcing a portion of its web maintenance work. Bringing this position completely in-house would not increase the overall bottom line because it would decrease funding for outsourcing in the computer services line.

He suggested that in looking at the projected deficit the right approach would be to ask if this deficit was a one time event or reflective of a longer term series of deficits. If the latter, there would be a need to address that issue immediately. If, however, the deficit was due to a confluence of events, then it would not be necessary to take drastic action. In his opinion, the deficit reflected a one time event. He thought it was appropriate to use a portion of the Society's reserves to cover the extraordinary

circumstances, such as projected decrease in attendance at the annual meeting and the high costs associated with implementation of the software system.

Hickerson said SAA had balances in the fund accounts which could pick up the costs of focused projects, so it was not that the Society was financially unstable, but that Council needed to be aware of the impact of decisions such as where to locate an annual meeting had on the budget. He suggested that the Treasurer and the Chicago office project out an additional year in budget presentations in order to educate Council on the impact of events and decisions.

Jefferson asked when SAA should consider making budgetary cuts rather than going into the reserve to cover budget deficits. If income was tied directly to annual meetings it would make sense that there would always be fluctuations in that revenue stream.

Sink said that it would be difficult to identify which areas to cut. Greene suggested that since there would be a deficit equivalent to 3% of the budget to mandate a 3% across-the-board cut.

Harrison said SAA hadn't run a deficit in at least eight to 10 years and that the reserve fund existed precisely for occasions such as this.

Greene said he was very hesitant to use the reserve to even out budgetary inconsistencies every second or third year. The reserve was not established for that purpose but for truly disastrous situations.

Sink said he saw it differently. He viewed the Adam's Mark controversy as falling within the disaster category. The controversy made a significant difference in how he and the Chicago office budgeted the figures for the next fiscal year.

Adkins suggested a 1-2% budget cut for each line item exempting certain budget lines from that cut, i.e. annual meetings, sections, society dues, etc. That approach would save approximately \$10,000 out of General & Administration.

Pearce-Moses asked if Council could revise the budget mid-year. He found the idea of taking a 1% across-the-board cut attractive. Sink said he thought it would be better to deal with the budget now.

Council engaged in a discussion with Fox about projecting costs for computer software support, given that the costs had risen far above projections for the prior fiscal year. Fox explained that she was watching those costs very closely. She believed that, while computer support costs would always remain high, the unusually steep costs of the prior fiscal year should abate. She cited staffing changes, staff's increased familiarity with the system, and the apparent stabilization within a previously volatile association software industry as factors which would bring costs down. Council came to consensus that it would be prudent to add an additional \$10,000 to the computer services line, given the trend from the prior year.

Stout moved adoption of the FY01 budget which reflected the recommendations of the Task Force on Continuing Education, with an additional \$10,000 allocated for computer software support. Eaton seconded. PASSED with Greene abstaining.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Report on the National Forum for Continuing Archival Education (NFACE)**

Willis reported on the spring meeting of the National Forum for Continuing Education. Council discussed how SAA could play an active role in helping to move the national archival education agenda forward. Council asked Fox to convey the message that SAA was open to participating in a discussion about how SAA could take a constructive, leadership role as NFACE moved forward, especially if such a role took advantage of SAA's strengths to the benefit of the larger continuing archival education community.

Hickerson thanked Willis for her excellent work as Council liaison to the NFACE forum and with her work with the Task Force on Continuing Education.

### **CEPD Request for Midyear Meeting**

Greene moved that Council approve funding from the educational endowment for a 2000-2001 mid-year meeting of the Committee on Education and Professional Development in support of their work to revise the Masters of Archival Studies guidelines. Stout seconded. PASSED.

### **Hickerson Archival Outlook Editorial**

Hickerson recapped his thoughts from his most recent column in Archival Outlook. He said he saw a need to make the archival umbrella as large as possible and to be open to new ideas, such as organizational mergers, with a merger with NAGARA as a

most compelling case. He believed SAA would have been much stronger had the government archivists not broken away to form their own organization.

Council discussed the possibilities and agreed to add an examination of strategic alliances to the winter meeting agenda.

### **Membership Forum**

Hickerson noted that the annual meeting program appeared to have two membership fora, one to discuss the proposed M.A.S. revised guidelines and an open membership forum. He recommended, and Council agreed, that Fox not routinely schedule membership fora at annual meetings unless specifically requested.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **NHPRC Proposals**

Kenamore and Tibbo reported that a proposal on "Archives and the Future" to convene a forum and issue a publication would not be submitted to NHPRC this year because the lead developer, David Gracy, immediate past President of the Association of Certified Archivists, had too many immediate professional commitments to be able to help conceptualize and complete the proposal in time for submission. Gracy requested that the proposal be delayed for one year.

#### **Rewarding Long-term Members**

Kenamore moved that: whereas a small, select group of individuals have maintained unbroken memberships for periods of more than half a century, and whereas loyal members are essential to the success of the Society and to the archives profession, be it therefore resolved the Society of American Archivists gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all members maintaining individual memberships for fifty consecutive years or more. Be it further resolved that the Society bestows to each of these individuals an honorary membership, with all the rights and privilege of a regular individual membership. Be it further resolved that each individual holding an honorary membership will pay no dues to the Society. Be it finally resolved that each individual holding an honorary membership as a result of maintaining fifty or more consecutive years of individual membership in the Society will be recognized annually in Archival Outlook. PASSED.

Council directed Fox to list all institutional members with more than fifty years' longevity in each issue of the American Archivist, including their join date.

#### **Terms of Participation in the Archives & Archivists Listserv**

Greene said he would need to come back to Council with one more iteration of the draft terms of participation in the archives & archivists listserv, due to the necessity of posting the draft terms on the listserv for a two week comment period. He said he would consolidate the comments into a revised set of terms for approval.

Sink read the To Do list.

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.