

Minutes of the Massachusetts History Alliance Annual Meeting 16 July 2018

Present: Mary Baker-Wood, Jane Becker, Pam Bobay, Pleun Bouricius, Patty Bruttomesso, Robert Farrant, Jonathan Green, Scarlett Hoey, Robert Marchetta, Susan Mareneck, Cliff McCarthy, Eric Peterson, Mike Potaski, Joanne Riley, Earl Taylor, William Wallace

Meeting called to order at 3:00pm.

Introductions

MHA President Pleun Bouricius noted that this was the MHA's first annual meeting as a corporation and then asked that meeting attendees introduce themselves (each attendee provided their name and historical organization they represent). Ms. Bouricius thanked the outgoing board members for their service over the past year and briefly introduced the candidates for the open board positions. Lastly, Ms. Bouricius noted her personal goal for this annual meeting is to hear from everyone in attendance.

2018 Annual Report

Ms. Bouricius led meeting attendees in a review of the 2018 annual report, beginning with the nine (9) one-year achievement goals established at the June 26, 2017 annual meeting, followed by a status report for each of those one-year achievement goals (refer to the *July 5, 2018 Annual Report* for specific details).

In her status report for one-year achievement goal number six (6), Ms. Bouricius notified attendees that as of July 16, 2018 the MHA has a total of 103 member organizations. Each member organization has one (1) vote in the board election. Ms. Bouricius quickly surveyed meeting attendees to ensure there was not more than one person from a given member organization at the meeting; each attendee was from a different member organization.

Evaluations for the 2018 Mass History Conference were, overall, good. Ms. Bouricius noted that one evaluation asked for more offerings while another evaluation asked for fewer offerings.

Ms. Bouricius explained that given limited resources the Advocacy Committee was unable to accomplish a great deal over the past year. Mr. McCarthy briefly reflected on his work with the Advocacy Committee. Mr. McCarthy touched on

the committee's efforts to support the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Despite incremental achievements, Mr. McCarthy firmly believes there is a lot of potential for advocacy that the committee, and MHA as a whole, has not tapped into yet.

Ms. Bouricius addressed programming, noting that the committee assigned to work on programming did not meet. However, Ms. Bouricius did argue for including advocacy as part of the MHA's programming.

Finishing her review of the 2018 annual report, Ms. Bouricius opened up things up for discussion.

Discussion

Mr. Peterson: Sees huge potential in the MHA and believes the trick is going to getting people to participate.

Mr. McCarthy: Argued for doing a better job building the MHA's digital presence. While the MHA is already using Google groups, teleconferencing for meetings, and the like, the organization just needs to tap into digital resources better. Mentioned that we need people to talk to their senators. Focusing on the CPA was a good starting point since it was an existing piece of legislation; however, the MHA must consider what legislation it should create and ask our leaders to support.

Ms. Becker: Curious about the MHA's relationship with Mass. Humanities going forward.

Ms. Bouricius: As of December 2016, the MHA had a contract with Mass. Humanities. That contract said that Mass. Humanities would handle logistics and registration for the 2017 Mass History Conference, but the MHA would conduct fundraising in order to obtain 501(c)(3) status. During the second year, Mass. Humanities would serve in the same capacity as the previous year, but the MHA would fundraise for \$5,000. Currently, the MHA needs a new contract because it is now a 501(c)(3) and Mass. Humanities is charging a fee for handling logistics and registration unexpected. The plan is for the Mass History Conference to become the MHA's responsibility. Ms. Bouricius noted that the MHA will need to spend some money to continue developing its online presence, including setting up a PayPal account and getting ready to run the conference and its registration.

Mr. McCarthy: If managing conference logistics and registration become the MHA's responsibility it may want to look into free online tools like Eventbrite.

Ms. Becker: Wanted to clarify that the MHA is asking Mass. Humanities for money, but the MHA will run the conference.

Ms. Bouricius: Ms. Bruttomesso will, for the time being, continue doing what she has been doing on the committee, but we will need to consider paying for web development and managing conference registration. In addition to this, we need to spend \$400-\$450 to become a 501(c)(3).

Ms. Riley: If the MHA does not take responsibility for the Mass History Conference, will Mass. Humanities manage logistics and registration for the 2019 conference?

Ms. Bruttomesso: No. Once the contract is up Mass. Humanities is not going to do the conference anymore.

Ms. Bouricius: Now that we have a board, the hope is that the board will get together to plan. But we need to conduct fundraising and that may require making asks of community foundations. Asked if anyone had ideas concerning planning and fundraising.

Mr. Peterson: Is that contracted out by Mass. Humanities to run the conference?

Ms. Bouricius: Ms. Bruttomesso handles the logistics and Mass. Humanities uses Raiser's Edge to manage registration. Mass. Humanities used to handle the PR but the MHA did most of that for the 2018 conference.

Ms. Becker: Do we need an organization with Raiser's Edge to manage registration?

Ms. Bouricius: No. We can use Eventbrite or get multiple WordPress plugins going; other options like these should work. Still, someone needs to research what we are going to do. Do we need to ask for a vote to accept the 2018 annual report?

Mr. Taylor: Yes.

Mr. Potaski made a motion to accept the 2018 annual report as presented. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. No changes were proposed. Ms. Bouricius put the motion to a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

2018 Treasurer's Report

Ms. Bruttomesso reviewed the treasurer's report (refer to the *July 5, 2018 Treasurer's Report* for specific details). Mass. Humanities will continue to serve as the MHA's fiscal agent until December 2018 or until the MHA becomes a 501(c)(3).

Mr. Marchetta: Where is the MHA in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3)?

Ms. Bouricius: The MHA has its EIN number, but we need to set up an account with the IRS.

Ms. Mareneck: What bank does the MHA plan on using? Ms. Bouricius made it clear that the MHA is not using a bank as of yet since Mass. Humanities is still acting as the MHA's fiscal agent. We will, however, eventually need to research what bank to use. Presently we need at least \$400 in the MHA's account in order to complete the 501(c)(3) application.

Mr. Wallace: Strongly advised to get the 501(c)(3) process going quickly because it may take longer than five to six weeks for the IRS to return the form.

Ms. Bouricius: Briefly reviewed the current list of donors.

Ms. Bruttomesso: Reviewed the subsection of the treasurer's report (see page 2 of the *July 5, 2018 Treasurer's Report*) detailing the income, expenses, and net from the 2018 Mass History Conference. So far only one person has taken advantage of the MA SHRAB/Archives offerings at the conference. It is also important to note that Holy Cross does not provide tech support for the conference; Mass. Humanities had to hire someone to manage technology at the conference.

Mr. Taylor: Why are we projecting \$41,000 for next year if this past year total expenses were just under \$28,000?

Ms. Bouricius: Explained that projected costs for web development added an additional \$10,000 to the budget.

Ms. Bruttomesso: Added that the \$6,000 for hiring someone to manage the registration brings the total projected expenses close to \$41,000.

Ms. Mareneck: Asked for clarification on the scope of Ms. Bruttomesso's role in organizing the conference.

Ms. Bruttomesso: Described her role in organizing the conference as managing logistics. She also raised the point that the MHA will need to get someone to process credit cards.

Motion made to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Motion seconded. No changes proposed. Motion put to a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Candidates for the Board and Election Results

Candidates for the open board positions introduced themselves to those in attendance, noting what positions they are candidates for. Those candidates are:

- Robert Marchetta for the position of director
- Jonathan Green for the position of clerk
- Eric Peterson for the position of director
- Michael Potaski for the position of vice president
- Earl Taylor for the position of treasurer
- Pleun Bouricius for the position of president
- Margo Shea for the position of director (not present)

After the candidates introduced themselves, Ms. Bouricius displayed the voting results for those present. A total of 29 member organizations voted to elect the candidates to the MHA's board.

New Budget

Ms. Bouricius presented the new budget for discussion.

Mr. Taylor: Why is the goal for membership fundraising \$2000? He feels it is too low.

Ms. Bouricius: While the MHA has raised \$6000 so far, no more than \$2000 of that is from memberships. Given that the MHA's goal is to represent all historical organizations in Massachusetts, we decided to be an organization that does not require dues from member organizations. However, we do ask member organizations to consider donating in order to support the MHA.

Ms. Baker-Wood: Noted that smaller organizations may not, as of yet, know that the MHA exists.

Mr. Marchetta: Proposed that the board of his local historical organization—of which he is a member—join the MHA, and the board did choose to become a member organization.

Mr. Potaski: Speaking of his experience with his local historical organization, initially there was less of a positive reaction to join the MHA; however, now he feels his board will be more receptive to joining. Breaking down barriers between various organization (e.g., historical commissions, historical societies, libraries, etc.) is difficult and this is a fact the MHA needs to consider as it grows and conducts advocacy work.

Mr. Marchetta: It is also difficult getting archivists and curators, at least at his organization, to advertise collections and make them accessible.

Ms. Bouricius: Perhaps the MHA should consider conducting a statewide tour and traveling to each region to hold meetings, also about advocacy and regional organizations. This may encourage more participation and increase the number of MHA member organizations.

Mr. Potaski: Addressed opening a bank account for the MHA. It was noted that Ms. Bouricius has the MHA's EIN number.

Mr. Taylor: He will most likely use his own credit card and request reimbursement from the MHA once the organization has the money.

Mr. Wallace: Feels it is best not to create confusion by having people pay two different organizations since Mass. Humanities will remain the MHA's fiscal agent until December 2018.

Mr. Talyor made a motion to accept the new budget as a working budget. Ms. Becker seconded the motion. Not changes proposed. Motion put to a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Programming and Committees

Ms. Bouricius: The bylaws state what committees the MHA is required to have. Prior to discussing programming, we should decide what our plans are for committees. We need to set assignments. The bylaws require the following committees:

- Executive
- Strategic Development & Financing
- Communications
- Programming
- Nominating

Mr. McCarthy expressed his desire for creating a separate Advocacy Committee. There was some discussion about this and a decision was made to keep the Advocacy Committee as an ad hoc committee.

Ms. Becker: Recommended putting out a call to member organizations for volunteers to serve on committees.

Mr. Taylor: Agreed we need to invite people to join the committees. Also feels we need to establish ways for committees to meet. Given that both board members and member organizations are spread out across Massachusetts, committees are not always going to be able to meet in person.

A decision was made to assign committees to each of the board members and work would need to be done to enlist additional volunteers to serve on the committees. Programming may help fill out committees.

Ms. Bruttomesso: Over the next two to three weeks she will keep the Google groups updated and will also work with board members on transitions.

Goals

The following goals for the coming year were discussed and established by those in attendance:

- Committees will be running and working
- Clarify the MHA's relationship with Mass. Humanities
- Ensure the MHA is a 501(c)(3)
- Plan and execute a successful Mass History Conference
- Obtain the commitment of a skilled conference coordinator
- Strengthen regional networks and hold regional meetings

Mr. McCarthy: Feels that too much money was spent on the conference coordinator.

Ms. Becker: Another important task is keeping a pulse on what historical organizations in Massachusetts are doing. That is an essential part of planning the Mass History Conference.

Ms. Bouricius: Feels it is necessary to continue paying for a conference coordinator. Currently the conference is \$6000 in the red, we need to raise approximately \$7000 in order to fund the conference coordinator.

Mr. Potaski: Has points of contact for all registered Massachusetts historical organizations.

Ms. Baker-Wood: MELC contains a list of local organizations.

Ms. Becker: The Metro Boston Regional Group already exists.

Ms. Baker-Wood: Noted that holding meetings may prove difficult as people may balk at having to attend another meeting on top of what they already have going on in their lives. How do we convince or entice people to get involved?

Mr. McCarthy: This is why advocacy is a huge goal. Programming does not have to be advocacy for the MHA. Mr. McCarthy offered History Camp as an example.

Ms. Riley: Perhaps over time we can work on establishing regional councils. For the time being the Mass History Conference is important because of the range of activities it offers and its connection to local history in Massachusetts.

Mr. Farrant: Maybe one of our objectives should be to each (region) get five (5) new organizations to attend the Mass History Conference. We need to review

conference attendance in previous years to determine what organizations we should try to get to attend.

Ms. Bruttomesso: Of the organizations that attended the 2018 Mass History Conference, 64% were first-time attendees.

Ms. Baker-Wood: We can use regional networks as a hook for people to attend the conference.

Ms. Becker: Can regional organizations give us information about what is happening, for the conference?

Ms. Bobay: She was impressed with the response on the MHA listserv to the question about bike tours and the interest that is out there. Maybe this is something the MHA should consider for programming.

Ms. Bouricius noted the time and the need to bring the meeting to a close.

The new board members will email to schedule a future teleconference meeting very soon.

Ms. Bouricius asked when we should hold the next MHA meeting that is open to all member organizations? In six months? Mr. Marchetta asked if Ms. Bouricius was asking if she felt we should hold the open meetings quarterly. Mr. Farrant suggested membership open houses; member organizations will host the open meetings. Ms. Bouricius felt this was a good way of getting regional meetings started. This idea will be explored further.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jonathan Green
Clerk