

Minutes of the Record Storage Advisory Committee, Wednesday September 27, 2017

Meeting opened, 11:05 a.m.

Present: Leslie Bracebridge (LB), Susan P Millinger (SPM), Susie Mosher (SM), Savanna-Ouellette (SO), Linda Avis Scott (LAS). **Absent,** Jim Aaron (JA); Becky Torres (BT) (ex officio)

Select Board and the RSA Committee. It was reported that the Select Board, in the meeting of September 19, had approved the increase in membership to six (not counting the Town Administrator, a member ex officio). Thus there are now two Community Members. The Select Board also appointed the six members to the Committee. It was also reported that the Select Board was informed that they might expect a grant request in the near future.

Election of officers: A chair, Susie Mosher and a note-taker, Susan P Millinger, were elected.

The minutes of September 15, 2017 were approved as amended. Copies of the minutes will be sent to Rachel Onuf, the Roving Archivist; the Select Board; and the Buildings Committee.

Grant Application.

SPM reported on her research on the grants recommended by Rachel Onuf in her report. Group discussion focused on the MA SHRAB grant, for which the State Historical Records Advisory Board has been accepting applications on a rolling basis. The Board makes decisions on applications within two months. In addition, volunteer time (at the rate of \$29.88/hour) can be accepted as the Town's contribution to the project. For all these reasons, this seems like an ideal grant with which to begin.

Acquisition of a flat file (for storing maps and similar oversize materials flat, as archival protocol requires) was determined to be a high priority item. In his 2000/2001 *Strategic Plan*, Archivist Walter Carroll emphasized the importance of acquiring flat files, which a number of departments could share. A flat file could be used to store maps right away, helping immediately with storage and space concerns.

LAS reported on her research on the prices of flat files. The cost of an archival quality five-drawer metal filing cabinet with base, suitable for the standard maps that are stored by town officials and committees (2' x 3') was approximately \$1,125 with base in the Hollinger Metal Edge catalog; a lock would be between \$65 and \$75. In comparison, a non-archival quality unit was listed in another catalog as approximately \$1050 with the lock extra. Thus, the archival quality unit is not significantly more expensive than the non-archival unit.

Given the need to work towards a future when archival materials are stored according to archival practice, the Committee opted for the archival quality unit. It was also suggested that this filing cabinet could be placed where the large wooden table is in the meeting room downstairs in Town Hall, while the big table could be moved under the windows. (BT is to be asked by LAS if she approves this change.) The unit is also stackable; one additional five-drawer cabinet can be placed on top of it.

During this discussion, ***the Committee agreed on certain principles*** (additional principles may be added in the future):

1. Purchasing archival quality products is essential;
2. Given limited space in municipal buildings, any discussion of supplies to be acquired must include a determination of the place where the product(s) would be placed;

3. Any equipment purchased must be acquired with the necessary number of locks (again, security of materials was emphasized in Carroll's Strategic Plan.)
4. Membership on this Committee does not commit a person to provide volunteer work on record storage projects. Although several of the Committee members were willing to commit to providing the volunteer work which can be the Town's contribution *to this particular grant*, it was agreed that this is not to serve as a precedent.

Given these principles, the Committee moved, seconded and approved the following motion:

To apply for an SHRAB grant for the purpose of purchasing an archival five-drawer flat file with base and lock for approximately \$1400 (included shipping.)

SM will draft the grant; the draft will be sent to Rachel Onuf for her review. (There is still some time left on the grant which provided her services.)

Additional topics discussed.

There was some *discussion of the priority of acquisition of other needed materials*. Both a climate monitor and archival boxes and file folders were mentioned. (Note: Archival quality storage materials will be needed only for permanent records.) It was agreed that needs are so interrelated that it is hard to know what steps should be taken next. The chair pointed out that the job of the Committee is to suggest a process for storage of records, not do all the work of record storage itself. Acquisition of a flat file provides an opportunity to see what challenges may arise, what processes appear most useful to follow. The flat file will be needed and useful in whatever long-range solutions are explored.

There was also discussion about the fairness of a double standard: some members of the Committee might be performing record storage duties as part of their (paid) work load; others might be providing their services for free, as volunteers. Was this fair? At this point the fourth principle mentioned above evolved. The record storage work that will have to be done will inevitably require volunteers as well as the involvement of paid staff; the Committee's work may involve identifying tasks for which volunteers will be needed, and the training volunteers may need.

Tour of Town Hall

The Committee then was given a tour of Town Hall to get an understanding of the magnitude of the problem: very limited space and lots of documents to be stored, whether in the short term or permanently. Administrative materials, equipment and supplies take up much of the space. The records that need to be held in short term and permanent records reduce the efficient working space for all the offices

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 25, beginning at 11 a.m. On the **agenda**: Discussion of the need for a climate monitor; tour of Old Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned, 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan P. Millinger, note-taker