

Meeting of the Record Storage Advisory Committee, February 28, 2018

Meeting opened, 11:08 a.m.

Present: Leslie Bracebridge (LB), Susan Millinger (SPM), Susie Mosher (SM) and Linda Avis Scott (LAS) **Absent:** Savannah Ouellette (SO), Becky Torres (BT), and Jim Aaron, Buildings Committee Representative.

The chair clarified that the regular meeting day of this committee is the fourth Wednesday of the month; however, from time to time it may meet on a different day. The next meeting will be on March 21.

Minutes of November 15: The committee members have all received Rachel Onuf's comments on these minutes. Many of these comments were on the possibility of storing Shutesbury's records in SCUA, the UMass Archive, which RSAC no longer considers a possibility. Onuf's comments about which office ordinarily keeps a record in cases of multiple copies of documents were particularly helpful. LAS made copies of the minutes containing Onuf's comments.

Minutes of December 20: Some minor changes were suggested; a motion to approve the minutes as amended was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Minutes of January 24: A section of Old Business C was omitted; two sections in D were rephrased and a typo was caught. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of three in favor, one abstaining.

Old Business:

A. Budgeting for Annual Record Storage:

What should the budget proposal to be submitted to the Financial Committee include?

There was discussion of whether instead of a request to the Financial Committee (FinCom), departments might be expected this year to purchase archival-quality boxes from funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year. It was also suggested that individual departments might include archival-quality materials in their own budget requests. It was decided that having one budget for these materials would be both more efficient and cheaper, because of the possibility of buying in bulk. It was also decided that it's important for RSAC to start as it means to go on in submitting a budget request for needed archival-quality materials. Another factor in making a budget request this year is that materials are needed as soon as possible.

1. **Discussion of using acid-free paper.** SM suggested that she start keeping agenda and minutes on acid-free (also called permanent) paper. The implications of this were discussed; for instance, acid-free paper, though itself recyclable, does not meet the standard of at least 30% recycled content which is current town policy. SM sees this as a start; other departments may choose to follow suit or be encouraged to do so. The committee was supportive of this initiative. It was estimated that SM would need a case of paper (1 case=10 reams. A ream =3 inches of paper).

2. **Discussion of archival boxes needed.** Using LAS's research and adding the needs of her own office, SM indicated that 3^{1/2} boxes a year would be needed. Yet to be determined: the needs of Town Administrator, Treasurer, Assessor, Board of Health and MLP (Municipal Light Plant) Board. It was suggested that 6 archival boxes a year might be needed. LAS is estimating 14 boxes to be used for the backlog of older documents in the offices/commissions for which she has record-keeping responsibility. Boxes are ordered in quantities of 25, which should provide enough for a year's permanent records and for reduction of the backlog of records, leaving some boxes for future use.

LAS has researched the archival boxes available at Hollinger and University Products and determined that Hollinger makes the better boxes, those which meet many of the criteria for good archival boxes. Although Universal's boxes have metal edges, while Hollinger's do not in the 15" depth size needed, it was suggested that Hollinger's better meet our needs. There is not much difference in price between the two company's boxes. Approximate cost for 25 boxes: \$285.

3. **Discussion and demonstration of folders.** RSAC currently has access to archival-quality folders thanks to LB. SM demonstrated how she is using these folders. Her goal has been to find a way to file documents in her office now which will continue to be used in permanent storage, thus saving energy and effort. Consulting Rachel Onuf about best practice, SM was told that for recent documents, about an inch can be stored in one folder. For old or fragile documents, it is best to put 10-15 in one folder. SM showed a folder with top and side tabs, the kind used in the Old Town Hall archives. The side tabs are useful in current storage; when they are moved into boxes, the side tab can simply be cut off.
 - a. The question was raised: how should attachments and related documents be handled: can and should they be kept with the records to which they pertain, even though they may not be printed on permanent paper? The committee seemed to agree that they should; that it is probably inevitable that all records in a folder might not be on permanent paper.
 - b. Another question was what do when information has been written on a folder. Rachel Onuf's advice was to put all or parts of such folders into new archival folders with the records to which they pertain—except in the case of moldy or tattered folders. Eventually the old folders might be replaced, with the written contents of the folder copied.
 - c. Rachel Onuf is willing to spend some additional time giving advice/instruction about preparing records for permanent storage
4. **The consensus of the committee was that the chair, SM, should prepare a budget request for FinCom for archival-quality material (a case of paper and 25 boxes.)**

The request would indicate that some are for use with current records, some for working on the backlog of records, and some might be for future use. The request is approximate because we don't yet have all the information needed. The request would also

indicate that FinCom can expect going forward an annual budget request for archival materials, one request for all departments.

Old Business B: Listing of any and all record storage space possibilities: Tabled until the March meeting.

New Business:

1. **Wendell Visit summary:** Since all present had visited Wendell on one of the two trips SM led, instead of a report there was a brief exchange of members' responses to Wendell's storage of documents. In some ways we are in better condition than Wendell in our record storage: our vault is better, for example. Having seen the archives at Templeton and Wendell, it is clear that towns/town clerks have different views about the storage of committee minutes. Shutesbury keeps more of its minutes in its archive. Towns do the best they can in meeting archival standards for record <http://www.lwvamherst.org/content/registration-form-second-annual-civicsfeststorage> with the resources available to them. We found impressive the system Wendell uses to keep humidity in the vault under control. The small vault in the Town Clerk's office was noteworthy. We are envious of the spacious offices we have seen so far.
2. **Future field trips:** The committee agreed on a trip to Barre next; SM will set it up.
3. **The report from the MTCA Records Retention workshop:** tabled until the March meeting.

Next meeting: March 21, 11 a.m.