

MINUTES
TEXAS HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD
October 21, 2021

The Texas Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on October 21, 2021, in the Commission Room of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission at 1201 Brazos St. Austin, Texas 78701 and via teleconference. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, members of the public had access to and a means to participate in this meeting by two-way communication by dialing the teleconference line.

Members Present: Jelain Chubb, coordinator; Linda Barrett, Phyllis Earles, Melissa Gonzales, Leslie Stapleton, Kristy Sorensen, Malinda Cowen

Members Absent: Tara Turk-Zafran, Carla Alvarez

Staff Support: Peggy Price, principal assistant

1. Welcome and introductions

Jelain Chubb welcomed board members and reviewed procedures specific to teleconferencing for open meetings.

2. Roll call for members and establishment of quorum

Chubb called roll and established a quorum with Linda Barrett, Leslie Stapleton, Melissa Gonzales, Phyllis Earles, and Kristy Sorensen present. Carla Alvarez and Tara Turk-Zafran were absent.

3. Approve minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting

Phyllis Earles moved to approve the minutes and Melissa Gonzales seconded. The board approved minutes for the June 2, 2021, meeting in a roll-call vote.

4. Public comment.

There were no comments from the public.

5. Consideration of resolutions and certificates of appreciation

There were no resolutions or certificates of appreciation.

6. Recognition of the 2021 THRAB Archival Award Recipients

Peggy Price reported on the 2021 THRAB archival award recipients, Melleeta Bell and Kaitlyn Price. Chubb invited award recipient Melleeta Bell, who was on the call, to speak about her work with archives and members of the board offered their congratulations.

7. Update on National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

Chubb informed the board that NHPRC received \$7.5 million in the new budget, which was a \$1 million increase over their last appropriation. The NHPRC's next meeting will be held on November 16 and that is when they will consider the pending grant application, which includes THRAB's board support grant.

8. Update on the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's (TSLAC) activities

Chubb reported that former Assistant State Librarian, Gloria Meraz is TSLAC's new Director and State Librarian. Chubb mentioned that Meraz has experience working with libraires, archives, and museums and has always demonstrated strong support for the State Archives. TSLAC will begin strategic planning in February for the next legislation session and Chubb will request input from THRAB at the next meeting. TSLAC will continue requesting funds for archival storage and salaries. Chubb will also begin strategic planning for the State Archives and will ask for input from THRAB on that as well. Chubb informed the board of the status vacant positions at the State Archives, including the key position of assistant state archivist. TSLAC has not received qualified applicants, which may be related to COVID and cost-of-living in Austin. Other state agencies and other industries are dealing with similar issues related to hiring. Price reported on the upcoming exhibit opening in February that will showcase "Texas Treasures" in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building. Chubb added that there will be multiple receptions and fundraising opportunities surrounding the exhibit.

Chubb shared a new initiative at TSLAC to transcribe documents in the State Archives and make them available online. Funded by the Texas Historical Foundation, TSLAC will hire a student or retiree to transcribe documents from the Third Court of Appeals as a pilot project and then open up the transcription to volunteers. The next phase will be to transcribe and translate documents in the Nacogdoches Archives. TSLAC is contracting with the Austin-based company From the Page to facilitate these projects. From the Page had partnered with the Council of State Archivists and TSLAC bought into that project, so this will be a multi-pronged effort. Linda Barrett mentioned that Fort Worth Public Library has worked with From the Page and has been very pleased with them and Kristy Sorensen recognized the great potential of the pilot program. Chubb has considered adding a similar opportunity to other archives by including a transcription and translation component in the next grant. Phyllis Earles expressed interest for Prairie View. Leslie Stapleton inquired as to whether the Nacogdoches Archives translations would be separate from what has been published in the Robert Bruce Blake papers. Chubb will follow up on that topic with TSLAC reference staff.

9. Discussion of impact of COVID-19 on archives in Texas

Chubb reported that the TSLAC date to fully reopen has been pushed back several times and that the return to on-site work is November 1. The staff will have the opportunity to telework two days a week depending on the type of work and staffing needs in the areas. (Some TSLAC divisions offer three days a week for telework.) The library (north) reading room will open to the public and the archives reading room will continue to offer appointments in addition to walk-ins. The hours will change slightly from 8:30-4:30 and lunch closure to 9:00 – 4:00 and no lunch closure. COVID protocols will be maintained.

Earles shared that at Prairie View, they contracted with Elder Preservation to conduct a workshop on emergency preparedness and response and that is in conjunction with a \$15,000 preservation assessment grant they received from NEH. Among other activities, they have hired two archivists with a Texas Treasures grant. As far as COVID, they have been fully open since June 1. Researchers wear gloves when in-person, but most requests come through email. Earles also mentioned a new sign language software for which she may coordinate with THRAB on offering a presentation.

Stapleton reported that the Archives and Special Collections at Texas A&M San Antonio was open fully before August 15, the date when the lease expired on the building they occupy, but since they have not been able to make contact with the county in order to extend the lease, the university has not allowed staff to return to the building.

Sorensen informed the board that the staff at the Presbyterian Seminary library and archives had been working from home since March of 2020, with some exceptions to return to campus as needed. Beginning after Labor Day, staff has returned to campus for the fall semester. Sorensen reported on the renovation project at her library and archives and that, if all goes as hoped, they will open to the public in the spring semester. They have expanded archival storage space and room for researchers. Hopefully, they will be able to host THRAB in the future.

Gonzales shared that at the Houston Community College system many colleagues have been back on site and that staff who are not student-facing had the choice determined by supervisors. The enterprise content management system they use has been able to provide access to the records regardless of campus location. An issue they have been dealing with is the process of retaining and destroying records. Another issue is how staff managed records while working from home.

Barrett reported that at the History, Genealogy, and Archives of the Fort Worth Public Library, her department had been taking patrons by appointment and walk-ins as needed. Their traffic has been steady and system-wide the library has returned to regular business.

10. Discussion of current State Board Programming Grant activities

Chubb reported on the status of the activities funded by the current grant and that THRAB had spent almost all of the money in spite of COVID issues. Sorensen applauded the efforts THRAB made to pivot when COVID prevented some of the projects from happening in the original proposal. Instead of TARO in-person workshop training, for example, THRAB worked with NHPRC and TARO to revise the objective reallocated the funds to support the coding of 200 finding aids. In the end, more than 1300 finding aids from fourteen repositories were completed. Barrett recognized the excellent return on the investment of funds with more than 1300 finding aids completed.

Chubb discussed the current grant proposal that is pending with NHPRC. THRAB has requested \$39,824 out of a possible \$40,000. The grant includes another round of the AASLH Basics of Archives online course with a view to directing outreach to HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions. Gonzales inquired as to whether THRAB will promote the course with indigenous groups. Stapleton will provide contact information for the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions. Earles reminded the board about the idea to use a library science graduate student to locate these groups and target outreach. Chubb will follow up with Earles on this topic for the next grant application. Chubb added that THRAB will continue to offer DAS/SAA workshops and support TARO, TSHA, and Archives Bazaars. The grant will also fund preservation assessments in the Rio Grande Valley and a THRAB intern. The workshops will include outreach to HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions. Chubb mentioned that she was pleased with the comments from grant reviewers.

Chubb opened the discussion on the activities of the current grant that began July 1, 2021, and concludes June 30, 2022. Price reported on the Archives Month poster and website for 2021, which was on the topic of disability history in Texas. Chubb requests of the board that they encourage colleagues to nominate archivists and archives for the THRAB awards. THRAB will continue to support and participate in the regional Archives Bazaars. Stapleton mentioned that the San Antonio archivists are exploring an Archives Bazaar in 2022. THRAB will also continue to offer awards for Texas History Day and encourages anyone interested to serve as a judge. Three TARO workshops will be offered in Fort Worth, West Texas and the SSA meeting in Houston. Rebecca Elder will conduct wet salvage preservation workshops; potential locations are in San Antonio, Denton, Victoria, and the Liberty/Beaumont area. THRAB will also

offer the American Association of State and Local History's Basics of Archives course beginning in January and support the session, "Multicultural Digital and Oral History: Uncovering our Hidden Histories" at the Texas State Historical Association annual meeting in February.

Chubb proposed that the next meeting take place Friday, February 4 in Austin if possible. Price will poll the group for availability.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 p.m.

Approved, February 16, 2022.