

# SHAFR Council Meeting

Thursday, June 21, 2018 - 8:00 AM to 1:15 PM

Hamilton Room - Sheraton Philadelphia Society Hill Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA

## Meeting Minutes

**Council Members Present:** Peter Hahn (presiding), Barbara Keys, Amy Greenberg, Matthew Connelly, Thomas Borstelmann, David Engerman, Kathryn Statler, Amanda Demmer, Mary Dudziak, Lien-Hang Nguyen, Brian McNamara, Adriane Lentz-Smith, Terry Anderson, Julia Irwin.

**Others Present:** Amy Sayward (ex officio), Andrew Preston, Kate Epstein, Jeff Engel, Petra Goedde, Richard Immerman, George Fujii

### General Business

Peter Hahn welcomed everyone and thanked them for their service. Amy Sayward stated that the only motion passed by Council between meetings was unanimous approval (with one abstention) of the January 2018 Council meeting minutes.

### Budget Reports

Sayward reviewed the current fiscal year to the end of May and explained that final numbers for the fiscal year (which ends on October 31) were very much in flux since the conference is our largest single expenditure. She also reviewed long-term financial projections, which show the work of both Council and the Ways & Means Committee in bringing expenditures in line with current income. She also reviewed the proposed FY2019 budget, which follows the previous year's budget quite closely, and asked for questions. Amy Greenberg made a motion to accept the proposed FY19 budget, which was seconded by Matthew Connelly and passed unanimously.

## **Ways and Means Committee Report:**

Based on a report from Mary Dudziak, chair of the Ways & Means Committee, Council discussed the history of SHAFR's endowed awards and what its policy should be on future awards. The general lines suggested by the committee and Council were that a minimum of \$30,000 would be required for an endowed award, which would generate approximately \$1,000 per year in disburseable income. Council also clarified that such efforts would be undertaken privately, separate from Development Committee initiatives, but some assistance (such as mailings) could be coordinated by the Business Office. Kathryn Statler motioned that a formal policy be developed for Council approval at its January meeting with the above advice being provided informally to anyone inquiring; the motion was seconded by Brian McNamara and passed unanimously.

The Ways & Means Committee, having received a request from the National History Center to restore the funding that Council had cut in the previous year, saw no reason to change course on this decision, noting that work over the past two years had put SHAFR in a strong financial position. David Engerman made a motion affirming the committee's recommendation, which was seconded by Julia Irwin and passed unanimously.

## **SHAFR 2020 Conference Site:**

Following a discussion of three sites that had developed proposals and following preliminary Council discussion in January, Council discussed the merits of the various sites, including costs, their historical connections, and the advantages of SHAFR having a conference abroad. Connelly suggested that a partnership with the World History Association conference, which meets annually at approximately the same time, might make an international conference more affordable. Statler made a motion that SHAFR move forward with New Orleans as the site of its 2020 conference. The motion was seconded by Irwin. The vote in favor was unanimous with two abstentions.

Conversation continued about an international conference and resulted in a motion made by Irwin and seconded by Adriane Lentz-Smith that SHAFR actively pursue developing a proposal for an international conference in 2022; it passed unanimously.

### **Diplomatic History Publisher Search:**

Engerman and Petra Goedde (who joined Council for the discussion) reported on the search process for a publisher of *Diplomatic History*, as the current contract with Oxford University Press (OUP) ends on 31 December 2019 and requires one year's notice of the intention not to renew. Engerman reported that the current academic publishing market would not bear a contract as financially beneficial as SHAFR's current contract with OUP, however after engaging in an extensive search process that included a variety of bids and interviews, the committee was recommending that Council develop a contract with OUP, which was the strongest bid in financial terms. He also expressed the opinion that current technical issues with OUP related to SHAFR membership could be improved with an investment of effort from both sides in developing a better interface between the two websites.

Hahn reiterated to Council that all contracts of this nature are reviewed by SHAFR's legal counsel ahead of the President's signature. Dudziak reported that the Ways & Means Committee's review supported the conclusion of the search committee, especially because the proposed contract allows SHAFR to decouple membership dues from the *Diplomatic History* subscription in a way that will potentially benefit SHAFR. Additionally, working to resolve technical issues related to renewing membership also has the potential to allow for more efficient and visible fund-raising efforts. Irwin asked whether the new interface might allow an opportunity for SHAFR to survey its membership in order to garner better information on our membership's demographics and needs. Dudziak made a motion to approve the recommendation of the search committee; this was seconded by Amanda Demmer and approved unanimously.

## **Diplomatic History Editor Search:**

Preceding the discussion of the specific editorial bids, Hahn raised the question of whether Council might want to consider whether the editor of its publications should simultaneously be able to sit on Council if elected. If not, such a prohibition could be included in the letter of appointment to editors or an amendment to the by-laws could be considered. Discussion by Council members considered issues raised by a concentration of power within the organization, how best to have a diverse set of leaders to represent SHAFR's membership, the ways in which serving on Council provides a much clearer sense of how the organization functions, the question of conflicts of interest, and historical precedents. Hahn explained that Council members recusing themselves from discussion and voting on issues where there might be a perceived conflict of interest was our traditional practice, but there was no formal policy on this. Having gauged the views of Council, Hahn thought it best to defer the matter to the January Council meeting.

Andrew Preston, who chaired the search committee for the new editorial team for *Diplomatic History*, joined the Council meeting to report on his committee's process, recommendation, and rationale. At this time, Hahn, Irwin, and McNamara recused themselves from the conversation (as they had perceived conflicts of interest) and left the room. Barbara Keys therefore chaired the conversation in the absence of Hahn. She thanked the committee for its hard work in helping to solicit four strong bids; Preston indicated that this spoke well for *Diplomatic History* and SHAFR, especially given the abbreviated timeframe in which teams assembled their bids.

Council considered the financial costs, the institutional commitment, the editorial structure, the innovation, and the proposed editors' experience, record of successful teamwork, diversity, and scholarship in relation to the proposed bids. After considerable discussion, Dudziak moved to accept the bid from Temple and Indiana State with the editorial team of Petra Goedde (editor), Anne Foster (editor), and Alan McPherson (associate editor); the motion was seconded by Greenberg. The final vote was 9-1-1, with 3 Council members recusing themselves. Council expressed thanks

for the work done to assemble all of the outstanding bids received and asked SHAFR's President and Executive Director to work on finalizing the transition that will occur on 1 July 2019.

### **2018 Conference Issues:**

Kate Epstein and Jeff Engel, the co-chairs of the 2018 Program Committee, joined the Council to discuss issues related to the conference and their written report. They started by thanking Debbie Sharnak, who had served as their assistant, who was both conscientious and a pleasure to work with. Full panel proposals were accepted at a rate of 77.25%. There were twenty fewer panel proposals than in the previous year; seven panels were created from individual paper proposals; and six panels were commissioned, including a panel sponsored by the Society for Historians of Technology and Business History. This year's conference included SHAFR's first poster sessions, which were part of the 36 individual paper proposals that were accepted (58% rejection rate). The committee specifically sought to foster diversity in assembling the program, including a breadth of topics and geography as well as considering the institutional levels and demographics of panelists. Committee members specifically gave preference to topics that spoke to the conference's theme and that had a global focus. Hahn thanked the co-chairs for their work.

Related to the choice of keynote speaker, Hahn explained that the decision to issue the invitation was his, which was the tradition of SHAFR. He also explained his thought process in terms of both the selection of speaker and the method of scholarly exchange in this case (moderator who integrated some of the written questions from the audience). He also explained the efforts that he and the Program Committee co-chairs had made to address the issues raised in the protest letter, but those who opposed the keynote chose not to participate in the planned roundtable, which was subsequently canceled. Conversation followed about how best to communicate, moving forward, with those SHAFR members who opposed the choice of keynote and the method of selecting such speakers. Hahn volunteered to write a letter to the membership, an idea that Council endorsed. Dudziak made a motion supporting the

tradition that SHAFR's President selects the keynote speaker and supporting the tradition of scholarly exchange with such speakers. Connelly seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **Membership Meeting:**

Council also discussed the by-laws requirement for a petition by 25 members to call a membership meeting with at least 6 months' notice. Although some Council members expressed the opinion that this period should be shortened to three months, other members who had served on the recent advocacy task force expressed the opinion that the current language in the by-laws was the considered opinion of the SHAFR membership as voted on by Council and ratified by a majority of SHAFR members who had voted for the most recent by-laws amendment. Council reiterated as well as that its members are always open to communication with the membership on all issues of concern.

### **Conference Issues:**

Council turned to the written report of the Conference Committee, which included recommendations about and examples of a conference code of conduct/ethics, which the President had requested from the committee. The consensus emerging from the resulting conversation was that SHAFR needed to have such a code and that graduate students especially appreciated Council's openness to creating such a code, given the power disparities and professional consequences in play. Emphasis was given on the need to have a clear reporting system. Engerman made a motion, seconded by Tim Borstelmann, that following the lead of other professional societies, SHAFR affirms its commitment that all members should be able to attend its meetings free from discrimination and harassment and will work toward drafting a code of conduct/ethics toward that end, which will be voted on at its January meeting.

Council also discussed the parameters for its call for proposals (CFP) for its next summer institute, which in keeping with past Council decisions, will be linked to the annual conference, will have a smaller budget, and will occur roughly every other year.

Keys moved that the next CFP be issued for 2019 or 2020, with subsequent calls similarly falling within a two-year window. The motion was seconded by Demmer and passed unanimously. It was also agreed that the previous policy of having the three former SHAFR presidents (constituted as the Summer Institute Oversight Committee) review the proposals and make its recommendation to Council would be revived.

### **Graduate Student Committee:**

Hahn opened the conversation of this agenda item by saying that he was concerned that there was some ambiguity regarding the Graduate Student Committee and its relationship to the elected graduate student representatives serving on Council, which he had asked McNamara and Demmer to consider. Based on that conversation, which was part of Council's pre-meeting materials, consensus emerged that the committee should continue, with the graduate student representatives serving.

### **Historical Advisory Committee/Committee on Historical Documentation:**

Richard Immerman, chair of SHAFR's Committee on Historical Documentation and chair of the State Department's Historical Advisory Committee (HAC), joined Council to provide an update on recent, rather abrupt, changes in the committee's membership, which had prompted SHAFR representative Robert McMahon's resignation. Immerman explained the process by which new representatives will be appointed to the HAC, which includes that at-large members will be selected by the Office of the Historian in the State Department in consultation with the HAC. Hahn added that SHAFR has already nominated a member to fill the seat left vacant by McMahon's resignation and stands ready to nominate others as Thomas Zeiler and Katherine Sibley's terms expire. Borstelman moved that SHAFR formally thank McMahan, Zeiler, and Sibley for their valuable service to this important committee. The motion was seconded by Terry Anderson and passed unanimously.

## **SHAFR Guide:**

Sayward provided an update on how the *SHAFR Guide* subscriptions for SHAFR members would be handled moving forward, with SHAFR acting essentially as a library or institutional subscriber (paying an annual subscription rate of approximately \$480/year) who would then manage usernames and passwords for its members who subscribe; SHAFR's Information Technology Manager, George Fujii, would handle this process. Hearing no objections to this arrangement, Hahn said he would move the agreement to SHAFR's legal counsel for review.

Council then turned to the question of renewing *Guide* editor Alan McPherson's memorandum of understanding, which would otherwise end on 31 December 2018. Council members considered the relative merits of continuity and of potential conflicts of interest with serving as *Diplomatic History's* associate editor. Keys made a motion to continue McPherson's editorial role through the next three years (through the completion of the *Guide's* contractual update) with a stipend of \$6,000/year. Lentz-Smith seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **SHAFR Website:**

Fujii entered the Council meeting to answer questions related to his written report. He discussed the different options that SHAFR would have once the current version of Drupal (the software that supports the website) was no longer supported, which included moving to WordPress, a CRM (customer relations management) model similar to the Texas Historical Society, or updating to Drupal 9. Consensus was that the Web Committee could be charged with exploring and reporting on the various options and making a recommendation to Council in 2019 so that the corresponding change could take place in 2020.

Hahn asked Fujii about the privacy issues relayed in his report. Fujii urged a review of SHAFR's policies and agreements to ensure compliance protocols, and Council recommended that he work with the Web Committee to establish these.



### **Committee on Minority Historians:**

Lentz-Smith reported that the committee had organized a panel for this year's committee. She expressed the difficulty of identifying appropriate people to serve on the committee, which could be improved by either a survey of the membership or the "volunteer" form on the SHAFR website.

### **Survey Task Force:**

Until a full survey of the membership can be undertaken, Irwin and her task force were emphasizing getting more feedback from and developing lines of communication with the membership. To that end, a "comment box" had been set up on the website. She circulated a list of questions that will be rotated and publicized through the monthly e-blast to the membership, which will include a link to the comment box.

### **Executive Director's Report:**

Sayward reported that September 1st will mark the end of three years of the initial five-year commitment she had made to serve as SHAFR's executive director. She had suggested and Hahn had approved of creating a review committee that would evaluate the executive director's work and make a recommendation to Council in June 2019. Such a process would be comparable to the review processes for the editors of *Diplomatic History* and *Passport*, and its timing would also provide SHAFR with the opportunity to launch a timely search for a new executive director as needed.

Sayward also stated that she had received and would be circulating the five-year report of the Committee on Women in SHAFR; further investigation into issues raised in the report will be part of the January 2019 Council meeting agenda.

### **Diplomatic History:**

Statler made a motion to thank the editors of *Diplomatic History* for their service. The motion was seconded by Demmer and passed unanimously.

## **New Business:**

A member of SHAFR had inquired about whether the society would consider making posthumous awards, such as for the Graebner Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement. There being no strong opinion expressed in favor of such a change, Council opted to continue its traditional practice. Given that there had been no nominations for this year's Graebner award, it was also decided to extend (and greater publicize) the nomination process through the fall in order to make an award at the SHAFR's awards luncheon at the AHA meeting in January.

Council adjourned at 1:15 p.m. following a motion by McNamara that was seconded by Connelly and passed unanimously.