

Joint Meeting
Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board
Archival Review Board
November 15, 2023, 4 p.m.

Minutes

Present:

ARRAB Board Members: In-person—Pamela Cruz; Via Remote— Marco Carrion, Lillian Jean Baptiste, Richard Moylan, Eric K. Washington, Sarah Gonzalez, Brian Carlin, Alison Cornyn, Glenda Grace, Rebecca Pou.

ARB Board Member: Jeffrey Lowell (remote).

DORIS Staff: Pauline Toole, Sylvia Kollar, LaTonya Jones, Kenneth Cobb.

Pauline Toole commented that this would be the first ever joint meeting of the two Boards. She said there was enough commonality for a joint meeting. She noted that there was not a quorum for the ARB.

1. Call to Order

Marco Carrion called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Chair Carrion asked for a vote to approve the agenda, and the minutes from the meeting on July 23, 2023, as well as the amended minutes of the May 19, 2023 meeting. The agenda and minutes were approved.

3. ARRAB Chair Report

Chair Carrion said that it was great to meet the ARB Board and thanked all Board members for the time they give to the organization. He also thanked the Municipal Archives staff for their help.

4. ARB Chair Report

Commissioner Toole discussed the City's financial situation, noting that there had already been a 5% cut to the agency's budget. She said another 5% cut would be due in January, and another in June, for a total of 15%. She said it will be very difficult and painful to make the cuts. The first round had been met with accruals from unfilled positions, together with unspent funds from the Electronic Records Management System initiative.

Commissioner Toole continued her comments regarding the merged Boards. She said the merger was under consideration for the current Council's legislative agenda. She noted that the Law Department has dropped their initial objection as both boards are advisory, only. If the merger proposal does not make it onto the legislative agenda, she said Board members may be asked to contact their respective legislators.

Commissioner Toole noted that the ARRAB Annual Report, prepared as a video, had been published and very well received. ARB Board member Richard Lieberman suggested that it be sent to History Departments at the 52 area academic institutions. Lieberman also suggested that the agency consider focusing on the upcoming 200th anniversary of the Erie Canal.

Commissioner Toole also spoke about the "third" Board – the New York Archival Society, the agency's 501 c.3 organization and said they were soliciting new members and to pass the word!

Member Eric K. Washington inquired if there was documentation and/or plans regarding the Harlem Canal.

5. Archives Report

Sylvia Kollar reported that work was progressing well on implementing Preservica, the digital preservation tool. More than 3 million records had already been transferred and they are aiming for a launch in May 2024. She said the Archives is in the process of hiring a technician to digitize the 1890 Census volumes. She noted that there had been more than 1,000 on-site visitors to the facilities this year to-date, and that 21,000 items had been digitized on-demand for patrons.

Sylvia Kollar also said the archivists had conducted a tour of the Industry City facility. She added that bar-coding the holdings at 31 Chambers Street was about two-third complete and the Manhattan Building plans project

team had processed 60,000 plans, out of a collection of more than 100,00 items.

6. External Affairs Report

LaTonya Jones said there had been seven public events, with 532 attendees. She added that they are seeking a new public programming officer. The Neighborhood Stories, Women's Activism projects were continuing, and 40 volunteers had been trained. New themed curriculums had been developed based on the 1918 flu epidemic, LGBTQ rights and Conditions in Harlem. The Brooklyn Bridge program for elementary school students is also continuing both in virtual and in-person formats. The agency website is being updated.

7. Other Matters.

Commissioner Toole urged Board members to visit the newly-opened TriBorough Bridge exhibit. She said that it had been staged in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA). She added that TBTA chief archivist is Mary Hedge, founder of Archives Week.

8. Board Chair Carrion asked for further comments or questions. None were voiced.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.