



CITY OF BOSTON
Archives & Records Management Advisory Commission

Minutes

Monday September 20, 2010, 3:00 p.m.
City Hall—Curley Conference Room, 5th Floor

Members Present: Jeanette Bastian (Public), Bill Sinnott & John Houton (Law), Elaine O'Connor (Admin. Services), James O'Toole (Public), Judith McCarthy (Registry Division), Susan Glover (Boston Public Library), Bill Fowler (Public), Christopher Cook (Arts & Tourism)

Others Present: Deputy Archivist John McColgan, Asst. Archivist Dave Nathan, Patrick Collins (Dept. of Innovation & Technology), Charles Childress (Boston Public Schools), Dean Huggins (Boston Redevelopment Authority)

Call to order.

James O'Toole welcomed Commission members and guests, and noted that City Clerk Rosaria Salerno could not be present and had asked him to preside in her absence.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes: The minutes for April 26 were reviewed and accepted.

O'Toole then introduced Deputy Archivist John McColgan to report on current activities of the program.

Deputy Archivist Quarterly Report:

- McColgan amplified on the accompanying written report by suggesting that the Division's goals are exemplified in these representative initiatives:
 - The ingathering to the Archives of legacy records from agencies, such as one currently underway with Boston Housing Authority records.
 - The systematization of agency recordkeeping practices through development of agency file plans and annual records retention reviews for destruction or transfers.
 - The ongoing initiative to re-orient City agency recordkeeping operations around the records life cycle management model. This goal depends on close collaboration between the major City records and information stakeholders of Law, DoIT, and Archives. Special appreciation is due to the efforts of John Houton of Law and David Nero of DoIT.
- Q: Have the previous grant projects resulted in increased City resources for the Archives?
A: Not across the board; more typical was DoIT's hiring our project archivist at project end as a temporary consultant to continue the momentum on e-records management initiatives.
- Q: What was the role of e-records in the recent grant?
A: One goal of the grant was to begin developing a collaborative relationship with stakeholders around e-records management issues. The Division is now building on that foundation.

- Q: What is the scope of the current grant proposal?
A: The Division's proposal is to identify City-wide agency records of permanent value, accession and document them, and mount an exhibit of the most significant acquisitions. It would also encompass planning for preservation of permanent agency e-records.
- Q: What would happen to this necessary effort if the Archives did not obtain federal funds?
A: In the event that Archives did not get the grant funding, it would be severely handicapped. The principal resources lacking would be transportation and storage containers.
- Q: Shouldn't such costs be a function for the agencies who hold the records?
A: The Archives agrees but to this date we have not been able to effectively advocate for this position. The Division has run its records center operation on a chargeback basis for more than a decade.
- Q: In order to sustain this desired level of operations, should not a plan be drafted to address structural impediments such as transportation costs? (The Commission public members offered to assist where useful in developing such a plan.)
A: Archives staff would be happy to work with Commission members on such a sustainable operations plan.

Old Business

- Electronic Records Management Software Application Initiative: Patrick Collins, former project archivist and now Digital & Records Management Analyst for DoIT, explained that the City is proceeding with a test of the records management features of Microsoft Sharepoint 2010
Q: Will the issue of stranded e-records be addressed (where systems or software are not accessible)?
A: That issue duly noted and would be addressed in any implementation of MS-Sharepoint.
- Law Department / City Archives / DoIT / HR Email Training Initiative: Bill Sinnott of Law explained that City-wide training just about ready to go, and will only cover the City policy; system implementations such as with retention folders or buckets will be addressed in agency trainings.
Q: There are concerns about uneven compliance about what to destroy and to keep. Will there be regular re-trainings and spot checking?
A: Compliance is reinforced by having an overall system of staff training, agency-specific file plans, and oversight by Archives and Department Records Officers. Training for new hires and transfers will be necessary as well as spot checking.

New Business

- Based on the grant project discussion, it was agreed that Archives staff will begin develop a sustainability plan for operations and consult on this with members between now and the next commission meeting.

O'Toole moved that, if there were no other observations, that the meeting be adjourned; it was seconded and passed. The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 6. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.