COUNCIL MEETING

April 7, 2025
2 – 3:30 pm CT
Zoom

Attendees

Council Officers: President, Troy Reeves; Vice President, Sarah Milligan; First Vice President, Mark Cave; Past President, Kelly Elaine Navies

Council Members: Nishani Frazier; Shanna Farrell; Anna Sheftel; Abby Perkiss
Absent: Francine D. Sprang-Willis

Executive Office: Executive Director, Stephen Sloan; Associate Director, Steven Sielaff; Program Associate, Leslie An

Notes

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
Welcome & Opening Thoughts Call to order at 2:03 pm CDT	• Sarah shared inspiration from *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker. • Encouraged consideration of deeper "disputable" purpose of organization and annual meeting — what the annual meeting truly accomplishes beyond surface-level intentions. • These deeper purposes (beyond gathering oral historians) should drive planning and work.	
Minutes Approval	• Midwinter Minutes were moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.	☑ ~~Leslie: Post Midwinter / February Minutes on OHA site~~
Advocacy Meetings Recap	Three key points from March 24 and 31 meetings: 1. Open virtual community forum for members 2. Better interacting with and amplifying local/regional voices 3. Sign-on statements to review or vote on	
Advocacy Meetings Recap **1: Open Virtual Community Forum for Members**	• Forum would allow members to express what's important to them and how leadership can help, rather than leadership making assumptions • Idea shifted from one big meeting to several virtual community forums • Proposal for one-hour Zoom rooms scheduled throughout the year	☐ Troy/All Council(?): Schedule virtual forums. At least one before Annual Meeting (Troy would like one in May). Set specific dates including evening and weekend options.

	• Troy envisions scheduling several before Annual Meeting/business meeting with 1-2 leadership present • Sielaff reminded that virtual gatherings will not be recorded to encourage free speech • Need for consistent note-taking discussed; suggestion for having one person facilitate, one take notes, and possibly a third person from executive office • Sloan suggested regular day/time for predictability and engagement • Troy suggested offering both midmorning and late afternoon sessions to accommodate international participants • Nishani suggested adding weekend sessions for broader accommodation and volunteers to lead one • Strategy is to decide/formalize dates, add evening and weekend sessions, then have council volunteer for slots • Kelly will be in Bay area in late August for potential collaboration with Shanna on a meetup	☐ Council members: volunteer for specific time slots ☐ Council members who volunteered to lead meetings: update Troy with their planned dates (e.g., "We're going to meet in mid-May") ☐ Kelly and Shanna: coordinate Bay area meetup for late August
Advocacy Meetings Recap **2: Better interacting with and amplifying local/regional voices**	• Proposal for both virtual and in-person regional meetings with Council members leading their regions • Kelly Elaine suggested Council members take lead for respective regions • Potential regional leaders: Shanna (West Coast), Kelly (Baltimore-DC), Abby (Philly-NY) • Shanna noted West Coast doesn't have much activity and she's been working on this already • Kelly Elaine and Abby could attend each other's meetings while still holding separate ones • Suggestion to leverage existing regional associations and conferences • Noted that OHA funded four meetups this year with some money available for food at in-person meetings • Discussion about supporting fledgling efforts in "desert areas" (South and Midwest) • Mention of New England regional efforts with Sloan speaking to someone trying to establish something there	☐ Shanna, Kelly, Abby: Lead regional meetings in respective geographic areas ☐ Abby: Contact OHMAR about Philly-New York area meeting ☑ ~~Troy: Reach out to Ellen Brooks about leading Chicago-Midwest area~~ ☐ Troy and Sielaff: Connect with regional associations about potential collaboration, including SOHA and TOHA
Advocacy Meetings Recap	• Troy noted co-signers appreciate OHA support and there's strength in numbers	☑ ~~Troy or Sielaff: Write piece about sign-on statements~~

3: Sign-on statements to review or vote on	• Shanna requested more review time before decisions. However, some statements require quick turnaround (e.g., IMLS, NEH). • Troy willing to allow 36 hours from time Sloan sends email notification to accommodate time zones. • Group chat suggested for quicker turnaround notifications; Sloan will notify via email, Troy will follow-up via group chat. • Discussion of reporting signed statements to membership. Solution: piece in upcoming newsletter linking to page compiling list of OHA-signed statements. • Consensus on writing own statements only when members request and when backed by action.	~~for upcoming newsletter. Include link to statements page in newsletter and news blasts.~~ ☑ ~~Troy: Create page on OHA site listing statements signed~~
Continued discussion of Atlanta	• Troy decided to push continued discussion of Atlanta and strategic plan to May.	
Executive Office Updates **1: All Chairs Meeting**	• March 24 meeting had good turnout from standing committees and caucuses • Office created shared folder for committee reports • Pushback from one committee about completing both minutes and the new form • Sloan clarified they could keep taking minutes but should also use the form to communicate with Executive Office and Council • Council liaisons should encourage all committees to use the reporting form while allowing them to continue their existing minutes process • Ongoing issue with unengaged committee members • Some members voluntarily leave, which is better so they can be reappointed • Council should identify committees operating under capacity due to inactive members and notify Troy about committees with “ghost members” so additional people can be appointed	
Executive Office Updates **2: Volunteer Document**	• Thanks given to Council members who completed their assigned pages (assigned in February)	☐ Sloan: Compile completed work into a clean document to be finalized in spring

Executive Office Updates **3: U.S. Programs and Centers List**	• Sielaff had removed outdated list U.S. Programs and Centers List in the Regional and International Organizations page of the OHA site, and noted it can easily get messy • Sielaff posed question about criteria for inclusion in U.S. Programs and Centers list • Sielaff suggested educational programming as the criterion and Metadata Task Force survey from 2018/2019 as starting point • Shanna affirmed education/programming as sensible boundary • In response to whether museums or historical societies should be included, Sielaff emphasized focus on organizations with oral history as main focus — not just collections • Kelly Elaine suggested including museums with instructional components and regularly updated site • Mark noted difficulty in defining education. His museum does exhibitions and social media posts using oral histories, and has an education department non-specific to oral history. • Kelly Elaine suggested that having outreach/education resources available on site qualifies • Nishani noted some public history programs do oral history projects, but inclusion could be unwieldy. Also suggested tending toward inclusivity since centers aren't available everywhere. • Troy emphasized definitely including all partners • Sarah questioned the purpose of the list to guide decision-making — helping connect people with local programs or creating a comprehensive list? • Sielaff called this list the regional association equivalent of the “Find an Oral Historian” tool	
Executive Office Updates **4: Member Site Updates**	• Sielaff cleaned up site but has outstanding questions for Memberclicks • Still needs to locate “Upcoming Events” and “Our Tweets” in backend • New copy added to member landing page explaining menu functions	☐ Shanna: Send Sielaff “Race and Power” recordings via Box

	• Discussion of recordings pages as value-added exclusive content for members	
Executive Office Updates **5: Federal Workers Oral History Project**	• Project promotion ongoing to get volunteers • Approximately 350 responses received • Intention to train about 12 volunteer interviewers	
Executive Office Updates **6: Sister Organizations Spreadsheet**	• Building comprehensive list of kindred organizations and contacts to be used for external communications • Part of new newsletter editor's function to develop external communications • External communications plan to launch in 2026 • List will help with advocacy efforts • Will be searching for a newsletter editor	☐ All Council: Add contacts directly to the spreadsheet to make it as comprehensive as possible ☐ Troy and Sloan: Draft job description for newsletter editor
Executive Office Updates **7: Accessibility Guidelines**	• Brief mention of continuing implementation of points in document	☑ ~~Troy: Follow up with Francine, diversity liaison (cc Sloan)~~
Asides		☐ Sloan and Troy: Work with Committee on Committees to deliver Google Form to committee chairs asking about their needs and which members are/aren't doing their work, to help build next slate of committees ☐ All Council: Accept Sloan's invite to Business Meeting
General Updates/Discussion **1: Nominating Committee Updates**	• Mark reported on nominating committee's thoughtful discussion and selection process • Committee members ranked their favorites considering past OHA involvement and zones of influence • Mark expressed disappointment that some he nominated didn't make final list • Kelly reiterated concern about "recycling" the same people and OMHA being overly represented • Shanna expressed confusion about OMHA being called out • Sarah explained historical context: geographical diversity efforts 5-7 years ago brought in Northeast coast program graduates	☐ Mark: Send approval to nominating committee for First VP outreach ☐ All Council who hasn't already: Add nominees to list for Nominating Committee and Committee on Committees by Monday, April 14 ☑ ~~Troy: Verify with Sloan and Leslie who has run before~~ ☐ Troy and Sloan: Conduct email vote on who to reach out to

	• Positive mention of geographic diversity with nominee Micah Mizukami from Hawaii • Clarification of two vacant Council positions • Explanation that Alissa Rae and Fanny get first opportunity to vye for First VP position. If anyone declines, opportunity passes to alternate list at their discretion. • Troy empathized that his nominees also didn't make list but resolved to honor committee's work • Anecdotal confirmation that everyone on list is a member • Council consensus to approve committee's recommendations • Commitment to continue discussions about bringing in new people	
General Updates/Discussion **2: Committee Updates**	• Diversity & Education need to add a member to Scholarship committee • International does not need to have a member on it; they have their own thing	
General Updates/Discussion **3: Berkeley Misquote Issue**	• Berkeley's Office of Scholarly Communications is redoing legal releases; they misquote OHA Best Practices in training and online toolkit, incorrectly stating that OHA says one should sign legal releases in advance; OHA's position on informed consent miscontextualized and misinterpreted as legal release. • Need to update language in Best Practices to specifically use “informed consent” terminology; to clarify distinction between permission form as part of copyright exchange VS informed consent; and to clarify that there are ethical expectations that transcend a legal document. • Shanna reported that informal correction was rejected and suggested formal letter as only way to change this	☑ ~~Troy and Sloan: Schedule meeting with Shanna before next Council meeting~~ ☐ [Undesignated responsibility]: Update language in Best Practices
General Updates/Discussion **4: L&E Task Force Webinar Proposal**	• Written proposal included $300 honorarium per speaker • Nishani suggested reducing speakers or honorarium to tighten budget • Sarah supported more programs, but suggested charging non-members and recommended capping budget at $600 per session, however they want to divvy that	☑ ~~Troy: Communicate decision to L&E Task Force~~

	● Agreement to pay only invited speakers, not task force members, who can participate as moderators ● Council approves first session, still to work through budget details	

Minutes prepared by Leslie An