



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

2:30 – 4:00 PM

October 4, 2022

Present: Katelynn Averyt, Michele Bailey, Sally Blanchard-O'Brien, Taiga Christie, Carrie Cleveland, Eileen Corcoran, Amy Cunningham, Jamie Duggan, Brinker Ferguson, Carolyn Frisa, Tom McMurdo, Rachel Onuf, Ben Rose, Joseph Watson

Updates

Amy/Michele: The Arts Council is very busy administering the \$9 million Creative Economy grant, which opened on September 15. This is an unprecedented amount of money and is new for the Council in that it's also open to for-profit businesses other than artists. As long as an organization was in existence before the pandemic and can demonstrate harm, it qualifies. There is a large range of grant sizes. The deadline for the first round of applications is November 1, and two more rounds will be opened in the winter and the spring. The Council's executive director is leaving at the end of October and a search firm was hired to find a replacement, hoping to have an offer for someone in January. Amy is serving as the interim director. Michele is doing many presentations on funding at conferences in different sectors around the state.

Tom: The Department of Libraries worked with Senator Leahy's office to request congressional funding for capital improvements to libraries. If it goes well, they hope to see the money sometime next year. The Department also has ARPA money for capital improvements, so altogether this could be a substantial, and is the first federal funding for capital improvements for libraries since the 1990s. The new state librarian is settling into the role and has hit the ground running, with lots of projects in the works.

Eileen: The Vermont Historical Society has lots of projects going on and museum attendance is pretty much back to pre-pandemic numbers. The Society's annual meeting will be held this week virtually, and the League of Local Historical Societies conference will be at the end of the month.

Rachel/Sally: The Vermont Historical Records Program is working on getting its mobile digitization unit and environmental monitoring program up and running. Sally has been planning an Archives Month event for the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration with other VSARA employees, the first event for VSARA since before the pandemic. The VSARA reference room has seen an increase in researchers but numbers don't seem to be where they were pre-pandemic. Rachel will be teaching a disaster planning workshop for the State Library of Iowa:

<https://www.statelibraryofiowa.gov/index.php/libraries/training-consulting/continuing-education/special-events/learning-circuit>. This opportunity came from a similar series of workshops that Rachel taught for the Association of Rural and Small Libraries last year. Rachel discovered a new card game called "Master the Disaster" that could be a fun way to teach VACDaRN members about disaster planning: <https://pressbooks.lib.jmu.edu/masterthedisaster/>. The AFR Advisory Committee, which has met quarterly for the past year, decided to open the meetings to any AFR steering committee members who wish to join. The topic for the January meeting will be network structure. Rachel will forward meeting details once it is scheduled.

Carolyn: Over the summer, Carolyn and Rachel taught two disaster response workshops as well as a document humidification workshop for town clerks. Things have been quiet for Carolyn on the disaster response front.

Joseph: Middlebury College has been very busy with classes this semester. The college archivist retired after 28 years and Kaitlin Buerge, a Middlebury alum who has worked in Special Collections in the past, will assume that role on Halloween.

Ben: Vermont Emergency Management is coming down from the annual conference, and session recordings can be viewed online: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkv2VZBHkd08eF1tz56yQyNt0sGDleJ67>. Vermont has been fortunate this hurricane season, and COVID has calmed down, but the work continues. Some COVID response projects are winding down but some are continuing. Ben hopes to get the USDA to continue the Everyone Eats initiative. Ben will be sharing information at upcoming conferences around the state about hazard mitigation funding opportunities for nonprofits.

Taiga: Taiga is the new southern regional coordinator for Vermont Emergency Management, with a background in public health and theater. Taiga is involved with the Faultline Ensemble: <https://www.faultlineensemble.org/>

Carrie: CERF+ has been busy responding to hurricanes Fiona and Ian. The new executive director for CERF+, Ruby Lopez Harper, is starting in November, and she has a deep skill set in programming for individual artists. The organization held an all-staff retreat last month to get everyone all together, to do planning, and to visit artists in the area.

Katelynn: The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative has been engaged with organizations affected by hurricanes Fiona and Ian, and the flooding in Kentucky. They are continuing to work with Ukraine. The Heritage Emergency and Response (HEART) training (https://culturalrescue.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HEART-Application-Call-2022_FINAL.pdf) will be held in person in DC in December for the first time since the pandemic, and Katelynn will be helping with the training.

Jamie: The Division for Historic Preservation's new historic sites regional administrator, Rejoice Scherry, put in an application to attend the HEART training. The historic sites section chief has left, and they are interviewing to fill that position. A great show is up at the Kent Corner site: <https://www.kentscorner.org/art-at-the-kent> but this and most sites will be closing for the season soon. The Division continues to work on the Bennington Monument, including the broken elevator, and this has the Division thinking more about emergency procedures for other sites. They are currently working with the Coolidge site on this.

Brinker: The NH Alliance for Response got funding so the network will kick off in 2023. Brinker will be presenting in Egypt on research about mapping climate effects on historic and cultural sites.

Crisis Analysis and Mitigation Training

Carrie thanked everyone who provided names of whom to invite to the training, although September wasn't the right time to get everyone together. The Steering Committee agreed to try to have this training in February, after the busy fall and holiday seasons.

Future Plans

The Steering Committee discussed continuing to meet as it has been, gathering bimonthly for updates. It was decided that we want to have a strategic discussion in the future, an in-person or hybrid meeting with a facilitator. ***Rachel and Sally will draft a plan for this to share with the group.***