



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

1 – 2 PM

November 22, 2024

Present:

Amy Cunningham, Rachel Onuf, Eileen Corcoran, Meg Campbell, Michele Bailey, Katelynn Averyt, Tom McMurdo, Christopher Ilstrup, Ben Rose, Joseph Watson

NEWS!

Ben Rose is retiring on December 20th. Thanks to Ben for all he has done with and for VACDaRN!

This is not-yet public information: Waterwheel Foundation is giving VACDaRN \$50K to develop a Cultural Organizations Resilience Cohort: VACDaRN will identify a group of 10-15 cultural organizations to come together over the course of a year to develop disaster and continuity of operations plans. Organizational participants will receive trainings and one-on-one support to create and test the plans, with the outcome of creating emergency and continuity of operation plans that the organizations can directly put into use.

Amy, Michele, and Rachel met 11.21 for a preliminary discussion of how to plan to do this. Considering using dPlan | ArtsReady tool, submitting an RFP for consultants, and potentially having the new Roving Archivist offer support. VACDaRN co-leads are planning to submit a plan to Waterwheel in February or March, at which point we can be public about this funding award.

Updates:

Tom reported that the Treasury funds were granted to 14 libraries around the state, approaching 15M dollars. An historic amount of money but doesn't meet all the need. Two more libraries will get running water and many other critical structural improvements will be made. Have \$10M in HUD funds that they will be granting soon. Preparing for the legislative session.

Katelynn reported that SCRI will be merging with the Museum Conservation Institute and will have a new director: the longtime Program Director of SCRI has announced her retirement. They are undertaking a strategic planning process. The HEART training is in second week of December, Rachel and Carolyn will present on the VACDaRN 2023 flood response.

Meg reported that PTV was granted a sixth round of Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Funds from the National Park Service. PTV will open the call for applications February 3 and close April 4,

2025, offering \$625K for seven projects. Projects can include climate resilience and flood mitigation work.

Michele reported that she attended the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and was on a panel to discuss the *Culture for Climate Action* workshop series. She also attended tabletop scenarios for state arts organizations and found that to be a great exercise. Cultural Facilities grants will open soon.

Eileen reported that the Activating 21st Century Local History Program had 12 applicants for the first cohort – and none had disaster or emergency plans. So there is a role there for VACDaRN...

Christopher was just at the National Humanities Conference. The NEH may NOT be able to fund the Climate Smart grants (the program we decided *not* to apply for this year). The Vermont Reads book for 2025 will be a “CliFi” book (Climate Fiction!). *The Light Pirate* by Lily Brookes-Dalton is set in Florida and Vermont Humanities is seeking collaborations with folks there as well as in Vermont. The title will be publicly announced in March; keep it under your hat until then! Noel Clark, Communications Officer at Vermont Humanities, will start coming to steering team meetings in 2025. Welcome, Noel!

Joseph reported Middlebury Special Collections had 52 classes come through this semester. He has purchased a freezer to remediate a pest infestation in a collection of records stored in a dairy barn.

Laura reported the mold has been remediated at the Education Center at the Justin Morrill Homestead. She’s beginning to see real progress working with FEMA. Laura is setting up supply caches and “to go” buckets with PPE and security codes at every historic site. Bins too big for some cars...but good if they can hold everything. Rachel is now her co-chair for the HCRTF and we will be meeting with Laurie Domler at Department of the Interior. Three more National Park Service trainings in Vermont for buildings are in the works for next year, based on published flood guidelines: Waterbury, Ludlow, and St. Johnsbury – will be able to bring your building issue to the group for discussion.

Tentatively planning *Keeping History Above Water* (KHAW) for 2026 in VT. Can include Arts Orgs! [Later note: NOT going to happen in 2026. Perhaps in a year or two].

In response to a question about FEMA funds going forward, Ben noted that historically an administrative change does not change FEMA’s ability to meet its Strafford Act obligations. “Steady On” he says!

Parting comments, looking ahead to 2025:

- Flag KHAW recordings in an upcoming VACDaRN email
- Ben has found VACDaRN steering team meetings the most inspiring and energizing of all.
- Amy wants to advance GIS mapping and the physical asset list. (Tom’s wife Heather worked for ESRI and was a GIS pioneer...)
- Joseph wants a formal association for VACDaRN, with point people in each county/region.