



STATE OF WASHINGTON
LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

Office of the State Auditor • Office of the Attorney General • Office of the State Archivist
PO Box 40238 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0238 • (360) 586-4900

January 30, 2014 – 10:00 a.m.
State Archives Conference Room
1129 Washington St SE, Olympia, WA 98504

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Cindy Evans, Chair – State Auditor’s Office; Sharon James – Attorney General’s Office; Steve Excell – State Archivist.

Staff Present: Russell Wood – State Records Manager; Julie Blecha – Local Government Records Retention Specialist; Tracy Rebstock – Southwest Regional Branch Archives; Debbie Bahn (via PolyCom) – Digital Archives.

Guests Present: Andi Reed – Bremerton Housing Authority; Tim Baker – King County Housing Authority.

I. ROUTINE ITEMS

A. Call to Order

Cindy Evans called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

B. Introduction of Guests

C. Adoption of Today’s Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda as presented; Evans; second by Sharon James.

Resolution: Motion carried

D. Approval of Minutes for October 31, 2013

Motion to approve the minutes as presented: James; second by Steve Excell.

Resolution: Motion carried

II. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Housing Authorities Records Retention Schedule (Version 2.0) – Julie Blecha

Blecha thanked Tim Baker, King County Housing Authority, for instigating this revision in 2009. The project finally commenced in April of 2013 with an email to each Association of Washington Housing Authorities member. 8 volunteers have been working diligently on this revision.

According to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website, there are 36 housing authorities in Washington State that receive operating funds from HUD.

Besides the format restructuring, the most significant change is the increased minimum retention for tenant files from *termination of lease plus 3 years* to *termination of lease plus 6 years* due to the 6-year statute of limitations. Because the tenant and participant files now share the same retention requirements, they have been consolidated – along with 15 *additional* series – into one “big bucket”.

The reference group also determined that four records series should be designated as “Essential”, including *Tenant/Participant Files* (HA60-01-52), and the three records series covering low income housing tax credit (LIHTC) property records (HA2014-005, HA2014-006, and HA2014-007). Evans stated that the State Auditor’s Office finds LIHTC audits very challenging due to the complexity of the programs. Blecha thanked Andi Reed, Bellingham Housing Authority, for her assistance with these complex series, and mentioned that the Washington State Housing Finance Commission approved the specific language used in the LIHTC series.

Evans described her familiarity with housing authorities and all of the federal programs and the federal monies they receive, and she declared the revision “nicely done”.

Tim Baker presented a letter addressed to the Committee signed by Stephen Norman, Executive Director of King County Housing Authority, which urged members to approve the revision. Blecha read the letter aloud, including this statement: *“The new schedule has condensed, consolidated and clarified the many types of documents that PHAs use, as well as standardizing retention dates and is a welcome change by our agency.”*

Evans stated that due to the complexity of the statutes that regulate PHAs, the input the reference group members provided is vital to the success of the retention schedule. James appreciates that this version no longer lists numbered HUD forms, which are so quickly obsolete, and, instead, provides series that are more descriptive and, therefore, more broadly understood.

Motion to approve the *Housing Authorities Records Retention Schedule (Version 2.0) as presented*; James, second by Excell.

Resolution: Motion carried

Blecha thanked the reference group participants:

- James Fearn, General Counsel, Seattle Housing Authority
- Andi Reed, Bremerton Housing Authority
- Lisa Richwine, Housing Authority of City of Pasco & Franklin County
- Tim Baker, King County Housing Authority
- Joylyn Meyer, Spokane Housing Authority
- Kim Foster, Spokane Housing Authority
- Lisa Boone, Housing Authority of Grays Harbor County
- Sandy Byrd, Renton Housing Authority
- Rosanna Morgan, Housing Authority of City of Walla Walla
- Katherine Gray, Housing Authority of Island County
- Klayton Kuzminski, Bremerton Housing Authority

Blecha also expressed thanks to Felicia Den Adel and Brian Picchi of the State Auditor’s Office who provided helpful input. In addition, thanks to Melissa Donahue, Manager of the Asset Management & Compliance Division at WA State Housing Finance Commission, where they monitor for compliance with the LIHTC program.

III. WASHINGTON STATE ARCHIVES UPDATES

A. Revision of Records Retention Schedules – Julie Blecha

Blecha presented members with an updated retention schedule revision plan, which will be posted on the website.

Progress continues on the *County Clerks and Superior Court Clerks Records Retention Schedule* revision project. Blecha will be meeting with the Clerks reference group in March in Leavenworth, where the clerks will be gathering for a conference. The goal is to present a final draft to the larger Clerk body at their WA State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) conference in May.

Continuing to refine the *School Districts and ESDs Records Retention Schedule* at monthly WA Association of School Business Officials Records Management subcommittee (WASBO-RM) meetings. Evans noted that the new *public* charter schools should be considering during this revision project. Blecha stated assistance will be provided to public charter schools.

CORE *Human Resource Management* and CORE *Legal Affairs* are the next major revision projects planned.

In response to frequent requests from local and state agency staff, *sample* destruction logs have been prepared for **voluntary** use by local and state government agencies. Additionally, advice sheets on several records destruction topics are being developed and everything will be available on the WSA website.

There are currently 2,768 subscribers on the local government listserv, which includes 304 new subscribers since the last LRC meeting. WASBO-RM created an email (which was distributed by OSPI to every superintendent in the state) requesting agency records manager contact information so that each district could receive records management updates from WSA. Of the 225 responses received, 164 were from districts and ESDs *that were previously not receiving bulletins*. WASBO-RM members plan to contact each district that has not yet responded.

Guests asked several questions, including:

Q: When does the new Housing Authorities Records Retention Schedule (HARRS) take effect?

A: Immediately. Version 6.0 is revoked and Version 7.0 will be posted online today.

Q: How many years will Version 7.0 be in effect?

A: If a new program or requirement creates a gap where the records are not covered by an existing series, inform Blecha and the issue will be reviewed and prioritized.

Q: Do agencies *have to* use the new destruction log?

A: State law does not require that you document records destruction; however, it is highly recommended best practice. The logs are provided as *examples* for agencies to use and/or modify, as they so desire.

Q: Any advice on how to respond to staff who may argue, “*why does it say 6 years when HUD says we only need to keep it for 3 years – and HUD is our funding source!*?”

A: Per [chapter 40.14 RCW](#), Washington’s local government agencies are responsible for retaining records for the minimum period(s) *approved by the Local Records Committee*, which is tasked with analyzing Washington state law, statutes of limitations, audit cycles, historic significance, etc. In addition to these requirements, agencies *may be* obligated (by a federal law, local statute, court rule, grant agreement, etc.) to retain the same records for a longer (or shorter) retention period(s). **All requirements must be satisfied.** Folks who believe they can disregard current approved retention schedules should be shown [RCWs 40.16.010](#) and [40.16.020](#), both of which detail penal provisions for the willful destruction of public records.

B. Announcements from the State Archivist – Steve Excell

Two decision packages went to OFM and the Governor, one for temporary warehouse space since the three Olympia area facilities are full, and the other a \$250,000 pre-design to study a permanent solution for a space for the records center, State Archives and State Library. The Governor turned both decision packages down, but the Secretary of State is continuing attempts to secure approval this session.

Washington State Archives is supporting a pair of AG request bills that require mandatory records management training every four years for all newly elected officials and public records officers.

In 1931, the American Exchange Bank in Seattle folded during the Great Depression, and when the contents of safety deposit boxes were returned to bank customers, one unclaimed box contained a

copper pot holding the ashes of John Montgomery, showing a 1910 cremation date. Various state agency employees have searched since 1931 for Montgomery relations, to no avail. An article appeared in the Wall Street Journal about a group of *genealogists who assist coroners in returning unclaimed remains to family members* recently, and WSA contacted them about John Montgomery. The group of genealogists is associated with the television show, "Who Do You Think You Are", and the book, "America, Your Roots are Showing". They agreed to take the case, solving it after only three months. Several family members were identified and contacted, and a plan is in the works to bury the ashes of six-year-old John with his father at Calvary Cemetery in Seattle.

IV. NEXT MEETING – April 24, 2014

ADJOURNMENT: 10:47 am

CERTIFICATION OF MEETING MINUTES OF THE LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE:

I, Cindy Evans, Chair of Local Records Committee, certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the minutes of a public meeting of the Local Records Committee of the State of Washington held in the State Archives Building conference room on January 30, 2014, and that the public meeting was duly called and held in all respects in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington, and that a quorum was present.



Chair Signature

4/26/14

Date