

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS

MEETING #67

Thursday, December 19, 2024

11:15 – 11:20 AM

Meeting on WebEx

Members of the Committee present:

Denise Hibay, Director of Collections and Research in the New York Public Library

Tanya Marshall, Vermont State Archivist and Chief Records Officer

Kevin McCumber, Acting Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and Co-Chair of the Committee

Katherine Scott, Historian of the U.S. Senate

Debbie Ramsey, Curator of the McConnell – Chao Archives at the University of Louisville

Gunter Waibel, Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director, California Digital Library at the University of California

Others present for all or a portion of the meeting were:

Robert Paxton, Attending on Behalf of Ann Berry, Secretary of the U.S. Senate and Chair of the Committee

Ellis Brachman, Attending on Behalf of Colleen Shogan, Archivist of the United States

Ben Francis-Fallon, Attending on Behalf of Matthew Wasniewski, Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives

Richard Hunt, Director, Center for Legislative Archives (NARA)

Alison Trulock, Attending on Behalf of Heather Bourk, Archivist of the U.S. House of Representatives

Robert Paxton: Welcome to the 67th meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, and — I was going to say my last meeting as chair — but it is Anne [Berry]’s last meeting as chair. I’m Robert Paxton. I’m assistant secretary [of the Senate]. Anne is not feeling well this morning and sends her apologies and regrets that she couldn’t make the meeting. But thank you to everybody who has joined today and I want to start by giving you a brief update on the status of our legislative efforts to restructure the Advisory Committee.

On Monday, December 16, the House approved HR 9849, a bill that would sunset the Advisory Committee. We learned yesterday that the Senate does not plan to vote on the Senate bill this month. House and Senate Historians are committed, however, to working with their leadership to move this proposal forward when the 119th Congress convenes next year. I’d like to thank our partners in the 118th Congress, Kevin McCumber, Acting Clerk of the House, and U.S. Archivist, Dr. Colleen Shogan, for their continued dedication to the preservation of our nation’s congressional records.

I also want to recognize the Senate, House, and Center for Legislative Archives staff for working diligently to preserve these treasures and making them accessible for future generations. A special thanks to Senate Archivist Karen Paul for nearly 43 years of dedicated service. I know I join with others in wishing her health and happiness as she begins her retirement next year.

I'm sad to report that we've recently lost one of our Advisory Committee members, Danna Bell. Danna was an educational resource specialist at the Library of Congress and a former president of the Society of American Archivists, and she passed away in November.

Kevin, I think you would like to say a few words about Danna.

Kevin McCumber: Yeah, thank you. First, I'd like to thank you and the staff and the Senate Historical Office for hosting. I'd like to say just a couple of words about our [inaudible].

Robert Paxton: Kevin, we're having trouble hearing you. We hear it a little bit. It's very faint Sorry.

Kevin McCumber: Is that any better?

Robert Paxton: A bit. I think good enough.

Kevin McCumber: Sorry about that. I will start over briefly.

I just want to say thank you to Robert and thank you to the staff in the Historical Office for hosting today's meeting and I would like to say just a couple of words about our appointee, Danna. As you mentioned, she was an education resource specialist at the Library of Congress. She was a bright light in the archives profession. Her commitment was evident in her numerous leadership roles, publications, and work as an instructor.

She believed deeply in the power of primary sources to tell stories, to inspire, and to educate. She dedicated herself to making both the archival profession and the archives themselves places where everyone was welcome. She was an engaged and active member of this committee, and I'm grateful for her service and contributions. I also look forward to continuing to partner with the Senate and NARA in addressing the challenges of collecting, preserving, and providing access to congressional records in new ways as we move into the next phase of collaboration in the coming years.

We are committed, as is Robert and the rest of you, in seeing the restructuring of this committee, the legislative efforts, be fulfilled next Congress. And we'll work actively with our committee of jurisdiction to do our part to see that that happens.

I'd just like to wish everyone a joyful and restorative holiday season. Thank you, Robert, for the time.

Robert Paxton: Thank you, Kevin.

The next order of business on the agenda is the approval of the October 29, 2024 minutes. Do I hear a motion to approve?

Tanya Marshall: So moved.

Kate Scott: I second.

Robert Paxton: A second? Thank you. There being no objection, the minutes of the October 29 meeting are approved.

If there is any additional business speak now or forever... I see smiles but no business. Great. On that note, the meeting has adjourned, and thank you all and have a wonderful holiday season.