

***VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND
ADVISORY COMMITTEE***
To The New Hampshire Department of State

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
November 20, 2003***

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-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

November 20, 2003

Health and Welfare Building
Conference Room 110/111
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patty Little, City Clerk Appointment
William Armstrong, IT Manager, DITM Appointment
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Tom Janosz, Funeral Director Appointment
Jane Ireland, Rye Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
David Kruger, Public Member Appointment
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment
Paul Bergeron, Nashua City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
Annette Barnaby, Health Information Specialist Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Linda Hartson, Exeter Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment

GUESTS:

Steve Sullivan, IT Manager, SOS
David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS
Melanie A. Orman, Vital Records, SOS
Barbara Kostka, Vital Records, SOS
Douglas Steil, Project Manager, CNSI
Mark Parris, Office of Information Systems, DHHS
Cathy Eccleston, OIT, Vital Records, SOS
Steve Wurtz, Supervisor of Registration/Certification, DVR, SOS
Patsy Elderkin, Vital Records, SOS
Cynthia Swank, Consultant, InLook Group
Peter Parker, Consultant, InLook Group

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Little called the meeting to order and seeing new faces she suggested that everyone introduce himself or herself. Mr. Bolton followed up the introductions by announcing that Mr. Robert Lambert had recently been appointed liaison between the New Hampshire City & Town Clerk's Association and the VRIF committee was not in attendance, but would be attending future meetings. Mr. Lambert is the Peterborough Town Clerk.

Ms. Little informed members that the first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes of the September 18, 2003 meeting. She then asked if there was any discussion necessary. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adopt. Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Kruger made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Swank mentioned that on page four, fifth paragraph down it said the State Archivist administered the program. It is actually the Public Records Administrator that administers the program. Down five more paragraphs the reference to UNIS should be Eunice Dibbela, who is the public records administrator.

Dr. Mevers mentioned the reference to Mrs. Wurtz and Mr. Bolton replied that a correction had already been made to that typo. Dr. Mevers went on to direct members to the bottom of page 10. He stated that it should read January 1, 2004. Hearing no additional comments or corrections, Ms. Little asked for a vote. The committee voted unanimously to adopt the minutes with corrections.

2. InLook Group Presentation:

Ms. Swank reported that she and Mr. Parker had passed along benchmarking survey results. She explained that the handout was basically an overview of where they are in the benchmarking process. She stated that they did not include all the questions, but gave a good representation of what they have learned from other states. Other states have local records grant programs, it is not limited to vital records. Their funding differed dramatically in amount as well as source.

Some states have non-lapsing funds based on fees; others get direct appropriations from legislatures. Others have obtained grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for up to three times, supplemented by funds appropriated by state legislatures. She asked members to peruse the document she had distributed. Mr. Kruger expressed surprise at the amount of one grant. Ms. Swank explained that often the grants are given to counties rather than municipalities and that the \$235,000 was probably used for a filming or scanning project. Dr. Mevers suggested that it might have been Georgia that received such a large grant. They held a statewide education program that was funded by the NHPRC.

Mr. Kruger asked if the survey covered private funding as well. Ms. Swank replied that it was for states that have grant programs in operation. She reiterated that many states do not limit the grants to local records. Mr. Kruger explained that he was interested in the sources of funding and whether there was any private funding represented in the survey. Ms. Swank replied that there was not.

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Ms. Little asked Ms. Swank to step back and share with the committee the scope of the project that InLook has been contracted to do. Ms. Swank replied that the benchmarking process was very valuable. They are able to glean a great deal of information from them relating to how other states are operating their grant programs. What standards and guidelines they have in place and how they enforce them? How much is done legislatively? They are looking at what is done in terms of preservation and conservation within states. They are also looking at what the National Archives, Library of Congress, Northeast Document Conservation Center recommend in terms of conservation and preservation.

InLook is also looking at conservation, filming and scanning vendors. Mr. Parker added that they are also looking at how area states encourage their clerks and other officials to strive to meet certain standards. He wondered if they used a certification project or other means to stimulate them. They did discover that in many other states there is a much more emphasis on education and training. Mr. Parker explained that New Hampshire appeared to be a do-it-yourself state while other states encourage training. In Maine you are required to attend workshops before applying for grants related to local records.

In New York there are nine itinerant archivists working for the state archives program and they each have districts. In each district there are training programs for local record keepers, which are an important part of the New York program. Ms. Swank stated that she and Mr. Parker felt that benchmarking was key because there is a great deal of written documentation out there. She explained that they were rather overwhelmed at the moment with an entire plastic crate full of documentation. Most of the information was collected through telephone calls. They followed up with those selected to receive the survey.

Ms. Swank explained that she and Mr. Parker now know what really works and what doesn't. She felt that they had acquired the information they needed to go through all the documentation. Ms. Little asked what the deliverables were on this project. Mr. Parker explained that the reports that he had done on the original five towns that participated in the committee's first foray into awarding grants for record preservation had been delivered to Dr. Mevers eight to ten weeks prior to this meeting. Dr. Mevers replied that it was August or September.

Mr. Parker continued explaining to Ms. Little and the committee, the deliverables they were contracted to provide. He explained that in report form they hoped to inform the committee of the current best thinking is about preservation and conservation methods. He explained that one of the things they had learned was that what people like Brown's River and Roudy have been doing for years and years is no longer recommended at places like the Library of Congress. Mr. Parker explained that they had inquired about filming, scanning and other methods. They were surprised to find that only one state with a grant program would support scanning. Most states prefer filming.

Ms. Swank added that there were standards and guidelines that InLook would provide, as well as a list of vendors that clerks may contact. They will also provide a sample contract/RFP to ensure that clerks know what to ask a vendor to provide. Ms. Swank added that they had also been surprised by the variations of quality control on filming is a major issue. Ensuring that the applicant has quality control set or has hired someone to perform that function. Ms. Little asked if one of the deliverables had been a sample grant application and guidelines. Both Mr. Parker and Ms. Swank answered in the affirmative.

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Mr. Parker and Ms. Swank displayed New York's eighty-page application, adding that even the smallest application provides a great deal of information and the key is to explain the purposes and how to go about completing the application. They added that there is a great deal of hand holding in most states. Ms. Little asked if the final criteria would be up to the VRIF committee or would input be sought from the clerks, etc. Dr. Mevers replied that he felt that the committee would be the one, as it would be awarding the grants. Ms. Little clarified that she meant who would establish the criteria. Dr. Mevers replied that had been what he meant. Because this committee controls the resources they would have the final say.

Ms. Swank explained that they had listed the most popular funding categories they had found with the survey. Mr. Parker added that one thing they learned from someone in Georgia was to not have the administrative rules or the legislation authorizing the program cross all the I's and dot all the T's. Some leeway should be left so those that are administering the program can make adjustments. They recommended that strongly. Ms. Swank added that it had been Missouri, not Georgia. Mr. Parker agreed.

Mr. Parker told the committee that one of the difficulties many states encounter is ensuring that those that did receive grants adhered to standards. Whether those standards involve filming or environmental standards. How do they get the word out? How do they enforce it? One state goes so far as to not give money to the community. Instead, they authorize projects and tell the community to submit the bill to them when the project is complete. That is an intriguing idea, but whether it helps to enforce standards is not clear. Ms. Swank added that they call it a debit card system.

Mr. Armstrong stated that most grant programs criteria changes over time, like education and technology grants. The plans should be reviewed every year or two. He suggested that on a statewide level everyone should be brought up to a certain level before everyone else progresses. His second question was about the filming and scanning Mr. Parker had alluded to. Mr. Armstrong asked if they would be providing some recommended indexing for it depending on the type of document or at least identified who was doing a good job.

Ms. Swank felt it was very important to have at least one person dedicated to the program. She explained that it was not just the administering of the grant, but the selling of it, the guidelines, technical reports, the workshops, etc. In some cases they are practically writing the grants for some towns because the clerk may not have the expertise or the time in which to do it. Mr. Parker added that New York's program requires five full-time employees to administer it. Maine has a person that comes in two days a week and the gentleman that runs the program would like a person at least part-time. In Connecticut there are one and one half full-time persons dedicated to the program. Ms. Swank offered that those did not include being able to do site visits.

Ms. Little replied that she did think the VRIF would be able to cover staffing, but she was hoping something would be done legislatively to help. She then asked Mr. Bergeron what was happening with Senate bill 74, which is before municipal and county government. Mr. Bergeron replied that he really didn't have anything new to share with the committee. He suggested that Mr. Scanlan might have more information as he had just been shown the amendment the day before by Dr. Mevers and hadn't really had the time to go over it. Mr. Scanlan replied that he had read the amendment and had spoken with Chairman Betsy Patten several weeks ago, but had nothing new to offer.

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Dr. Mevers offered that he hadn't had a great deal of time to think about it, but he did think that having that towns have a record committee in order to participate in the program was an excellent idea. He asked if that was what they had been getting at and they answered in the affirmative. Dr. Mevers had heard the same from other states in meetings and it had been discussed locally as well. He felt that it gave a town a lot more incentive to participate and follow through with the program in a responsible manner.

Mr. Bergeron replied that one of the concerns he had was who was going to be first? Who was going to be the first city/town that is going to participate? He felt that if it were a city like Manchester or Nashua, almost all the funding put into it would just be just subsidizing a state position. He did not feel that was a very good incentive for communities. Another concern was that he felt only those cities or towns that are participating in the program should be entitled to receive re-grants.

Cities like Manchester and Nashua do not want to contribute \$125,000 and watch it distributed all the other towns that had opposed the legislation in the first place. He felt those two issues were of concern, but thought with some tightening up it was good legislation. Representative Patten had made it very clear to Mr. Bergeron that her committee would not put forth any legislation that required participation. They had discussed mandating that the "big twelve" communities be mandated to contribute, allowing the smaller communities to opt-in. All the clerks, except one took a supportive position on it, but the committee had not gone along with it. Ms. Patten's committee did not feel the mandate would pass.

Ms. Little asked where it was in the legislative record. Mr. Bergeron replied that he thought it would be reported out, but did not know if it would be reported out as a House action or if it would be reported out as a whole new bill. Mr. Scanlan added that it would be reported out as a House action. Things will carry on as if the House had amended a Senate bill. The Senate has the opportunity to look it over the amendment and concur or decide to set up a Committee of Conference. Ms. Little stated that she felt it was important that we get some influence to the Committee of Conference.

Mr. Armstrong asked if the counties were included. Mr. Bergeron replied that they were not. Counties had been approached in 1996 when they were looking to finance this fund through a UCC surcharge and of course the counties were a part of that. At that time they wanted nothing to do with it. They already had a \$2 fee for their programs and did not want to go further. Ms. Little asked if there was any other discussion on the Vital Records Business Plan. Hearing none, she thanked Mr. Parker and Ms. Swank for their presentation and turned the floor over to Mr. Parris.

3. OIS Update:

Mr. Parris greeted the committee and explained to the committee that Mr. Bolton had asked him to do a quick update on the web enablement project. He explained that they were in the process of ordering the new software and hardware and if that sounded familiar to committee members it was because they had done this once already. Initially, those items were purchased for the development region and they are now doing it for the production region. They ordered some new servers, software for them. They have been coordinating their order with CNSI to ensure that the correct versions are being ordered.

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Mr. Parris explained that Mr. O'Neal had asked him to put everything on one order and he hoped to see it go to the vendors the following week.

Mr. Parris stated that there were some critical dates coming up in the schedule that he relayed to the committee at the September meeting. They had spoken briefly about it at their bi-weekly staff meeting the day prior and "it's still pretty good. They have caught up some and he believed that Mr. Steil would address the timeline issue further in his presentation. Mr. Parris reported that they were looking at an end of January date to have the birth and death modules up on the new system. He added that between now and then they had some critical items to get into.

One is the Social Security Administration test period, a thirty-day period where they test the confirmation of social security numbers. He and Mr. Bolton agreed that they would begin that portion soon. They would also begin scheduling User-training sessions on the birth and death modules. There are limited days available in their training room. Getting the maximum benefit from those dates was Mr. Parris' goal. There is also a need to completely and thoroughly test the two new modules. Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz would be contacting users to come in to test the product. CNSI is already doing unit testing and Mr. Bolton; Wurtz and Vital Records staff would also conduct testing before they got into the user acceptance testing.

Mr. Parris directed the attention of the committee to the final bullet on his handout. It referred to Completion of an Implementation Plan for Birth and Death Modules. He explained that He, Ms. Eccelston and Mr. Friese and other OIT staff began working on yesterday. They are working to get both the birth and death modules functioning on one system and the others still functioning the way they are on a different system. The discussion so far has revolved around setting up the databases and getting the appropriate data split. Birth and death data on one side and the rest of the data would be on the other side.

Mr. Parris reported that he had been working with Mr. Sliwoski and they had come up with a good plan for it, but needed to work out the details. That is one of the major things that they are doing. They had a lively discussion about it and although it would be involved Mr. Parris felt it would work out fine. There would be a lot of work, but they would be able to meet the timeframe. He added that Mr. Steil would be addressing the schedule issues and status of the project.

Ms. Little asked about a timeline Mr. Steil wanted to reiterate that NHVRIN would not be an icon on the desktop. It is a web-enabled software. It in a sense will be very different from VRV2000. As far as how long, he replied that the timeline would depend on when the other three modules are finished. As it is currently scheduled it is planned for late 2004. They hope that with all that they have learned from the birth and death modules and using common functionality the development time for that other three modules should go quicker. Ms. Little asked if the late 2004 number was still their plan. Mr. Steil replied that it was his hope that it could be done sooner. He could not give exact dates. Ms. Little thanked him and asked him to continue.

Mr. Steil informed the committee that they had recently had a death module demonstration for Mr. Bolton and Mr. Parris' staff. They were given the opportunity to look at it, play with it and test it to an extent. Several days prior to this meeting Heather Bentley from Vital Records sat down and went through the whole process of entering a

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death record. Mr. Steil reported that a lot of good information came from that meeting. It was his impression that the state was pretty happy with the look and feel of the module. He explained that there was train the trainer training scheduled the following week. In that Mr. Bolton and Mr. Parris' staff will be allowed to get on the system to get a better feel of it. He added that almost every day they are adding a new build to the development servers at the Nash building. Every day they are spending several hours fixing bugs detected the night before. Things are rapidly changing at this point.

The next part that is important is User Acceptance Testing (UAT). He spoke with Mr. Gaff the day before and they were looking at mid-December. That date was not fixed, as they had to depend on the migration, getting it onto the state's development servers. Mr. Steil, his tech lead, P.J. and Mr. Parris are working on moving that along. They would like to get it on the state development server quickly as it is the next step in the process. Ms. Little asked when that was scheduled for. Mr. Steil replied that they hoped mid December. In addition, they hoped to get a sampling of town and city clerk users to come in to do some testing. In addition that same week they were working with Mr. Bolton on recruiting a sampling of all user groups to come in and start testing the death module that week.

He hoped to have a demonstration of the birth module for state users the first or second week of December. Moving into 2004, they had hoped to bring all users in for training in December, but with the holidays and the fact that the system would not be operational until January 26, there was fear that they would forget the training in the meantime. It was decided to begin training January 12, 2004. The implementation date for birth and death they are striving for is January 26, 2004. Mr. Bergeron asked what impact that day would have on clerks, as it was the day before the presidential primary.

Mr. Steil replied that he was unsure of how it would impact them. He assumed that the majority of questions would have been answered by the training. He added that we could push the implementation to the 28th of January if it would be easier. Mr. Bolton agreed that was a possibility. Ms. Little told Mr. Steil that clerks needed no added stress that day. He suggested that maybe the later date should be considered and that he would speak with Mr. Bolton about it. They have gotten through OVS implementation and testing. The testing will begin on that shortly as well.

Ms. Little asked Mr. Steil about the discussion the committee had with Mr. Bolton and Mr. Parris at an earlier meeting about the project being forty-eight days behind schedule and CNSI planning to deploy more resources in Maryland. She asked for an update on the progress and whether CNSI had put more employees on the project. Mr. Steil replied that CNSI had indeed deployed more resources in Maryland as well as in New Hampshire. Mr. Parris replied that significant progress had been made and the number of days had dropped to around thirty-four days. He explained that he was much more comfortable with the schedule than he had been. Ms. Little thanked Mr. Steil and asked if any members had questions for him. Hearing none she moved to the next agenda item.

4. VRIF Quarterly Budget Update:

Mr. Bolton distributed a handout to committee members. He explained that he had recently had the opportunity to have some discussion with Ms. Penney, the administrator for the Secretary of State's Office and asked her to produce a report similar to the one

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Mr. Andrew used to provide. The first document was the IFS. It is a report from the state finance system that Mr. Andrew used to provide. Mr. Bolton directed the committee's attention to the bottom of the second page to a description by class of expenditures for the period of July 1, 2003 through October 31, 2003. Ms Little asked Mr. Bolton to point out the money, how much is the fund worth at this point. Mr. Bolton replied that the report indicates by the estimated revenue it was \$790,231, but that revenue estimate was one that we provided.

Mr. Bolton reported that what we had actually brought in was \$288,572. Ms. Little asked if the fund was on track. Mr. Bolton replied that he felt that it was. In previous years it had been \$800,000 to \$850,000 and if you multiply what has actually come in by three additional quarters it comes up to \$866,000. Ms. Little asked why they had reduced the anticipated revenue. Mr. Bolton replied that it was not like they were trying to lowball the numbers. They just wanted to be conservative. He added that the \$866,000 is not set in stone.

Mr. Bolton then turned the committee's attention to the front page of the handout. It was basically a recap of the IFS document in a more readable format. In the future there will be a full budget like was produced in the past. Ms. Little asked about Ms. Penney's assistance to the committee in terms of the fund accounting/software to track clerk monies. Mr. Bolton replied that she would be attending those meetings. Ms. Little asked if the new accounting software package decision had been finalized and that the fund would now be administered through it. Mr. Scanlan replied that they had discussed that the day before and he believes that is the intent. He also stated that they would follow through on those discussions and ensure that the software is a good fit for this system. Ms. Little asked if there had to be adjustments made, who would be responsible for paying for those. Mr. Scanlan was unsure, but felt it might depend on the scope of the adjustments.

Mr. Kruger told Mr. Bolton he thought he understood the discussion about actual and estimated revenues, but what he wanted to know was the fund balance. He asked if that could be located in Mr. Bolton's handout. Mr. Bolton was unsure and looked through the paperwork. He replied that he would work with Ms. Penney to provide that information in the future. Mr. Kruger felt that it was important for the committee to know that number. Mr. Bolton did say that he felt that the \$1.5 million figure seemed more likely.

Mr. Kruger asked if there were any flags that he could see that might indicate that the fund would be overspent this year. Mr. Bolton replied that they do not overspend. Mr. Kruger acknowledged that he was aware, but wanted to know if there would be any large expenditure this year. Mr. Bolton told Mr. Kruger and the committee that the largest expense is usually providing hardware to the cities and towns and that is planned. Mr. Kruger asked if there were any expenses that Mr. Bolton could see on the horizon that the committee was unaware of. Mr. Bolton replied no.

5. Other Business:

Ms. Little explained to the committee that she had been reviewing the minutes in preparation for this meeting and remembered that there had been discussion about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in regard to the support of the new software. The concept of MOU that articulates who is supporting the initiative from a technical

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standpoint in terms of resources in the IT arena. She thought she had heard some general discussion between Mr. Bolton and Mr. Sullivan about an MOU. She had hoped to hear more about that at this meeting. Mr. Bolton replied that he and Mr. Sullivan had shared a voicemail and then Mr. Sullivan became otherwise occupied. He was sure that they would get back on track with that.

Mr. Sullivan explained that it would be an agreement between Vital Records, the Secretary of State and OIT, outlining who would be responsible for what. Ms. Little asked if it was a guiding principle. Ms. Little asked if MOUs were not the norm. Mr. Parris was unsure. Mr. Sullivan explained that it would establish responsibility for the software. What you will get and who will provide it. Mr. Armstrong added that it would have service level agreements; disaster recovery provisions and then it should have rates. Ms. Little asked when the committee would get a look at the document. Mr. Sullivan felt that if the money was coming from VRIF they should have input on the agreement. Mr. Armstrong told Ms. Little that there is a template out there somewhere and he did not see why they couldn't have a first draft copy at the minimum available for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned.