

2017 Minutes of the Society of Early Americanists' Business Meeting
Friday, March 1, 2017
Hyatt Regency, Tulsa OK
SEA 10th Biennial Conference
Minutes Prepared by Patrick Erben, Executive Coordinator

- 1) At 5:30pm, SEA President Laura Stevens welcomed the SEA members to our SEA Business Meeting and congratulated Ralph Bauer to the election as the new Executive Coordinator. For the 2017-2019 term, Gordon Sayre will serve as President and Patrick Erben as Vice President of the SEA.
- 2) The minutes for the 2016 SEA Business Meeting were approved unanimously.
- 3) Executive Coordinator Patrick Erben confirmed the financial health of the organization [data on file] and noted an increased membership (over 400 at the time of the conference).
- 4) Vice President Gordon Sayre reported on progress with the development of the new SEA website, which he is leading with SEA Webmaster Susan Imbarrato, as well as efforts to improve cooperation with the University of North Carolina Press's Journals Division, which provides membership dues collection for the SEA (e.g., UNC Press is planning to replace the Paypal payment platform with a shopping-cart option that allows credit card payments).
- 5) President Laura Stevens led the discussion of two sets of amendments to the SEA Mission, Constitution, and Bylaws. Amendment I extends the SEA Temporal Range to 1830 and Amendment II adds the office of Treasurer to the SEA Advisory Officers. The texts of the respective Amendments appear below.
 - a. Laura clarified that the vote to adopt the amendments would be conducted by the Executive Coordinator online [see ballot results below].
 - b. After some discussion, it was concluded that the new treasurer position would be uncompensated service (as all other officer positions) but that each Executive Committee may grant the treasurer a travel reimbursement to the SEA's biennial conference.
- 6) Laura Stevens asked the attendees for feedback concerning the use of Ex-Ordo for program submissions and Event Interface for registration. Generally, the feedback was positive but Laura and Gordon suggested that the new website in preparation may be able to handle some of these functions for the next biennial conference. Furthermore, Laura remarked on the high costs associated with A/V equipment and coffee for the 2017 conference in Tulsa and encouraged members to convey ideas to the Executive Committee for reducing those costs in the future.

- 7) Abram van Engen reminded the membership of the 2018 Topical Conference, sponsored by the SEA, entitled “Religion and Politics in Early America,” to be held March 1-4, 2018 in St. Louis. He also noted the paper submission deadline of May 26, 2017.
- 8) The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.

ADDENDA TO THE MINUTES:

- 1) Amendment I and II were approved by the majority of the SEA membership and announced on the SEA listserv, EARAM-L, by Executive Coordinator Patrick Erben on May 5, 2017.
- 2) New SEA President Gordon Sayre announced the appointment of E. Thomson (Tom) Shields, East Carolina University, as the new Treasurer of the SEA on June 15, 2017 on the SEA listserv, EARAM-L. Tom Shields will serve an initial term of 5 (five) years as SEA treasurer.

APPENDIX

Amendment I: SEA Temporal Range

- 1) **Mission Statement** (www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/mission.html)
 - a. **Current:** “The purpose of this Society shall be to further the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1800.”
 - b. **Amend to Read:** “The purpose of this Society shall be to further the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately **1830**.”
 - c. **Rationale:** The proposal seeks to bring the SEA’s time range in line with the journal *Early American Literature*, which defines as its province “American Literature through the early national period (about 1830); it reflects more fully the scholarship and teaching of our members.
- 2) **Constitution** (www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/constitution.html)
 - a. **Current:** “II. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Society shall be to further the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1800.”

- b. **Amend to Read:** “II. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Society shall be to further the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately **1830.**”

Amendment II: Treasurer Position

1) Constitution (www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/constitution.html)

- a. **Current:** “II. OFFICERS. [. . .] The Advisory Officers shall consist of the Editor of the Newsletter of the Society of Early Americanists, the Coordinator of the Electronic Bulletin Board, the Past President of the Society, and one other person, appointed at the wish and discretion of the President. [. . .].

After the President's term is complete, the President shall become an Advisory Officer. The President is ineligible for election to the office of Executive Coordinator for three years following his or her two-year (Past President's) term as an Advisory Officer.”

- b. **Amend to Read:** “II. OFFICERS. [. . .] The Advisory Officers shall consist of the Editor of the Newsletter of the Society of Early Americanists, the Coordinator of the Electronic Bulletin Board, the Past President of the Society, **the Treasurer,** and one other person, appointed at the wish and discretion of the President. [. . .]

After the President's term is complete, the President shall, **as Past President,** become an Advisory Officer. The President is ineligible for election to the office of Executive Coordinator, **or appointment to the office of Treasurer,** for three years following his or her two-year (Past President's) term as an Advisory Officer. [. . .]

[insert after “in June 1992”:] **The Treasurer shall be appointed by the President to a five-year term, renewable at the discretion of a subsequent President.”**

- c. **Rationale:** Since the Society's founding, the Executive Coordinator has overseen the SEA's finances, and so the home of our business operations changes every two years with the election of a new Executive Coordinator. Alterations to banking laws have made it increasingly difficult for us to change our business address and the primary signatories to our bank accounts so often. Additional problems can arise with vendors because our checks do not have a permanent address on them. The SEA also is required to be registered in one state as a business, even as a 501c3 non-profit, and the itinerant nature of our operations has made it difficult for the Society to be in compliance with this rule.

The treasurer will become the primary signatory for the SEA's bank account and will file the Society's taxes. The Treasurer will register the SEA as a business in her or his state, and his or her address will become the Society's official address. As with the other positions on our Executive and Advisory Committees, the Treasurer would do this work as service to the field and our Society. The SEA

would, however, offer some small compensation by covering his or her travel and housing costs for the biennial conference.

2) **By-Laws** (www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/constitution.html#)

- a. **Current:** “III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF OFFICERS, SECTION 1: [. . .] Executive Coordinator. The Executive Coordinator, in charge of the central business office of the Society, shall keep the records of the Society members, have custody of Society funds, and generally oversee the Society’s obligations to members. The Executive Coordinator will oversee the balloting in elections [. . .].”
- b. **Amend to Read:** “III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF OFFICERS, SECTION 1: [. . .] The Executive Coordinator, ~~in charge of the central business office of the Society, shall keep the records of the Society members, have custody of Society funds, and generally oversee the Society’s obligations to members~~ **is in charge of member relations, such as recruitment and communication. The Executive Coordinator shall also archive the Society’s records and serve as financial proxy to the Treasurer.** The Executive Coordinator will oversee the balloting [. . .].”

SECTION 2: [insert after section on “Past President of the Society”] **“The Treasurer of the Society. The Treasurer will be in charge of the central business office of the Society, have custody of Society funds, and serve as primary signatory for the Society’s bank and credit card accounts. The Treasurer shall file the annual tax returns and maintain the status of the Society as a non-profit entity under IRS regulations. The Treasurer shall prepare documentation for a biennial financial review by an audit committee appointed by the President. The home state of the Treasurer will be the location of the Society as a non-profit entity.”**

Endorsing SEA Members for BOTH Amendments:

Sari Altschuler
 Allison Bigelow
 Michelle Burnham
 Brigitte Fielder
 Thomas Hallock
 Joy Howard
 Drew Lopenzina
 Meredith Neuman
 Wendy Roberts
 Oliver Scheiding
 Jonathan Senchyne
 Timothy Sweet
 Kelly Wisecup
 Hilary Wyss

Addendum: Additional Endorsing Members for Amendment I—SEA Temporal Range

Philip Gould

Sandra Gustafson

Catherine Kelly

Lisa Logan

Cathy Rex

David Shields

Cassander Smith

Shevaun Watson