



Kentucky Oral History Commission December Meeting

Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History

Friday, December 5, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. EST

Minutes

Commissioners Present:

In-Person: Scott Alvey, Amanda Matthews (Chair)

Via video conference: Dr. Rebecca Bailey, Milan Bush, Shana Goggins (Vice-chair), Dr. Tony Harkins, Rusty Heckaman, Dr. Jillean McCommons, Mark Neff

Commission Advisors Present:

In-Person: Brent Bjorkman, Doug Boyd, Ann Ferrell

Via video conference: Delainey Bowers, Heather Fox, Dr. Felicia Jamison, Kopana Terry, DeBraun Thomas, Bailey Vandiver

KHS Staff Present:

Johannah Ball, Casey Castro-Bracho, Leah Criag, Michael Cruikshank, Michael Kilmore, Kirsten Kindrick, Jonathan Noffke

I. Welcome and Call to Order:

Commission chair, Amanda Matthews, called the meeting of the Kentucky Oral History Commission to order at approximately 10:05 AM EDT. A quorum was present.

A. Roll call and introductions

Director of Historical Resources Jonathan Noffke welcomed Casey Castro-Bracho, an 8-year KHS staff member, who has recently taken a new role as the Archives Administrator.

II. Modification to December 2024 KOHC Meeting Minutes

The December 2024 KOHC Meeting minutes were previously approved at the May 2025 meeting but later revised to change Kopana Terry from present in-person to present via video conference.

The updated version of the December 6th, 2024, KY Oral History Commission meeting minutes were presented to the commission. Amanda Matthews call for any additions or corrections. There were none.

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Motion by Mark Neff, second by Tony Harkins, that the updated minutes be approved as presented. The motion unanimously carried.

III. Approval of May 2025 KOHC Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the May 9th, 2025, KY Oral History Commission meeting were presented to the commission in advance electronically and with a copy in the meeting packet. Amanda Matthews called for any additions or corrections. There were none.

Motion by Tony Harkins, second by Mark Neff, that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion unanimously carried.

IV. Reports:

A. Kentucky Historical Society Report

Executive Director, Scott Alvey, referenced the report provided in the meeting packet. He highlighted the challenges and issues at the Old State Capitol, including a temporary malfunction of the building's air conditioning system and ongoing plaster stabilization work. He stated that the historic preservation work at the Old State Capitol has become a major focus for KHS. In addition, KHS hosted the funeral for Governor Collins in November and will be hosting the State of the Commonwealth in January due to the closure of the New State Capitol. Alvey shared details about additional work being done at KHS and stressed the importance of sustaining the momentum leading up to America 250 in 2026. He encouraged the commission to watch the KHS year in review video on the KHS YouTube channel.

B. Oral History Administrative Report

KHS Processing Specialist Johannah Ball presented the administrative report as provided in the meeting packet. Johannah reported that 10 grant applications were received this cycle, 14 people attended two applicant workshops in September, and 16 grant consultation appointments were conducted. In addition, she highlighted that 4 grants had recently been completed, outstanding grants, and upcoming outreach and access opportunities.

Jonathan Noffke added that Johannah Ball and Michael Kilmore have done a great job consistently following up with grant applicants and recipients, and that their hard work shows through the increased number of applications compared to past grant cycles.

C. Nominating Committee Report

KHS Deputy Director Leah Craig presented the Nominating Committee Report as provided in the meeting packet.

The committee recommends Angie Weaver and Zada Komara to fill the vacant commissioner positions, which are ultimately appointed by the Governor.



Motion by Mark Neff, second by Milan Bush, to accept the commissioner recommendations as presented in the nominating committee slate. The motion unanimously carried.

Serving as advisors, the committee recommends appointing Leena Haider, Rainette Jones, Emily Hudson, and Kathryn Engle, and reappointing Brent Bjorkman, Heather Fox, and Doug Boyd.

The committee recommends re-electing Amanda Matthews as chairperson and Shana Goggins as vice chairperson of the commission.

Motion by Mark Neff, second by Tony Harkins, to accept the slate of advisors and officers as recommended by the nominating committee. The motion unanimously carried.

D. Grant Review Committee Report

Shana Goggins reported that the deadline for the fall grant cycle (FY26-01) was October 5, 2025. The KOHC received ten applications, seven of which were in the project grant category and three submissions in the transcription/indexing grant category. Additional information about the grant applicants' proposed projects was provided in the meeting packet. The commission was asked to approve the committee's recommendation to fully fund grants for: #616, #617, #620, and #625. The total amount for the recommended grants to be funded is \$11,556.15.

Motion by Tony Harkins, second by Mark Neff to fully fund four grants as recommended by the grant review committee. The motion unanimously carried.

E. Grant Guidelines Review Subcommittee Report

Director of Historical Resources Jonathan Noffke reported that the grant guidelines review subcommittee met in June and July of 2025 via zoom. The updated grant guidelines were posted and used for the current FY26-01 cycle. These changes to the grant guidelines reflected a broader discussion over funding priorities for the commission and the need to break down barriers that impeded smaller organizations and independent practitioners from applying. Additionally, the subcommittee also prioritized simplifying the grant guidelines and creating clear eligibility requirements. Recommended changes made to the grant guidelines were provided in the meeting packet.

Motion by Amanda Matthews, second by Mark Neff to empower the grant review committee to conduct ongoing work on the grant guidelines and make additional changes prior to the next cycle. The motion unanimously carried.

In reference to the grant guidelines review, the commission members and advisors had a robust



discussion about the possibility of direct KOHC grant funds being used to pay interviewees. Pros and cons were provided both in favor and against payment of interviewees, with some stressing the importance of paying people for telling their story, and others questioning its legality and feasibility.

Motion by Milan Bush, second by Jillean McCommons to conduct a study on the feasibility and legality of paying interviewees with KOHC grant funds. The motion unanimously carried.

F. KOHC 50th Anniversary Planning Committee Report

KHS Oral Historian Michael Kilmore reported that the KOHC 50th anniversary committee met on November 19th, 2025, to discuss plans for the 50th anniversary in 2026. He shared plans to host a Lunch and Learn in October 2026, as well as the opportunity for co-branding the anniversary with the America 250th anniversary. Michael also asked that the commission and advisors like, share, and repost on social media to spread the word about both anniversaries in 2026.

V. Old Business:

A. Archival Accreditation Guidelines Review Update

KHS Oral Historian Michael Kilmore reported a committee was formed in May to review the archival accreditation guidelines, in part due to the fact that a KOHC accreditation credential is only valid for 5 years and the guidelines have not been updated to better reflect technological advances in storage, video capabilities and AI. More information on this is forthcoming.

B. Bylaws Review Update

Director of Historical Resources Jonathan Noffke reported that there is ongoing work to review the bylaws with KHS staff and Amanda Matthews and Shana Goggins. Updates on the work will be provided to the commission at a future meeting.

VI. New Business:

A. KHS Rebranding

Director of Historical Resources Jonathan Noffke reported that KHS has recently gone through a rebranding, and the KOHC logo will be retired as a result. He also stated the need for a KOHC 50th brand mark that will be developed soon and be used for co-branding opportunities along with America 250.

VII. Commissioner and Advisor Updates

Amanda Matthews asked for any additional updates. There were none.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the KY Oral History Commission, Chair Amanda Matthews called the December 2025 KOHC meeting to adjourn



**Motion by Amanda Matthews, second by Mark Neff, that the meeting be adjourned.
The motion unanimously carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 PM EDT. The next KOHC meeting will be held in May 2026.

Minutes submitted by: Kirsten Kindrick (KHS Director's Office Manager)

