

**Meeting Minutes – Draft  
NRHS Board of Directors  
Double Tree by Hilton Milwaukee Downtown  
Friday, August 27, 2021**

Pursuant of Notice, the Board of Directors of the National Railway Historical Society, Inc. met at the Double Tree by Hilton Milwaukee Downtown, Milwaukee, WI on Friday August 27, 2021.

President Al Weber called the meeting to order at 1:11 PM CDT.

**Roll Call**

President Weber welcomed the Directors to the meeting. The Board attendance for the meeting was as follows:

Name	Office	Present	Absent
Al Weber	President	A	
Tony White	Vice President	A	
E. Steven Barry	Global Director	A	
Ned Harris	Global Director	P	
Eric Fogg	Global Director		X
Regan Rickson	Global Director	A	
Roberta Ballard	Global Director	A	
R. Douglas Scott	District 1 Director	A	
Harold Shaak	District 2 Director	A	
Charles Webb	District 2 Director	A	
Jon Baake	District 3 Director	A	
Marlin Taylor	District 3 Director	P	
David Foster	District 4 Director	A	
Frank Scheer	District 4 Director		X
Scott Andes	District 5 Director	P	
John Goodman	District 6 Director	A	
John Simanton	District 6 Director	A	
Kenneth Eddy	District 7 Director	A	
Skip Waters	District 7 Director	P	
Jeffrey S. Smith	District A Director		X
Patrick Molloy	District A Director	A	
Jack Hillborn	District B Director	A	
Ricky Durant	District B Director	A	

A= In Attendance P = Attended via Phone X = Absent

There was a quorum present to conduct business.

Also in attendance were NRHS Comptroller Bill Sweeney, Treasurer Bob Bitzer, Assistant Treasurer Carol Ann Cornelius, General Counsel John Fiorilla, Inspector General Walter Zullig, NRHS Fund Chair Robert Ernst, NRHS Fund Comptroller Kevin Feeney, Membership Chair Hugh Harris.

## **Administrative**

President Weber announced that there are two vacancies on the Board, District 1, Tony White's old seat, and District 5. Due to medical issues Jim Pahriss had to resign.

## **Unfinished Business**

The secretary reported there was no unfinished business.

## **Approval of Spring 2021 Meeting**

The minutes of the Board of Directors' Spring Meeting were approved by email; and posted to the admin site on July 27, 2021.

## **Reports**

### **Treasurer – Bob Bitzer**

Treasurer Bob Bitzer stated that all reports had been sent via email to all directors. He had nothing else to add from what was said at the Advisory Council Meeting. He asked if there were any questions. There being none a motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

He advised all the members that we are now fully staffed for our Financial Team: we have a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and two Comptrollers. NRHS Comptroller is Bill Sweeney and the NRHS Fund Comptroller is Kevin Feeney. Cynthia Atwood is the Fund Treasurer.

RKL is currently working on the audit. They are also doing the 990s and will have them ready to be submitted in November.

The NRHS works on a balanced budget. That is dollar in, dollar out. Bob has requested that all Directors and Department heads who have budget expenditures to contact him with their 2022 Budget projections. The 2022 NRHS Budget will be discussed and voted on at the Fall meeting in October.

Bob also wanted to thank Carol Ann Cornelius for handling the comptroller duties while we searched for a new one. He stated that we now have a wealth of accounting knowledge with the new comptrollers. He thanked Bob Heavenrich for his job as the previous NRHS Comptroller.

A question was raised regarding Wells Fargo investment account and seeing those reports. Bob replied that this was more of a question for Bob Ernst, Fund Chair. President Weber advised that the reports are on the website in the financial section.

### **Advisory Council – Carl Jensen**

Carl advised that the Advisory Council had four items to be presented to the Board:

1. The NRHS should get their own PA equipment for meetings
2. Historic Plaque committee should actively seek new locations for plaques.
3. Increase Bulletins
4. “Share the Wealth”- a system for chapters to exchange information with each other.

### **General Counsel – John Fiorilla**

He has been working mostly on insurance which has been difficult because of Covid. He had to provide reasons why it would not be an issue at the convention and most locations carry their own insurance.

The NRHS Fund is looking for ways to increase contributions.

The virtual office has been busy. They handle the NRHS mailings. They receive change of address, dues, mail for the President and Vice President, and most recently the proxy forms. John visits them weekly and gets the mail to where it needs to go.

### **RailCamp – Rebecca Gerstung**

The committee is planning for 2022.  
Report posted online.

### **Heritage Grants – Charlie Webb**

Report is posted online.

Charlie advised that he needed the 2022 amount that is allocated for the grants. Victor Varney stated that in a 2019 meeting this came up for discussion and was decided that the amount would be based on what donations came in the prior year. Therefore, donations received in 2021 would be allocated for the 2022 grants. He thought that this had been resolved. Al stated he did remember the discussion and would look back in notes and minutes to see what was decided. Jon Baake asked that this be resolved for the NY meeting.

### **Publications – Valli Hoski**

Report posted online.

Val explained that she protects the rights of the authors. If you use a source of information from somewhere else, you must give her the copyright information. If there is an article in a chapter newsletter that she feels should be sent out, she does contact the author for permission.

### **NRHS Fund – Bob Ernst**

Report posted online.

President Weber asked if there were any questions. Ron Gawedzinski questioned using Wells Fargo Advisors since a lawsuit was just settled against them for misuse of customer services for 14 years. Is it feasible to be using them because of this? President Weber explained that although part of the name is the same Wells Fargo, however, Wells Fargo Advisors is the Wealth Management part, not the retail part. They are separate entities.

### **Membership – Hugh Harris**

President Weber explained that there are two things we need to do:

1. Spend money to move NEON to our own website. Doing this will allow us to do more.
2. Once moved to our website need to change the renewal cycle for new members to be the join date.

President Weber went on to explain that NEON is getting very hard to work with and doesn't fit with what we want to do. Hugh stated that he feels we need \$5000 to do this work and he needs the approval to spend this amount. Yearly we are gaining more new members then loosing. The money issue will be brought up in New Business.

There was a question/point of order stating we need a by-law change to implement the renewal change in the by-laws. Steve Barry made a motion to change the renewal date in the by-laws, seconded by Smoke Shaak. Motion passed. John Fiorilla advised he will begin working on the change.

### **Historic Plaques – Walter Zullig**

Walter explained that this is a reactionary committee. They receive on average 3 requests per year. They have no budget. As was stated at the Advisory Council meeting, awarding a Plaque to Pullman at Chicago is a wonderful idea. The biggest problem is how to pay for it. Plus you need to work with the people requesting it, the verbiage for the plaque. The other point is how to pay for it: split the cost with them, get a sponsor, etc. There is not enough time to get one done for Pullman.

## **Member Survey – Al Weber**

Al did two surveys, one for past members and one for current members. It was a random survey generated from our membership lists and sent to 500 people. 51 of the 500 responded. He explained how he selected who would get the survey. He did find that the two gave very different results. Not all questions were answered. He read some of the comments from those who replied.

He did a PowerPoint Presentation of the Prior Membership Survey. A copy of the presentation is online. Ron Gawedzinski questioned where do you go from here? The answer was that it is up to the Board to determine what to do. There is no deadline currently.

The presentation is posted online.

## **Conventions – John Goodman**

John started out by saying he has not investigated Sacramento, Albuquerque, Nashville, Vancouver, or Grand Canyon. He asked Becky Gerstung to speak about Grand Rapids, MI. Becky stated that she hasn't spoken to anyone but investigated things to do. Grand Rapids has an Amtrak station and an airport. Things to do would be Steam Railroading Institute where the Pierre Marquette 1225 is housed, Huckleberry Railroad and Crossroads Village, Steam Railroading Institute in Owosso, the Air Zoo Aerospace and Science Museum, and Frankenmuth (known as Little Bavaria). The last one would be for the ladies with plenty of shopping offered.

Victor Varney suggested Chattanooga. Hugh Harris said he had spoken to someone in Springdale AR, and they would like to sponsor a convention.

John mentioned that we currently have two choices for California-March 14 or 21 at the Knotts Berry Farm or May 16 or after Labor Day at the Holiday Inn in Buena Park. Jon Baake made a motion for the Holiday Inn, seconded by Steve Barry. Discussion followed.

The motions for Knotts Berry Farm and the Holiday Inn were withdrawn.

New motions for Knotts Berry Farm and Holiday Inn were made. The Holiday Inn was passed. Al looked for motions on the other recommendations: Sacramento, Albuquerque, Grand Canyon, Chattanooga, Springdale AR, and Grand Rapids. The only motion made was for Grand Rapids in mid-August instead of California by Tony White, and seconded. Tony asked that a roll call vote be taken: 11 No, 9 Yes. Al mentioned that all the locations mentioned would be good conference sites.

2023 Convention- Walter Zullig. The convention would probably be centered in West Palm Beach. Brightline operates high speed intercity service between Miami and West Palm Beach which is being extended to Orlando. MetroRail and Tri-Rail operate in the area, and we would hope to arrange a shop tour from one of them or possibly Brightline or Amtrak. There also are the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Miami and the US Sugar

Co in Clewiston which has a steam locomotive and is restoring a second one. We also will look into the possibility of a joint activity with the FEC Historical Society.

Brightline is currently working on double tracking from west Palm to Coco and a hi-speed line from Coco to Orlando. He will be working on hotels the next time he is in Florida.

2024 looking at East Broad Top with Hershey or Harrisburg as the base. Looking at Altoona Museum, Horseshoe Curve and the Reading and Northern Railroad.

### **Conferences – Bob Bitzer**

Bob questioned having conventions in the same time frame as we usually have conferences. Discussion followed. He also advised that application packets for Ronkonkoma are at the convention and on the website.

Working with several chapters on conferences for next year. Nothing definite yet. He asked that all directors talk to their chapters about hosting conferences. Hugh mentioned Arkansas as a location for next year.

Dave Foster moved that we take up the Advisory Council points before we adjourn. Seconded by Jon Baake. Passed.

1. Getting our own equipment for meetings.  
Working on that. Problem is shipping to different sites and who will maintain. Bob Bitzer stated that many hotels have their own systems and technicians. They may not want us to use our own and/or charge us for it. Dan said that he recommends getting our own equipment and working with the hotels. Motion was made to spend \$3000 on our own equipment. Motion failed.
2. Plaque committee- We have a committee to do this.
3. More Bulletins per year-up to 6 or maybe 7. Al asked for a motion which failed. Bob Bitzer stated that if we increase the number of issues, it could raise the dues to \$75 per year.
4. "Share the Wealth" – needs a central person to guide chapters who to contact. Send information to Val to put in the newsletter.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:29PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Ellen Scott*  
NRHS Secretary

