



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 10, 2023
Zoom Video Conference

AC Members: Chairman **Richard Shulby** (Baltimore / Piedmont-Carolinas), Secretary **Elizabeth Guenzler** (Central Coast), **Bill Long** (North Texas), **Kenneth Katta** (Long Island Sunrise Trail), **David Brighters** (Southeast Louisiana), **Robert Leslie** (Blue Ridge), **Doug Scott** (Cape Cod), **Bob Brewster** (Intermountain), **Richard Soderman** (Western Maryland), **Martin Owen** (Heart of Dixie), **Mike Yuhas** (Wisconsin), **Dawn Holmberg** (Northstar), **Thomas Gallagher** (Champlain Valley), **Chase Arnold** (Connecticut Eastern), **Patti Webb** (Harrisburg), **Carl Jensen** (Roanoke), **R. Victor Varney** (North Carolina Railroad Museum), **Tom Steckler** (Lancaster), **Rebecca Gerstung** (Niagara Frontier), **Ron Gawedzinski** (St. Louis), **Tom Posatko** (Wilmington), **Vee Pauli** (Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley), **Paul Hopkins** (East Tennessee), **William Welk** (Philadelphia), **Richard King** (Cincinnati), **Joe Maloney** (Tidewater), **Regan Rickson** (Atlanta), **Valli Hoski** (Ad Hoc), **Mitch Dakelman** (Jersey Central), **John DeRoo** (Kansas City)

Others: Tony White, Ellen Scott, Charles Webb, John Fiorilla, Dan Meyer, John Goodman, Skip Waters, Harold Shaak, Larry Dyer

Richard called the meeting to order at 16:02 PST with Elizabeth taking the minutes. He thanked those present for attending on short notice, noting that he had not originally envisioned the inclusion of reports at this meeting. Those from Heritage Grants, RailCamp, Film Library, News, List of Railroad Attractions, Membership and Finance had been distributed to all AC members.

Elizabeth noted that in the September 24th, 2022 minutes, Joe Maloney should have been in the list of AC members present as he represents the Tidewater Chapter. With that amendment, *Doug motioned and Mike seconded that the minutes be accepted. Carried.*

Website Report

Dawn explained that she had been updating the chapter listing as a result of the information Elizabeth forwarded her from the chapters, and thanked Elizabeth for the work she has done so far on acquiring updated information.

2023 Convention Report

John Goodman then gave his report on the Fort Lauderdale convention, occurring September 1st through 6th. The hotel is the Doubletree at Deerfield Beach. \$129 per night which is good two days before and two days after. Registration will open at 4:00; Elizabeth is leading the registration. There will be a seminar that evening.

September 2nd is meeting day with Advisory Council (8:30 to 11:30), Board (1:00 to 3:00) and Membership (3:30) meetings. There will be a seminar that evening.

September 3rd, Sunday, is a trip on Brightline from Miami to Orlando. Boxed lunch will be available and return to hotel is planned for 6:00.

September 4th, Monday (Labour Day), the buses will leave at 8:00 and go to Clewiston for U.S. Sugar steam trip to Lake Placid. U.S. Sugar 4-6-2 148 will be on rear and diesel on the front going up and there will be a runby. Everyone is on their own for lunch. There will be two runbys with 148 leading on the return to Clewiston. 1 hour 40 minutes back to hotel. Probably no seminar this day.

September 5th, Tuesday, Henry Flagler home and museum tour, including rail car. Banquet that evening, 6:00 cocktail (restaurant/bar will be the location), 7:00 dinner and 8:00 guest speaker.

September 6th, Wednesday, trip on Tri-Rail to Mangonia -- bus to there, ride from Mangonia to Miami. Large deli for lunch. Re-board and go to Miami Airport station where buses take us to Gold Coast Railroad Museum, home of the Ferdinand Magellan presidential car, two steam engines, amusement park train and SW1500 and coach train ride.

Membership Awards

Doug Scott did not have a report as he does not start the process until the end of March. However, he requested that an e-mail be sent to all representatives to ask where each chapter would prefer to have the pins, certificates and letter sent and to send the replies to him directly.

ACTION ITEM 1 - Elizabeth to send an e-mail to all chapter representatives on this item
[update March 14th -- e-mail was sent]

NRHS News

Val reported that the March issue of NRHS News was mailed to all members. The April issue will be PDF online; there will be no May issue. The rail attractions guide should be out by June.

Carl mentioned the reports contained very good information and suggested that everyone take the time to read and brief chapter members on their contents.

Mike asked if we could hear from national officers, to which Richard reviewed the plan/guideline of this meeting and how it came about. Elizabeth explained that it is best if we work from a standardized agenda for each meeting, but agreed it would be helpful to include a notation of 'no report' on the applicable line items if that is the case.

ACTION ITEM 2 - Elizabeth to notate "no report" if none is submitted for any of the existing categories on each meeting's agenda. This will be ongoing.

Film Committee

Bill Long discussed the Film Committee's report. Mitch noted that Tom Coughlin took some of the films and put them on his Youtube channel. 2,000 feet of reels have been put on a hard drive but editing is needed to be done. They are currently one hour each and a narration track is to be added. Bill asked if the Board could assist and made a motion that we as the AC request the Board to provide financial and/or people support to the film library to get at least one DVD on our website. Carl seconded the motion.

Mitch explained that we need an editor. He cuts the film and splices it together, then edits it down. Need hard drive to edit, which he has, and works with the digitized data. He does need a new digitizing machine/scanner.

Richard noted an e-mail which requested to send all film-related items to Joe Maloney.

Richard then re-read the amended motion: **“Request the Board provide such financial and editor support to the Film Committee working through Joe Maloney and Mitch Dakelman to focus on getting access to a DVD on the website”.**

Dawn noted that it may be better to put it on Youtube and have a link on our website, rather than directly, due to file size.

The motion was voted with a show of hands and it was unanimously passed.

Membership Report

Patti reviewed her report and thanked Mike, Tony and Becky, as well as Steve Siegerist, for all the work that they have done on Membership and the Neon database. As of February 28th, there are, 3,675 members who have renewed; 4,449 last year at this time. Membership cards have been mailed to 2,600 members and the second batch is underway.

New Business

1. ***Future Conferences*** -- Tony reported on behalf of Bob Bitzer, who is in the hospital. The spring conference is in Sparks, Nevada on May 21st from 8:00 to 3:00 (Advisory Council and Board). So far, 23 have signed up and unless the numbers increase, we will lose money at this conference. The hotel has additional rooms available but one has to call the hotel directly. Victor noted that the activities are early to mid-week, both outside and inside hotel and our meeting is at the end of the event, on Sunday.

The annual meeting is in Fort Lauderdale on September 2nd.

2024 - locations are being discussed including Philadelphia and Delaware. Do not want to put chapters out and will try to make the locations as easy as possible.

Richard strongly believes that an option of joining remotely via Zoom should always exist and give everyone the opportunity to engage. Tony has no intention of cancelling Zoom as an option but in-person always gets things done. Vee noted that she appreciates being able to participate online.

2. ***Chapter Engagement Committee report/update*** -- Elizabeth reported that, with the formation of the Chapter Engagement Committee (CEC) at the last AC meeting, she developed goals and objectives which the committee (Tony White, Mike Yuhas, Jon Baake, Richard Shulby and herself) agreed to. The first step was to contact each chapter and obtain updated key officials and contact information for the chapter listing on the NRHS database. She has heard from 74 chapters so far and is following up with others. This information has been forwarded to Dawn and Elizabeth thanked her for the work that has entailed.

As an adjunct project, Mike asked if she would be able to update the chapter entries in Neon, the membership database. Since she has the information from the chapters who have responded, it

followed that she would be the best person to do this. Elizabeth embarked on this project but found there are 31 chapters, and 57 individuals within those chapters, who are only chapter members, not NRHS members. She has shared the specific details with the committee.

Richard believes the President and possibly the Vice President should be national members. The chapters are not legally part of the NRHS. Any National Representative has to be a national member per the bylaws.

Mike asked about the bylaws and noted an old rule that one had to be a member of national if you were a member of a chapter.

Mike went on to give a large amount of praise to Elizabeth for all her efforts and noted that it was a great starting point on what National can do for the chapters.

Victor noted that his chapter used to be a 'renegade chapter' which had broken out with the NRHS but the members are good preservationists and encourage others to become members.

Bill Long remarked that there need to be reasons for people to join National. Richard stated that it is up to us to change the rules.

Ellen checked the bylaws and it states that the President and National Representative must be National members. Richard noted that the chapter requirement is still in the bylaws that they be 100% national members.

Doug asked how many national members does a chapter have to have to be a chapter? John Fiorilla answered with five.

Patti noted that she will be launching a winback campaign to send notices to those who have not renewed since 2021.

Mike asked what action should be take to the Board, to which Richard replied the CEC will begin to reach out to the chapters and engage them to get them back in the fold.

Skip noted that the dues used to be connected, which ensured everyone was a national member. When that split, that was the beginning of not being a national member. If you wanted both, national membership was at a slightly less amount. A good portion of society work takes place at the chapter level. How to get more chapter member - incentives?

Val noted that it is similar to making the News member-focused -- chapters are giving current news and makes them feel part of the family, broadening the scope of what we include. She asked why we can't make membership dues for multiple years, to which Mike responded that we can, and it currently exists.

Victor noted that the chapters are performing rail preservation. Tom noted that two people signed up through his chapter and became national members.

Richard noted that for the Baltimore chapter, they collect national dues for certain members who are not Internet-oriented and send them directly to National. Mike responded that there are a number of chapters who handle national dues for their members and we are not going to discourage the chapters from collecting dues in the future.

Richard suggested the CEC take the lead on how errant officers could be enticed and suggested that they continue to work and meet amongst themselves in the next couple of weeks. Elizabeth and Richard to report to the Board.

ACTION ITEM 3 - Chapter Engagement Committee to take the lead on errant officers and meet amongst themselves, then report to the Board.

3. *Chapter Survey* -- Richard gave the premise for it and asked for volunteers. Ron and Elizabeth volunteered but there is currently no one to lead it. Victor mentioned that we could use Survey Monkey as he has an account with them. Paul cautioned there needs to be a mission/goals for the survey and Elizabeth assured him that there would be. This is a new idea and nothing has been discussed in any detail or decisions made yet.

ACTION ITEM 4 - Chapter Engagement Committee to create mission and goals for a chapter survey and bring it back to the AC in May.

Richard then reviewed the Board meeting agenda for the next day and discussed the Conflict of Interest Policy, asking those present for their opinions with both the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality policies.

Bill Long remarked that regarding confidentiality, if anything discussed is confidential, let us know, otherwise report on everything.

Ron asked what is the Board going to do if anyone refuses to sign both documents? John Fiorilla replied that there are many ways go to and would discuss options tomorrow, to which Richard asked will it be shared with the AC before the Board acts?

The \$500 annual limit for reimbursement for travel to annual conferences -- amount should not be directed by National.

Open Mic

Becky reminded everyone of the April 1st deadline for RailCamp registration.

Bob Brewster noted that to attract people to our organization, we have to do things. Does not see conferences competing with the national convention. You see things that you don't normally see during conferences and conventions.

Tony mentioned the article in the NRHS News for the Assistant Treasurer had no response, and urged all representatives to share it with your chapters. We need someone.

Review Items To Report To Board

Richard reviewed the items as discussed in this meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 18:28.