

NRHS Spring Conference
Best Western Hotel, Cedar Rapids, IA
May 5, 2024

President White called the Plenary Session to order at 9:01 AM. He thanked Eric Fogg and Mike Yuhas for arranging this meeting. He explained that we are trying a new format to try to get the meetings to run more smoothly. This is a trial to see how it works.

Reports from the Committees: Note: written reports are available on the website under Documents Available to the Public, Spring 2024 Conference.

Convention (2024, future) – John Goodman. The Harrisburg PA convention will run from August 26 – 31. Day 1 the registration room will open in the afternoon, Day 2 a trip to the Strasburg Railroad and dinner at an Amish buffet, Day 3 will visit the East Broad Top Railroad and the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Day 4, Thursday, will be the Advisory Council, Board of Directors, and the Membership meetings. Day 5 will be a trip to the Reading & Northern Railroad, and Day 6, the last day, will be to the Middletown & Hummelstown railroad in the morning and the Northern Central Railway of York in the afternoon.

A convention in Montreal Canada is not planned at this time. 2025 is the 90th anniversary of the NRHS and a convention should be held in the United States. The current plan is for it to be held in Lansing, MI.

Conference (2024, future) – Bob Bitzer. The Fall Conference will be held in Wilmington, Delaware and will be sponsored by the Wilmington Chapter. The dates are October 10-12. The hotel will be the Double Tree in Wilmington with a rate of \$159 per night. Details are currently being worked on.

Heritage Grants – Charlie Web. January 31 was the deadline for grant applications. The total amount to be given was \$125,000. The amount requested was \$266,449. The checks for the recipients were released in late May.

Membership – Patti Webb and Mike Yuhas. A survey was sent to all members and have received back about 10%. They are working on getting lost members to rejoin.

Membership Awards – Doug Scott. A total of 108 pins and certificates have been awarded. The majority have already been sent. He has several to still mail out.

Bulletin – Jeff Smith. In Jeff's absence President White gave the report. During Covid we got caught up on the Bulletin. We fell behind again last year and are currently getting caught up.

News – Val Hoski. See written report.

Rail Camp – Becky Gerstung. President White reported that there were 51 applications for the East and 15 for West. The selections for the East were difficult as there were

many qualified applicants. However, the selections were made for 24 for East and 12 for West. We did no advertising this year and still received many applicants. We will probably not advertise until we start to see a decline in applicants. We have the funds and gave out more money this year than in the past. We have finally heard back from Amtrak, and they will be doing their program. All partners are now on board for the program. The only downside is that we may have to do an additional background check in the East; Delaware may want a state one done in addition to the Federal one that is currently done.

The university threw us a curve in that they are requesting double the insurance coverage that they have in past years. John Fiorilla is aware of this and working on it.

Historic Preservation Award – Mike Yuhas. Mike thanked the committee of Tony White, Victor Varney, and Ed Bernsten for their work on the committee. A special thank you to Victor as he was the spearhead for getting this off the ground. New nominations will be opening soon to all NRHS members. Be on the lookout for an email.

Alco Historic Photos – Joe Maloney. They are plugging along. Hasn't heard from them recently. See his report.

He wanted to thank the NRHS for his 60-year pin. Back when he first joined there wasn't even a 50-year pin.

Historic Plaques – Walter Zullig. The only pending item is for Tunnel 6 at the Donner Summit. It is currently in limbo due to discussion on funding. He is also working with them on the language for the plaque. Their request is too wordy, and they need to change it.

If anyone knows of a plaque proposal can send it to Walter so he can follow it up.

Treasurer – Bob Bitzer. We have been working with our new auditing firm, Bowers and Company. We have been providing them with the data needed for review. Mike Yuhas has been working with them explaining how we use NEON. All reports have been filed as needed. Ward Wells is the new Assistant Treasurer. We are still interested in finding a bookkeeper who has knowledge of QuickBooks Pro.

NRHS Fund – Bob Ernst. Report was submitted a few days ago. We currently have 1.2 million in our accounts. This afternoon he will be asking the Board to accept Charles Webb to fill the position left by the resignation of Cynthia Atwood last year. Also, a few days ago he received word that the Freeman Grant was accepted in the amount of \$150,000. That will mean \$50,000 for the next three years designated for Heritage Grants.

Rail Attractions – Wes and Shirley Ross. In the publishing phase right now. They have had a request for 7000 of our brochures that Jon Baake has been sending out. The list will be mailed out and will be on our website.

He has not been involved the Combined Federal Campaign for several years. This is due to our 990's not being filed in a timely fashion. To be eligible, all documents must be filed by January 31. We can rejoin in the future by meeting this requirement.

General Counsel/Insurance – John Fiorilla. Works on all our insurance, including the conventions and Rail Camp. He is currently working on Rail Camp and not sure of what the final cost will be at this time. He is also working on the contracts for the convention. We have had no litigations this year. Our annual reports have also been done.

Inspector General – Walter Zullig. Everything is in his report. He has been working with the Heritage Grants committee in reaching out to groups that have not responded to communications from us. The first is the Twin Forks chapter in response to a grant they received. They have been given an additional year to complete the project.

The second was the emergency grant to the Winchester chapter to relocate a caboose. Walter issued a letter requesting a report by a certain date. They did respond and it worked out that it wasn't the emergency everyone thought, and they are looking for another location to move the caboose.

There being no further reports, this portion of the meeting was adjourned.

President White called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:45 PM. He welcomed everyone to Cedar Rapids and stated that we have 100% Board attendance.

Attendance – Ellen Scott.

First Name	Middle	Last Name	Title	Present	Absent
Tony		White	President	A	
Joe		Maloney	Vice President	A	
Ellen		Scott	Secretary/Director	A	
Ralph	Robert	Bitzer	Treasurer/Director	A	
Scott		Andes	Director	A	
Kevin		Feeney	Director	A	
Eric		Fogg	Director	A	
John		Goodman	Director	A	
Skip		Waters	Director	A	
Charlie		Webb	Director	A	
Jon		Baake	Director	A	

A = Present, X = Absent

Also in attendance were Elizabeth Guenzler, Chris Guenzler, Richard Shulby, Sue Bishop, Ward Wells, Dawn Holmberg, Dan Meyer, Al Weber, Patti Webb, Ed Fortuna, Mitch Dakelman, Cora Sowa, John DeRoo, Wesley Ross, Ken Mosby, Jim Perry, Mike Yuhas, Robert Brewster, Robert Ernst, Preston Hamilton, Ron Gawedzinski, Thomas Gallagher, John Fiorilla, Walter Zullig.

Minutes from the emergency meeting February 28, 2024 – A motion was made, seconded, and approved. Ellen will send the minutes to Dawn to be published.

Convention – There were no questions from the floor. All was covered in the morning. John Goodman advised that parking was the only issue. He hopes that the booklet will be out in mid-May. Reservations can be made now for the hotel. If there are any problems, please contact him. There are plenty of restaurants in the area that can be walked to. All the events: Registration, meetings, and seminars will be held on the second floor. They are to the left when getting off the elevator. President White explained that we need the attendance to keep the cost down. We are not looking to make money but need to cover our costs.

2025 is the 90th anniversary of the NRHS. Because of this, John has postponed working on Montreal for the convention and moved it to Lansing, Michigan. He has been advised that late May to mid-June would be the best times. The location is on the Amtrak Port Huron run. We would visit the Huckleberry Railroad and the Ford Museum. It will be a 5-day convention, and he will be working on it.

2026 is the anniversary of the B&O museum in Baltimore. We had problems in the past with the hotel and other issues, but he will investigate it more.

John Goodman made a motion that we hold the 2025 Convention in Lansing, MI the end of May-early June. The motion was seconded by Skip, approved by all.

Conferences – Bob Bitzer. The conference will be October 10-12 in Wilmington, DE. The hotel is the Doubletree.

Heritage Grants – Charlie Webb. The final report has just been sent to the committee. The report will be sent to Tony White, Ellen Scott, Dawn Holmberg, and Skip Waters.

Film Preservation – Mitch Dakelman. No questions.

Membership – Patti Webb. No questions.

Membership Awards – Doug Scott. Ellen reported for Doug that they are almost done with all the awards. Tony added that they have gotten the work done earlier this year than in the past and he has received his 25-year pin.

Bulletin – Jeff Smith. No questions.

News – Val Hoski. Chapter news and announcements are increasing and so are the pages. When we are reaching 30 pages, we should consider that it is no longer a newsletter but now a magazine. Thank you to Dawn, Mike Yugas, Patti Webb, Charlie Webb, and those who send the information.

Historic Photos – Joe Maloney. Joe moved that we pay \$2000 a year minimum for storage fees and an agreement/lease. Seconded by Tony. Mitch advised that the location is on Main Street in Phillipsburg, NJ. It is a train station that is privately owned by the Friends of NJ Transportation Museum. It encompasses two floors and is currently undergoing restoration. The library is located on the lower level which is the basement. The space is shared but items are not co-mingled. After a lengthy discussion Skip Waters moved to table the motion until more information is gathered. Seconded and passed. Joe Maloney moved that the original group go back to Phillipsburg to define the roles and responsibilities of both parties for the next meeting. Seconded and passed. Tony advised that this will be tabled until the October meeting as it's too close to the convention for a report at that time.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Bitzer. Bob is now getting information from Bowers & Bowers that will allow him to begin doing financial reports again soon. He also needs budget information from the committee heads for both this year and next. We are also in need of a bookkeeper that is familiar with Quick Books Pro. Please let either him or Ward Wells know if you know anyone.

NRHS Fund – Bob Ernst. Bob moved to appoint Charles Webb to the Fund to fill the position left by Cynthia Atwood. Seconded by Jon Baake, approved.

Historic Preservation Award – Mike Yuhas. No questions.

New Business:

President White introduced Jeff Smith and Mike Frorio to present their proposal. They have asked the NRHS for help with this project. He then turned to meeting over to them. Mr. Frorio is a professor at Drexel University for 22 years. By trade he is a photographer. He is looking for our assistance in obtaining a grant from the North American Railway Foundation for a project in conjunction with the Library of Congress. He has looked at some of our photos and realized that the library has nothing like this in their collection. He would work primarily about the Pennsylvania Railroad. This would be a photo survey of the railroad. He is looking for us to be the sponsor of the project. The NRHS would receive the grant monies and disperse to him as needed. In return, our name would be on the project and Mike would provide a portfolio for the NRHS and allow access to the material for research. Skip asked Bob Bitzer for any concerns he might have. Bob's concerns were the disbursement of funds, any expenses for administrative fees, and the handling of tax filings. Kevin Feeney expressed that it would be setting up a restricted account and dispersing the funds from there. There was some discussion regarding bookkeeping. Bob Ernst agreed that he has no problem with taking over this project but understands we also need to speak to Bowers. There was also discussion on the funding. Mike said he felt that we will be getting the \$47,000 piecemeal and therefore if the project isn't finished there would be no issue with the money. A motion was made by Kevin that we approve to sponsor this project being handled by the NRHS Fund subject to discussion with Bowers. The motion was seconded. Skip called for a Roll Call vote: Yes – 6, No – 4, and 1 abstain. The motion carried.

Chapter Development – Skip Waters. Skip has heard from the Ludlow Heritage Museum in Kentucky about chapter membership. He has received a letter of Intent from them They currently have 5 officers but are missing the required 7. They are also unsure of the chapter name. We will table further discussion until the next meeting.

Chapter Engagement Committee – Skip Waters. This is working well. The "Fireside Chat" was brought up by Ron G of the St. Louis Chapter. They are a busy chapter, and the meeting went well. Skip answered their questions to the best of his ability. Some items discussed were dues, new members, partner with a college or university to offer and extension of Rail Camp to get them interested in a railroad occupation, Zoom type programs for those who can't attend in person., materials for young members ages 10 and under, shared activities with other chapters.

Conference Policy – We have seen with several of the past conferences that chapters are losing money in sponsoring meetings. In the past we have helped them out. To help prevent this going forward, since the meetings are held for NRHS business, the NRHS will help defray the costs by paying for some of the business needs. The proposal drafted by Scott Andes: "For NRHS conferences hosted by a Chapter, the NRHS shall

reimburse the Chapter for the cost of meeting rooms, meeting room equipment, name tags and meeting room refreshments required for NRHS meetings. The cognizant NRHS focal point for the conference shall be consulted in advance during event planning and shall approve the expenditures as necessary, appropriate, and reasonable for the conference being hosted.” They will also be able to use NEON for registration. Scott moved that we accept the proposal, seconded by Skip, approved.

Historic Plaques – Walter Zullig. As he stated this morning, there is pending plaque. The costs are now between \$1700 and \$2000-for one. He feels we should add money for this to the budget. For now, he needs the approval to go forward with the current request once the verbiage is determined. He made a motion that we authorize up to \$2000 for a plaque for Tunnel #6 at Donner Summit. Seconded by Skip, approved.

Restricted Accounts – Kevin Feeney questioned why we are not spending the monies allocated by restricted accounts. He used film as an example. We have the money in an account set aside for film preservation, yet we aren’t spending it. We can spend it on rent, etc. as brought up earlier today. Also, Rail Camp, why aren’t we having free camps to use the monies. There was some discussion, no resolution.

Meeting Format – Tony White. President White asked everyone how they liked this format. The consensus was that everyone liked it but there still was some duplication. We will continue with this format going forward.

Advisory Council – Richard Shulby. Richard asked that we take the recommendations of the Advisory Council immediately after the meeting and add them to the BOD Agenda the same day. It was agreed that that can be done.

Fireside Chat – since it worked so well in its beta trial, the Central Coast Chapter will be hosting a meeting in July. The tentative date is July 10 at 9:30 pm. Skip has agreed to attend to represent the BOD.

The Chapter Engagement Committee will be added to the BOD agenda with the other reports. Elizabeth handed out to the board the results of their survey.

The next meeting will be the Fall Conference to be held in Wilmington DE, October 10 – 12. Tony also thanked John Goodman, Skip Waters, and Charlie Webb for their service on the Board. Their last meeting as board members will be at the Wilmington, DE conference. He then thanked Mike Yuhas and Eric Fogg for their work in putting this conference together.

Mike Yuhas thanked Mitch Dakelman for the film shown last night and advised that there will be another shown tonight. He will also have some at the convention.

Eric Fogg advised that the bus will be arriving at 7:00 AM tomorrow and will be departing promptly at 7:30. They have allowed for some travel time, but the schedule is tight. If not on the bus when it is ready to leave, they will not wait. Wes Ross and Tony White will be making a donation to Operation Lifesaver during the day.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Scott

Ellen Scott
Secretary

Minutes approved August 29, 2024