



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 5, 2024

Best Western Longbranch Inn, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

AC Members: Chairman **Richard Shulby** (Baltimore / Piedmont-Carolinas), Secretary **Elizabeth Guenzler** (Central Coast), **Cora Sowa** (New York City), **Doug Scott** (Cape Cod and Western Connecticut), **Patti Webb** (Harrisburg), **Jim Perry** (Washington, DC), **Bob Brewster** (Intermountain), **Tom Gallagher** (Champlain Valley), **Dawn Holmberg** (Northstar), **Mike Yugas** (Wisconsin), **Wesley Ross** (Kentucky Central), **Ken Mosby** (Delaware Valley), **Ed Fortuna** (Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley), **John DeRoo** (Kansas City), **Ron Gawedzinski** (St. Louis), **Mitch Dakelman** (Jersey Central)

AC Members Joining Remotely: **John Simanton** (Inland Empire), **Robert Leslie** (Blue Ridge), **Regan Rickson** (Atlanta), **William Welk** (Philadelphia), **Richard King** (Cincinnati), **Valli Hoski** (Ad Hoc), **Bob St. John** (Topeka), **Bill Long** (North Texas), **Ken Eddy** (Arkansas-Boston Mountains), **Ed Berntsen** (Tacoma), **Tom Bauer** (Bucktail), **Edward Harris** (Tidewater)

Others Joining Remotely: Bob Bitzer, Walter Zullig, Scott Andes, Mark Eyer, Dave Baniewicz

Others in Attendance: Tony White, Joe Maloney, John Goodman, Jon Baake, Dan Meyer, Bob Ernst, John Fiorilla, Skip Waters, Charlie Webb, Ellen Scott, Ward Wells, Kevin Feeney, Sue Bishop, Preston Hamilton and Eric Fogg.

Note: the format for the Spring Conference meetings was changed to presentation and highlights of the various committee reports first, followed by the Advisory Council meeting (which concluded the morning) and the Board meeting in the afternoon.

The reports were sent via e-mail to the Advisory Council and are also on the Documents site of the NRHS website.

2024 Convention

John Goodman reported that the convention booklet has been finished and will be going out for review and ready online by mid-month. The East Broad Top Railroad may not have steam.

He reviewed the schedule for the August 26th to 31st convention. Reception Monday evening with seminar on EBT history, Tuesday will be at Strasburg and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Wednesday East Broad Top and Rockhill Trolley Museum, Thursday meetings, Friday Reading and Northern RDC trip and Saturday is the Middletown and Hummelstown Railroad, lunch there and motor coach to Northern Central Railroad.

2025 Convention

John noted that 2025 is the 90th anniversary of the NRHS and he is proposing a Lansing, Michigan-based convention with a visit to Owosso and the Steam Railroading Institute (Pere Marquette 1225), the Michigan Central Station in Detroit and the Huckleberry Railroad to be potential events. Timeframe for this is late May to early June.

2024 Autumn Conference

Bob Bitzer confirmed the Autumn conference will be October 10th to 12th in Wilmington, Delaware, hosted by the Wilmington Chapter. The Doubletree Hotel will be the conference venue with a rate of \$159. An excursion on SMS Railroad's Woodstown Central, plus a shop tour, is being planned.

Heritage Grants

Charlie Webb remarked that the deadline was January 31st. \$266,499 was requested and \$125,000 in grants have been approved. [the list of recipients with amounts and details was sent via e-mail and is posted on the NRHS website].

Historic Photographs

Mitch noted that there are 1,800 pictures in the photo gallery on the NRHS website.

Membership

Patti reported that we experienced a decrease in membership since 2023. A survey was sent out to 300 people who had not renewed and several renewals were subsequently received.

1,237 transactions opted to cover the credit card fees. There is an automated spreadsheet available (monthly, quarterly or annual basis) to chapters giving them a list of the chapter members who are also National members.

Membership Awards

Doug noted that two-thirds of the pins and certificates have been mailed out.

Bulletin

In Jeff Smith's absence, Tony noted that work is being done to catch up.

RailCamp

In Becky Gerstung's absence, Tony reported that there were 51 applications for 24 slots for the East Coast version. There were 12 applications for 15 slots for the West Coast version. There is plenty of funds in the restricted account and all partners are on board for this year's camps.

Richard called the meeting to order at 8:33,

Historic Railroad Preservation Award

Mike Yuhas reported that an announcement will be sent via e-mail in a week or so for entries for this year's award. It has to be a common carrier railroad.

Historic Plaques

Walter noted there is only one active application - Donner Summitt. It has been approved but needs funding. The suggested wording was rather lengthy and he is working with the group to resolve that.

Treasurer's Report

Bob Bitzer commented that since we changed to a new auditing company, he has been working extensively with them but the process is taking longer than expected, hence the lack of reports for this meeting. The 2022 taxes were filed on schedule. He is still looking for a bookkeeper who is familiar with QuickBooks.

NRHS Fund

Bob Ernst noted there is \$1.2 million available in the Fund. He will be asking the Board to nominate Charlie Webb to the Fund Board. The Freeman grant was accepted so there will be \$150,000 over three years, all going to Heritage Grants.

Discount Program

Wesley Ross reported that the list is in the publishing phase. Over 170 attractions responded and over 7,000 brochures were mailed out.

Combined Federal Campaign

Wesley noted that we have not been part of it for several years, due to the lack of financial reports. The 990's and yearly review is need by January 31st.

Legal Issues

John Fiorilla explained that he deals with insurance for all aspects of the society and has reviewed and approved the convention contracts. If you have an insurance question, call John.

Richard called the meeting to order at 10:30 and asked for a minute of silence to honour the late Carl Jensen, who passed away on March 29th.

The minutes of the previous meeting, on September 2nd, 2023, were reviewed. Mike Yuhas motioned and Wesley Ross seconded that the minutes be accepted. Carried.

Business Arising From Previous Minutes

Item 1 - Kevin Feeney, as comptroller, explained that as of March 31st, 2024, the Fund has a total of \$1,070,000 in assets. Once the accounts payable are excluded, the leftover amount is \$1,048,356. Of that \$176,796 is restricted funds (including films, RailCamp, Heritage Grants, Railcamp scholarships) and the remaining \$985,759 is unrestricted.

Item 2 - Joe Maloney spoke to this, noting that the films and slides are stored at the former New Jersey Union Station in Phillipsburg They were moved in late 2008 and he worked with the Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Museum. The museum's main contact passed away and the widower is not in good health. We have not been sent a storage bill since 2008. There is a backlog of work to be

done in the renovated facility. Joe will recommend to the Board that we pay rent. Mitch Dakelmann visited there last week and items are being removed to a climate-controlled area.

Chapter Engagement Committee Report

Elizabeth read the committee's report and to the unresponsive chapters portion, which is being handed off to President Tony White for follow-up letters, Charlie Webb suggested wording along the lines of "how can National help keep the chapter if they want to continue. Charlie also suggested reaching out to chapter members in the geographical area. Elizabeth noted that she had done research in Neon and reached out to the existing key officials but not other members who are members of that chapter.

Skip noted that the Utica and Mohawk Valley chapter has posted on Facebook recently, to which Elizabeth responded that no one had responded to any of the calls or e-mails sent.

Richard would like the Chapter Engagement Committee to be recognized as a stand-alone committee, not keeping it under the Advisory Council umbrella. Joe Maloney, in Tony White's short absence, agreed that it was a good first step and encouraged it go forward.

Mike agreed and made the motion, to which Dawn seconded. Carried.

New Business

Item 1: Carl Jensen's legacy was discussed with Victor Varney's original suggestion as the starting point of the conversation. Doug Scott suggested that this year's Heritage Grants be dedicated to him rather than re-name the whole program for a specific person.

Cora remarked that he was very much involved in restoration of passenger cars and Richard noted his involvement was over thirty years ago.

Richard made a motion that the Advisory Council recommends that one Heritage Grant project a year be awarded in the memory of Carl S. Jensen, at the determination of the Heritage Grants Committee. Wesley Ross seconded. Carried.

Item 1 Sub-topic (to continue or not to continue the Convention Sites Exploration Committee, of which Carl Jensen was lead).

John noted that there are very few sites that meet the criteria specified for a convention and does not believe the committee needs to continue. Ed Bernsten noted that John would like support but is in favour of disbanding the committee, and made a motion to that effect.

Skip believes there is validity in the committee to help with suggested new sites. Patti suggested seeking advice of the local chapter in the area. Bob Bitzer proposed putting an article in the News which lists guideline bullet points of items to look for when organizing a convention. Taking that one step further, Valli asked 'what are the top five places to see - why should we come to your city?'

Richard concluded that it be left to the Convention Committee and the Convention Sites Exploration Committee to determine its needs - no recommendation at this time.

Open Mic

Patti noted that Richard Hayforth, President of the Perryville chapter is encouraging younger members who were found trackside and they have set up a Youtube channel on interviews with retired railroaders -- preserving history.

Valli commented on the Winchester Chapter's Junior Railroaders.

Ed Fortuna mentioned that the four railcampers that their chapter sponsored were found trackside and grew from young people getting to know the railroad engineers.

Charlie suggested having complimentary issues of the News and to hand out brochures to those trackside railfans.

Announcements

None of applicability.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.
