

**Plenary Session  
Fall Meeting  
Saturday, October 12, 2024  
Minutes approved 5/3/25**

President Tony White called the meeting to order at 9:05AM. He thanked the Wilmington Chapter for hosting the meeting. He then asked for a moment of silence for those who have passed.

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	
Ward		Wells	Asst. Treasurer	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 Ken Eddy, John Simanton, Victor Varney, Al Weber, Val Hoski, Dave Banewicz, Elizabeth Guenzler, Christopher Guenzler, Ron Gawedzinski, Bob Leslie, Bob Brewster, Jim Perry, Dawn Holmberg, Tom Posatko, Richard Shulby, Robert Ernst, Doug Scott, David Warner, Patti Webb, Dan Meyer, Walter Zullig, Mike Yuhas, John Fiorilla.

A quorum is present to do business.

Convention Reports – John Goodman. John noted that the 2023 convention was in Deerfield Beach, FL not Fort Lauderdale as noted on the agenda. We had struggles with this convention. Brightline delayed the start of the Orlando section. This section of the trip was canceled. John thanked Mike Yuhas for getting a small refund for this. We were supposed to tour the shops in West Palm but there was no one there when we arrived. We then rode the bus to the station. When we got there the ticket agent collected the tickets which caused some confusion. The rest of the trip went as scheduled.

Wednesday was the sugar train. He wanted to cancel due to the cost but went forward since it was behind steam. There was a 160-seat capacity which we didn't meet. We had 138 in attendance. The railroad sold the extra tickets for us.

Thursday was meeting day at the hotel.

Friday was the Transit Tour led by Walter and the Flagler tour led by John. Both has a good turnout. They broke even on these trips.

There were issues with the hotel. We had a high food and beverage commitment that we did not meet. The banquet underperformed. He and Tony sat at a table with the President of Brightline and his assistant. When the dinner was served, the president cut into his dinner and pushed the plate away. This led to a change being made to no longer have a banquet.

2024 Convention – Harrisburg. The convention started on **Monday** with the opening of the Registration Room. Monday evening was the reception. The tickets were \$15 which included a \$7 wine or beer drink. The food was plentiful, and we didn't run out. There was a seminar by the East Broad Top Historical Society.

**Tuesday** was the trip to the Strasburg Railroad. We raffled off a \$200 cab ride. We had some runbys. The afternoon was spent at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Dinner was held at the Shady Maple Restaurant.

**Wednesday**, we had 3 busses to the East Broad Top Railroad. The steam locomotive was not running, but we did get a ride just not behind steam. Later the steam locomotive was brought out on the turntable and did a short runby.

Thursday was meeting day.

**Friday**, we rode the Reading & Northern BUDD RDC cars to Minersville.

**Saturday**, we went to the Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad. Everyone rode the train a short way down the track. Once there many got off the train to photograph the street running. Our afternoon trip was cancelled. However, with the help of the Harrisburg Chapter members, we took a trip to the Williams Grove Historical Steam Engine Association Steam & Tractor Gathering. In the park is the only running Pennsylvania Railroad steam locomotive, #643.

There were seminars each night by Dan Cupper, Chris Jagodzinski, and Mitch Dakelman. There is no P&L at this time. We had 199 registered for this convention.

Conferences - Bob Bitzer thanked the Wilmington Chapter and crew for a great job they did with this conference and those held in prior years. We need to pick up attendance at conferences to help with costs and get more chapter involvement. In Nevada we had 23 registered. The Spring Conference in 2025 will be held in Johnson City, TN and hosted by the George L. Carter Chapter. Putting on these conferences is a team effort.

Spring 2024 – Mike Yuhas. The conference was held in Cedar Rapids Iowa. We rode an inspection trip on the Iowa Interstate to South Amana where we had a tour of the shops. We gave a donation to Operation Lifesaver before leaving. After the tour and donation presentation, we went to Silvis, Illinois, to the shop of the Railroading Heritage of Midwest America. At the end of our visit there we made another donation presentation.

See Appendix 1

Heritage Grants – Charlie Webb. We will be giving \$150,000 in grants in 2025. The application for grants will be online in mid-November. The deadline is January 31, 2026. There will be a tutorial on “How to Apply” on the website. Charlie thanked Dawn for her assistance in getting this done. See Appendix 2

Film Preservation – Marlin Taylor. Not much has happened since Harrisburg. Mitch Dakelman is cleaning up and getting film online. The film is going on the You Tube channel and has been getting a lot of attention.

Membership – Patti Webb. They will continue to send membership renewals via email. It is saving on paper and postage. See Appendix 3

Discount List and CFC – Wes & Shirley Ross. Wes asked to think about organizations in your area that should be on the list. Send the information to Wes and he will add them to the list. Approximately 750 get letters via USPS. The letters go out in late January and early February.

The CFC is the combined Federal Campaign. It is fund raising to all Federal employees and retirees. To comply with this program, we must fill out an application every 3 years to show how the money is spent throughout the 50 states. This includes Heritage Grants, RailCamp and educational efforts. Each year we must apply with copies of our Federal 990 tax return and outside CPA audit by January for the prior year. He hasn't been able to get these forms in time. There is also an application fee and a listing fee of \$1000. We will not apply for this program until we can get the necessary forms in a timely fashion. See Appendix 7.

Val Hoski thanked Wes and Shirley for all they do.

NHHS News – Val Hoski. Val sent her report yesterday. We do 6 print issues in color and 3 black and white. The November issue will be via email and the December print issue will be mailed.

Bulletin – Tony White. The current issue will be mailed in the next few days.

RailCamp – Tony White. We had 36 campers this year, 24 at the east and 12 at west. We had 2 ladies at the east camp. Tony thanked Doug Scott for his presentation at RailCamp East. See Appendix 4

Historic Preservation Award – Mike Yuhas. This award is given by the NRHS and the Railway Age and Railway Track and Structures magazines. Last years winner was the UP-Heritage Program for their restoration of the 4014. Mike was at the presentation. There was a slide presentation of the 844 and 4014 restorations. They were very honored to receive this award. See Appendix 5

NRHS Fund – Bob Ernst. We currently have \$1,370,751 in our accounts. The markets are doing well. A transfer of \$10,000 was made for the 2022 audit bill. They are working on the transfer of fund and moving the money accurately. We received \$50,000 from the Freeman Grant and received donations from Giving Tuesday. They are working with

Skip to get donations to work on Facebook. They are working to improve fund raising. All meetings next year will be via Zoom unless they correspond with a conference or convention. The Admin site is now up to date with all documents.

Online Content – Tom Hogan of Steel Highway magazine. He is spear heading this committee and sponsored this meeting. This is still in the formative stages, but he plans to have seminars with industry leaders or grant recipients, or authors. All programming would be on YouTube. See Appendix 6

Chapter Engagement Committee – Richard Shulby. Elizabeth Guenzler is the chair of the committee. Other members are Ron Gawedzinski, Skip Waters, Jon Baake, and Mike Yuhas. In 2023 a survey was sent to all chapters. 119 were sent with 72 responding. There were 4 categories. Some of the comments were lack of communication from the national to the chapters and increase membership. 50% do not share newsletters.

General Counsel – John Fiorilla. John explained the steps he is taking regarding the unresponsive chapters. He also noted that on the trip there was no safety briefing. There were members wandering around the yard and shop. We need a briefing at any shop facility. We should also be having a briefing at every meeting.

Brochures – Jon Baake. New membership brochures are coming. He should have them for the next conference. They have corrected the QR code so that it should be working on the new brochures.

Tony White stated that they have a safety briefing at RailCamp. This is done the first day.

At this time, Tony dissolved the Board of Directors and all committee chairs. He then adjourned this portion of the meetings at 10:15 AM.

#### Meeting of the Board of Directors Organizational Fall Conference

President White called the meeting to order at 2:45 PM. He then introduced the new Board of Directors: Ellen Scott, Scott Andes, Bob Bitzer, Mike Yuhas, Jon Baake, Ken Mosby, Eric Fogg, Tom Gallagher, Kevin Feeney.

Ellen Scott took attendance. There is a quorum.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policies – Joh Fiorilla explained the policies and why we must sign them every two years. All members of the Advisory Council and the Board of Directors must sign. Revisions have been made over the years, and these are the current policies. Ellen will send the policies and signature forms to Elizabeth so she can get them out to the Advisory Council members. Ellen has received the forms from all the Directors.

Appointment of Officers – President White introduced the officers: Ellen Scott -Secretary, Bob Bitzer-Treasurer, Ward Wells- Assistant Treasurer. A motion was made to accept the above slate of officers, pass with one abstention.

President White then thanked John Goodman, Skip Waters, and Charlie Webb for their service on the Board. He advised they are eligible to run again in two years.

President's Report – President White explained he was out of commission for a while. He had an incident on his way to RailCamp West. He ended up in the hospital in Salt Lake City. Spent some time out there. He was finally able to go home and had surgery in Pennsylvania.

He then welcomed the new board and made the following appointments:

General Counsel – John Fiorilla  
Assistant General Counsel – Scott Andes  
Inspector General – Walter Zullig  
Comptroller – Kevin Feeney  
Advertising Chair – Mike Yuhas  
Bulletin Editor – Jeff Smith  
Bylaws Committee Chairs – John Fiorilla and Scott Andes  
Chapter Development – Skip Waters  
Chapter Engagement Committee Liaison – Jon Baake  
Chief of Staff – Joe Maloney  
Combined Federal Campaign – Wes and Shirley Ross  
Conference Chair – Bob Bitzer  
Convention Chairs – Mike Yuhas and Eric Fogg  
Discount List Chairs – Wes and Shirley Ross  
Electoral Committee – John Fiorilla, Robert Ernst, Joe Maloney, Patti Webb, Charles Webb  
Emblem Sales – David Baniewicz  
Executive Committee – Bob Bitzer, Ellen Scott, Tom Gallagher, Ken Mosby, Mike Yuhas  
Heritage Grants Chair – Charles Webb  
Historical Plaques Chair – Walter Zullig  
Library Slides and File Chair – Mitch Dakelman and Marlin Taylor  
Marketing Communications Chair – Mike Yuhas  
Membership Awards Chair – Doug Scott  
Membership Brochures Chair – Jon Baake  
Membership Committee – Patti Webb-Chair, Becky Gerstung, Steven Siegerist, Mike Yuhas  
Membership Welcoming Committee Chair – Becky Gerstung  
NEON System Administrator – Mike Yuhas  
NRHS News Editor – Val Hoski- Chair, Eileen Weber, Elizabeth Guenzler  
Online Program Chair – Mike Yuhas, Tom Hogan  
Photo Contest - Jeff Smith-Chair, Mike Yuhas, Keith Schmidt, Tony White  
RailCamp Chair – Becky Gerstung

Technology – Dan Meyer- Chair, Al Weber, John DeRoo  
Website Committee – Dawn Holmberg

#### Old Business-

Minutes from the last meeting – A motion was made to accept the minutes from the Spring 2024 meeting, seconded and passed.

Chapter Engagement Committee – Elizabeth Guenzler. A report was given at the earlier session. She reviewed the survey results. Where do we go from here. One of the takeaway from the survey was that the Board needs to give more attention to the chapters. The Fireside meetings have been very successful. The committee would like to see them continue. They need a volunteer to attend those meetings. She asked what directors might be interested. The board will come up with a name. Discussion followed regarding the survey and handling the outcome.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Bitzer. Bob and Kevin had a discussion at the previous meeting regarding the reports. There were some problems with the accruals. They took this back to Bowers & Co. The reports have been reissued. Bob is working towards final reports, getting the 990's and getting everything up to par.

Fund – Bob Ernst. A report was given earlier. There were no questions.

Vice President's Report – Scott Andes. Nothing to report. He looks forward to working with Tony.

Heritage Plaques – Walter Zullig. They finally came to an agreement on the verbiage for the plaque at Donner Summit. The plaque has been ordered and will be presented on May 25, 2025. At the meeting in Harrisburg there was some talk of moving the plaque. He hasn't heard any since then. The consensus was that this shouldn't be a problem.

2025 Draft Budget – Bob Bitzer. Bob had asked all department heads for their best guestimate for 2025. The draft budget shows all this. He anticipates a loss of 41,000 because of the dues decline and some cost increases.. Dues are static. He feels this is a reasonable budget and if we control expenses, we might be able to break even, He has discussed a dues increase. Raising dues can cause a decrease. He feels this is a workable budget. Bob then entertained questions or concerns. The question was asked as to when was the last times dues were increased. To the best of everyone's knowledge it was about 10-12 years ago. The question of why not raise dues as asked. Dues in other organizations are going up. A discussion on raising dues began. Bob advised it is too late to raise them for 2025, it would have to be for 2026. He then asked were there any questions regarding the draft budget. Additional discussion followed regarding raising dues. Kevin made a motion to agree to raise dues by an amount to be determined by end of January 2025. Seconded by Eric, the motion passed 5 to 3.

Mike moved that we accept the 2025 budget with the change of dues increase, seconded by Kevin, motion passed 7 to 1.

Comptroller – Kevin Feeney. Kevin is now the comptroller for the NRHS. He is a newly retired CPA. He comes into this with a fresh set of eyes. We currently use a cash basis as opposed to accrual accounting. He hopes to adjust by the end of the year and have timely and accurate statements.

Convention 2025 - Eric Fogg and Mike Yuhas. The convention is very important to the organization. They want the very best for us. They are currently looking for a location. With hotels, it's rates, free parking and good food. They would like to improve the value of the hotel. Create good will for the hotel. The tours should be a cut above, interactive, and limit buses to 2 hours. They need committee members but want to keep a small group to hold down committee costs. Safety is prime, no private cars with the group. They need volunteers. They thanked the previous convention committee. John had started plans for Michigan and they are continuing with these plans. They want the best possible trips. Looking at the 1225 Pere Marquette. John had started talks with the NMRA (they will be out there and have planned activities) and doing a joint ride with them. Once the locations of the trips is decided, the hotel will be determined in a centrally located place. Detroit is a possibility.

2025 Conferences – Bob Bitzer. He has had one bid for 2025, the George L. Carter Chapter in Johnson City, TN. They had a great conference there in 2014. This would be in the spring of 2025. John Baake moved that we hold our 2025 Spring Conference in Johnson City TN, the date to be determined, seconded by Kevin Feeney. Motion passed.

Items from the Advisory Council – Richard Shulby. To improve communication between the Advisory Council and the Board, they would like to add the Council Chair as an ex officio member of the board to allow communication in a timelier manner.

Ron G. recommended that we acknowledge the following: John Goodman, Elizabeth Guenzler, Walter, Skip Waters, Dawn Holmberg, Al Weber, Dan Meyer, Eileen Weber, Mike Yuhas to thank them for the tremendous work done for the past years. Without their diligence we could not have had the conventions we've had. He thanked the Convention committee.

New Chapters- Skip Waters. Skip advised tht the Wichita Falls Railroad Museum had a lack of activity. Several of the members have reorganized and wish to change the name to Wichita Valley Chapter. They have re-organized and have a new mission and goals. Mike made a motion to change the name to Wichita Valley Chapter, seconded by Kevin. Motion passed. Ellen asked did they need a new charter. Skip replied that a letter will do as they will keep the same chapter number.

President White thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He also thanked the Wilmington Chapter for the great weekend.

There being no further business, Scott Andes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jon Baake.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ellen Scott*

Ellen Scott  
National Secretary



## **Appendix 1**

### **2024 Spring Conference Recap**

Early in 2024 President White tasked Eric Fogg and Mike Yuhas organizing the NRHS Spring Conference. Those were our only instructions and Spring was just a few short weeks away.

Having never done anything exactly like this before, we went with what we knew and who we knew. So, we asked the legendary Henry Posner III, CEO of the Iowa Interstate Railroad, if he could help. Known as a hard negotiator, we weren't certain what, if anything, he might be willing to do.

Were we surprised!

Mr. Posner offered a tour of his Iowa facilities and a ride across the state to the IAIS rail yard in Silvis, Illinois. He threw in use of his personal railcars and included lunch. We held our breath waiting to see what this would cost.

"Nothing." That was what he would charge NRHS for the entire trip. He did suggest a contribution to a railroad-related charity.

After that, things fell quickly in place. We found a hotel in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the headquarters of the railroad, and held the usual NRHS meetings.

Because we were going to Silvis, we asked Steve Sandberg, head of Railroading Heritage of Midwest America, if we could tour their facilities, which are rarely open to the public. They have lots of locomotives and cars we'd seen over the years, now in the process of getting a new lease on life.

To cap off a day to remember, NRHS made contributions to Operation Lifesaver - a favorite of the IAIS, and the RRHMA, who's doing the preservation work we all champion.

Thanks to some careful planning and our gracious hosts, the Spring Conference covered all our expenses, made two generous contributions to groups we appreciate, and finished the weekend in the black.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Heritage Grants Committee Report 2024Fall Conference**

1. Several issues with checks sent to recipients this year due to problems with the US Postal Service. We are pursuing using ACH transfers for 2025 awards.
2. The 2025 NRHS Heritage Grants applications will be available on the NRHS Website in mid-November. The deadline for the 2025 applications will be January 31, 2025, at 8PM EST via the NRHS Website. Dawn Holmberg had placed this information on the NRHS Website.
3. NRHS has agreed to award \$150,000 in 2025 via the Heritage Grants program.

Thank you. Charlie Webb

## **Appendix 3**

### **NRHS MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT OCTOBER 12, 2024, WILMINGTON, DE CONFERENCE**

#### Membership Statistics

Total Membership as of 9/30/2024: 4,032 (increase of 1.11% since last report of 8/15/2024)

#### Neon – Credit Card Processing Fee

The majority of our members, when paying on-line, have opted to cover the credit card processing fee as a donation to the NRHS. For the year 2024, \$2,403.11 in credit card processing fees have been donated to the NRHS by our members.

#### New Members Welcome Packets

Mike Yuhas and Becky Gerstung have coordinated the mailing of membership cards and member welcome packets to new members. Thank you to both Mike and Becky for enhancing our new members experience in joining the NRHS!

#### Neon – Membership Renewals

The first membership renewal reminder for 2025 was sent on September 27, 2024 as part of the multi-pronged membership renewal campaign. Every member that chooses to renew online helps save on the expense of printing and mailing a renewal notice.

#### Neon – New Feature!! - Geotarget Mini Email Campaigns

In the past, chapters have asked for names and contact info of nearby NRHS members not affiliated with their chapter. Owing to privacy concerns, we no longer disclose non-affiliated member personal information to anyone, for any reason. However, our Neon contact relationship management system does provide us with the ability to send mini email campaigns to limited audiences on behalf of chapters. A chapter in South Hoople, for example, is planning an outing or a dinner, and would like to get the word out to NRHS members within a 50-mile radius of the venue. The chapter would design a simple promotional email, and the NRHS membership team would put the email into the standard NRHS template and send it to all members within 50 miles of South Hoople. The email is sent by NRHS on behalf of your chapter. Send a message to [membership@nrhs.com](mailto:membership@nrhs.com) to start the process.

#### Membership Committee Members

Patti Webb, Chairperson  
Mike Yuhas  
Tony White  
Becky Gerstung  
Steve Siegerist

A special thank you to the Membership Committee for your continued efforts and dedication to the NRHS members.

Membership keeps the NRHS on track for the future!

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Webb  
NRHS Membership Committee Chairperson

## **Appendix 4**

### **RailCamp Report**

RailCamp 2024. Thanks to generous chapters, other organizations, individuals and reserve funds received from various sources including donations with dues renewals we were able to provide half of the campers with full or partial scholarships. This is an expensive undertaking. The costs for housing, meals and especially insurance continue to rise. Even so, our intent is to keep tuition the same as it has been for the past two years.

The University of Delaware where East campers stay has already been contacted with possible dates. Some of our partners, inviting us to return, have also been contacted. The 2025 application will be available January 1, 2025.

Any chapter wishing to sponsor a camper with a full or partial scholarship needs to contact us in January, even if you do not have a specific camper in mind by that time. Contact me for more information on becoming a sponsor.

Our volunteer counselors and other support staff make RailCamp a success. We are always looking for additional people to step up and be part of this popular and very successful project of the NRHS. If you have questions about what is involved, contact me. These kids have opportunities most railfans only dream about. This is your chance to get behind the scenes and insure this program continues.

Becky Gerstung  
RailCamp Program Director

## **Appendix 5**

Report of the Historic Preservation Award committee  
Fall, 2024

The Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award program is designed to give visibility to a common carrier railroad (class I, shortline, regional) for their efforts in preserving railroad history. Potential recipient railroads must be in business to move freight (or passengers), and not in the nostalgia trade. In other words, the preservation of a historical asset is not central to the mission of the railroad; the railroad selected has embarked on the preservation as a nod to the railroad's own history specifically, and the rich history of the North American railroad industry in general.

Our partnership with Railway Age and Railway Track & Structures brings prominence to the award (and NRHS) in the eyes of the professional railroad community.

The NRHS and Railway Age/RT&S awards team reviewed all qualified nominations and selected a 2024 honoree. The recipient is delighted to receive our recognition. The award will be presented in person at a short ceremony at the Railway Supply Institute conference and trade show in Chicago on Friday morning, October 11, at which time we will share the winner with NRHS members and the world at large.

The 2025 award cycle will begin early, as the presentation of next year's award will take place at the Railway Interchange trade show in May. Nominations will open in January.

Submitted by Mike Yuhas, on behalf of R. Victor Varney, Edward M. Berntsen, Tony White (NRHS) and William Vantuono (Railway Age) and David Lester (RT&S)  
October 2, 2024

## Appendix 6

Initial report of the online content committee  
Prepared by Tom Hogan, Iowa Chapter, and Mike Yuhas, Wisconsin Chapter  
Committee co-chairs  
October, 2024

Our proposal to begin expanding NRHS online content in earnest was approved at the August board meeting. We are starting slow. We have two or three slide show-type programs in production, and there are a few webinar-type ideas under development.

Announcements will be sent by email to all members in advance of these programs.

It is important to keep in mind that the new content will complement the historic footage being digitized and uploaded by Tom Coughlin and Marlin Taylor.

Members who wish to help this initiative succeed are encouraged to contact us with suggestions and program ideas: [thesteelhighway@gmail.com](mailto:thesteelhighway@gmail.com) and [mike@mikeyuhas.org](mailto:mike@mikeyuhas.org).

## Appendix 7

### 2025 NRHS Directory of Railroad Attractions

Shirley and Wesley Ross

Shirley and I will begin compiling the 2025 list sometime in late January. We will be sending a letter of invitation to approximately 750 railroad museums and attractions across the country. Our list is large; but, by no means, complete. We would like to ask the cooperation of all NRHS members to assist us in this task. If you know of any attraction that you think should be listed, and might not be on our list, please contact us with the name and US mailing address for the attraction. You may contact us at: [wesleyross@windstream.net](mailto:wesleyross@windstream.net)

Secondly, many attractions do not respond to our invitation to participate in the program. In order to get more participation this year, we would like to ask all NRHS members to contact any attractions in their area and alert someone that the letter of invitation will be coming in late January or early February and a response to that invitation must be sent back to us by mid-March. The list will be published in May and should be available around Memorial Day, so that members can use it for summer vacations.

This year, we will publish all attractions that respond. Any attraction that is free, or willing to offer a specific discount for NRHS members, on admissions or Gift Shop purchases, will be printed in **Bold Face Type**. Remember, all listings apply only during 2025, so each attraction MUST submit their information each year.