



## **ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES** **NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

October 12, 2024  
Doubletree Hotel, Wilmington, DE

*AC Members:* Chairman **Richard Shulby** (Baltimore / Piedmont-Carolinas), Secretary **Elizabeth Guenzler** (Central Coast), **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 Yuhas** (Wisconsin) **Ron Gawedzinski** (St. Louis), **Tom Posatko** (Wilmington), **William Welk** (Philadelphia), **Wesley Ross** (Kentucky Central), **Ken Mosby** (Delaware Valley), **Robert Leslie** (Blue Ridge)

*AC Members Joining Remotely:* **John Simanton** (Inland Empire), **Richard King** (Cincinnati), **Ken Eddy** (Arkansas-Boston Mountains), **John DeRoo** (Kansas City), **Victor Varney** (North Carolina Railway Museum), **Valli Hoski** (Ad Hoc)

*Others Joining Remotely:* John Goodman, Al Weber, Dave Baniewicz

*Others Present:* Scott Andes, Jon Baake, Bob Bitzer, Michael Dault, Bob Ernst, Kevin Feeney, John Fiorilla, Eric Fogg, Christopher Guenzler, Ellen Scott, Dan Meyer, Walter Gay, Wilson Harkins, Andrew Jennings, Joe Maloney, Christopher Monje, Ronald Resua, James Schoonmaker, Albert Walton, Ward Wells, Tony White, Brian Yates.

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The morning started with the plenary session and highlights/overview of the previously-submitted reports, which were sent via e-mail to the Advisory Council and are also on the Documents (Admin) site of the NRHS website.

At 9:05, Tony White welcomed everyone and thanked the Wilmington Chapter for hosting, then asked for a moment of silence to remember those members who have passed away recently

### **2023 Convention**

John Goodman gave a review of the event and the challenges encountered as final preparations were being made; although it turned out to be successful.

### **2024 Convention**

John reviewed this event, which was very successful, highlighting the main items, including the reception and East Broad Top seminar.

### **Conferences**

Bob Bitzer thanked the Wilmington Chapter for all their efforts to put on this conference and a round of applause was given. Conferences need to have National and Chapter involvement.

The George L. Carter Chapter in Johnson City, Tennessee, has a bid in for the spring conference. It is important to have face-to-face meetings. He urged those in attendance to get the word out to the chapters to offer to host a conference. [note: At the Board meeting that afternoon, the bid was accepted; dates to be determined.]

Mike Yuhas summarized the Spring Conference that was held in Cedar Rapids in May.

### **Heritage Grants**

Charlie Webb noted there is \$150,000 for the 2025 grants. Application forms will be on the website mid-November, with the deadline being January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. He thanked Dawn Holmberg for putting up the frequently asked questions, introduced at the convention, on the website.

### **Film Preservation**

Marlin Taylor reported there was not much new since August. The three-person team continues to need assistance. The preparatory work that Mitch undertakes is a very large part of the project. The Youtube channel with a large selection of film is proving to be very popular and is a testament to Tom Coughlin's work.

### **Membership**

Patti Webb reported that membership renewal e-mails will continue, in an effort to save paper and postage. Paper renewals will continue to be accepted.

### **Discount Program**

Wesley Ross remarked that he has 750 organizations to which he sends letters each year. Please let him know if there are any that are not on the Discount List that you would like to have included.

The list is published before Memorial Day and is good for that year only.

### **NRHS News**

Valli Hoski noted there were nine issues a year - six are colour PDFs and three are black-and-white mailed versions, limited to ten pages.

### **Bulletins**

In Jeff Smith's absence, Tony reported that the next issue is ready to be mailed.

### **Outstanding Railroad Historic Preservation Award**

Mike Yuhas gave a background, noting that this program was created in partnership with Railway Age and Railway Track and Structures. This year, the winner was Union Pacific for its Big Boy restoration and Mike was on hand yesterday to present the award at the Railway Track and Structures seminar in Chicago.

### **NRHS Fund**

Bob Ernst reported that the Fund has a balance of \$1,370,751. This year, the Freeman Trust will give \$50,000 for Heritage Grants, rather than the \$33,000 of recent years. He also noted that we will participate in Giving Tuesday this year and will be working with Skip on our Facebook page to create a link to our website so people can donate directly to us.

The Fund will be meeting four times in 2025, as usual. Dates are: January 31<sup>st</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup> and will only change if a conference is scheduled close to those dates.

Bob informed everyone that he has caught up on meeting minutes and financial statements and they are posted on the Admin site.

### **Online Content**

Mike discussed programs and seminars with industry leaders and recognized authors and asked that people send him or Tom Hogan ideas for what to cover -- this is in the formative stage.

### **Chapter Development**

Skip reported that the Wichita Falls Chapter would like to be renamed the Wichita Valley Chapter, and would be making a motion to that effect at the Board Meeting this afternoon.

### **Chapter Engagement Committee**

Richard Shulby reviewed the summary survey report previously submitted.

### **Legal Issues**

John Fiorilla noted that communications had continued during Tony's health issues. He is working with Ellen and doing legal research on the unresponsive chapters.

John stressed that safety briefings are necessary, including during railway shop tours, chapter meetings or at hotel meetings.

### **Membership Brochures**

Jon remarked that he sends about 10,000 brochures a year. The new brochures will have the correct QR code.

### **Rail Camp**

In addition to Becky's report, Tony noted that the first meeting with Railcampers each day is about safety.

### **Conclusion**

Tony dissolved the Board of Directors and all Committees until the Board Meeting this afternoon.

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A fifteen minute break took place then Richard called the Advisory Council meeting to order at 10:35, thanking the Wilmington Chapter for hosting this conference.

**It was moved by Mike Yuhas and seconded by Wesley Ross that the minutes of the previous meeting, August 29<sup>th</sup>, be accepted. Carried.**

### **Business Arising**

Bob Ernst confirmed that he was caught up on NRHS Fund minutes and going forward, financial statements.

## **New Business**

### **1. Elections**

The Chairman's and Secretary's terms were up for re-election this year. There had been no nominations received from the e-mailed announcement and no nominations received from the floor, so **it was moved by Wesley Ross and seconded by Ron Gawedzinski that Richard Shulby be elected by acclamation as Chairman and Elizabeth Guenzler be elected by acclamation as Secretary. Carried.**

### **2. Chapter Engagement Committee**

Elizabeth reviewed the survey results, highlighting communication and chapter newsletters being shared with National.

Ron discussed the four-page report, noting it was a partnership with the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council members to improve communication, and to take action now for continued success of the Society.

Elizabeth mentioned the Committee's proposal to re-activate the Chapter Activities Annual. The idea received support, although it was mentioned that chapter details on the chapter listing of our website could include recent accomplishments or have a link to a chapter's newsletters, and our Facebook page features current events and projects of chapters. It was countered by Skip Waters that Facebook is more 'now' whereas something done eight months ago would not be easy to find, whereas a published (PDF) booklet would be forever. It documents activity.

The CEC will move forward with investigating the chapter activities annual in more detail.

### **3. Advisory Council Chair as Ex-Officio Member of the Board of Directors**

Richard spoke to this, with the objective of further providing communication between the two groups. While there is nothing in the bylaws that allows or disallows this, made a recommendation as follows: **That the Advisory Council Chair be made an ex-officio member of the Board going forward.**

**There was no discussion. The recommendation was seconded by Wesley Ross. A vote was taken, with Mike Yuhas and Patti Webb abstaining, and Doug Scott opposed. Carried.**

### **4. Mini E-mail Campaign**

Mike Yuhas, as part of the Membership Committee, noted that chapters may have the need to contact other non-Chapter members (At Large) in the area and an e-mail can be sent by NRHS on behalf of the chapter with a geotargetted area of 100 miles, thereby keeping people's e-mail addresses private.

## **Open Mic**

*Topic 1:* Ron Gawedzinski asked why the convention committee had been disbanded? Tony replied that that happened while he was in hospital and was done by Joe Maloney, the Vice-President. John Goodman retired from the convention committee as chairman. Tony would announce later today the new committee chairman.

*Topic 2:* Ron then made the following motion “The Advisory Committee wants to acknowledge the following individuals: John Goodman, Walter Zullig, Skip Waters, Dan Meyer, Dawn Holmberg, Al Weber, Eileen Weber, Elizabeth Guenzler and Mike Yuhas, by saying THANK YOU for your tremendous work in putting on NRHS Annual Conventions for the past nine years. Without your dedication, diligence and hard work, the Society could not have achieved this success”.

Mike seconded and the motion was carried.

*Topic 3:* William Welk asked Valli Hoski why the mailed version of the NRHS News was not on the Admin site. Val replied that that was in the process of being done, both with past and present issues.

### **Announcements**

Richard Shulby noted that the extant roundhouse survey will be moved to the primary page of NRHS rather than remaining on the Admin site, where it currently is. In addition to the roundhouse listing, there is a bygone roundhouse survey (all the others that existed) which is available in either Excel or PDF.

Elizabeth noted that it was Bob Brewster’s birthday the following day.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25

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