



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 4th, 2025
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Milwaukee

AC Members: Chairman **Richard Shulby** (Baltimore / Piedmont-Carolinas), Secretary **Elizabeth Guenzler** (Central Coast), **Doug Scott** (Cape Cod / Potomac / Western Connecticut), **Cliff Kierstead** (St. Louis), **Dawn Holmberg** (Northstar), **Jim Perry** (Washington, DC), **William Welk** (Philadelphia), **Joe Maloney** (Tidewater), **Arthur Bliss** (Champlain Valley), **Ted Itchon** (Promontory), **Dan Grudzielank** (Wisconsin)

AC Members Joining Remotely: **Cora Sowa** (New York), **Robert Leslie** (Blue Ridge), **Marlin Taylor** (Delaware Valley), **Ken Eddy** (Arkansas-Boston Mountains), **Bob Brewster** (Intermountain), **John Simanton** (Inland Northwest), **Bob St. John** (Topeka), **Wesley Ross** (Kentucky Central), **Regan Rickson** (Atlanta), **Ed Berntsen** (Pacific Northwest / Tacoma), **Ken Katta** (Long Island-Sunrise Trail), **Andrew Jennings** (Boston), **Patti Webb** (Harrisburg), **Skip Waters** (North Texas), **David Foster** (Roanoke), **Richard King** (Tri-State), **Valli Hoski** (Ad Hoc)

Others Joining Remotely: Jerry Hardwich, Walter Zullig, Ron Gawedzinski, Jeff Carhart, Charles Webb, Kevin Feeney, Tom Edwards

Others In Person: Dan Meyer, Al Weber, Tony White, Mike Yuhas, Bob Bitzer, Bob Ernst, Ellen Scott, Edward Koehler, John Fiorilla, Dave Baniewicz, Scott Andes, Carson Sailor, Ward Wells, James Schoonmaker, Tom Gallagher, Jon Baake, Christopher Guenzler, Carol Ann Cornelius, Frank Cornelius, Preston Hamilton, Steve Siegerist, Neal Wegner, Cathy Wegner

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 09:00, Tony welcomed everyone, thanked the Wisconsin Chapter for hosting the conference, then asked for a moment of silence for those who have passed.

After a safety announcement by John Fiorilla, the reports were given or reviewed.

Convention Update

Mike reported we had a successful convention in East Lansing with 180 members attending. A recap video was distributed to all and is on the NRHS Youtube Film Archive at <https://nrhs.com/programs/our-youtube-channel/nrhs-film-archive/>. There was no separate registration fee this year and no event tickets.

While nothing is firm for 2026 at this point, the committee is looking at Cincinnati in September. No other details are ready at this time. For 2027, the probable venue is Baltimore.

Conferences

Bob Bitzer reported that while no formal proposal has been received, a chapter is working on hosting the next autumn conference. There is no spring conference location at this time.

Elizabeth suggested sending an e-mail to the chapter representatives and presidents to encourage chapters to step forward and offer to host a conference, and what is involved. Ellen or Bob to send the information to Elizabeth.

Patti mentioned Key Lock and Lantern, the non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of railroad history and memorabilia, is interested in partnering with the NRHS. She will send information to Bob and Tony.

Heritage Grants

Charlie reported that the application forms for 2026 are expected to be ready by Thanksgiving. The Twin Forks Chapter received a grant to restore a Boston and Maine coach but are looking for a new home for it as they could not complete the work.

Ed Koehler suggested that the group send an e-mail to Val Hoski if something needs to go into the News.

Film Preservation

Mitch had nothing new to report. He continues to scan and document the slides. There are well over 3,000 pictures in the gallery on our website.

Membership

Patti noted it is still on the decline. 3,879 or 4.5% decrease compared to 2024. She also noted that she needs to step down as membership chair and Tony remarked that he had recruited someone.

Mike remarked that the 3,879 number is year-to-date, whereas last year is the full year. On September 17th, an e-mail renewal reminder was sent, then a couple of days ago, another one.

Mike also acknowledged the work of Steve Siegerist, who looks after all the cheques that are sent for renewals and donations in conjunction with renewals. A round of applause was given.

Membership Awards

Doug had nothing to add to his previously-submitted report.

Membership Brochures

Nothing new.

RailCamp

See report

Historic Preservation Award

Nothing new. There will be a 2026 program.

Historic Plaques

Walter reported there have been a few expressions of interest but nothing concrete.

Inspector General

Walter noted that he is dealing only with the Twin Forks Chapter matter.

Treasurer

Bob Bitzer reported that the QuickBooks accounting system is working well thanks to Ward. The 2024 audit is being worked on for a November 6th filing. We are holding steady, the convention was profitable and Rail Camp broke even.

Donations are being sent to both the NRHS and the NRHS Fund. If a donation is designated as “general fund”, it goes to the NRHS itself, not the Fund.

Bulletin

Tony noted the next Bulletin is being sent out. The delay was caused by technical issues with the printer. Three issues will be sent out by January.

NRHS Fund

Bob Ernst had nothing extra to report. They are still looking for a comptroller and will be putting an article in the News. There is \$1,450,768 in the Fund as of October 1st. On the NRHS side as of August 31st, dues have netted \$170,000, year-to-date income is \$45,000 and there is \$133,000 in the bank.

NRHS News

Val reported the October issue is done. The November issue will be on the convention and other information. Three printed issues are mailed as a courtesy to our members. PDFs of all issues are on the Admin section of the website.

General Counsel

John Fiorilla remarked there was not a lot going on at the moment. The society was bequeathed \$25,000 from an estate and there is another \$5,000 coming.

Convention Sales

Dave Baniewicz reported convention sales went well and we made a profit.

Chapter Development

Skip Waters had nothing to report. The new Hub City chapter is a very go-ahead group and has an active Facebook page.

Internet Report

Al Weber remarked that the committee consists of him, Dawn and Trishah. GoDaddy has been the Internet provider for our server for many years and they are discontinuing some services and replacing with others.

As such, a second virtual server is needed and \$1,000 will be requested from the Board. The company chosen is In Motion, which is a nationwide server farm.

The Advisory Council meeting was called to order by Richard at 10:34, and he welcomed everyone. The three Board members identified as being in attendance, as is required, were Scott Andes, Ellen Scott and Bob Bitzer.

Richard reviewed the agenda then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 17th meeting. With the additions of Cliff Kierstead being in attendance and a couple of items that Joe Maloney had brought to Elizabeth's attention earlier, **it was motioned by Joe and seconded by Arthur that the minutes be accepted. Carried.**

Business Arising From The Minutes

1. At-Large Committee -- Richard explained that due to the large number of At-Large members and their lack of representation at the Council level, a committee was formed and an e-mail sent, inviting any At-Large member to represent the group at the Advisory Council.

There have been four positive responses to date and Richard will set up a brief meeting with the At-Large Committee then consult with the four and discuss ideas.

ACTION ITEM 1: Richard to set up meeting with At-Large Committee.

Richard noted that Board approval will not be needed, just concurrence.

2. Contact List of Officers and Committee Chairs -- Elizabeth reported that Ellen provided her a list and she distributed to the members of the Advisory Council and chapter presidents. This is another example of communication being improved between chapters and National.
3. Yearbook/ Activities Annual - Elizabeth reported that after canvassing the chapter representatives and presidents last weekend, 29 chapters responded that they were in favour of this publication returning and two were not in favour.

Some discussion ensued, with Elizabeth countering the cost angle since such a publication would be a PDF.

Ken Katta noted that a lot of members of his chapter, Long Island-Sunrise Trail, are not NRHS members, and it was countered that an activities annual would show such people what is available to them if they become members.

Cora Sowa noted that her chapter would not have much to report but as all chapters differ in size, activities and missions, it does not matter.

It was also noted that there would be a record going forward, on an annual basis, of each chapter's accomplishments.

New Business

Jerry Hardwick of the Central New York Chapter, introduced the topic of sharing newsletters with other chapters. They send hard copies and e-mailed versions monthly and documents what is currently happening with the chapter, as well as providing some historical information.

This item was discussed a little more but was moved to the Chapter Roundtable as it fitted that forum.

Open Mic

Cliff had a request from a St. Louis Chapter member regarding the membership expiration dates - end of year vs. when they joined.

Mike noted that most chapters do not collect and remit NRHS dues, although a few do. Chapters are separate entities. The bylaws were changed quite recently, but Steve Siegerist agreed there is some confusion out there.

Mike reminded everyone that upon request from a chapter representative, he can provide a list of members for any chapter who are National members. Send an e-mail to membership@nrhs.com

David Foster noted that the Roanoke Chapter collected National dues simultaneously with chapter dues, although that is becoming harder to do. Patti Webb, as Membership Chair, noted that Delta, their chapter's head of membership, does an excellent job of compiling the information and sending to her.

Patti also requested that reports, agendas and the Zoom link, are sent to Charlie Webb, head of Heritage Grants, as he is no longer on the Board and is therefore not included. Elizabeth made a note to do that in the future.

There being no other business, it was motioned by Dan and seconded by Doug that the meeting be adjourned. Carried at 11:30.
