ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 21st, 2026
Crowne Plaza Playhouse Square, Cleveland, Ohio

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), **Ted Itchon** (Promontory), **Bob Brewster** (Intermountain), **Harold Shaak** (Lancaster), **Marvin Rogers** (Samuel Spencer), **William Welk** (Philadelphia), **Bob St. John** (Topeka), **Arthur Bliss** (Champlain Valley)

AC Members Joining Remotely: **Cora Sowa** (New York City)**, Jerry Hardwich** (Central New York), **Bruce Hucker** (Iowa), **Patti Webb** (Harrisburg), **Tom Posatko** (Wilmington), **Ken Katta** (Long Island-Sunrise Trail), **Ed Berntsen** (Pacific Northwest / Tacoma), **Regan Rickson** (Atlanta), **Robert Leslie** (Blue Ridge), **Scott Stodola** (George L. Carter), **David Foster** (Roanoke), **John Simanton** (Inland Empire), **Wesley Ross** (Kentucky Central), **Skip Waters** (North Texas), **Marlin Taylor** (Delaware Valley)

Others Joining Remotely: Ron Gawedzinski, Matthew Payne

Others In Person: Dan Meyer, Ward Wells, Bob Bitzer, Jack Barbier, Thomas VanDerGrift, Walter Zullig, Jon Baake, Roy Peckham, Geoffrey Homatas, Helen Shaak, William Siebert, Bob Ernst, Eileen Weber, Al Weber, Bob Caccese, Bill Didden, Tony White, Michael Brock, Paul Rogers, Christopher Buckley, Patricia Johnson, John Fiorilla, Jeff Stoudt, Lee Schultz, Eric Fogg, Andrea Capiola

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Tony called the plenary session to order at 08:55 and welcomed everyone. He asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of 25 years and 10 days ago (9/11/2001), as well as for those members who had passed since the spring conference.

After a safety briefing by John Fiorilla, so commenced the 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.

Alco Photos
John F. reported a new for-profit organization was working with City of Schenectady and they are starting with the glass photo negatives so they can be duplicated for selling. This is a continuation of the city's history.

Bulletin
Tony summarized Jeff's report.

Chapter Development
Tony summarized the procedure and noted there was a model railroad club in Ohio interested in becoming a chapter.

Chapter Engagement Committee
Nothing to report.

Conferences
Bob Bitzer encouraged chapters to step up and host. Ted Itchon, President and National Representative of the Promontory Chapter which hosted the Salt Lake City conference in May, noted the conference went well and the chapter made money. He appreciated everyone's help.

Convention
150 members registered for this year's convention. No decisions have been made for 2027 yet.

Elections
Bob Ernst noted that 1,083 votes were cast in an uncontested election. The Elections Committee will be looking at electronic voting for 2028. He thanked his fellow committee members.

NRHS Fund
Bob Ernst noted that there was $1,505,658 in the Fund.

Film Preservation
The donation of slides is ongoing. The scanner and laptop need replacing, which will be done.

General Counsel
John F. reviewed his report.

Heritage Grants
Charlie Webb reported the application period starts in November and closes on January 31st, 2027. Valli Hoski thanked Charlie and the other members of the committee for the tremendous amount of work that goes into the review of the applications and Charlie thanked Patti for all the administrative work.

Historic Plaques
Walter summarized his report.

Historic Preservation Award
Mike reminded everyone that this award is done in partnership with Railway Age and recognizes a common carrier railway that also undertakes preservation. Victor Varney, Ed Berntsen, Larry Pearlman and Tony White are the committee members with Dawn Holmberg as the webmaster. This year, CPKC was the recipient and the award was presented at the Railway Interchange conference in early June. It was very much appreciated.

Inspector General
Walter had nothing to report

Membership Awards
Nothing beyond the previously-submitted report

Membership Attractions
Wesley reported that he and Shirley had put together the 2026 list and are planning the 2027 version, with letters being sent to the attractions in January.

Membership Brochures
Jon Bake reported he had sent 15,000 brochures to over 150 organizations, noting it is a marketing tool to encourage members to become national members.

NRHS News
Val referenced her report, highlighting that there were three more issues planned this year. The print issue is mailed three times a year and all issues are on the Admin site.

President's Conference Committee (PCC)
Scott Andes noted the next meeting is set for October 14th.

Photo Contest
NRHS is a sponsor of Trains Magazine's photo contest and those on the committee are Tony, Jeff Smith, Mike and Larry. We administer the program, Keith Schmidt administers the entries and the winners are announced in the November issue.

Working on a youth photo contest and youth video contest.

RailCamp
See Becky's report. 36 campers total, with 24 in the East and 12 in the West.

Telegraph
Tony announced that Elizabeth will be re-introducing the Telegraph, a quarterly newsletter for chapter leadership.

Treasurer
Bob Bitzer reported the first draft of the analysis is underway for 2025. In process of developing budget for next year.

Ward Wells, Assistant Treasurer, reported that as of August 31st, 2026, there is $115,052 in the society and $1,517,197 in the Fund. Donations: $19,528 to the Society, $122,651 for the Fund, totalling $149,909.

Website: nothing to add from the report. It was noted that the NRHS e-mails would be moving from GoDaddy to Inmotion.

That concluded the plenary session and a break occurred.

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Richard called the Advisory Council meeting to order at 11:00 then Mike thanked Wheel Rail Seminars for being the convention sponsor.

It was noted that Tony, Mike and Kevin were the three Board members in attendance. There were others, but the requirement is three.

Richard reviewed the minutes of the May 30th meeting. Doug made a motion to accept, it was seconded by Joe and carried.

Richard noted the At-Large Committee work was in progress. Regarding the Mission Statement, he has been working with Larry via e-mail and this would be discussed at the Board meeting in the afternoon.

New Business
There had been no nominations received from the e-mail sent to all representatives for the position of Chairman and Secretary, so Richard and Elizabeth were elected by acclamation.

Open Mic

Bruce Hucker of the Iowa Chapter asked who to contact at the National level regarding officer malfeasance. Walter Zullig, in his role as Inspector General, responded and provided his e-mail address for review of the matter and recommendations.

Andrea, who is involved with Mount Rainier Scenic Railway, suggested being more active/visible on social media.

Elizabeth explained that Skip Waters handles the Facebook postings, which consists of chapter events and postings, with the majority being sharing of other groups' postings. She noted that we do not have an Instagram presence.

Jack Barbier noted travel costs to attend the convention.

Bill Siebert remarked that our website does not have a lot of past convention coverage. That will be rectified over the next few months, with Tony noting that we have past history in text. We do have a Youtube channel.

Bill Lynch, one of the At-Large members of the Council, suggested a younger member event.

Cora Sowa noted that in her area, collaboration with area groups has been unwelcome.

Bob Brewster suggested opening events to the public.

Valli suggested generating a list to libraries which have railway collections.

Review of Items to Report to Board
N/A

Announcements
Elizabeth thanked everyone who had given their sympathies and condolences regarding the passing of her husband, Christopher, a regular attendee at the conventions and conferences, who had 27 years as a member.

Adjournment
There being no other business, it was motioned by Joe and seconded by Doug that the meeting adjourn at 11:35 am.

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