

## **Board Meeting – Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association – September 17, 2022 – Baxter, Minnesota**

Meeting called to order by President Bill Zidel at 8:29 PM. Board Members present: Don Golde, Steve Joyner, Bob Makins, Jim Woodward, Bill Zidel, and Ken Zieska. Outgoing Board member Doug Shearer was not present for the meeting; Board members Dave Hillard and Dean O'Neill did not attend the 2022 Convention.

Guests included John Fujii and Kent Sullivan, as well as incoming Board members Steve Fuller and Bill Taylor.

Bill Taylor complimented Ken Zieska for leading a successful and smoothly run 2022 Convention

**2023 Convention:** Bill Zidel commented that arrangements are progressing for the 2023 Tacoma Convention. Planning meetings will begin in earnest in October 2022.

### **NPRHA Officers:**

Dave Hillard and Bill Zidel are working to identify who will eventually replace Dave as NPRHA Treasurer. We also need to identify persons within the current (post-September 2022) NPRHA Board who can replace Bill Zidel and Jim Woodward as President and Secretary when their terms expire at the end of the 2023 NPRHA Convention.

### **Officers serving until the 2023 Convention:**

Bob Makins nominated **Jim Woodward** to serve as **Secretary**, Steve Joyner seconded. Approved unanimously via voice vote.

Jim Woodward nominated **Dave Hillard** to serve as **Treasurer**, Bill Zidel seconded. Approved unanimously via voice vote.

Bob Makins nominated **Ken Zieska** to serve as **Vice President**, Steve Joyner seconded. Approved unanimously via voice vote.

Ken Zieska nominated **Bill Zidel** to serve as **President**, Don Golde seconded. Approved unanimously via voice vote.

### **Convention Planning Guide:**

Bill Zidel mentioned that he is updating the NPRHA Convention Planning Guide, which was last revised in 2006. The 2006 version can be viewed at <http://www.nprha.org/Association%20Documents/Convention%20Planning/NPRHAConventionPlanningGuideRev13D.pdf>

### **Calendar Committee:**

As previously reported by Bill Kuebler at the September 13, 2022 Board Meeting, and again at the September 17, 2022 Membership Meeting, the majority of the members of the current Calendar Committee, consisting of Duane Durr, John Fujii, Bill Kuebler (Chairman), Bob McCoy, and Gary Wildung, will be retiring from Calendar production when the 2024 NPRHA Calendar is published in mid-2023. Only John Fujii plans to remain on the Calendar Committee. As previously reported, David Saldana is currently assisting John Kutz with final production of the 2024 Calendar.

Given this situation, the Board invited John Fujii to the September 17, 2022 Board Meeting to get John's views regarding the Calendar Committee and NPRHA Calendars for 2025 and beyond.

Bill Zidel mentioned that he had some names in mind as possible Calendar Committee members to work on the NPRHA Calendar for 2025 and subsequent years. He will discuss their possible participation with them. Bill also plans to gather additional input regarding possible future Calendar Committee members from the aforementioned members of the current Calendar Committee, as well as seeking their comments on strategies and procedures that have worked well for them over the past 25 years. That said, Bill Zidel asked John Fujii for his input regarding the search for new Calendar committee members.

John Fujii commented that since the announcements of the impending retirement of the current Calendar Committee, he had been contacted by a few NPRHA members who expressed interest in Calendar development and production for the years 2025 and beyond. John suggested to those members that they should also contact members of the NPRHA Board. John suggested to the Board that they encourage member participation in the Calendar development and production process for future NPRHA Calendars. John also encouraged the Board to help with definition of the Calendar development and production process.

Questions were raised regarding whether NPRHA should stay with the current format for the Calendar. In recent years, it has consisted of 28 total 8.5 x 11 inch pages – 4 of which constitute the front and back outside and inside covers, with the remaining 24 pages displaying a large photo on one side and a tabular month calendar, with NP related notations, and perhaps a few small thumbnail images on the other side. Might we instead provide a large wall calendar that has just one large image and displays the month tables for the entire year, such as was traditionally published by many railroads, including the Northern Pacific? John Fujii suggested that we consider asking the NPRHA membership about

questions of this nature. John also commented that the NPRHA Board must consider how various calendar options might affect the costs and revenue associated with the Calendar.

Bill Taylor asked John Fujii if written instructions currently exist for production of the NPRHA Calendar – covering guidelines for photo selection and other aspects of the process. John replied that he was not aware of such a document, but he is a relatively recent member of the current Calendar Committee, brought on board mainly to utilize his capabilities for image editing / enhancement, and graphics. He essentially replaced an outside person who had been charging NPRHA for work that John has since done gratis.

Question was asked regarding past practice for selection of photos for the NPRHA Calendar. John replied that each edition of the Calendar includes a request for photos for consideration as Calendar content. Some of the photos in past calendars appeared as a result of that request. Some have come from the personal collections of Calendar Committee members, with many in recent years coming from sources such as the Nixon collection at Museum of the Rockies, University of Montana Mansfield Library, Warren McGee photos (now held by Montana Historical Society), NPRHA Archives, Milwaukee Road Historical Association, etc.

Bill Zidel commented that as Bill Kuebler had mentioned at the Membership Meeting earlier in the day, the photo selection process makes a deliberate effort to achieve Balance – balance of steam vs diesel, east end vs west end, balance in era, balance in choosing images from several photographers, etc. John Fujii commented that in his relatively recent experience on the Calendar Committee, this attempt to achieve balance also relates to comments from NPRHA's most vocal members at NPRHA Conventions and perhaps via other avenues of expression. John further commented that he did not have a good understanding of how comments from those vocal members might relate to opinions held by NPRHA's younger members.

Comment was made that with the departure of Bill Kuebler from the Calendar Committee, we might be losing a significant resource to help with identification of locations and circumstances for images that might be chosen for future calendars. Some Board members commented that if the Calendar Committee finds a superior image for which they do not know the location, date, or other circumstances, they could probably consult with other NPRHA members for assistance, especially those who lived and/or worked in the general area of the photo. Furthermore, we might find that Bill Kuebler might be willing to consult or critique information that the future Calendar Committee might place in future calendars. And if we find a truly magnificent NP image, we might consider putting it in a future calendar even if we cannot identify the exact location, date, or circumstances. It might be wise to include in the calendar committee persons who grew up in locations along the NP. Precise dates, persons in photos, and other context might be more challenging, if the photographer did not record that information.

We might also consider using the membership to vet information about photos for an upcoming calendar. Small to medium sized thumbnails of the photos might be included in *The Mainstreeter*, along with requests for NPRHA members to provide whatever information they might have as to location, time and date, people in photos, etc.

John asked Board members who are members of other railroad historical groups that produce calendars how they would compare the NPRHA Calendar to that calendar products by the other group. Don Golde replied that in his opinion the NPRHA Calendars are generally comparable to the calendars produced by the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society, although both have strengths and also room for improvement. Ken Zieska commented that photos in NPRHA Calendars have been sharper and more graphically dramatic than the content of calendars produced by many other railroad historical organizations.

John Fujii commented that groups such as the Calendar Committee do their work at least in part because their product is a source of pride for them and for their sponsoring organization. Bill Taylor commented that the product of a cohesive team is always better than the product of an individual. John Fujii commented that Board should probably be a bit more involved in the workings of the post-2023 Calendar Committee, if only to ensure that their product has the same general quality level as past NPRHA Calendars.

Kent Sullivan commented that many organizations similar to NPRHA are seeing the effects of an aging membership group. Many are seeing declining membership rolls, as younger generations may have fewer people interested in railroad history. In Kent's opinion, those organizations that take a moment to examine and perhaps modify their approaches to products like calendars are more successful in retaining or perhaps growing membership than organizations that continue to do things like calendars in exactly the same way they've been done in the past.

Several commented that NPRHA's Calendar is more than a simple document showing which dates fall on what days of the week, and which are holidays, etc. during a year. The NPRHA Calendar is a tangible product of our organization that

allows us to spread information about the Northern Pacific and its environment, recruit membership, and market NPRHA and its activities to all who view the calendar, including some members of the broader population that may not have a detailed interest in Northern Pacific or in railroads in general.

**Any product we might consider to replace the current** approach to the NPRHA Calendar should provide similar capabilities to recruit membership, and market NPRHA. The Mainstreeter magazine is probably not as powerful a marketing tool as the current NPRHA Calendar. In order to ensure the longevity of NPRHA, we need to engage younger members of our population. Providing a Calendar that shows NPRHA members pursuing their interest in Northern Pacific, as well as documenting historical contributions of employees, equipment, and places to the fortunes of the Northern Pacific, could help us attract membership from the younger generations.

On the other hand, in this age of smart phones and computers, many people keep their actual schedules on those systems, in part because they provide a much higher level of information integration.

Bill Zidel will collect names of NPRHA members interested in serving on the Calendar Committee. John Fujii will provide a checklist to assist that effort. The NPRHA Board will further consider the matter in future meetings.

Bob Makins asked whether the Board needs to discuss **pricing and number to be printed for the 2024 NPRHA Nixon Tribute Calendar**. Consensus of the Board was that price should be in the range of \$18 to \$20, although no vote was taken. Regarding the size of the print run, Bill Zidel will discuss historical calendar sales and distribution with NPRHA Treasurer Dave Hillard to provide context for a future Board decision whether we should increase the number printed above the recent level of 2600. The informal poll at the September 17, 2022 Membership meeting suggested that some members might buy additional copies. **The Board should attempt to decide these issues by mid-October 2022.**

**Adjournment:** Jim Woodward moved to adjourn the meeting; Don Golde seconded. Adjournment approved unanimously at 9:37 PM.

Jim Woodward – Secretary, NPRHA