

Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association

General Membership Meeting

Tacoma, Washington

September 13, 2023

Board Members Present: Steve Fuller, Don Golde, Dave Hillard, Steve Joyner, Dean O'Neill, Bill Taylor, Jim Woodward, and Bill Zidel.

Board Members Not Present: Ken Zieska.

Meeting called to Order at 12:44 PM by President Zidel.

Printed Copies of the Membership Meeting Agenda, NPRHA Treasurer's Report, NPRHA Balance Sheet, NPRHA Profit & Loss Report, NPRHA Company Store Profit & Loss Report, NPRHA Membership Report, and NPRHA Grants Summary Report, as well as 2022 Membership Meeting Minutes and 2022 Board Meeting Minutes, were available to Membership Meeting attendees.

President Zidel introduced those members of the current NPRHA Board who were present at the Convention.

President Zidel thanked Dean O'Neill, Chuck Soule, and Doug Andreassen, for their assistance in organizing the Presentations and helping with other arrangements for the 2023 NPRHA Convention. He also thanked the Conventions Committee. He also thanked Jan and Bill Taylor for preparing nametags and assisting with advertising. He thanked Al Zimmerman for the Convention T-Shirts, which feature Jack Christensen's art work. He also thanked Jim Woodward for his service as NPRHA Secretary and John Fujii for his photographic documentation of recent NPRHA Conventions and activities.

President Zidel asked attendees if they had any housekeeping issues with the current convention, but none were mentioned. He apologized for running out of meals for the lunch that accompanied the Membership Meeting. This was a result of underestimating the number of spouses and guests that accompanied convention attendees. To ensure that he could order the correct number of lunches for Friday, September 15, he asked for a show of hands by those who planned to be present for that lunch (rather than getting lunch on their own as they pursued the layout tours and other activities that were suggested for Friday). This resulted in a count of 20, a good match for the number of meals that Bill had ordered. Dean O'Neill commented that 11 model railroad layouts had been identified for Friday's tour and additional Friday activities would be discussed later in the Membership meeting.

Approval of Minutes for the September 17, 2022 Membership Meeting at Baxter, Minnesota: Mike Lustig moved to approve, Dean O'Neill seconded. Approved unanimously via voice vote.

NPRHA Board Membership:

Four Board Members were elected in 2022, and have agreed to serve through 2024: Steve Fuller – Seat 6, Don Golde – Seat 7, Bill Taylor – Seat 8, and Dave Hillard – Seat 9.

At the request of President Zidel, Steve Fuller read the names of the Board members holding the other five seats, which are up for election or re-election in 2023:

Three Board Members - Bill Zidel – Seat 1, Steve Joyner – Seat 2, and Dean O'Neill – Seat 5 agreed to stay on the Board if re-elected at this Convention. Two Board Members - Jim Woodward – Seat 3 and Ken Zieska – Seat 4 will not be returning, so replacements must be elected at this Convention.

Steve Fuller asked three times if there were any additional nominations for Seat 1. No additional nominations were received, so Bill Zidel was re-elected via a unanimous voice vote.

Steve Fuller asked three times if there were any additional nominations for Seat 2. No additional nominations were received, so Steve Joyner was re-elected via a unanimous voice vote.

Steve Fuller asked three times if there were any additional nominations for Seat 5. No additional nominations were received, so Dean O'Neill was re-elected via a unanimous voice vote.

President Zidel then asked if there were any nominations for Seat 3. Tim Trudnowski nominated himself for Seat 3, Rich Batie seconded. Tim briefly described himself and his background. No other nominations were received for Seat 3, and Tim Trudnowski was elected to Seat 3 via unanimous voice vote.

President Zidel then asked if there were any nominations for Seat 4. John Nemnich nominated himself for Seat 4, Rich Batie seconded. John briefly described himself and his background. No other nominations were received for Seat 4, and John Nemnich was elected to Seat 4 via unanimous voice vote.

Grants Committee:

Committee Chairman Harold Shannon could not attend the 2023 Convention due to health issues, so John Fujii briefly reported. In addition to Harold and John, the Grants Committee includes Phil Beach, Bruce Ferguson, and Barry Kantowitz.

2023 Grants included:

- \$5000 to Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society for cleaning, repair, and interpretation of Bonanzaville's Northern Pacific Pullman Passenger Coach #1360
- \$5000 to Yakima Valley Rail & Steam Museum at Toppenish, Washington to build a 1900's era exhibit to house and display a restored Northern Pacific motorcar, along with tools that typically would have been in a motorcar shed during that era.

A report detailing 2023 NPRHA Grants will appear in *The Mainstreeter*.

Calendar Committee:

President Zidel complimented former Calendar Committee chairman Bill Kuebler, as well as his former committee members Duane Durr, John Fujii, Bob McCoy, and Gary Wildung for their recently published Ron Nixon themed 2024 NPRHA Calendar, which NPRHA members have already received and is currently available at the NPRHA Company Store.

Going forward, the Calendar Committee now consists of Kurt Armbruster as Chairman, with John Fujii as a carry-over member, as well as new members Doug Andreassen, Steve Fuller, Mike Lustig, Alan Manson, Dave Saldana, Chuck Soule, and Rich Wilkens. Jonathan Fischer, Dean O'Neill, and Jan Taylor will serve as advisors to the Calendar Committee.

Kurt spoke briefly about his goals for future Calendars, as well as possible future content for *The Mainstreeter*.

Modeling Committee:

Chairman Dean O'Neill reported that the Modeling Committee has had a relatively light list of new offerings in the past two years; however, that will change significantly when the Committee announces several new offerings at their Convention presentation on the evening of Friday, September 15, 2023. Currently, they have one new product – the Thrall Warehouse –available through the NPRHA Company Store.

Convention Committee:

Chairman Dean O'Neill commented that we are currently here in Tacoma to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad. COVID considerations, the 150th Commemoration, and a very willing Convention Chairman led to the unusual circumstance where NPRHA has two Conventions in a row in the same state.

Future Conventions:

- 2024 – September 10 – 14 at the Marriott Delta Hotel in Everett, Washington. Kent Sullivan, who will lead arrangements for that Convention, offered the following additional information:
GNRHS will have their Convention at the same hotel immediately after the NPRHA Convention. These arrangements result in a better hotel room rate for both organizations. There will be a joint swap meet.
The Everett convention will feature a Friday visit to the Northwest Railway Museum at Snoqualmie, Washington, current home of Northern Pacific L-5 0-6-0 #924, an operable NP steam switch engine, and several other NP items – see <https://trainmuseum.org/index.php/large-artifact-collection>.
Paul Hobbs asked if there would be options for tours of other nearby attractions, such as the *Boeing Future of Flight Museum*. Kent replied that it might be possible, if the days of the convention are not fully filled with NP-related activities. Kent also commented that the *Future of Flight Museum* is about a 15-minute drive from the convention hotel, so attendees might choose to go there on their own during their convention stay.
Kent mentioned that *Friends of the Burlington Northern* (the BN historical group) recently signed an agreement to house their history information at Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive, along with information from NPRHA, GNRHS, and several other groups covering railroads that operated in the Pacific Northwest. This may result in closer future ties between NPRHA and Friends of the Burlington Northern.

A question was asked regarding a visit to the Lake Whatcom Railway. Kent replied that he has been in contact with that organization, but currently has no definite plans for a visit to their operation as part of the Everett Convention. This might be another operation that convention attendees can choose to visit on their own. Kent also commented that there probably would not be a Convention-arranged visit to Bellingham.

- 2025 – St Paul, Minnesota area. Steve Fuller leads arrangements for the St. Paul Convention. This will be a joint convention with Great Northern Railway Historical Society and Spokane, Portland & Seattle Historical Society. Members of the Burlington Route Historical Society will also be welcome at that Convention, although we have not established a formal agreement for that organization to be part of Convention arrangements. Steve is seeking presenters for this convention, with an emphasis on presentations regarding the relationships between the NP, GN, & CB&Q, and perhaps about relationships between the NP and other railroads that served the Twin Cities, such as the Soo Line, Chicago Great Western, C&NW, and Milwaukee Road. One presenter has already been identified and will discuss how the NP, GN, CB&Q, and SP&S passenger trains interacted between Chicago and Seattle/Tacoma/Portland. This convention will likely feature two or more concurrent presentations, with many presentations presented two or more times, to allow attendees to experience the broad range of topics that this convention will likely address. People interested in presenting should contact Steve Fuller.
- 2026 – Toppenish, Washington area, at the Legends Casino Hotel. This convention will feature Toppenish's Northern Pacific Railway Museum. Doug Shearer is currently leading arrangements for the Toppenish Convention.

Jackson Street Roundhouse:

Bill Zidel reported that he learned about two days ago that the Great Northern Railway Historical Society will be moving their archives out of Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since NPRHA currently subleases archive space at Jackson Street from GNRHS, this means that NPRHA must either move into new space (perhaps along with GNRHS) or see if we can establish a new direct lease with Minnesota Transportation Museum for space at Jackson Street Roundhouse. NPRHA's current sublease arrangement exists because previous leadership of MTM said that they did not want to lease directly to NPRHA. However, Jackson Street Roundhouse / MTM now has a new leadership team, and perhaps they may be more amenable to leasing to NPRHA. We need to understand what plans Jackson Street has for the space currently occupied by GNRHS and NPRHA. If NPRHA were to stay at Jackson Street (as suggested by Kent Sullivan) after GNRHS leaves, NPRHA would lose access to the large format document scanner that is owned by GNRHS. If NPRHA must move to a new location, that will be a significant moving project, although we have heard from Ken Zieska that many NPRHA archives have already migrated to PNRA. In either case, we must be sure that NPRHA materials are still accessible to Hudson Leighton, who has been NPRHA's primary archivist at Jackson Street in recent years. Moving to a location more secure than Jackson Street would be a plus. Ladd Siegfried would also like to get reinvolved with the NPRHA archives in St. Paul. He recently retired and has expressed interest in resuming work at Jackson Street, or perhaps at another location, if NPRHA moves along with GNRHS. If NPRHA must move, funds must be budgeted to pay a commercial mover to migrate NPRHA archives to the new location. Bill Zidel will learn more about the GNRHS move and share it with the Board so they can make an informed decision.

NPRHA Website update:

Kent Sullivan reported on efforts to update the NPRHA website. Surveys of the NPRHA Membership have revealed that members are interested in modifying the NPRHA internet presence – currently <https://research.nprha.org/> - so that information about the NPRHA (such as membership renewals, Convention plans and registration, minutes from membership and board meetings, etc.) is readily accessible. NPRHA needs a better "front door".

Dean O'Neill and Kent interviewed six different web development firms, seeking proposals for an updated NPRHA web site. Their proposals were winnowed down to one candidate (Lighthouse Graphics), whose proposal was approved by the NPRHA Board at their September 12, 2023 meeting. The new web site will be built on Wordpress and will provide much better access to information about NPRHA as an organization. It will also provide links to the current research web site for users who seek access to information that resides at that site. As part of their product, Lighthouse Graphics will produce customized YouTube videos describing how to use and maintain the new web site.

In addition to the above, we need to become more involved with content strategy and content coordination on various other internet platforms, such as the Facebook groups called *Northern Pacific Railway* and *Northern Pacific Railway*

Historical Association. This will include tasks like maintaining content calendars to ensure interested parties are aware of upcoming conventions and other gatherings, as well as knowing how to register for and participate in those events.

NPRHA Company Store:

Chris Atkins announced that the NPRHA Company Store was offering a bargain during the Convention - six Bowser HO X-32 50' round-roof double-door boxcars for \$50 (regular price is \$14 each). He also said that the store had the 2024 NPRHA Nixon Calendar for sale at \$20 each, in case anyone wanted additional copies of that calendar.

Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive:

Jonathan Fischer announced that the PNRA would be open for NPRHA convention attendees on Friday, September 15. Virginia Wright, a cultural heritage professional, is now the Executive Director of PNRA.

Raffle:

President Zidel encouraged Convention attendees to purchase raffle tickets at the September 16 Banquet. Many tickets have been purchased on-line, but more will be available for sale at the banquet.

John Berg:

President Zidel remembered former Board member John Berg, who passed away in July 2023.

Second NPRHA Board Meeting is scheduled at 9:00 PM (following the banquet and raffle) on September 16, 2023 in the Willow Room. As always, interested members are welcome to attend.

Other Topics:

President Zidel also encouraged NPRHA members to consider serving on the NPRHA Board of Directors in the future. At least four Board seats will be up for reelection or replacement at the 2024 Everett Convention.

President Zidel also encouraged members to consider what they want to happen to their NP-related items – photos, documents, models, books, hardware, etc. Include your wishes in your will and/or estate plan.

A question was asked regarding a Veterans Panel for this Convention. We counted at least 10 NP veterans in attendance at this meeting. Jack Christensen was probably most senior, having started his NP career in 1942. However, Dean O'Neill commented that most of those veterans were reluctant to participate in formal Veterans Panel discussion. It was then suggested that an informal gathering might be organized for just the veterans to reminisce about their careers with the NP.

Adjournment:

Dave Franz moved to adjourn, seconded by Mike Lustig. Approved Unanimously. Adjourned at 2:01 PM

Jim Woodward – NPRHA Secretary