

The Second Section

Minutes from the August 19, 2010 meeting

President Dennis Mead called the board and general membership meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., in the conference room of the U.S. Bronze Foundry and Machine, Inc., located at 18649 Brake Shoe Road, Meadville, PA.

In attendance were Dennis Mead, Ed Cronin, Carl Timko, Jack Sheets, Larry Johnson, John Snyder, Tom Collard, Denis Manross, and Wayne Brown.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ed Cronin reported the current balances to the attending members. He also noted that the tax returns were filed, along with the Annual Report for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the report for the bureau of Charitable Organizations.

Committee Reports

-Historical/Archives-

The friend of Mrs. Bingham's who has the warehouse of railroad paperwork is willing to talk to the group about the collection, and is more interested in selling the collection.

The passenger car windows that are in possession of Mrs. Bingham's daughter and son-in-law haven't been seen yet by any member of the board. It was thought that a trade for the windows with another railroad group

would be possible. Currently, the windows aren't a priority with the number of projects that need completed.

- Property/Equipment-

The #518 was moved back to near Cucumber St. in Jefferson, Ohio, by the AC&J Railroad. The AC&J is to receive a heavy duty crane for use to dismantle a Detroit Edison U30C. The AC&J could use the crane to remove the components out of the #518 so the shell can be sent for sandblasting and painting.

Dennis Mead said he would write Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper a letter asking about the possibility of procuring the services of the Corps of Engineers to haul the #518.

The project to bring electricity to the caboose still needs completed. As of the date of this meeting, the grounding rods still needed installed, the electric cable run to the caboose, outlets installed, and the inspector notified.

Options to complete the trackwork at the display site were discussed. One option is to hire Darwin Durlin (not Durland, as previously reported) for a small fee. The other was to do the work ourselves, with Wayne Brown supervising.

The caboose is in need of a wash and wax. Members are encouraged to volunteer to get the job done in one

day. A date to do the work has not been announced as yet.

- Museum-

The attending members discussed in great detail the choices for the proposed railroad and tooling museum. Opinions for the Bessemer Building noted that current leases could pay for the mortgage.

Should the current tenants move, the museum could move into those spaces. Also noted, an arrangement to an effect the organization would not be liable for cleanup of any contamination on the property.

The feasibility study and business plan for the Bessemer Building have been completed, while the civil engineering study is in progress.

Opinions against the Bessemer Building question the source of income should all the tenants leave. There are environmental concerns and a concern that the Foriska machine shop would dominate the museum. As it stands now, the Bessemer Building is regarded more of an educational facility rather than a railroad building with PMI and Edinboro University adjoining or adjacent to the building.

Members voicing opinions for the freight house to be used as the museum noted the cheaper asking price of

the freight house as opposed to the Bessemer Building. The freight house is more likely to attract railroaders. It is thought that the freight house would not take too much to get a museum started as the rooms are nearly complete, with a sink and bathroom in each one. Expansion is legally possible, as the daycare had plans to build a gymnasium before it closed. One plan for expansion would be to rebuild the platforms and bring in boxcars to be used for displays and storage.

The organization also is not thought to be liable for any contamination should any move towards the freight house.

Opinions against the freight house include that there wouldn't be enough room to house the exhibits planned as in the Bessemer Building. One member noted that there wasn't room for expansion. The building is also reported to be in a flood zone.

To finance the museum, a capital campaign using local contributions would be needed. The first half of the campaign would be done in a "quiet phase", where wealthier donors would be asked to contribute over three years. After the first half of the goal is attained, the public campaign would be started, which would last as long as need be. The top ten donors would be identified, then the lead donor would be identified

and consulted to discuss the project and options.

Other points regarding the planned museum include a need to contact Bill DeArment of Channellock regarding the asking price for the freight house. The organization would set up a three member committee to confer with Mr. DeArment. It is hoped Dan Higham would lead the committee.

If the freight house would become the site of the museum, the tool shop may be located outside of the freight house, possibly in an expansion of the freight house.

Ed Cronin noted the organization is able to collect rent as a non-profit corporation as long as it is reinvested. This relates to the plan of acquiring the Bessemer Building as the museum.

It is hoped that this organization would follow the model of the Lake Shore Railway Historical Society, in North East. That museum rented the New York Central depot from the railroad until enough funds were raised to buy the property. The LSRHS is doing very well and is a magnet for railfans.

-Public Relations/ Education-

The new website is due to be up and running within a week or two. (Editor's note: The website is now operating. The URL address is still the same: www.fcvrrhs.org.

Carl Timko announced that the FCVRRHS is now on Facebook, through his page. Once on his page, look for the title of French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society and click on it for updated information regarding news, meetings, and events. Members and the public are welcome to become "friends". Just keep it clean and relevant.

-Special Events/ Programs-

A proposal to replace the poker run, which was cancelled, with an appearance by railroad author Ken Springirth was approved by the board. Mr. Springirth will appear on September 5, coinciding with the caboose tour. Hours are from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Mr. Springirth's new book is "*Northwestern Pennsylvania Railroads*" and mentions the FCVRRHS. The book will be available for purchase.

- Model Railroad-

Nothing has been set yet for the display of the model railroad layout during the upcoming holiday season. It is possible it may be at the Cambridge Springs trolley station. The trolley station is scheduled to have its grand opening on November 29. A comment was made that the layout would not get the number of people visiting as it did last December while it was at the Hobby Headquarters

Hobby Shop. Hobby Headquarters closed its doors for good before the month was over.

Store fronts downtown may be available, as well as a store inside the Downtown Mall by then.

A suggestion was made to have member Scott Wilson look at the layout for any upgrades. Tom Collard wondered if Scott could evaluate what it would take to convert the layout into Digital Command Control, or DCC.

-Membership-

The organization welcomed a new member. Ed Shaw of Titusville signed on after touring the caboose on August 1. Welcome aboard, Ed!

President Dennis Mead will send a letter to the membership for help in current and future projects. The member is encouraged to participate in a project he or she is best suited for. The member is encouraged to participate in more than one project if so inclined. The number of uncompleted projects have involved a small core of the membership. These people are usually the same ones trying to complete each project. The more members that can get together to get the projects done, the better. Completing projects will make potential donors take notice.

All members who have not renewed their membership will be sent a second notice

to do so. Each member's dues are important as the only sources of income the organization has are the dues, donations, sales of t-shirts and magazines. It is hoped that in the future the organization can begin to sell more products to raise funds.

A vote by the attending members approved a temporary change to the starting time of the board and general membership meetings. The meetings will start at 6:30 p.m for the next couple of months, or until the winter weather settles in.

The next meeting will be Thursday, September 16, 2010, at 6:30 p.m, in the conference room of the U.S. Bronze, Foundry & Machine, Inc., located at 18649 Brake Shoe Road, Meadville, PA.

