

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors' Meeting**  
4th Division, PNR, NMRA, June 10, 2023

**Attendees:** Bill Messecar, Russ Segner, Ed Ives, Robin Peel, Al Lowe, Alex Brikoff, Ed Liesse, Lee Marsh, Jack Hamilton, Dennis Terpstra, Burr Stewart, Lou Davis, Kurt Laidlaw, Byron Osborn, Bob Kenworthy, Magnus Christerson, Larry Sloan, Al Carter

Superintendent Bill Messecar called the meeting to order via Zoom at 10:00 AM.  
The March 24, 2023 minutes were approved as written.

**Officer Reports**

**Superintendent – Bill Messecar**

Bill congratulated Kurt Laidlaw and the entire PNR Convention Committee for putting on a really outstanding PNR Regional Convention this year, the Prairie Line Experience.

**Assistant Superintendent – Al Lowe**

Al officially handed over the position of Assistant Superintendent to Bob Kenworthy. Bob will serve in that position for the next two years.

**Treasurer – Robin Peel**

Robin reported on the state of the current budget (directly from his report), as of June 8, 2023, as follows:

1. We received reimbursement of the \$2,000 “seed money” provided to the PNR Tacoma convention.
2. Additional payments of the “profit” from the PNR convention are imminent and expected to be between \$4,000 and \$6,000. Kurt Laidlaw added that it is actually closer to about \$8000.
3. We still need a decision on the disposition of funds from the PSX 2004 NMRA convention (\$7,892).
4. We are on track for a significant excess of income over expenditure for the current year. This is largely driven by the unexpectedly high value of donations (\$4,950) received.

There was also discussion regarding the cost of the Golden Grab Iron Award. There was a substantial increase in the engraving price of the award. A possible reduction in the actual size of the award would be one way of reducing the cost.

**Action Item: Bill Messecar will contact the PNR President and Treasurer to clarify the policy and process of the Member Rebates to each of the Divisions.**

**2023 – 2024 Proposed Budget Highlights and Discussion Points**

1. The draft of the budget shows an overall loss of just under \$3,000 for the upcoming year: This mainly due to:
  - a. Income in 2023-2024 is reduced because of the reduction of the NMRA rebate (via PNR) by 50%. This is a reduction of \$925 over the 2022-2023 budget.
  - b. Expenditure on modular groups is high, primarily because of the 4D HO Modular Group's request of \$4,080 for improvements.
  - c. No major changes to the routine operating expenses.
2. 2023-2024 budget assumes a repeat of the WSHM show (income about \$6,200), but zero income from the PSC or MOHAI shows.
3. No submissions received from the North Seattle, Olympia, or Tacoma clinics, nor from the On30 modular group. These have all been assigned a zero budget.
4. The 4D HO Modular Group has requested just over \$4,000 for maintenance and improvements. This is roughly double the current balance in their liability account (\$1,994): This item will be funded as part of the 2023 – 2024 4<sup>th</sup> Division Budget.

5. Income from the major shows (MOHAI, PSC, WSHM) has not previously been allocated to the modular groups that supported these shows, but has instead been regarded as funding for 4D as a whole:
  - a. Going forward, should we allocate some (or all) of this income to the participating modular groups? Generally speaking, the BOD's discussion favored an incentivized distribution of funds into the respective modular group's liability accounts based on their level of participation in the various shows.
  - b. If so, how do we fund 4D's other core activities, given that the NMRA rebate is significantly reduced? The 4D may need to identify additional sources of income to fund its activities.

**Action Item:** Robin Peel will meet with the Modular Group leaders to identify and discuss a new disbursement policy of funds received for participating in the various train shows.

**Motion:** A motion was brought before the Board to approve the 4th Division Budget for 2023 – 2024 as written in "Budget Draft 3". It was so moved, seconded and passed.

#### **Office Manager and Membership – Byron Osborn**

Byron reported the latest membership information as follows:

456 - 4<sup>th</sup> Division Total Membership

65 – 4<sup>th</sup> Division Life Members

25 – Master Model Railroaders (MMRs)

7 – New Members, have been contacted

6 – Renewals behind for May

11 - Renewals behind for June

8 – Renewals behind 30 Days

7 – Renewals behind 60 Days

#### **Education – Jack Hamilton**

Jack reported that he has received about 60 surveys from his Education survey mailing recently. As a result, he will update the Master Clinic list accordingly. Jack presented two questions to the Board:

1. Should the Make and Take Clinics be continued? Yes! There is a lot of interest and positive comments about the Make and Takes, so they should definitely be continued.
2. Jack would like to see more people work towards their Chief Dispatcher AP Award. This could be done by setting up Op Sessions and identifying local layouts that run with different car routing systems such as TT&TO, Switchlists and so on. This could also be made to work well with the new Pathfinder member retention program. Bill Messecar's layout could be a possibility for this program along with Brian Ferris' and Burr Stewart's layouts as well.

#### **Layout Tours – Burr Stewart and Lee Marsh**

Lee reported that the second Saturday virtual layout tours are continuing with much success with each tour averaging about 20 attendees. However, the format is also evolving to include occasional Panel Discussions. Recently, the aluminum benchwork Panel Discussion was very well received by about 50 attendees. Some of the Panel Discussions and topics being considered are Panels that feature railroaders that have actually worked on prototype railroads. Their real life experiences in mainline running and switching are invaluable to modelers trying to emulate railroad operations.

Lee also reported that him, Burr Stewart, and Magnus Christerson are still planning to work on implementing a digital archiving system for the 4<sup>th</sup> Division's online media this summer.

#### **Achievement Program – David Yadock**

David reported ([by previously submitted report](#)) the following AP status:

Brian Ferris wants to be evaluated for his Structures AP Award. David would also like to connect with new members regarding the AP Program.

## **Modular Group Reports**

### **Hi-Railers – Ed Ives**

1. Ed reported that the group will have a railfan ride on the train at the Snoqualmie Railway museum next Saturday, 06/17, followed by their annual Business Meeting.
2. They have been informed that there will not be a show at Elbe this summer due to trackage problems.
3. The group has been working on trailer #6 to clean it out as they are decommissioning the Gargraves layout. They would like to keep this trailer but need to find a storage location closer to Ed Ives.
4. They have also received a request from the Snoqualmie Museum that they would like to have the O gauge layout running during their Thomas Train event. The layout will need a lot of work to make it runnable for the event. They might need additional budget.

### **4DNTRAK – Al Lowe**

Al Lowe reported that they are planning their annual business meeting sometime in July or August. The group is also planning some work sessions.

### **HO Modular – Lou Davis**

Lou Davis reported that they are planning a very busy schedule this summer to renovate the group's modules. They have requested approximately \$4,080 to be able to complete the work that they have identified. The requested amount is shown to be available to the group in the approved 2023 – 2024 budget.

### **HO Free-Mo Modular Group – Larry Sloan**

No Report.

### **Bremerton Northern – Jack Hamilton**

Jack reported that the Bremerton Northern group is in place at the Kitsap Mall. The HO layout is being reconfigured to include switching capabilities. The N scale layout is now doing op sessions on Sundays. Jack will determine whether the group wants to be featured on a Saturday virtual Layout Tour.

### **On30 Modular Group – Rich Blake**

No Report.

## **Clinic Reports**

### **North Seattle Clinic – Lisa Murray**

No Report.

### **Mt. Vernon Clinic – Al Carter**

Al Carter reported that Ted Becker is still hospitalized but will be able to go home most likely by the end of June or first part of July. Since Ted will probably be in a wheelchair, Dale Beardon has agreed to take over co-chairing the Mt. Vernon Clinic with Al Carter. The Mini Swap Meet took place in May and \$285 was collected and donated to the Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program. The last clinic of the year was a field trip to Nick Muff's house. Carl Kleeman co-authored a book titled "Bellingham Bay, British Columbia". Al will write a Grab Iron article with details on how to obtain this book.

### **Skagit Valley and Whidbey island Clinic – Rich Blake**

No Report.

### **Eastside/Redmond – Russ Segner**

Russ reported that the Eastside Clinic is still virtual and will be for the immediate future. This month's clinic will be a remembrance of JJ Johnston, who passed away last month. Russ is encouraging people to sign into the clinic and share their memories and thoughts of JJ. Whatever time is leftover will be used to talk about benchwork and various ways of building benchwork. Doug Oldenburg is now maintaining the attendee list for the Eastside Clinic. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact either Russ or Doug.

**Tacoma – Kevin Klettke**

No Report.

**Olympia – Greg Wright**

No Report.

**Westside – Jack Hamilton**

Jack reported that the clinics will be continuing through the summer. They will also continue meeting in-person at the United Way Conference Center in Bremerton. They are working on increasing their membership to previous levels.

**Old / New Business****PNR Regional Convention Wrap Up – Kurt Laidlaw**

- Kurt will report exact amount of PNR Convention “seed” money received to Bill Messecar directly and offline.
- Kurt expects to clear about \$8000 after the books are closed for the Convention.
- The 4DNTRAK group did have about a dozen people at the Convention interested in operating on the group layout.
- Jack Hamilton urged people to attend the 2024 PNR Convention in Surrey, BC next spring. The room rates are very attractive due to a favorable exchange rate.

**Online Storage – Burr Stewart, Anton Faulk, Magnus Christerson**

Burr Stewart reports the repository project will be completed over the summer. A status report will be presented at the next BOD meeting.

**Pathfinder Program – Byron Osborn, Bill Messecar**

Byron and Bill had an open discussion with the BOD about how to best implement a new NMRA initiative called Pathfinder in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. This new process provides a means by which the Division is able to provide mentors and contact persons to new members in order to hopefully improve the membership retention levels of new members. The initial attempt will be to match new members with designated Pathfinders by location and modeling gauge. The Pathfinders could be people that have operating layouts and/or have already been established NMRA members, this includes members of the BOD. They would invite the new members to operating sessions, clinics and other NMRA sponsored events. Byron Osborn would own this process for the 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

**Trailer Request Status – Larry Sloan (for HO Free-Mo Group)**

Larry reported that the HO Modular Group has a 6 x 12 trailer stored at Rob Staples house. The HO Free-Mo Group would like to ask Rob Staples for permission to use that trailer for the HO Free-Mo Group. This trailer will be stored at Andy Goelzer's house. Robin Peel reviewed the current status of all five trailers that the 4<sup>th</sup> Division owns and verified that silver trailer #4 is currently being used only for storage. Trailer #4 will be reassigned to the HO Free-Mo Group. It will be cleaned out to determine if anything of value can be salvaged from the trailer. The Free-Mo group would like to use this trailer in September for the Lynden show.

**NMRA 2026 National Convention Bid – Jack Hamilton**

Jack reported that there have been many changes to the NMRA National Convention policy in recent times. Among the major changes are that the Convention has been shortened by a day and will now run from Monday to Saturday. The National Train Show, which is a separate event but runs concurrently with the Convention, will run Friday through Sunday of the Convention. There also needs to be an anticipated minimum of 800 attendees. So, there needs to be a Convention Hotel and Convention Exhibit Center available that is large enough to host the anticipated convention size. Based on previous convention experience, Tacoma, WA would probably be the best location to have a National Convention. There are at least two hotels that meet the requirements for hosting the National Convention in Tacoma, WA. The Hotel Murano and the new Marriott Hotel are both large hotels and have adequately sized Exhibit Centers. The Train Show would most likely be held at the fairgrounds in neighboring Puyallup, WA. The fairground has ample parking at a reasonable rate. The local Host Convention committee needs to be identified along with a Chairman and Co-Chairman. Based on previous convention experience, the recent PNR Regional Convention committee would be approached

if they would like to serve on the newly formed National Convention committee. A pertinent comment was made that before anything else is done, a Convention Chair and Co-Chair need to be identified to present our convention bid to the NMRA in Dallas, TX at this year's National Convention. It was mentioned that there might not be enough time to prepare a formal bid to present at Dallas this summer. A discussion followed regarding a general feeling among the BOD whether or not to even consider bidding for the 2026 National Convention. Most of the arguments heard were not in support of a traditional National Convention but rather proposing a shortened convention format of only four days rather than seven days. The comments favored adopting a convention format similar to the National Narrow Gauge Convention. Also, a Chair and Co-Chair were not immediately identified with people declining and saying that they just didn't have time to devote to such an undertaking while others declined citing their age as the reason.

This discussion regarding a potential bid to host the 2026 NMRA National Convention was left undecided pending the results of a survey comparing room rates, fees and other related costs for both a four day and a seven day convention at the two Tacoma hotels mentioned above. This was assigned as an Action Item

**Action Item: Russ Segner, Robin Peel and Bob Kenworthy will contact the hotels identified in the NMRA Convention discussion above to conduct a survey comparing room rates, fees and other related costs for both a four day and a seven day convention at the two Tacoma hotels mentioned above.**

Superintendent Bill Messecar adjourned the meeting via Zoom at 12:07 PM.

**The next 4D BOD meeting will be held virtually Saturday, September 23, 2023, at 10:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Brikoff  
Secretary, 4<sup>th</sup> Division