

MINUTES
Board of Directors' Meeting
4th Division, PNR, NMRA, February 17, 2024

Attendees: Bill Messecar, Russ Segner, Ed Ives, Robin Peel, Alex Brikoff, Lee Marsh, Jack Hamilton, Dennis Terpstra, Kurt Laidlaw, Bob Kenworthy, Magnus Christerson, Burr Stewart, Thom Keyes

Superintendent Bill Messecar called the meeting to order via Zoom at 10:00 AM.
The November 18, 2023 minutes were approved as written.

Officer Reports

Superintendent – Bill Messecar

Bill thanked the Board of Directors for an outstanding job done on all tasks before the Board. He did not have anything else to report at this time.

Assistant Superintendent – Bob Kenworthy

Bob reported three significant activities:

- He has been working with Kurt Laidlaw on the Spring Meet for later this spring.
- He also has observed the work being done by Robin Peel, Magnus Christerson and others on the NMRA National Convention bid.
- He is also part of the 2024 4D Nomination Committee with Kurt Laidlaw.

Treasurer – Robin Peel (Excerpt per Robin Peel's report)

Robin reported on significant items of interest with the 4D finances since the last report:

- We received payment of \$3,600 from WSHM. As agreed, 50% of this will be distributed between the participating modular groups. Robin needed verification as to which groups were to receive payments. Those were the 4DNTRAK and the HO Modular Group.
- Mike Donnelly reviewed our books and completed an audit for the period from July 2022 to December 2023 and has submitted a separate report, including my responses. Many thanks to Mike for performing this rather tedious task!

Asset Write Off

The Board has asked Robin to review options for depreciating the 4th Division's assets (the only "assets" on our balance sheets are the trailers):

Asset Write Off Background:

4th Division assets are recorded at their purchase value (less taxes and fees) and have never been depreciated. As such, they may not truly represent their value and may not follow US GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles):

Robin's research suggests that the trailers should be depreciated over 5 years:

Trailer #2 (HiRail) was purchased in 2006 and should now be fully depreciated.

Trailer #4 (Freemo) was purchased in 2015 and should now be fully depreciated.

Trailer #5 (NTRAK) was purchased in 2014 and should now be fully depreciated.

Trailer #7 (HO) was purchased in 2019 and should have been depreciated at \$1,307 per year (until FY 2024-2025).

We have three options:

- (1) Do nothing. Leave the trailers on the books until they are sold or otherwise disposed of, and at that time write down their full values. This has the unfortunate result of showing a large (and confusing) "loss" in the year that they are written off.
- (2) Write them off (straight-line) at 20% of their value each in year following their purchase. But most of the trailers are already more than 5 years old. So should we: • (2) Restate our historical financial records to show this write off each year. But changing historical financial records is not good practice. The books should, ideally, remain "closed" to retain their integrity.
- (3) "Catch up" on all the depreciation in the current financial year (showing full write off for 3 of the 4 trailers) then continue to depreciate trailer #7 normally in future years? If we did this, our write-

off this year would be \$19,835. This large write-off would be supported by the appropriate board meeting minutes.

Robin Peel recommends option (3) – to write off all the historic depreciation immediately to get our books in order.

Motion: **A motion was brought before the Board to approve capturing the historic depreciation for all of the 4th Division's assets (specifically, including the trailers as recommended by the Treasurer) during this 2023 – 2024 financial year. It was so moved, seconded and passed.**

Office Manager and Membership – Byron Osborn

Byron reports that there are currently 424 active members in the 4th Division. That includes 20 – 30 members that are 30 – 60 days delinquent in their current dues. New member contacts were also attempted. In support of the Pathfinder program, about 80 surveys were sent out to new members but only about 15 were returned. Byron received a request from the Whidbey Island Clinic for a local membership list. They would like to invite other local members to the clinic. Byron offered to do this for other clinics as well.

Modular Group Reports

Hi-Railers Group – Ed Ives

Ed requested that the current 4th Division membership list be made available to the Hi-Railers group. He asked that this be either sent directly to them or made available somewhere online. Ed also asked Robin Peel whether their large inventory of electronics and power supplies should be tracked as assets. Robin said that typically only those assets of \$1000 or greater value should be tracked.

4DNTRAK Group – Kurt Laidlaw

Kurt also asked Robin Peel whether or not the 4DNTRAK modules need to be kept track of as inventory. Robin indicated that they probably should be tracked as inventory but not as depreciated assets. This could be done on a spreadsheet at year end.

HO Modular Group – Lou Davis

No Report.

HO Free-Mo Modular Group – Larry Sloan

No Report.

Bremerton Northern Group – Jack Hamilton

No Report.

On30 Modular Group – Rich Blake

No Report.

European Train Enthusiasts Group (ETE) – Chris Woodruff

Previously submitted report as **Addendum #1** attached to the end of these minutes.

Clinic Reports

North Seattle Clinic – Lisa Murray

No Report.

Mt. Vernon Clinic – Al Carter

No Report.

Skagit Valley and Whidbey island Clinic – Rich Blake

Rich Blake (by previously submitted report) reported that he has had some health issues and has had to step away from the clinic until springtime. There are clinics scheduled through May 2024.

Eastside/Redmond – Russ Segner

No Report.

Tacoma – Kurt Laidlaw, Kevin Klettke

No Report.

Olympia – Greg Wright

No Report.

Westside – Jack Hamilton

No Report.

Old / New Business**Old Business****NMRA National Convention Bid – Robin Peel, Magnus Christerson**

Robin and Magnus traveled to Amherst, MA to present our initial bid for the NMRA National Convention in 2027. The bid was presented to the NMRA Board of Directors in late January 2024 at their Winter Meeting. Presentation went well and there was no problem with our new format for the convention. The future of the National Train Show (NTS) at NMRA conventions is uncertain. The NTS seems to be plagued with management and union labor issues. However, the NTS will most likely be continued in some form. Our bid for a 2027 Convention will most likely be approved at the Convention in Long Beach, CA this summer. We need to present a more detailed cost breakdown as the NMRA Board is very cost conscious.

Next Steps:

- Request 4D Board to appoint leadership roles for “Tacoma 2027”:
 - Chair (or Co-Chairs).
 - Chair(s) will recruit and appoint other roles as/when required.
- Determine if we require an LLC to host the convention:
 - Would isolate 4D from any financial risk or any other liability.
 - Maintain 501c3 status for LLC, if possible.
- Open bank account to support convention:
 - Request 4D Board to transfer remaining PSX 2004 finds as “seed money”.

4th Division Elections – Bob Kenworthy, Brian Ferris, Lee Marsh and Kurt Laidlaw

The 4th Division Elections this year will re-elect Ed Ives as a Board Director and a new Superintendent to take over for Bill Messecar. It has become apparent that difficulty exists in identifying new Board candidates, especially those running for Superintendent. A solution would be to expand the number of Directors to four or, even five, to allow more people to become familiar with the workings of the Board and perhaps be more interested in running for the position of Superintendent. The fifth Director would possibly be an appointed position tasked with being the Division’s Communications Director.

Action Item:

Bill Messecar will research the process required to expand the number of Directors to either 4 or 5 Directors per the 4th Division Executive Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual.

2024 Spring Meet

This year, the annual 4th Division Spring Meet will be held at the Northwest Railway Museum on Saturday, June 8, 2024. Due to minimal parking at the museum, there will be a train that will pick up attendees at the North Bend depot in the morning at about 7:30 AM and then return them to the same depot at the end of the Meet. At that point, attendees will have the option of going on some layout tours that afternoon on the way home on the Eastside. The activities planned for the Meet include: Engine Shop Tour, Clinic about Museum Archives and the Restoration of the O gauge layout located at the museum. The proposed prices for the Spring Meet are as follows:

- \$20.00 / person R/T train ticket from North Bend to Museum to North Bend.
- \$15.00 - \$18.00 / person for Jersey Mike's type lunch. That would be Cost + 20% for total of \$25 - \$30 per attendee.
- The 4th Division would also like to donate \$2000 to the Northwest Railway Museum. This was discussed recently at a previous board meeting.

Motion: **A motion was brought before the Board to approve holding the 2024 Spring Meet on Saturday, June 8, 2024 at the Northwest Railway Museum, Snoqualmie, WA. It was so moved, seconded and passed.**

Motion: **A motion was brought before the Board to authorize a one time donation of \$2000.00 to the Northwest Railway Museum, Snoqualmie, WA in connection with the 2024 Spring Meet. It was so moved, seconded and passed.**

Action Item: **Bob Kenworthy will research and determine the following three items pertaining to the 2024 Spring Meet:**

- **Lunch budget and cost.**
- **Attendee Entry Fee.**
- **Meeting Schedule.**

Bob Kenworthy will report his findings to Bill Messecar within one month's time.

Communications

Anton Faulk has done a great job of updating the 4th Division website recently. To facilitate accuracy, Bill Messecar has asked the Board to go to the website and proofread it this week. Besides Anton, there were also Magnus Christerson, Burr Stewart, Byron Osborn, Bob Kenworthy and Lee Marsh working to update the 4th Division website. Some of the tasks involved were to clean up and remove outdated information, update the software version and keep WordPress as our website platform, added plugins to automate calendar updates as well as links to YouTube. Additional work will be needed to update Search Rankings for the website.

Additionally, Anton Faulk would like to have the Board approve the funding for a "Plugin" app for WordPress that would automate the sending of event information and communications to the membership.

Motion: **A motion was brought before the Board by Bill Messecar requesting authorization of an annual payment to Anton Faulk of \$99.00 for a WordPress "plugin" app after the initial trial period. This would be used to automate the mailing of event notices of the 4th Division to the membership. It was so moved, seconded and passed.**

New Business

Resignation

Alex Brikoff has submitted his resignation as Secretary of the 4th Division Board citing health and personal reasons for wanting to resign. This will be effective June 30, 2024. Meanwhile, Kurt Laidlaw has agreed to take over my secretarial duties and I will be working with him during the transition period.

Monroe Train Show – February 24 – 25, 2024

This year's annual Monroe Train Show will take place on February 24 - 25, 2024. The 4D is planning to have three tables of donated model railroad equipment and supplies. Bill Messecar mentioned that he will help Russ at the tables on Saturday.

Superintendent Bill Messecar adjourned the meeting via Zoom at 11:45 AM.

The next 4D BOD meeting will be held virtually Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Brikoff
Secretary, 4th Division

Addendum #1:

European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) Pacific Northwest Chapter – Modular Group Report Addendum February 17, 2024

To the NMRA 4D Superintendent and Board of Directors:

The ETE Northwest Modular Group continues to grow and has had a very busy winter. Over the Christmas holidays, we participated for the first time in the Train Festival held at the Washington History Museum in Tacoma. The nine-day show was the venue for our roll-out of our expanded modular layout; now 35 feet long and able to run 2-rail DC and 3-rail AC trains simultaneously.

Two weeks later, we participated in the Great Train Show in Ridgefield, WA on a very snowy and cold weekend. Despite a subdued turnout by the public (due to the weather), our modular team had a great weekend running trains and interacting with the railfans who braved the elements to attend the show.

The following week, we participated in the Great Train Show in Puyallup, WA. This is the show that is the closest, proximity-wise, to most of our members, and we had record member participation.

Our best news from the past three months is that we've added 10 new members to our Chapter; three of who are amazing young men under the age of 14! Each of our new members brings a different approach to the hobby and we are thrilled to welcome them as members.

We currently have several initiatives in progress, specifically:

- We are designing the first of two, possibly three large corner modules. These modules will be constructed with aluminum framing and Precision Board bases. This first module will feature a scratch-built arched viaduct bridge, as well as mountain scenes and water features.
- We have held informal "partnership" discussions with the Eastern New England Chapter of ETE, a chapter that also has an active Modular Group and outreach initiatives to engage younger members to take up the model railroading hobby. Like our PNW Chapter, the New England Chapter also has a children's layout that they set-up at train shows to expose children to the hobby. We plan to engage the New England Chapter to explore better ways to involve children with our layouts, and also to discuss jointly pursuing sponsorship by manufacturers to provide products to demonstrate. We believe there's a direct-line benefit from our children's layouts to the manufacturers, so we are looking for sponsorship of our programs.
- We are in early discussions regarding forming a Mentorship Program within our Chapter. We have several new members who are new to the hobby, geographically isolated, and would benefit from having a mentor available to help them as they learn more about the hobby. This program would be on a strictly voluntary basis, but initial feedback from one parent was that they think it would be a great idea for their child. We would also make mentors available to new/inexperienced adult members as well.
- Our Modular Group members have been discussing partnering with NMRA in some official capacity; the details of which have not been worked out. The majority of our members are in favor of such a partnership, and most of our Modular Group members are also members of NMRA. We would like to work with Robin Peel, and/or other members of the Board, to develop an Agreement that would support our affiliation with NMRA but also allow us to operate under the bylaws of ETE. We request that

the Board delegate us to come up with a proposed Agreement that could be presented to the Board at the next Board Meeting, if not before.

Our Modular Group will be displaying our layout at the Monroe Train Show next weekend at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe, WA, 24-25 February, and also at the Lewis County Model Railroad Show and Swap Meet, April 6-7th in Chehalis, WA.

We have plans for a workshop in May in Gig Harbor, and then will be working throughout the summer to complete our corner module and get ready for next winter's train shows.

We are currently in discussions with the City of Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce to display our modular layout at their Oktoberfest event held in September-October. They are very interested in having us participate, and we believe that venue would be perfect for our European-themed layout and European trains.

So...lots to report, and all very exciting! We are looking forward to being more closely aligned with NMRA and doing whatever we can to help support NMRA 4D and our fantastic hobby!

Chris Woodruff
President, ETE PNW Chapter Tacoma, WA