

Meeting summary for 4D PNR Board meeting (12/07/2024)

Participants: Mike Stepner, Bob Kenworthy, Dennis Terpstra, Lee Marsh, Edwin Ives, Kurt Laidlaw, Byron Osborn, Magnus Christerson, Chris Woodruff

Quick recap

The meeting covered various organizational matters, including membership concerns, financial reports, and upcoming events. Discussions were held on improving outreach, increasing member value, and addressing technical issues within the organization. The board also considered proposals for new affiliations, additions to the board, and plans for future conventions and mini-meets.

Tasks:

- Chris Woodruff to provide more detailed information on ETE's proposal for affiliated modular groups to the 4D board
- Kurt to send out ETE's proposal slides to all board members
- Mike Stepner to arrange an in-person meeting with board members to discuss ETE's proposal after the holidays
- Kurt to contact Al Lowe about adding ETE's layout tour information to the Grab Iron calendar
- Magnus and Robin to present updated budget for 2027 National Convention to NMRA Board in January
- Bob to implement plan for adding two new board member positions (one 2-year term, one 1-year term)
- Bob to work with Mike on forming a new nominating committee
- Bob to explore venue options for the spring Mini Meet, including community colleges and Snoqualmie
- Kurt to add March 22nd at 10 AM to the calendar for the next board meeting
- Mike to follow up with Kurt about scheduling a meeting to discuss ETE proposal and donated items
- Byron Osborn to send out current membership roster to board members
- Magnus Christerson will send out the NMRA budget to the board for review.
- Mike Stepner will bring up the issue of membership dues at the PNR meeting.
- Byron Osborn will send a copy of the membership roster to all board members.
- Kurt Laidlaw will ensure that Anton is contacted to update the website with necessary information.
- Lee Marsh will reach out to Jack Hamilton regarding a potential tour from Bremerton Northern.
- Mike Stepner will follow up with Terrell to provide his email address to the board.
- Kurt Laidlaw will contact Terrell to ensure information about the Fircrest N-Scale Group is included in the Grab Iron.
- Ed Ives will submit a bio for Dan Peters to the Grab Iron.
- Ed Ives will explore options for the Hi-Railers donated trains, including taking them to the Burien Model Shop.
- Mike Stepner will discuss the table at the Monroe meet and confirm volunteers.

- Chris Woodruff will prepare a proposal for the board regarding the new category of affiliated model railroad clubs.
- Magnus Christerson will send out the NMRA budget to the board for review.
- Kurt Laidlaw will ensure that Anton is contacted to update the website with necessary information.
- Lee Marsh will reach out to Jack Hamilton regarding a potential tour from Bremerton Northern.
- Kurt Laidlaw will contact Terrell to ensure information about the Fircrest N-Scale Group is included in the Grab Iron.

Summary

Addressing High NMRA Membership Dues

There was a lengthy discussion about the cost of dues. Most of the board members agreed that NMRA dues are too high for the perceived benefits. Mike Stepner will bring the issue up at the next PNR board meeting to see if we can get the region to forward concerns to the NMRA board. Magnus said the national board is aware of the issue

Boosting Membership and Reviving Activities

Magnus discussed the need for increased outreach and education within the organization to boost membership and activity. He suggested organizing a train show and other visible events to attract more members. Mike agreed, noting that the hobby is not dying but is shifting, with more people engaging in model railroading online. Chris from ETE shared his experience of increased participation in his chapter when they organized more activities. The group also discussed the impact of Covid on their organization and the need to revive live clinics and tours. They agreed on the importance of the network within the organization and the need to find ways to make the organization more appealing to members.

Treasurer's Report and Membership Update

Robin Peel was not at the meeting, but the treasurer's report, which showed a total income of \$45,819 and total expenses of \$5,039 was discussed. Per Robin's request it was moved and seconded to change the signatories for the bank accounts, with Kurt and Mike to handle the task. They also discussed the Westside clinic's budget, which was almost exhausted, and the need to reach out to the clinic's representative, Bill Hupe. Byron Osborn presented the latest membership report, showing 435 members and 30 people who were 30 days past due, 3 people who were 60 days past due, and 22 people who renewed in November. The team also discussed the need for a copy of the roster, which Mike and Byron already had.

MOTION: “The Authorized signers for 4D PNR NMRA’s Chase Bank accounts are updated to include Board members Michael Stepner (Superintendent), Robin Peel (Treasurer) and Kurt Laidlaw (Secretary). All other signers should be removed.” Approved by unanimous vote.

Membership, Website Updates, and Layout Tours

In the meeting, Byron discussed the 100% membership and the use of data to ensure members are paid up and to find new members. Mike suggested that clubs are the best way to achieve this. Kurt brought up the issue of Anton not updating the board members on the website and the need for more people with access to make changes. Lee reported on the layout tours, mentioning that they have been successful despite the reduced number of attendees due to Covid. Mike added that Terrell from the Fircrest clinic has been organizing more than just layout tours, which have been well-received. The group also discussed the achievements report from Davey Yadock . There were no clinic reports as none of the clinic leads were in attendance. The question was raised if the board needs to search out a new coordinator for the North Clinic as Lisa seems to have lost interest.

Organization Activities and Communication Challenges

Few of the modular group leads were in attendance, but board members were able to provide update on group plans for NTRAK, High Railers. Kurt mentioned that they would be at the history museum for a long show, but it was challenging to get people to participate due to work commitments. Mike then moved on to discuss the clinics, but there was no new information to share. Ed brought up issues with communication and the lack of responses to emails and texts. He also mentioned the passing of a member and the donation of trains from the European group. Magnus suggested adding another table at the Monroe show to accommodate more items. Ed also mentioned the upcoming train festival in Tacoma and the need for more members to attend the Ridgefield show. Chris then gave a report on the activities of the European train enthusiasts, including improvements to their track plan, successful runs at Chehalis, and plans for upcoming train festivals. He also mentioned a new website and a proposal he wanted to discuss with the board.

Northwest Chapter ETE Proposal Discussion

Chris proposed a new category for the Northwest chapter of ETE, an affiliated Model Railroad Club, under NMRA. The proposal outlined the benefits of this affiliation, including increased public outreach, promotion of the hobby, and charity work. Chris also suggested that the club could be eligible for funding from NMRA. However, there were concerns about the ownership of assets purchased with 4D funds and the dissolution of the club. The board agreed to further discuss the proposal after receiving more detailed information about the club's operations and funding. A separate meeting was suggested to discuss the proposal in more detail.

The team discussed several topics. Ed proposed a 50/50 split for a second trailer, but there were concerns about the financial implications. The team also discussed the registration of a trailer, which had previously caused some issues. Lee questioned their authority to create this arrangement, which

Ed confirmed they possess. The team then moved on to discuss the upcoming convention, with Magnus providing an update on the proposal and budget. The convention is proposed to run for six days, with the National Train Show on the last two days. The team also discussed the sale of stored items, with Kurt announcing that Russ no longer wishes to manage the sale of donated items. Mike suggested that each modular group should handle their own donated items, with any surplus going to the division. Kurt raised a question about what should happen if the account balance exceeds the \$5,000 limit. The team agreed to discuss these points further in the future.

NMRA 2027 Convention Update

Magnus updated the group on the NMRA convention proposal for Tacoma in 2027, which has received conditional approval from the NMRA board, contingent on presenting a budget that ensures break-even attendance. The revised budget targets 475 participants and will be discussed at the upcoming board meeting in January. Magnus also highlighted challenges faced by other conventions, such as the Long Beach convention, which lost money due to overestimated attendance.

The group expressed optimism for a positive outcome in January, allowing for detailed planning to commence. Additionally, discussions included the successful sale of stored items, the need for a nominating committee for upcoming elections, and planning for a mini meet set for May 31st, with considerations for venue and meal provisions.

Adding New Board Members Discussed

Bob Kenworthy brought up the need to set a procedure for bringing on the additional 2 board members voted on by the membership earlier this year. The decision was made to add two new board members, with one having a two-year term and the other a one-year term, to ensure staggered rotation in the future. The board also discussed the need for more representation from underrepresented areas, such as Alaska and the West Side. It was suggested that the nominating committee should consider nominations from these areas. The board also discussed the need for a new nominating committee, with Mike being tasked with forming it.

MOTION: Fill board position 4 as a 2-year term and fill board position 5 as a 1-year term to set up future staggered elections. Passed by unanimous vote

Spring Mini Meet Planning Discussed

In the meeting, the team discussed the upcoming spring mini meet, with a tentative date of May 31st. They considered various locations, including community colleges and high schools, and the possibility of a special venue like Snoqualmie. The team also discussed the cost of the mini meet, with the possibility of attendees opting out of the lunch and still paying a fee. They agreed to spread the wealth by considering other tourist lines around the area. The next meeting was scheduled for March 20th at 10 AM. Bob offered his assistance for setup or take down at the museum, but Kurt confirmed they had enough volunteers. Bob also mentioned bringing his two grandsons to the museum to let them count dinosaurs.