

# Minutes of May 17 Board of Directors

Submitted by Kurt Laidlaw, Secretary 4D Board of Directors

Attendees: Mike Stepner, Bob Kenworthy, Robin Peel, Magnus Christerson, Byron Osborn, Cole Van Gerpen, Lee Marsh, Chris Woodruff, Dennis Terpstra, Ed Ives, Al Carter, Scott Buckley, Burr Stewart, Alan Murray, Russ Segner, Lou Davis, Larry Sloan, Jack Hamilton, Alex Brikoff

## Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Bob Kenworthy facilitated the approval of the agenda, which was accepted without any objections, as Mike Stepner had not arrived yet. He then addressed the minutes from the previous meeting, which Kurt Laidlaw had prepared and distributed. The minutes were approved unanimously, with no comments or corrections raised.

- Approval of the agenda and minutes from the last meeting.

## Officers' Reports

**Superintendent:** not present at start of mtg

**Ass't Superintendent:** Moved discussion to Old Business for Spring Meet

**Office Manager:** Membership statistics were shared by Byron Osborn, noting six new members and 31 renewals in March, bringing total membership to 432.

## Treasurer's Report:

Robin Peel provided an overview of the Treasurer's report, mentioning that the financial situation has been quiet since the last meeting. He shared that the budget process is nearly complete, with input received from most groups, and noted a projected loss of \$12,000 for the upcoming year primarily due to expenses from the European Train Enthusiasts group. Robin also indicated that the budget would be circulated for approval soon.

- Financial reports and budget discussions, including projected losses and income sources.

### Financial Clarifications and Budget Allocations

Robin Peel explained the structure of liability accounts for modular groups, highlighting that budgets are annual and do not carry over. He noted the HO modular group's negative balance and proposed reallocating funds from an unallocated liability account to assist them. Lou Davis acknowledged the group's financial challenges and expressed appreciation for any support.

- Discussion on the allocation of funds to support modular groups and their financial needs.
- A motion was passed to transfer the unallocated liability account funds (\$1,455.43) into the HO modular group liability account to fund ongoing work on 4D owned modules.

**Communications:** Not present/no report

**Education Chair:** Cole Van Gerpen, the new education chair, provided an update on his activities. He has had discussions with Magnus about existing education plans and potential expansion, particularly in relation to the 2027 Convention. Cole has also connected with Bob Kenworthy regarding the spring meet, though he cannot attend due to a school field trip. He mentioned an upcoming educational program request from the Tacoma History Museum for December 6th, which he plans to develop curriculum for in conjunction with Magnus. Cole concluded by requesting volunteers to join the Education Committee, as he needs assistance due to his other commitments. Byron volunteered to work with Cole as it ties in with his responsibilities for retention.

**Layout Tours:**

The group discussed the ongoing layout tours, with Lee reporting that while live attendance has been low, the YouTube videos are getting 500-1000 views from around the world. Kurt is scheduled to give the next tour in June, after which they will take a break until September. Jack requested a list of all 4th Division layouts shown on YouTube for NMRA purposes, which Lee agreed to compile. Lee initiated a discussion on the potential for collaboration with the ON30 group, emphasizing the importance of fostering this relationship despite their current independence. He suggested that working together could enhance their capabilities, particularly through the acquisition of equipment and funding from 4D. Group comments underscored the need for strategic partnerships and resource acquisition to support their efforts. He also shared a story about a delivery incident involving a stolen phone, which illustrated the unpredictability of everyday challenges faced in their operations. Lee expressed uncertainty about how to engage the ON30 group more effectively, suggesting that they could benefit from collaboration even if they feel self-sufficient. He mentioned the possibility of obtaining equipment and funding from 4D, emphasizing the importance of these resources for their projects.

- Collaboration with the ON30 group
- Funding and equipment needs
- Current project challenges

**4D AP Chairmanship Volunteer**

Jack Hamilton volunteers to temporarily fill the position in the 4D Achievement Program (AP) chairperson and conduct the search for a permanent replacement.

**Golden Spike Awards Discussion**

Alan Murray talked about the logistics of giving out Golden Spike awards, with Jack Hamilton explaining the application process involved. The awards can be presented to anyone who has a layout that meets the criteria for the award. Jack also mentioned his intention to review layouts online to determine their eligibility for the award.

**Modular Groups/Clinics:**

The group discussed various clinic and event updates. Attendance at hybrid clinics has been mixed, with some areas struggling to maintain participation. The Olympia clinic is

considering combining with Tacoma to boost attendance. Several groups are planning field trips and layout visits. The modular and high-railer groups report on their activities and new members. Budget discussions are ongoing, with some groups needing to submit updated requests. Upcoming shows and events are mentioned, including participation at museums, fairs, and train shows. Some groups are taking summer breaks and will resume activities in the fall.

### **European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) Special Project Updates and Membership Growth**

Chris Woodruff provided updates on recent ETE activities, including a project at a children's hospital in Seattle, which has engaged five children in recent sessions. Additionally, a new turnaround module featuring a brewery is in development, with plans to roll it out by the end of the year. Membership has grown to 66, with only two non-renewals reported this year.

(See attached Clinic/Modular Group reports)

## **Old Business**

### **Spring Meet Planning and Updates**

The group discusses plans for the upcoming spring meet. Bob provides updates on arrangements, including a train ride from Snoqualmie to the Museum instead of North Bend, three confirmed layout tours, and catering details. He mentions they are still looking for more clinicians and encourages members to register. The meet will feature presentations on the museum's roundhouse exhibit and the 2027 National Convention in Tacoma. Additionally, Robin and Bob discuss a follow-up operations clinic for beginners at the Boeing Club two weeks after the spring meet. The group also considers adding another layout tour on the East Side for the post Spring Meet options.

### **Update Policies and Procedures**

Robin presents a simplified two-page document to replace the complex Appendix A of the policy and procedures manual, focusing on managing modular clubs. The document outlines sponsorship, benefits, responsibilities, creation, and termination of these groups. Ed suggests reducing the inactivity period for termination from 24 to 12 months and recommends groups report to the board every 6 months. Jack proposes making reporting a requirement to maintain active status. Robin agrees to incorporate these suggestions and circulate an updated version for approval alongside the budget. Additionally, Kurt mentions new wording for the AP Chairman's responsibilities regarding Alaska trips, including designating two people to go every three years with covered expenses, though the exact reimbursement guidelines are still under discussion.

### **NMRA 2027 Convention Planning Update**

Robin and Magnus provide an update on the 2027 NMRA convention planning. Three teams have been established: operations, program and education, and marketing. The marketing team plans to use a "rolling thunder" approach, with events building up to the convention.

The PNR leadership has agreed to combine their 2027 convention with the NMRA convention in Tacoma. Robin and Magnus are also reaching out to historical societies and other groups to potentially combine meetings and increase attendance. They note that 2027 is the 200th anniversary of railroading in America, which could be leveraged for the event.

## **New Business:**

### **Board Election and Recognition Updates**

Kurt informs the group about the results of the recent board election, with Bob, Lee, and Dennis being re-elected, and Scott Buckley joining as a new board member in September. Jack Hamilton discusses an upcoming training session for Modeling with the Masters instructors in Olympia, which will not require a budget from the division.

### **Modeling with the Masters Training Event**

Kurt announced that PNR has set up a program to train Modeling with the Masters (MWTM) instructors at the divisional level. The 4D training session will be in late September/early October in Olympia. The PNR President will be sending out an email to 4D members looking for volunteers to participate as students for the training. There will be no cost for the participants and no budget requirements for 4D. Jack provided additional information on the program.

### **Special Recognition Award:**

The group decided to create a special recognition plaque for Susan and Phil Gonzales, who will be attending the spring meet. Robin suggested updating the budget line item for awards to include broader recognition. The next meeting date is to be determined, with Robin noting that the third Saturday in July conflicts with the NMRA Convention in Detroit.

### **WA State History Museum:**

Magnus gave an update on the pre-Holiday Train Show event the museum wants to put on with 4D assistance. The event will take place on December 6, 2025. They are looking at children from age 4 to 12 to take place. There was a general discussion about the requirements for adult/guardian supervision at all times for events that include the NMRA groups. Cole said the same was true at the NW Railway Museum. The event is a museum sponsored event and does not need money from 4D.

## **Follow-on Actions**

- Robin to transfer \$1,455 to the HO modular group's liability account.
- Robin to finalize and distribute the budget for final Board approval before leaving for holiday weekend.
- Cole to connect with Robin and Bob offline regarding the operations clinic for beginners.
- Bob to confirm if Bob Stafford is still doing the Ops clinic at the spring meet.

- Lee to provide Bob with contact information for Jamie Paul for potential layout tour.
- Robin to revise the wording in the policy document regarding moribund groups and circulate the updated version.
- Kurt to finalize change to AP policy on sending evaluation teams to Alaska.
- Robin to add a point in the policy document requiring 4D groups to report to Board of Directors meetings.
- Magnus and Robin to prepare a presentation on the 2027 National Convention for the spring meet.
- Jack to fill the AP Chairman role and search for a replacement.
- Jack to put together a team to visit Susan and Phil's layout before it's torn down for AP evaluation.
- Kurt to arrange for a recognition plaque for Susan and Phil, aiming to have it ready before the spring meet.
- Robin to update the budget line item for awards to include broader recognition awards.
- Byron to verify and communicate the date for the next Board meeting in July.