

The Second Section

Minutes from October 16, 2008 meeting

President Dennis Mead called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., in the conference room of the U.S. Bronze and Machine, Inc., located at 18649 Brake Shoe Road, Meadville, PA.

Attending were Dennis Mead, Ed Cronin, Carl Timko, Larry Johnson, Bill McComas, Huntington Christie, Jack Sheets, Al Reibel, Ed Ferguson, and Loyd Mitchell.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ed Cronin reported the current balance. He also noted that twelve members have not remitted their dues as yet.

Ed has not updated the organization's new address to the state as yet. He is searching for ways to save the \$70.00 filing fee.

Old Business - Property & Equipment

Jack and Linda Sheets decorated the exterior of the caboose for Halloween with pumpkins and cornstalks donated by Al's Melons. They also have a straw scarecrow hanging on the side of the caboose.

Jack reported that the Meadville Area Sewer Authority used their equipment to set the 103 milemarker in place.

Ed Cronin reported on the status of the B&LE combine #23. Silk Road Trucking would not respond to repeated phone calls. A call to Klapec

Trucking of Oil City in hopes of finding a suitable trailer to haul the #23 to Meadville proved fruitless.

Ed wrote to the Norfolk Southern on September 17 to inquire if the NS could haul the #23 over their rails. The NS inspected the car and decided it cannot move the car due to the outdated wheel bearings and is not qualified for inspection.

Ed then tried UShip.com for quotes. He received one anonymous bid of \$9000.00, but the bidder would not reveal their identity.

Ed reported the FCVRRHS lost opportunities for grants towards getting the #23 home. All claims on the B&LE #23 were released, clearing the way for another interested party to acquire it.

In a conversation with Mr. Glenn Campbell, owner of the B&LE 2-10-4 #643, Ed Cronin suggested a first right of refusal contract. It would state that the organization would have first chance at obtaining the #643. If a better offer is received by Mr. Campbell, the organization would have thirty days to match it. Mr. Campbell didn't seem too interested in a contract. A first right of refusal contract was drawn up by the legal firm, Culbertson, Weiss, Schetroma, and Schug, pro bono. A meeting of the Heritage Center (museum) board passed a resolution that Mr.

Campbell would need to

sign this agreement.

Jack Sheets reported Brett Devore coming to excavate the area for the track extension as soon as his schedule permits. Jack said he will contact Blair Learn to take the excess gravel and dirt.

Hunt Christie is to get in touch with his contact in Conneaut, Ohio for a permission slip to acquire at least thirty ties. Dennis Mead said he has a concrete block truck available to him from Susi of Erie.

There is no new news regarding the rails needed for the track extension. It was agreed that four lengths of 39 feet each will be needed. There is no definite supplier of the subroadbed or ballast as yet.

Al Reibel said we should start talking with Penelec again concerning electric service to the display area.

Some of the options are run lines between three poles. Penelec charges \$2500 per pole to set and set up. Another option is to run the electric line underground. The problem would be running the line under the road. Boring under the road would cost at least \$8000. There was a discussion of acquiring a 5000 watt power generator to supply electricity to the site.

Nate Clark reported, via email, that he has not made any progress towards talks

with Norfolk Southern about acquiring the ex-PRR class X29 boxcar.

Old Business – Special Events & Programs

The Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad has said they will use either an office car or a caboose to transport Santa Claus to Mead Avenue in Meadville to kick off the Christmas season. A fire truck has been confirmed to pick him up at the crossing and transport him to the Downtown Mall where he will throw the switch to power the model railroad layout and then talk to the children.

Jack Sheets contacted the manager of the Downtown Mall and found that the manager didn't have a Santa Claus confirmed for the event. Jack called David Little who plays Santa and found Mr. Little was unavailable. Currently, we have no Santa. There was talk of even looking within the organization for a suitable Santa. Jack suggested booking Mr. Little for next year.

The Downtown Mall has confirmed the use of the front corner room for the model railroad layout. This is the old Blockbuster store section.

Old Business – Museum

Ed and Suann Cronin and Maryanne Martin and her husband attended a seminar on museums. They met

Anne Brown, who is a consultant and has contacts beneficial to the museum. Ed says Ms. Brown is a valuable resource, and the seminar was fascinating and informative.

Ed recounted that funds had been raised for the #518 Fund, a portion of which was earmarked for an engineering study of the museum site. The study was done by Porter Engineering Consultants. It was found that waivers would be needed for every property boundary. The study suggests acquiring property from the Meadville Area Sewer Authority. Permission to buy or lease the property has been obtained.

A call was made to the WNYP Railroad to inquire about buying property from the railroad for the museum site. The WNYP declined to sell due to the cleanup needed on the site.

Plans were discussed regarding the possible acquisition of the MASA lot. One of which was to use it for bus parking and turnarounds.

The museum board filed for funds from a state grant. A request of 50% of the grant total was made.

Ed revealed there may be an undisclosed entity interested in coming in with the museum.

New Business – Property & Equipment

Dennis Mead reported that the Lake Shore Railway

Historical Society has a signal mast that the FCVRRHS can have for the signal head that was donated by Jim Cray.

A question arose as to whether permission should be obtained from the ELHS to paint the interior of the caboose. There were stipulations in the agreement, when the FCVRRHS acquired it.

Bill McComas asked if an arrival date for the #518 is known yet. Things are at a standstill with the #518, as the AC&J Railroad is still waiting for the arrival of the crane needed to hoist the prime mover out of the locomotive and lift it onto a truck or flatcar. The crane hasn't been delivered due to an issue concerning the boom car it is attached to.

Al Reibel said if the Norfolk Southern does haul the #518 on its own wheels, it would move at restricted speed. He was wondering if NS could be convinced to move it as a donation or contribution between the AC&J and the WNYP.

New Business – Special Events & Programs

Jack and Linda Sheets will be hosting a trick-or-treat at the caboose on Saturday, October 25, between 12 noon and 3 p.m.

New Business – Public Relations & Education

The model railroad and railroaders show at Rainbow Gardens, in Erie,

PA is scheduled for Sunday, November 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The FCVRRHS will have table at the show. Come to the show and stop by the table.

There is a renewed interest in restarting the on-camera interviews of retired railroaders. Ed Cronin would like to get members Huntington Christie and Loyd Mitchell on tape. Mr. Mitchell worked for the B&LE in Albion, hostling steam locomotives, including the #643. Al Reibel suggested posting a sign-up sheet at the layout display in the Downtown Mall.

Bill McComas is waiting for more input for the newsletter. He has the paper ordered for 250 copies. There was a discussion of charging \$1.00 for an issue of the "Valley Express" to non-members. Members of the FCVRRHS would receive free newsletters.

A discussion concerning the paper quality vs. the cost. It was decided the high quality paper reflects well on the organization, and should be maintained.

New Business - Finance / Budget

Ed Cronin has started a list of items still needed for the track extension for the placement of the #518. He also needs the cost of such work to report to grant agencies. So far, a backhoe to excavate the grounds is to be provided at no cost.

Bernie Hanmore is looking into or taking care of the matter of fill. Rail are to be coming from the WNYP at no cost. Ties are available with a permission slip. Hunt Christie will be in charge of obtaining the permission slip. A truck to haul the ties is available from Susi, of Erie, through Dennis Mead. There is no supplier of the bank gravel for the base of the track extension, yet. Ballast is still needed. It was calculated that three tri-axle loads of ballast would be needed. This is approximately 30 cubic yards. The cost is currently unknown.

Ed Cronin is writing to two grant agencies to explain the dilemma with the AC&J RR not receiving their crane. If a crane is not available soon, it may become necessary to work with other railroads to rent the necessary cranes.

New Business - Model Railroad

The model railroad layout is progressing nicely. The track laying is nearly complete. Work sessions were held on October 6th, 13th, and 16th.

Carl Timko proposed raffling off a train set in coordination with the display of the layout in the Downtown Mall, with proceeds going to Toys for Tots. A raffle permit will be need to be obtained from the treasurer's office in the Crawford County courthouse. A

representative will need to contact a representative from Toys for Tots. Tickets would be needed, but Ed Cronin says he has tickets. The winning name would need to be drawn a week before Christmas so that Toys for Tots can use the proceeds to get gifts for the children in time. A motion was made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded and carried.

Jack Sheets expressed the need to get a box-truck to haul the layout down to the mall.

The next work session on the layout will be Monday November 3 at 6 p.m., at the U.S. Bronze & Machine, Inc. Daytime sessions are available to those interested and available. There are only four weeks left to get the layout in operation. Volunteers are greatly needed.

New Business - Membership

Huntington Christie requested to resign his position on the board due to not being able to attend a majority of the meetings. Dennis Mead declined his request, stating he is still a valuable asset to the board.

Dennis said the next meeting will be to review the committees and to make sure a board member is on at least one committee.

The next meeting will be Thursday November 20, 2008, at 6 p.m., in the conference room of the U.S.

Bronze and Machine, Inc.