

The Minnesota Streetcar Museum

MINUTES

**Board of Directors meeting and Winter Planning Retreat
9:00 a.m., Saturday, February 18, 2006
Fred T. Heywood Office Building**

Attendance:

Bill Arends, Director
John Diers
Rod Eaton, Director
Dave French, Director
Bill Graham
Scott Heiderich, Director
Louis Hoffman, Director
Aaron Isaacs
Howie Melco
Mike Miller
Greg Taylor, Director
Jim Vaitkunas, Director

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Jim Vaitkunas at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda. The agenda was discussed and approved.

Approval of minutes. The minutes of the November 12, 2005 Board of Directors meeting were not discussed.

Secretary's Note: Because this was a planning retreat, the format for these minutes will differ from the usual format.

Organization and volunteers. Because the Museum is a new organization, although it is a continuation of the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Traction Division, the Museum is being called upon to perform functions formerly conducted by MTM for its Traction Division when the Museum was MTM's Traction Division. The focus to date has been on transition – establishing the organizational structure and policies that the Museum needs to function as a fully independent corporation. The focus needs to shift to refining that structure and adopting those policies so that performing the new functions is done as a matter of course.

Jim described the ideal organization – a small group of “visionaries,” a larger group of “executors,” and a very large group of “workers” that, if drawn, would appear as a pyramid. Currently, in the Museum, visionaries overlap with executors (in part because

the Museum is small), there is a shortage of both, and there is a looming shortage of workers, especially in the Transportation Department.

Generally, the Museum has the following gaps in volunteerism:

- Engineering Department – needs Keith Anderson to return to his position as Chief Engineering Officer from leave of absence while working in Louisiana (key executor).
- Mechanical Department – needs coordinated leadership to establish policies, priorities, and procedures and to recruit and manage volunteers and programs in accordance with the policies, priorities, and procedure (key executors).
- Transportation Department – needs workers.

It was noted that “neighborhood” volunteers have a longer learning curve than volunteers who have an interest in railroading and also tend to disappear more quickly. It was agreed that many new retirees have both the interest, skills, and time. There are two keys to increasing membership and volunteerism and retaining members and volunteers: First, work with other railroad-related groups to share member information and to recruit a membership. Second, recruit a volunteer coordinator to lead this effort, specifically recruiting, training, monitoring “career paths,” recognition, etc. There was a suggestion to turn the current media area in the Linden Hills Station into a volunteer recruitment exhibit or to use the portable display case in the basement for that purpose. There was also a suggestion to further encourage volunteers to use the script provided at the beginning of the year for their end-of-the-line talk and to encourage membership and volunteerism.

Educational programming. John Diers volunteered to create a school-age curriculum in an effort to breach the “generation gap.” Louis Hoffman mentioned the materials being used by the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association and the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum (Secretary’s Note: Louis provided these to Aaron Isaacs to give to John). A missing “executor” is a person to actively market this program to child care centers, schools, and youth groups.

Recertification. There was a discussion about revamping recertification and a suggestion that non-revenue recertification be cancelled and replaced by revenue recertification during the first month of the season with the work being done by the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, and inspectors drawn from the ranks of senior foremen. It was suggested that this might permit revenue operations in April.

Investment of restricted funds. There was general agreement that restricted funds should be invested in some form of interest-bearing account but ensuring that the Museum has reasonable access to the funds. Bill Graham noted that some funds are in a

savings account. It was agreed that the Finance Committee needed to meet to address this issue as well as financial policies.

Rationalization and staffing of committees and committee structure. The Board noted but did not address the issue of unstaffed committees and agreed that it would need to do so, recruiting chairs and members, rationalizing the number of committees and consolidating their functions, or deciding to forego some tasks for which there are insufficient volunteers to staff a committee or committees.

What we do well and what we could improve. The Board did an exercise in which it listed things that “we’re good at” and that “need work.”

“We’re Good At”

Quality of Mechanical Department volunteers, maintenance and restoration work, and collegial atmosphere in the shops
Quality of Transportation Department volunteers
Quality of crew callers
Quality of *Minneapolis Gazette* and *Streetcar Currents*
Website

“Need Work”

Communication between Board/management and Mechanical Department leadership and volunteers regarding priorities
Mechanical Department leadership and organization
Cleanliness of shops
Condition of gardens and grounds
Recruiting, orienting, organizing, and training members and volunteers/doing a survey of members
Educational outreach
Fundraising
Merchandising and station management
Streamlining recertification
More Engineering and Transportation Department volunteers
Telephone system

Action items:

- The Board authorized expenditure of \$1,200.00 from the Isaacs/Prestholdt memorial funds to print 500 of the Rick Schuster-designed posters.
- The Board adopted the Collections Policy.
- The Board approved the logo that has been used informally for some time as the official logo of the Museum and authorized its use for uniform patches and other official purposes.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Next meeting:

7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

Lynnhurst Community Center

Annual Membership Meeting and Board organizational meeting

9:15 a.m.

Saturday, May 13, 2006

Linden Hills Community Center