



**Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting – Friday October 25, 2024
The Radisson Hotel - Airport – Colorado Springs, CO**

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM MDT by Don Stewart, Chairman.

Board Members Present:

Tim Tennant, President and CEO	Paul Davenport	Steve Jorgensen
Don Stewart, Chairman	John Engs	Ian Kelly
Bill Lock, Founder	John Ferrell	Dan Pyzel
Don Atkinson	Scott Hardy	Melissa Sellers
Ed Beaudette (virtual)	Jim Herron	Tom Stewart
	Frank Higgins	

Board Members Absent: Caroline Tower

Guests Present: John Porco, Becky Porco, Ken Sellers, Kathy Walser (virtual)

Minutes: Melissa Sellers, Secretary

II. Approval of Minutes – Melissa Sellers

June Board of Directors Meeting and July, August and September Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

- Change spelling of Bob Reib's name on page 11 of the June board meeting minutes.
- M/S: Davenport/Pyzel – Moves to accept June, July, August, and September Meeting Minutes. Passed unanimously.

III. President's Report – Tim Tennant

Tim distributed a copy of an ad for White River Publications Magazines. The add is geared towards recruiting new members.

He also distributed Kathy Walser's social media report which includes an ad that Kathy created for the *Albuquerque Journal's* Giving Guide which comes out on November 28th. The guide contains area non-profit organizations seeking contributions and volunteerism. We will stress becoming a member, volunteering and financial support.

We currently have 1,884 members.

the PNGPF fund has received \$130,962 this year up to September 30th.

Tim distributed a *Conflict-of-Interest Policy* which board members need to sign each year proclaiming that they understand that any Conflicts of Interest need to be reported.



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Tim shared a list of work session volunteers. There are about 25 docents who have registered. Scott wants to make sure all docents are listed. John Porco will help confirm.

Tim thanked everyone for the last 20 years of support while he has been president.

IV. Executive Search Update – Scott Hardy/Melissa Sellers

- There was some misunderstanding about the definition of “remote” amongst board members and this caused confusion with potential candidates as we had told the recruiter that we preferred someone who would live in the greater Albuquerque area, but if we couldn't find a qualified candidate, we would consider remote work. Some board members interpreted remote to mean that the employee can live and work anywhere (e.g. Omaha) and is not required to work in the Albuquerque office, while other board members interpreted “remote” as working from home sometimes, but mostly being in the Albuquerque office.
- Once the confusion amongst board members was resolved, we informed the recruiter that the majority of the board would like the new Executive Director to reside in the Albuquerque area and to work in the office most days each week.
- The recruiter had found some highly qualified candidates that would be interested, but they did not want to move to Albuquerque. This caused three candidates to remove themselves from consideration.
- We currently have a few people who are interested in the position and are willing to live/move to the Albuquerque area and work out of the office. Our recruiter is currently vetting these people to determine if they have the qualifications we desire. He hopes to present the search committee with three qualified candidates by mid-November.
- We discussed moving the office and having a higher qualified E.D. vs just finding someone who lives/will move to the ABQ area. The two major states where we get money are New Mexico and Colorado, so having an office in either place makes sense. This is something that may need to be revisited in the future, but at this point, we can't be changing our location and what we are telling the recruiter; we need to be consistent.
- We really need to make ourselves known in the communities close to the railroad for both volunteer and monetary contributions, being in ABQ can assist us in this endeavor.
- Moving the office is a huge undertaking, we have volunteers working on the photo collection and in the library, and we might offend people in ABQ if we move the office.
- The new Executive Director needs to attend the HPCC and Commission meetings and meet with the railroad, plus going to work sessions. Living in the region of Colorado Springs to ABQ to Chama/Antonito is important to effectively travel as needed.



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- M/S -Engs/Stewart – Move to continue down the path where the new E.D. needs to live in the greater ABQ area and can be present in the office multiple days a week. Passed unanimously.

V. Finance Committee Report – Tim Tennant

2024 Nine Month YTD Financial Report

a) Budget vs Actual

- Total revenue is below budget by \$8,592.
- Donations are below budget by \$27,148. YTD we have brought in \$103,402. At this time last year we had \$95,210 in donations.
- Member Dues are \$14,871 below budget. Current YTD is \$81,949. This time last year, we had received \$87,350.
 - John E. suggested that we revamp the website to make sure it is easy for people to donate extra toward membership dues. (Note: the website currently is set up where the minimum you enter is \$40, but you can put whatever you want and it goes towards membership dues.)
 - Don A. suggested that if people (not foundations) donate money but aren't current members, we should put the first \$40 toward a membership and auto-enroll them. That will put them on the list for our solicitation letters.
 - Don A. also suggested member dinners during every work session. This may not increase revenue, but might increase volunteer retention.
 - Tim suggested also doing them across the nation, as was done in the past. It would engage people from Texas, California, etc. and they could bring a friend and we might also get more volunteers.
 - John E. said that the public often stops by while on a tour of the trolley museum and see what the Friends are doing while on the tour. This is a way to get additional volunteers and members.
 - Tom S. suggested an article in the dispatch about these tours and their impact.
 - There was also a suggestion to write a little advertisement in the Colorado Springs Gazette to advertise work is being done that weekend and to stop by.
- Grant income is up. Candelaria donated a significant portion of this as an unexpected gift to help pay for the recruiter to find Tim's replacement.
- Commission payment was up a little, \$59,056 vs \$54,440 in 2023.
 - Ridership was down a little this year, but revenue was up because premium ridership is up while coach ridership is down.



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- The Historic Preservation fund collects 7% on every dollar of revenue, and the Friends get 20% of that.
- Overall revenue and support for the first three quarters is currently at \$448,097 vs. \$561,453 this time in 2023, so is down \$113,356 from a year ago.
- Expenses are at \$578,697 and we are currently budgeted for \$737,930, so we are positive \$159,232 from where we expected to be. However, overall expenses are \$17,244 over this time in 2023.
- As of Sept. 30th, revenue is under expenditures by \$125,260.

b) Cash Balances

- Unrestricted cash is \$345,330; total cash is \$1,109,888. This shows the strength of the viability of our organization.

c) SORFA (Summary of Temporarily Restricted Funds Activity)

- Work session support is in the negative by \$26,265.
- CRF improvements are in the negative by \$16,790.
- Webcams shows negative \$290, but that's not right because we received \$2,425 in donations, so Tim will check on this.

VI. 2025 Budget Process

- Once the board approves the budget, the office tries to put the money into the month where they expect the income and expenditures based on historic numbers. Tim provided a handout to demonstrate.
- Kathy is under 6470-membership expense, Steve is under 6000-salaries & wages, Katharina, accounting, SJD, and auditors are under 6260, and Tom Moore, the recruiter, is under 6290-professional other.
- The whole board will have a virtual meeting in December to approve the budget for 2025.
- John E. will submit the project committee budget to Tim/Don before Thanksgiving.
- Katharina will input the information into the budget on December 3rd and 4th.
- Tim will email the budget to the board members by December 6th.
- We will have a virtual board meeting December 11th.



VII. Docents – John Porco

- Trained two new docents but could definitely use more docents. There are currently 26 registered docents.
- Covered virtually all trains.
- All active docents have finished the online sensitivity training required by the commission.
- The docent management team has been great. Four onsite coordinators this year.
- John will give a check from docent tips to Tim at the member dinner.
- Kathy and Melissa will recontact with Art Baeza about working on the education program and also see he would be interested in chronicling.
- A few docents have been handing out docent recruitment cards. These cards don't advertise the other activities that the Friends do. Can we make a card with Friends information on one side and docent recruitment on the other side? This way if someone doesn't want to be a docent, they may still have the information about what the Friends do.
- Melissa and Kathy to work on a card to promote Joining the Friends/becoming a docent.
- Do we need to update trip map? People expect an hour for lunch because it is written on the trip map, but it's often 45 minutes.
- Idea to interview a docent for every Dispatch. Ask them about favorite experiences, most asked or funny questions, stories of riding, etc. Paul volunteered.

VIII. Interpretation Committee Report – John Ferrell

- Content and movies have been decided for the Hollywood Movie Car. The focus will be more about the production of the movies on the railroad vs what movies were filmed. Our risk of copyright issues is minimized when we focus on the production and makes it educational.
- We expect to have everything ready and installed in 2026/2027.
- Ian and Randy have been very helpful with movie info and updates on the boxcar restoration.

IX. Education Committee Report – Melissa Sellers

- The Junior Engineer Program did well again this year. Docents shared approximately 2,375 booklets and handed out 1,750 patches.
- Virtual education has begun uploading content to the "sandbox" websites, which are test sites before they become active. Melissa has requested some additional help from Steve Thomas to have Simply Design create some additional templates



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because they didn't provide a way for us to create additional pages to link all of our content.

- Three new trading cards were printed: Bill Lock (important people), Coal Tipple (structures), and Milepost 283 (signs).
- There are five more trading cards in the works, that will hopefully be printed soon.
- Trading cards are being used at train shows and given to volunteers at work sessions.

X. Collections Committee Report – Dan Pyzel

- Waiting for wheel sets to finish stock car 5774, which has otherwise been done for three years.
- Two of the cars that the railroad uses regularly need new wheelsets. They are flat on rider gon 1357 and caboose 0579.
- The friends don't typically run a caboose behind a passenger train. It is painted for 1916. However, we use 1357 almost every time we run a charter.
- Ed doesn't have an idea of when they will get new wheelsets/axles.
- We have many cars that need wheels. The D&S will fix wheel sets for us, but it is expensive. Other places can do it but the shipping costs would make it extraordinarily expensive.
- Most of the wheel sets in the yard are bad. Don A. said that we acquired three cars specifically with the intent of using the wheel sets, were bad. 1/12 were good. Don A. suggested a checklist to inspect cars before we buy them so that we can verify they have the usable parts we need.
- It will cost \$700/wheel to have the axle turned and to have the wheel pressed on. That's only if we remove the wheel and don't bend the axle in the process.
- We should not reuse axles, they need to be brought up to standards at a cost of \$1,500, plus \$700/wheel for just one set.
- Ed will talk to some of his employees and put together a rough plan with what to do with wheel sets for the next board meeting.

XI. Projects Committee Report – John Engs

- Many people gave great input.
- John requests board members to take a position for team leads and site leads.
- The 2025 project schedule was reviewed. Don A. will email Ed a copy of the project schedule and the PowerPoint.
- John gave a synopsis of the Cumbres Master Plan.
- There was a dispute with the National Forest over who owned the land up at Cumbres. This has been finalized and it is registered with the county that the property belongs to the RR.



- This is the only Section town with highway access.
- ICC standards – Interstate Commerce Commission.
- Historic Landmark status stops in 1930.

XII. Accufund Migration – Scott Hardy

- Trying to simplify the process to input purchase orders and have them paid for through the Accufund system. Request For Quotes could also potentially happen through this system. The system should allow remote access where everyone with a password can input purchase orders and John E. would just need to approve them and not have to enter them himself.

XIII. Social Media / Information Technology Report – Tom Stewart & Ian Kelly

- Tom shared Google Analytics that the number of people who visit our website is 1.7k, but the ultimate number of people who continued to click through pages and purchase something is 2%. Typically, non-profits have a rate of 9% completion.
- Most people who visit our website are from Colorado, Texas, New Mexico, California, and Arizona.
- Google Analytics also shows rankings for which cities are coming to our website the most. Kathy and Tom will try to come up with the same datapoints for the March board meeting.

XIV. Executive Session

- Executive Session – closed

XV. Railroad Report – Ed Beaudette

A. Current News

- Railroad is working through data collected this year to figure out what they will do next year. Especially evaluating experimental trips that were held this year.
- Christmas holiday service will be expanded this year with two days of trains out of each end of the line. Trying to bring area school kids in so they can bring their parents and experience the train. These will be shorter experiences (an hour and a half), with Cinder Bear, cookies, and hot cocoa. \$30 for holiday train. Antonito to 286. Chama to Lobato.
- Did better this year than expected. In general, tourist railroad ridership has been down, but we saw a 14% increase over last year.
- 30,000 people last year, around 34,500 this year. (42,400 pre-pandemic.)



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- Premium service sells out, but coach seats tend to be available.
- Group travel was higher this year. Typically filled with older groups of people who want a “package” service.
- Trying to get next year’s parlor car availability ready by Thanksgiving so people can book early (Christmas gifts).

B. What’s ahead for 2025

- Will run core services and also fall service.
- Will review data from this year to help determine the schedule for next year.
- Looking to offer shorter experiences. People aren’t willing to invest a whole day on the train.

C. Friends 2025 “After Season” Charter Request

- Not able to set a Friends Charter until other scheduling issues are straightened out, but hopefully they will know soon if they can support one.
- If the railroad can support an “after season” charter, then the Friends would be first in line to schedule one.

D. Engineer School

- Engineering school is another question the railroad is trying to figure out. A lot of people want them, but they are expensive and the railroad now has two fewer coal burners.
- If they do it, it will be on a smaller scale and in quieter seasons like early June and August/early September.
- Railroad needs to determine cost/benefit.

XVI. Bylaws- Approval of Changes – Bill Lock & Melissa Sellers

- Need to update Section 7.2. Last line needs update from Section 5.5 to 5.6.
- M/S: Lock/Higgins – Moves accept the changes in the bylaws. Passed unanimously.
- Tim will send them to Simply Design to update the website (meeting minutes and updated bylaws).

XVII. Other/New Business

- Website needs to be updated with all new meetings.
- Melissa to send Tim copies of approved minutes without draft 1 on them.
- Tom suggested we post links to the board meetings so that people can listen in.



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- Don A. is concerned about our car acquisition. We need to make sure we have a checklist and that the list is checked before we approve purchases.
- Don A. will create a checklist and formal process for acquisitions and approvals.
 - The top of the form will have a section where we say what the item is and why we want that particular piece of equipment.
 - The list needs to include the condition of parts we are concerned about getting,
 - and the cost for transport.
- Suggested dates for spring board meeting and next year's moonlight train:
 - The Spring 2025 Board Meeting shall take place on March 15, 2025 in Albuquerque at the Holiday Inn & Suites, 5050 Jefferson Street NE, Albuquerque.
 - Moonlight train (subject to the railroad's approval) will be Saturday Night August 9th, 2025.

M/S Lock/Stewart Moves to hold Spring board meeting on the 15th of March, 2025. And the moonlight train on Saturday August 9th, 2025. Passed unanimously.

- Diesel locomotive is scheduled to leave Washington tonight. Expected to arrive in Antonito in about 10-12 days.
- Not having the 2nd parlor car made the Moonlight train not profitable. The two regular parlor cars will be on the trains, so we can only have one for the moonlight train. Caboose will probably be available.

XVIII. Adjournment

- M/S: Pyzel/T.Stewart – Moves to adjourn. Passed unanimously.
- 2:37 adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Melissa A. Sellers

Melissa Sellers
Secretary