



**Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting – Saturday March 15, 2025
Holiday Inn & Suites North I-25 – Albuquerque, NM**

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 AM MDT by Don Stewart, Chairman.

Board Members Present:

Rick Marsden, Executive Director	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	Jim Herron - Virtual	Tom Stewart
Caroline Tower - Virtual	Frank Higgins - Virtual	

Board Members Absent: None

Guests Present: Linda King, Becky Porco, John Porco, Greg Pringle, Chris James

Minutes: Melissa Sellers, Secretary

II. Approval of Minutes – Melissa Sellers

- M/S: Pyzel/Davenport – Moves to accept all meeting minutes for October Board of Directors Meeting - Oct 25, 2025, December Budget Meeting – Dec 11, 2025, and Special Board of Directors Meeting - January 17, 2025. Passed unanimously.

III. Executive Director's/President's Report – Rick Marsden

A. Membership Report

- There are currently 1,850 Friends members.
- Rick presented information of our current membership levels and comparable levels at different organizations.
- Rick proposed a possible membership change from one flat membership fee per household to a membership fee based on the number of individuals in each household.
- Exact membership comparison is not possible on pricing strategies with other organizations because the nature of our organization is different from organizations with paid admission to their museum.



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B. Friends Train Handout-Rick Marsden

- Rick passed out a “mini-Dispatch” to consider handing out on the trains in order to share the story of the Friends. It is 8 pages total, printed on 70# semi-gloss paper, and is 8.5”x11”. It gives more information than you can get in the tri-fold brochure.
- Proposal is for every ticket purchaser to get a copy.
- Don A. suggested it might cost too much for our return of either new members or volunteers.
- These could be distributed in a clear plastic bag with a trip map, tri-fold Friends brochure, walking tour, sticker, and possibly the Jr. Engineer book and pencil.
- We have a volunteer who is willing to work as a yard docent who can possibly stuff the bags and hand them out in the yard at Chama.
- Tom asked Ed if he felt that people leaving them behind would cause a problem with the staff. Ed didn’t think it would cause a problem.
- John E. asked who would assemble the bags. Rick responded that a member of the Friends would need to do that. Rick volunteered himself and his wife to stuff bags.
- Don A. also suggested that the bag is given out when the tickets are given out. Ed did not think it was a good idea to put that extra task on his staff.
- Price for printing the mini-Dispatch ranged from under a dollar to \$1.14 per book.
- Scott pointed out that we are targeting getting members, not just getting volunteers (the mini-Dispatch focuses on volunteers).
- Tim said that we used to spend \$7-8K purchasing *Classic Trains* advertising lists and we would get 100-150 members. We can no longer purchase those lists, so we need another avenue to reach customers.
- We agreed to move forward on doing a run for the Denver train show and Narrow-Gauge Convention. Rick will do a run of around 500 - 2500, paying attention to price breaks.
- Chris will remove the line on the front page, asking customers to leave the booklet on the seats. Ed does not want that extra work for his employees.

C. Depot Kiosks-Rick Marsden

- Rick wants to put kiosks at various depots so that people can learn more about the railroad and the Friends. One version can have a spot to put Dispatch magazines or brochures.
- This could have information about local accommodations, geography, and the Friends’ story. This is the storyteller when there is no docent available, “The Silent Docent.”
- The kiosk must be indoors; it is on wheels so it can easily be moved.



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- We would need to find people to create the content.
- Ed said that there would not be space at Chama or Antonito, but it might be possible to put the kiosk at Osier.
- Bill brought up that there used to be a T.V. with introductory videos at both station and it was excellent. Maybe we should consider doing something similar at Osier.
- Scott suggested that this is a project for the Historic Interpretation Committee and should be done in conjunction with the Education team.
- Ed stated that we need to work with the concession manager at Osier to make sure it's in a place that doesn't disrupt the flow of traffic.
- Tom S. said that he would be willing to be the "on-site support guy" if there are any issues; he will fix it or move it.
- The kiosk weighs 85 pounds and costs \$4,500.
- M/S: Lock/T. Stewart – Moves to purchase one Kiosk. Passed unanimously.

D. Software Status – Scott Hardy

- Work is being done on the online registration software. Steve T. is revising the system and hopes to have something ready by the October board meeting.

IV. Finance Committee Report – Tim Tennant

A. 2024 Year End Finances

- The Audit will begin in April.
- We ended 2024 with our revenue \$28,883 under expenditures. However, when we created the budget, we expected a deficit of \$252,720.
- Our expenditures were under budget by \$164,473 and our revenue was over budget by \$45,479.
- Support and Revenue really fluctuated over the past few years due to estate gifts.
- Our expenses have gone up over the years, but so have our total assets.

B. 2025 YTD Financial Report

a) Budget vs Actual

- Through the end of February, we are in the red by \$11,264.



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- This time last year, we had already received our check from the commission(\$59K), which put us in the black. We have not received our check yet this year.
- We just received a \$30K estate gift, which will be reflected in March.

b) Detailed Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

- We are currently at \$2.1M.
- A good portion of our assets are in the CRF building and land that the Friends own.

c) Cash Balances

- Unrestricted cash is at \$233K.
- Our total cash at \$1.06M.

d) SORFA (Summary of Temporarily Restricted Funds Activity)

- Our ending net assets are at \$491,966.
- Antonito CRF Improvements are underfunded by \$33,614.
- Tourist Sleeper 470 is underfunded by \$500.
- John E. asked if we could use *Fund 311 Historic Structures* money to install a new roof on the Cumbres Section House. The short answer is yes. Tim stated that Historic Preservation money from the commission is earmarked for structures and rolling stock. The board can use that money, if the check is received in time, or move money from unrestricted funds.
- T. Stewart/ Lock – Motion to return Docent restricted funds to general unrestricted funds. Passed unanimously.
- Lock/T.Stewart – Motion to accept the financials as presented. Passed unanimously.

V. Development Report – Caroline Tower

- PNGPF (Preserving the Narrow-Gauge Preservation Fund) received \$105K for work session support in 2024. Caroline thinks that is the most ever since inception.



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- The PNGPF fundraising letter is scheduled to be sent out on April 1st. Caroline wondered if we should postpone sending out the request until May due to current economic certainty. The general consensus is yes, we should wait.

VI. Interpretation Committee Report – John Ferrell

- The sign garden should be finished this year.
- The team will be working on the installation of new interpretive signs at Cumbres Pass.
- Planning of the exhibit layout inside the Hollywood Movie car is starting. The hope is to complete the car by the of Spring of 2027.

VII. Collections Committee Report – Dan Pyzel

- We do not need any more projects, but we definitely need parts.
- We are in critical need of operating hardware such as trucks, couplers, and brakes.
- The prices may be high, but they will be cheaper to buy than to make them.
- Dan is looking for wheel sets because we need multiple wheel replacements; some cars used on charter trains have flats spots.

VIII. Projects Committee Report – John Engs

A. 2025 Project Management and Planning

- John E. asked John F. if he could provide a representative from the Interpretations Committee to be on the Projects Committee and vice versa. He is concerned that there are things going on at the project side that needs input from the interpretation committee.
- John said that we need to know what our projects will be for 2026 and 2027 because some projects have a long lead time for materials.
- He would also like to look ahead to what will be desired 10 years out.
- John requests that the railroad helps us document what has been done, and what needs to be done on each car so the information can be saved electronically and can easily be shared between the Friends and the Railroad.
- We have six different buyers that will be doing purchasing electronically to help make the process faster vs. John doing everything on paper.
- We need to look at adding E and F sessions in Chama.
- State health standards have not relaxed in New Mexico, so we still cannot make our own food. This makes it a bit more difficult to add sessions.



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- In 2026, we will add a couple of special projects. These would probably be “quick fix teams” with just one or two projects John wants to move one of Bill’s sessions to E or F so that he can be a site team lead in Chama where two projects, one led by Bill, would work. Bill says he would be willing to talk about it, but probably only for one week.
- At the October meeting, Don A. will present a 2026 draft that will include a possible E and F session in Chama (in addition to Antonito).
- E and F would take place July 27-30 and F would be Aug 3-7. If these include Chama Days, then these dates will change.
- Due to Chama Days probably being the end of session F, we may need to move the sessions to after Chama Days.
- There are rumors that people want to work in Chama in August (not just C and D in June). Nobody knows who they are; Scott is going to try to find out.

B. Volunteer Management Status (FIDO) – Scott Hardy

- Assets, volunteers, registrations, etc. will be moved online for easy access.
- Registrations for 2025 will still be on paper.
- We have 31 people already registered for 2025.

IX. Education Committee Report – Melissa Sellers

- The education team has been working with Simply Design to get the education page constructed.
- Right now, they are very close to being able to launch some of it.
- Melissa gave a demonstration of what the main education page, the Jr. Engineer page, and the virtual education pages look like.
- Melissa also showed some potential games that are planned for the site, such as Kahoot and Jeopardy.

X. Social Media Report – Tom Stewart

- 56.5% of our Facebook audience is aged 55+.
- 38.8% of our Instagram audience is aged 55+.
- Our Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube channels are reaching other countries.
- Most of our videos are on Vimeo.
- Most people like “shorts.” We need to figure out how to get people from “shorts” to see our longer videos.



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- Ian stated that YouTube breaks the videos into sections to show commercials, Vimeo doesn't do that.
- The trick is to figure out how we get people who like to watch the videos to become members.
- Scott pointed out that we don't know how many people that visit our social media sites are already members.

XI. Old/New Business

A. Equipment Acquisition SOP-Don Atkinson (old business)

- Don A. created a Standard Operating Procedure for acquisition of historic equipment.
- The operating procedure includes a checklist for a qualified inspector to fill out to make sure the asset is in the condition that we expect and has working parts that we need.
- Ed wants to make sure the process includes quickly removing parts as needed and a plan to dispose of the parts that we don't want.
- Rick wants to know if there is an operating procedure to get rid of the refuse. We don't currently have one, but we do need to figure this out and create one.
- M/S - Atkinson/T.Stewart moves to approve the Historic Equipment Acquisition procedure. Approved Unanimously.
- The document needs to be put on the website where people can access it.

B. Communications-Ian Kelly (new business)

- Internal Communications seem to be pretty good. However, our external communications have not been very good.
- Ian would like to formalize what we do right now. We have Kathy on social media, Chris doing the Dispatch, Ian doing Dispatch Extra, and Linda in charge of train shows, but we need more communication with the outside world.
- Ian requests:
 - A webmaster to coordinate what goes up on the website and when.
 - A video coordinator for YouTube and Vimeo.
 - A communication liaison with the railroad. Ian requests Abi.
 - A communications chairman who reports to the executive committee.
- Rick is going to talk to his wife to see if she is interested in helping with our website.
- Don appointed Tom Stewart as communications chair.



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C. Membership (new business)

- A membership chair is needed.
- We need appropriate membership appreciation as part of our membership chair's responsibilities. This could include thank you cards, yearly recognition, volunteer of the month, recognition in the Dispatch, an item of merit, a year pin, a gift certificate, awards for hours volunteered, etc.
- Don appointed Steve Jorgensen the membership committee chair.

D. Search Committee Jim Herron – (new business)

- Don asked Jim if he has made any progress on finding a treasurer. Jim has talked to Jim Marski, but he needs to reconnect to see if Jim got the budget information he requested and if he still has any interest.
- Jim H. should have the potential treasurer contact Rick or Katharina.
- Jim H. thinks Jim M. is basically retired, but has some small interest in a model train business. He was involved in the finance division of the Chicago Northwestern Railroad.
- Jim listed the names of people who are up for re-election. He will contact them and see if they want to run for another term.

E. Other – (new business)

- We need someone with contract signing authority that is approved by the board. If Rick is elected as president, then he will have contract signing authority.
- M/S Lock/Pyzel moves to elect Rick as president. Approved unanimously.
- M/S T. Stewart/ Lock moves to have the secretary send out the E.C. meeting minutes as soon as they are created as a draft (before approval). Passed unanimously.

XII. Adjournment

- M/S: Stewart/Pyzel – Moves to adjourn. Passed unanimously.
- 1:21PM adjourned.



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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Melissa A. Sellers

Melissa Sellers
Secretary