

**BOD MEETING MINUTES OF GARDEN STATE DIVISION, NE REGION,
NMRA**

Purpose: Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting
Date/Time: Saturday, March 20, 2021
Place: Telephone meeting by FreeConferenceCall.com
Attendees: Chuck Diljak, Jim Homoki, Jim Walsh, Bob Dennis, Mark Moritz, Paul Harbord, Andy Brusgard, JP Mikesh, Ciro Compagno and Steve Ascolese
Not in attendance: Tom Casey

Meeting started at 10:05 AM.

No Motions Submitted at the Meeting

Reports were presented:

President's Report – This meeting is Chuck's last one as President. He was privileged to lead the GSD over the last 3 years during which we accomplished a lot. The first year, we hosted the NER convention, second year we toured the High Line and had the fireboat trip. This last year was the pandemic and all the virtual activities. Chuck thanked us all and wished the new leadership success. He had nothing else to report since we have been only doing virtual meets and no other activities.

NER REPORT – The recent focus is the NERx on April 10 and 11 in the afternoon from 2 to 6 PM and in the evening 7 to 11 PM. Tom Wortmann's layout will be on tour, Jim H will give his Timetable clinic and Chuck will host one of the segments. There will be a model showcase and it should be great fun. We will have an NER election – Ciro is running for the Southern Director unopposed and he should do a good job in that role. Bob Dennis is not running for Vice President this time and he will be leaving the NER board. Roger Oliver is officially leaving the NER treasurer position on June 30 and Gerry Covino will take the Treasurer's spot. When Mark is GSD President and Ciro is NER Southern Director, either one may present the NER Report at our BOD meetings. This is because Chuck will no longer be a member of the NER board although he will continue to serve the board in a marketing capacity.

Vice President's Report – Mark noted that he wants to discuss the upcoming Northlandz meeting but that is a separate part of the agenda.

Secretary's Report - Jim W previously sent out DRAFT minutes of the last meeting of 09 JAN 2021. Jim also sent out DRAFT minutes of the last Annual Business Meeting on 16 MAY 2020. With no comments or corrections they were both accepted as written. Our meeting minutes posted online are very behind. Jim W acknowledged the situation and is working to bring them up to date.

Treasurer's Report – Bob D previously emailed the balance sheet and the profit and loss statement. We started getting funding from Amazon Smile - \$6. We had an expense of \$26.09 for containers to hold donated locomotives. There are no other changes to report. The treasurer's report was accepted.

Education Committee and AP Chair Reports – There was really no activity since no models were evaluated during the pandemic. We are waiting for things to change. In May Chuck will submit his paperwork for Association Official resulting from completing 3 years as GSD President. Steve's recovery is slow but he has been making improvements. He is not ready to resume as AP Chair.

Events Report - Our last virtual meet had 24 attendees: 8 GSD BOD members, 11 GSD members, 2 other NMRA members and 3 others not known to Chuck. He cannot explain the low participation level. SPRING EVENT – We will host a joint virtual meet with the New Jersey Division (NJD). It will start with our Business Meeting and since minutes are posted on the web site, we will have a motion to waive

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reading reports and Chuck will note that there is no old business from last year's minutes. Then we will move on to the election. Chuck will lead the election since he is not running for any elected position. Then Chuck will read the slate of officers and directors for the election. With one vote cast for the slate, the election is completed. Then Chuck will turn the meeting over to our new President, Mark, who will ask for any new business and then adjourn the Business Meeting. Jim W will contact Tom Wortmann about a clinic that he volunteered on installing DCC decoders in older locomotives. If Tom is not ready, Chuck will do a clinic on the Cars AP certificate. Chuck has been in contact with Bill Grosse of the NJD and will follow up with Bill. As the new President, Mark will be running the meeting after the election since we are hosting the meet. Jim H plans to have a virtual layout tour of his model railroad. Chuck mentioned Zoom but we decided to stay with Free Conference Call for the May event. Ciro is a subscriber to Zoom and volunteered to use his account if we wanted to try it in the future. Chuck is interested in whether Zoom has the same functionality that we use for our virtual meetings. Jim H indicated that Zoom offers the features allowing the host to control the meeting as we do now. He said that he has been on meetings where they blank everyone except one or two people running the meeting. We discussed meetings that included live streams to Facebook or YouTube and the technology to accomplish that functionality. Chuck is looking for somebody to take over the Just Brag. It requires monitoring the gsdrains Yahoo email account, preparing the PowerPoint presentation and introducing each modeler. Andy asked about a clinic on PowerPoint but Chuck responded that there are many tutorials online. JimW volunteered to work on the PowerPoint for the Just Brag segment. Ciro suggested that we cut off submissions before the last minute. Between Jim W and Andy it will get done. Andy will forward the emails with photos to Jim W who will work the PowerPoint.

SUMMER EVENT - We do not have any current plans for the summer and we don't know if it will be virtual or live. All agreed to a virtual summer event. We will need clinics and layouts for the summer event. Chuck will have his cars clinic ready for summer. Bob D was thinking about having the make-and-take 2 Ways clinic at the summer event. He said that the build would be over a number of weeks and we could have Zoom calls every week. It could be separate or part of the meet. Jim W noted that if we started the make-and-take at the virtual meet then it would replace the usual clinics at the meet. Bob D said the make-and-take would include a PowerPoint presentation. Bob D identified the key logistic points about organizing and running the clinic. First is to generate sufficient interest and have the kit at the start of the meet. Chuck was concerned since we do not have good attendance numbers at a virtual event and then making it a make-and-take may not make it better. Our last make-and-take had a small attendance. He likes the idea of a make-and-take clinic but is concerned about having it during a virtual meet. Mark suggested having the make-and-take clinic in the fall. Bob is concerned about making the preparations only to get minimal participation. Bob could make a presentation of the make-and-take clinic plans during the Summer Event. This would help to promote the make-and-take. We need to give it every chance to succeed. It is better to have it at a live meeting in the fall. Bob added that the \$20 cost should help. We discussed surveying the members but surveys can be tricky. The wording of the questions must be precise and clear. We need to promote the make-and-take clinic. On July 24 we will have a virtual event for the summer and Chuck will give his cars clinic.

FALL EVENT - Mark suggested that we will be ready for a live event in the fall but questioned the protocol for our first live event. Will we need proof of vaccination? We discussed the percentage requirements. Ciro suggested that when we get closer to the fall timeframe we need to check the latest state requirements as well as the rules for the facility being used for the event. Since we will be planning the fall meet in the summer we will wait to see the restrictions at that time. Chuck raised the idea of Northlandz being the location of our first meet back in person. Maybe we do the make-and-take in the morning and tour the Northlandz layout in the afternoon. This may also be of interest to the NJD. Jim W suggested that if we have it there the facility will already be set up with provisions for gatherings with respect to the health and safety. We will speak more about Northlandz when we get to that part of the agenda. Chuck noted that fall and winter are still uncertain with respect to the pandemic.

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Clinic Report – Jim W will contact Tom Wortmann about a decoder clinic that he developed to see if he can present it at the spring event. Chuck will be the backup for the spring event. Jim W is developing some clinics including building a static grass applicator, rust colors and 2D printing. For live events there are clinics by Scott Dunlap and Kai Ebinger. We definitely have clinics for spring and summer.

Membership Report – Andy is going to set up an Excel file for the people attending our GSD meets. Chuck noted that we must keep track of how many times guests attend. Jim W pointed out that we must address any at-risk individuals attending the meets. Andy suggested that we consider how other divisions are handling at-risk individuals. Chuck noted that it was discussed at the NER board meeting but not much is being done mostly because of the pandemic. Some divisions were aware of it and talking about it but some divisions were not aware of at all. Every division needs to do something but we cannot wait to see how others do it since nothing seems to be done. They may also be waiting to see what others do. Andy remarked that since the requirement comes from National they should be providing guidance on implementation. Ciro suggested that visitors to our meeting may not be aware of the policy and we should have it posted on an easel at the entrance to our meets. Bob D said that he could have that poster made up. Chuck asked who will create the copy for the poster? Andy will find the content to post. He will check the letter from National and the NMRA web site. Ciro said that we posted the information on the GSD web site. He worked with a Tom Wortmann to have it posted there.

Whistle Post Report – Jim H has one big article and nothing new since the last issue. He needs the usual write-ups, columns and clinic descriptions for May 1. Try to get those items in within a week or so. He will add content about the National at risk policy if it is provided to him. The same for any similar public service notes. Bob D will prepare a write-up to promote the make-and-take clinic.

Election Report – This is on the agenda but we covered it during the Business meeting discussion.

Old Business:

- Revamp The Whistle Post – We are still talking about revamping the Whistle Post with a full page cover photo. To do it we need good photos that must be taken with the cover in mind and should be related to content in the Whistle Post. It could be a layout tour, clinic, article or other content. JimW suggested that a good cover shot would be related to the layout tour coming up in May.
- GSD website – JP worked to address an issue with the Northeastern Region. During some NER web site migration, many division web sites hosted on the NER site went down. We are not hosted on the site but our files are there. Our web site did not go down but files could not be accessed – image files and documents. However, since then JP set up our own file server and Chuck got our files from the NER webmaster. JP put the files on our server and Tom Wortmann updated our web site. We are back to normal operation. Therefore, JP has not been working on our new web site.
- Erie Limited files – Chuck has flash drives and waits for an in-person meeting to distribute them.
- JCRHS Train Show at Mother Seton High School in Clark, NJ – On hold until November 2021.
- Membership outreach – It is ongoing and Chuck is not aware of anybody making contact with our members. Please continue to do it when you think of it.
- RPM/Craftsman Structures Meet – This is on hold for now.
- GSD T-TRAK modules for the NER – Bob D said that it is on hold because the NER board is waiting for John Doehring to get back to them. John is getting in touch with the vendor.
- Make-and-take clinic – We already spoke about the make-and-take clinic.
- GSD online apparel shop is on hold until Steve recovers and is well enough to do that.
- Plan to record and track attendance at in-person meets - We already spoke about recording and tracking attendance including at-risk individuals.
- Call log for membership outreach – We did not speak about the call log in our earlier membership discussion and Andy is not present at this time.

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- Bring up the NMRA At-Risk Persons Policy at the NER board meeting - Chuck mentioned that when the policy was discussed at the board meeting on 17 JAN 2021, it sounded like some divisions were aware of it but have not really implemented anything and other divisions had no idea. Bob D noted that some did not read it correctly or thought that it was something that they did not need to do.
- COMPLETED - Ciro and Tom Wortmann got 3 strikes rule and at-risk policy posted to the web site.
- Donated locomotives - Ciro reported that Tom Wortmann donated 65 used locomotives during a Friday night session of the modelers on Staten Island. The locomotives are entered in an inventory posted on Dropbox. We now have photos of each locomotive and Ciro is adding the photos into the spreadsheet on Dropbox – all photos will be added in a week or two. Ciro and Bob D met JP in Parsippany and handed him 2 totes containing the locomotives. JP will keep them in his home for now. We still need a plan for selling the items. Ciro added that the locomotives were not tested and that they are all used, DC powered locomotives. Mark noted that the family originally requested a donation receipt from Tom Wortmann and Ciro reported that was not done. Bob D has not generated anything. Chuck added that we can only acknowledge receiving the items but we cannot place a value on them. We can provide a receipt of the material if requested. JP can bring a portable test track to the meets when we start meeting again in person.
- Zoom license discussion – We already had a Zoom license discussion earlier in this meeting.
- D&O insurance - Bob D noted that it is falling through the cracks. The D&O insurance protects directors and officers for malfeasance and there is an organization to write insurance for the divisions. Costing \$200-\$300 each year, Bob is not sure if it is something we want. At the NER board meeting several divisions questioned their need for the insurance and asked why the NER was considering it. The GSD BOD is not interested in the insurance but decided to conduct an annual in-house audit of our finances. It is good practice and mitigates the largest risk covered by the insurance. Ciro will work with Bob to conduct the audit prior to our annual business meeting. The audit materials will go back to May 2020 to cover from last business meeting to the next one.

New Business:

- Whistle Post Ads - We do not sell ad space in the Whistle Post but include advertising for companies that assist our division. Many ads are for companies that donated to our door prizes. If a company provided meeting space or donated door prizes then we would run an ad for them.
- Northlandz – Christina Zambri is meeting with Tariq Sohail, the new owner of Northlandz, to establish them as an NMRA partner. Tariq is also interested in working with the New Jersey and Garden State divisions. Our division needs to discuss with Northlandz to determine how we can work together. On March 31, Mark and Jim H will accompany Christina at a meeting with Northlandz. Christina will be there to discuss NMRA partnership and Mark and Jim will discuss how our local division can work with Northlandz. What are our interests that can be addressed at the meeting? Chuck is interested in if we could have one of our meets at Northlandz. How large is the meeting space? Do they have tables so that we could do a make-and-take clinic there? Could we do a barbecue there on the grounds? Also consider our usual set up with coffee and donuts. The other issue is what can we do while we are there? Jim H said that Tariq wants to move the place ahead and improve its reputation since the maintenance had been lacking. Tariq is also interested in getting a model railroader to help him but this is beyond our meeting issues. Chuck is interested in Tariq's future plans for Northlandz and his timeline. If he is planning to site a hotel there, it may be a good place for a future NER convention. Besides discovering his plans we need to find out what he expects from us. Ciro thought that we could invite him to one of our live meets to educate him about the hobby and what we do. Jim H noted that Northlandz had a big presence at the last live train show in Springfield and if Tariq was there he definitely was exposed to the hobby. If he was not there at Springfield he may need to be educated on the hobby. Mark expressed concern that since Tariq is a businessman he may be looking to us for help in maintaining and growing the layout. However, Mark will need to hear what Tariq says at the meeting.

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Mark said that with the summer meet on July 24 and we need to meet about a month before that and June 26 is good for everybody. Same time as today -10 AM.

Ciro reminded Mark that if he wants to try Zoom they could discuss it and try it before the next meeting.

We all thanked Chuck for his service as the President but he reminded us that he is still available to assist those who are taking over some of his previous duties.

The meeting ended around 12:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Walsh

Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD