

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

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**Purpose:** Garden State Division (GSD) Staff Meeting  
**Date/Time:** Saturday, April 18, 2020  
**Place:** Telephone meeting by FreeConferenceCall.com  
**Attendees:** Chuck Diljak, Steve Ascolese, Ciro Compagno, Jim Homoki, Jim Walsh, Bob Dennis, Mark Moritz, Paul Harbord, Andy Brusgard, JP Mikesh and Tom Casey

Meeting started at 10:03 AM

**No Motions Submitted at the Meeting**

**Reports were presented:**

President's Report – Chuck hopes everybody is staying safe. Things will be challenging over the next few months. How will we provide for our members? Since the benefits of membership include the meets, we still need to provide value so that members feel like they're getting their money's worth. Chuck pointed out that that the following weekend Gordy Robinson organized NMRAX, a virtual convention, on Facebook Live. - 24 consecutive clinics around the clock from around the world.

NER REPORT – Before the meeting Chuck distributed the annual report that he sends to the NER. It addresses membership, achievement program, how we are communicating, financial status and similar information. Mike Bowler is officially the secretary of the NER. The region still needs a Coupler editor and a membership chair. At the last NER meeting they had a discussion of how divisions cope with the shelter in place orders due to COVID-19. Some divisions have been publishing more frequent newsletters highlighting what members have been doing while at home – projects and photos. Other divisions were more active on Facebook. We want to talk about similar things when we discuss our upcoming meet. END REPORT

Vice President's Report – Mark's material for this meeting applies to an upcoming meet and he has nothing additional for the VP report.

Secretary's Report - Jim W previously sent out DRAFT minutes for the meeting of 11 JAN 2020. Tom C found a misspelling on page 3, sixth line down – museum. The GSD received a nice letter thanking us for our contribution to the Chip Faulter Fund. The minutes were accepted with the noted correction.

Treasurer's Report – Bob D said that since January we spent \$267 more than we received primarily due to the make-and-take clinic in February. We purchased many supplies and waived the door entry fee for the clinic participants. Other than that we don't spend much money. We discussed an application for a gaming license. Andy said that is part of the new process to meet in Morristown. The town requires a state gaming license for us to have our raffle. Morristown wants everything by the book. There is a steep fine for operating without the license. Andy said that his group checked years ago and found that it did not apply for our group raffle because ours is internal for members and not the public. Chuck needs documentation or a clarification that it does not apply to us. The risk is high because the fines are steep. Bob D will get a clarification. Chuck is also concerned for the future – if we do an RPM meet it will be open to the public since it will not be exclusive to our members. Bob also reported that around 25 people participated in the make-and-take clinic. Steve A said that the left over supplies could be used for door prizes. Treasurer's report was accepted.

Education Committee and AP Chair Reports – We had much activity in the month before our last GSD event. Steve A hopes to award Tom Wortmann with his Association Official certificate at the next meeting. Steve received his Golden Spike – Bob D signed the paperwork. The dispatcher certificate for

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Jim H is in the works. Steve will prepare a write-up about the Golden Spike to go with the next email blast. Jim W will send photos of the award presentations to Steve for his next column. They are Chuck's Golden Spike and Andy's Association Volunteer certificate. Chuck noted that any of us can evaluate for a Golden Spike. There are no qualifications and any member can do it. Board members should watch for their eligibility for Association Volunteer certificate. Chuck reminded Steve to update the AP certificate spreadsheet on Dropbox and pass it to Tom Wortmann for the GSD web site.

Events Report - Due to COVTD-19, Chuck did not pick up the lawn sign from Jay Held. He will retrieve it when this is over. Paul still has the sign for North Haledon. NYSME did not use GSD lawn signs since they have their own signs. Bob D did not send the last meet sign-in sheet to Tom C. Andy has the attendance sheet. Andy will scan it and send it to Bob. We can use that information to see if there is a correlation between member activity and retention. Chuck said that we will be able to verify that guests are not exceeding the 3 visit limit – for our insurance. We welcome visitors but they must join to keep coming. Mason Logie's trip to NYC Transit Museum will be postponed to a future time- maybe next year. Chuck will contact Mason to discuss delaying the trip. We discussed the pandemic and when the state will be opening up. NMRA members are in the risk category. Our members will probably be cautious even after the stay home order is lifted.

SPRING - Our Spring event with the New Jersey Division probably will not be held in Middletown but it can be a virtual meeting online. Chuck discussed the possibility with Bill Grosse, superintendent of the NJD. Chuck suggested FreeConferenceCall.com. Bill wants to move forward with the virtual meet on the original planned date of May 16. We contribute one clinic and Fred is prepared to present his clinic on toilet paper for water scenes. It is appropriate considering the recent toilet paper shortage. Is there something that we can do in place of layout tours? The NJD usually has a themed model contest and this one was supposed to be industrial structures. Members can provide pictures for display as part of the meeting. Chuck is waiting on the NJD plans. However, Chuck is sure that we will be using FreeConferenceCall.com but not the same as for our BOD telephone meetings with everybody able to speak at once. There are modes where the meeting host can mute everybody's line. It eliminates usual background noise from people with an open microphone. It would be less distracting to the attendees. We will also have our business meeting with our election. We will waive reading the reports and Ciro will run the election part. One vote is cast for our uncontested slate and then close our business meeting. The business meeting will be done in a few minutes. According to our by laws, the membership has the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. Chuck agreed that we do that by the member typing into the chat or unmuting the microphone. We have the clinic and maybe some other content of interest to our members. If possible, a member could give a layout tour but Chuck was not aware of anybody who could do that. We may look into that. They will be doing virtual layout tours as part of next week's NMRAX virtual convention on Facebook live. Dave Abeles does virtual Ops sessions on Facebook live. Think of things that would work at this virtual meet and interesting to the membership. That is the status of the spring event.

SUMMER - Mark said that since we are sheltering-in-place there is a question if we will even have an event – at least not in person. Should it be a real or virtual event? The whole process to book the Morristown facility has changed since our meet 4 years ago. Extra steps and permissions from the town and submissions through the town clerk's office including food service permission just to have coffee and donuts. With the town shut down, Mark has no responses for his August 1 plan. Based upon Mark's difficulties and considering the pandemic, Chuck suggested that we plan for a virtual meet and the board concurred. Chuck said that we could have video tours of some of the layouts that were going to be open for the live meet. Maybe a prepared video with live narration by the layout owner during the meet. There could be some other way to present the layouts and we will have clinics as well. We could also have people provide photos of whatever they are working on while they are sheltering in place. Assemble the photos into a PowerPoint presentation and if the modeler is online, he can unmute his line and describe the pictures and project. It would be similar to the bring and brag. Mark asked how long should the virtual tour be? It depends on the layout and the narrator. They could

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describe buildings, structures, special features or scenery techniques. It could even include benchwork and plans for the layout or historical photos that provided inspiration. So the summer meet will be a virtual meet. We will speak about possible clinics when we get to the clinic report. Mark will inform the town that we will not have the meet – just end any plan for the event. Jim H said that maybe for the future we can skip Morristown because it is more difficult. He said that Hillsborough is much more inviting. Bob D asked Mark for the insurance certificate. He will see if he can recover costs.

FALL- Not long ago Tom Wortmann suggested returning to The Model Railroad Club in Union, NJ because he liked the operating sessions there. We still don't know how things will be at that time but Chuck sees it as a possibility for the fall event. Mark noted that the meeting area is small and seating is tight. Steve likes operating on the layout. Ciro noted that it has a nice outdoor area if the weather is good. Andy will contact Tim McCollum and let him know of our interest in a fall event at the club.

WINTER - For the Winter Event, Fred and Chuck are looking at Oakland, NJ. Fred is checking on a senior center because the hours are better for our usual plans. If it is too costly, we may be back in the library in Oakland, starting later but we can still make it work.

Spring/Summer 2021 - For Spring 2021, we will be hosting a meet with the NJD and looking at Hillsborough, NJ. If we want Father David Garretson to host an open house we must be mindful of Orthodox Easter on May 2, 2021. Mothers Day is May 9 so May 15 is a possible date for the meet. For Summer 2021, we will go to Hope or somewhere in western New Jersey. Chuck made a note that Phil Chiavetta has a layout in Stillwater. Andy knows Phil very well and he will contact Phil. It would be good to have him available for a meet in western NJ.

FUTURE - For future meets we will be watching the pandemic conditions as time goes by.

Membership Report – Tom C has not seen a membership report for March yet and reported on February information. We have a total of 209 members including 2 rail pass members. Nobody rerailed and we had 13 renewals – things have not changed much. Bob D reported that all new members that signed up in Springfield were for other divisions and not the GSD. Andy checked the email list against Constant Contact analytics and feedback. People who are not in our division and never open the emails were removed from our email list. He also confirmed the email addresses on the membership list. About 15% of our membership never open the emails. These may be good to check with our outreach activity. Make sure that we can contact those that never open the email. Part of the purpose of the outreach is to be certain that they get our email and confirm their email addresses. Andy found a couple of people on the membership list who were not on our Constant Contact list. Andy also contacts people who are behind on their dues. Chuck will be putting out a Constant Contact email to promote the virtual convention next week and our virtual meet in May. He will include a heads up on our planned August 1 meet. Andy also noticed that there are 8 members who are withdrawing themselves from the Constant Contact list. Andy will be reaching out to them and to some other people with bad email addresses.

Whistle Post Report – Jim H has not received anything yet. He suggested that we need a nice write-up of the make-and-take. Jim W reported that he is working on 3 items for the Whistle Post: His column, an article about the last meet including the make-and-take and an article about how members have been doing during the shelter in place condition. Jim H mentioned that the Central New York Division newsletter, Red Markers, had several photos highlighting what people have been doing while staying at home. Chuck said that he will solicit for those types of pictures with descriptions as part of our next Constant Contact email. Jim H still has one bridge article from Rich Newmiller. Chuck will be finishing his column and he said that his photos from the last meet are on Dropbox. JimW will send AP award photos to Steve for his column. Chuck mentioned that Steve may want to add a Whistle Post write-up about our new merchandise store. Jim H mentioned that the new Whistle Post format that we spoke of previously will require a great shot for the cover. These cover photos will require planning and not a last minute scramble to find a photograph. Chuck will send Jim H a photo of Fred's layout to promote Fred's clinic at the May meet.

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Clinic Report – Jim W reported that he started building a spreadsheet of all clinics from GSD meets. Some could be brought back if the members express an interest in the topic. Besides soliciting for clinicians, Jim W will be asking for clinic topics of interest to members. Recently Craig Bisgeier volunteered to do a clinic on making molds and casting parts. Craig previously presented this topic in 2014 but as a work in progress. We also discussed the possibility of Tony Koester as a clinician. Chuck would prefer that Tony present at a real and not virtual meet. We will wait until we start face to face meets again. Steve A has a clinic on using the Cricut machine but he would not want to drag his computer to a meet. Therefore, it might be good for a virtual meet but Chuck said that he would like to test that with FreeConferenceCall.com. We also have Chuck's clinic on JMRI operations in reserve. Chuck would like to do one on cars but he will wait until he has actually built all his cars for the AP certificate. He has an idea of what the clinic would be. Steve suggested that he could create a video to illustrate his clinic. Jim W suggested a PowerPoint with the video mixed in. For Spring Fred will do his clinic and for August 1 summer event – Steve A and Craig Bisgeier. Jim W has a future plan to do an NMRA EduTRAIN clinic for a division meet and perhaps write an article about the experience.

Election Report – Ciro said that we are all set to go for the election. All of the incumbents are running again and nobody new expressed interest in running.

### Old Business:

- Monitoring our Facebook is ongoing. Andy reported that our Facebook is active and reported some analytics. Keep the Facebook item as ongoing so it remains visible to the BOD.
- Item pertaining to thinking about clinic ideas –take it off since we have a clinic chairman.
- The item about the conference call is completed. The meeting took place but they concluded that we need to have a membership outreach that we spoke about at the last meeting. Mark developed a script and they decided that the board would call the members and have conversations based on Mark's script. The idea is to divide the membership list, distribute to the BOD and have board members call members and engage them in conversation. Chuck reminded the board members to go to Dropbox and select some members that you may know and wish to contact. Bob D agreed that it is a good thing to do especially since we can remind the members that we are having virtual meets. Andy will add notation on the list for people who do not open the emails. This meeting item will come off the list and the outreach will be the plan going forward for membership retention.
- Next item can be closed as well. Ciro checked with CNJ museum and it is very very expensive.
- Revamping the Whistle Post – we spoke a little about that and Chuck sent Jim H a picture of Fred's layout. That is still in process if we plan to go forward.
- The web site – JP did not do much with it lately but he plans to get back to it.
- Files from the 2018 convention – Chuck has the flash drives and they are loaded. He can distribute them when we meet in person.
- Chuck added the lawn signs to the responsibilities list. They're important for the home layout tours.
- Steve is working on his column for the Golden Spike and asked if it will go out with the email blast. Chuck responded that when the Whistle Post comes out with Steve's column, the email blast will include a blurb about the column on the Golden Spike.
- The recruiting initiative at Clark is on hold until November.
- Divide the membership list and make calls – we spoke about that one.
- RPM/Craftsman Structures Meet – we were talking about the RPM last time. Chuck said that Ted is planning to have an RPM meet in November but Ted is not a current member of the NMRA. He may ask us to cosponsor the meet so that he can get insurance but Chuck does not think that we should cosponsor the event because he not an NMRA member and we have no say in the planning or anything. JP stopped researching an RPM when he found out that Ted was planning it again. Chuck was signed up for the cancelled Valley Forge RPM. He wanted to learn about RPM meets.

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- The online apparel store for the GSD is now operating. Sue Ascolese did a lot of good work for it. Bob set up the payment account. Over the last few weeks they set up a shop. There are several decisions that still need to be made like what to call the shop, how we will present the merchandise and the mark-ups. Chuck suggested that sometimes like for the holidays, we could have a sale and reduce our markup. Steve needs a white logo for black shirts. Chuck will send Steve a white GSD logo file. Steve described some of the items available in the shop. Several mugs look similar but they differ by the size – 12, 16 and 20 ounces. Jim W suggested that if we ever get back to meetings in person, we could have some samples to promote the store. Bob is taking care of the financial end of the shop. Jim W suggested that when Steve puts together video for his clinic, he can include a promotion for our merchandise shop. Steve suggested that Chuck mention the shop in the next email that he sends out. Sue said to design an ad for our newsletter. Chuck will put together an ad for the Whistle Post and it will include a link to the shop. The shop's big advantages are there is no inventory and we do not need to handle anything.
- T-TRAK modules – it was not discussed very much on the NER call. However, Bob D said that John Doehring, our NER president, wants each division to prepare at least one T-TRAK module to bring to events like Springfield and the National convention. Chuck said that the next NER board meeting is May 17 and he expects to hear more at that meeting. Steve would build a module but he is not interested in being a coordinator. Put Steve down for building one.
- Make-and-take clinic discussion – Chuck suggested that it may become an annual event. It does not need to be a kit but it would be something hands on. For example: Bring your own car and we can show you how to weather it. Bob will contact Doug at Fos Scale Models to see about a simple kit for a make and take clinic. Also contact the participants of the make-and-take for Skip's bait and tackle and ask for pictures of the completed project. Bob D has the list of participants. For the future, we would like to have an annual event that is hands-on with the membership.

New Business:

- We already spoke about the raffles and permits.
- JP was approached about a local youth group, Warren County 4H group. They contacted him and asked about building a model railroad. Hope Township offered the Grange Building as a permanent location for the layout. Chuck thought if we work with a 4H group in Warren County after we stopped working with Jan's modeling club, we may be upsetting Jan. Mark suggested that it would be for individuals but not by our organization. Andy mentioned that the Warren Group is trying to do the same thing as was done in Somerset County for their hi-rail layout. They even approached the TCA for sponsorship. Andy will check to see what the TCA is doing with the Warren County 4H.

The next virtual BOD meeting will be Saturday morning June 27 at 10:00 AM.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jim Walsh*

Jim Walsh, Secretary NMRA/NER/GSD