

Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society, Inc.  
MINUTES of Annual Members Meeting, November 12, 2005  
[approved April 8, 2006]

Meeting was called to order at the North Freedom village hall by president Bloohm at 3:00pm. Roll call was taken. 29 voting members were present. 4 non-voting members and 2 visitors were also present. It was determined that there was a quorum in accordance with the By-Laws.

Secretary Swanson read the minutes from the April 9, 2005 annual members meeting. The minutes were accepted as read with no changes.

Doug Crary reported on the results of the board member election. 291 eligible ballots were mailed, 142 were returned, 17 could not be verified (no outside address on envelope). There were 111 votes for Dave Schumacher, 24 for Byron Long. Rad Becker moved, Pete Bunde seconded to accept the report of the nominating committee and instruct them to destroy the ballots. Passed unanimously.

Don Meyer reported on financials. Auditors will be in the office the week before Thanksgiving for the annual audit. Looking at our performance this year, we exceeded budget on most revenue items, except for unrestricted donations (short by \$20,000). We had anticipated performing at last year's level, but funds were solicited for other accounts, such as the Steam Fund. Overall, donations were up over last year. Train revenue was up \$6,000, gift shop revenue was up \$7,500, membership revenue was up \$2,800. We paid off the line of credit at the end of the fiscal year. The Mid-Continent Museum Foundation voted to dissolve, and their funds (\$37,000) will be donated to Mid-Continent's own endowment fund. All these figures are unaudited. A full audited report will be available within a few months.

Roadmaster Bierman reported that the two culverts were replaced this spring as reported in the last minutes. The rail relay project has also been completed. 550 track feet of 90lb rail was laid between Summit and Ulrich Road. Another 675 track feet of 100lb (ex-C&NW) rail was laid at the quarry on the main track and on the siding, and at County W. All cracked/broken 60lb joint bars have been removed as a result. Schumacher has been spearheading a rail reclaim project at Janesville, Wisconsin. 500 crossties were installed between Baraboo River bridge and Quartzite Lake. 1,100 feet of track was surfaced with a 2 to 3 inch raise. Another 4,000 feet of track was surfaced. 425 feet of new track construction was completed this year (primarily the second camp car track). The entire line was sprayed for weeds, and crossing quadrants cleared as per state requirements. An anonymous donation to acquire a new (used) hi-rail truck was received. The truck was purchased through the federal surplus properties program. It is a 1987 Chevy, with 44,000 miles, and had been used by the state fisheries department as a painters truck. It is in good shape.

Roger Hugg. First Class/Dining had a very good year. Most the trains were sold out weeks in advance. First Class seating was filled by walk-ins. The menu was changed to be more reflective of past railroad fare on dining cars. The caterer had to make some modifications to original recipes. Alcoholic beverages have been eliminated except for beer and wine. Two special charters were operated. Menu will be changed again for Snow Train: Chicken Oscar, rib eye steak, and stuffed filet of sole. We still need more help with staffing. We've had requests for earlier trains in the day during Autumn Color to take advantage of daylight. We have looked at running a luncheon train.

Pete Deets reported that since our last member meeting, the third course belly patch has been completed. We are awaiting heat stress relief treating of the boiler and a final visual inspection of the barrel. A new front tube sheet is on property. The new rear tube sheet is presently being made. Work continues on the throatsheet for staybolt holes. More staybolt work is needed. Wheel center welding has been completed. Pete again thanks everyone for their help throughout the year. The old smokebox has been removed. The front tube sheet will be the next project. Skip Lichter reported that running gear of PL #2 was worked on in the enginehouse this fall. The fireman's cylinder was bored out (by Jim Eng) so that now both are done. Frame, rods, and wheels are being cleaned up. Crossheads and guides have been reinstalled. Piston shafts have already been turned and plated. The pistons are being built up with brazing. New throat sheet at

Chattanooga, TN was being worked on this past week. Milwaukee Boiler has delayed working on the #2 due to another multi-million dollar boiler project. A 150-page inspection report by Steam Operations, Inc. has been completed. There are 17 items that need addressing yet. Skip will do riveting, flues, and staybolts. We are still awaiting blueprints for new #1385 boiler from Deltak.

Maintenance man Larry Tourdot has been working on the Shay, sprucing it up for the public.

Plans are being made for rebuilding the trucks under the DL&W #425 combine.

Jerry Mennenga reported the Restoration crews have been concentrating on the DM&IR reefer this summer, scraping and painting. It should be completed and lettered next summer. The C&NW combine roof has been stripped and is ready for new canvas. A trailerload of oak timbers arrived on the property today for rebuilding the Flagler trucks that will be placed under the MLS&W #63. A new wooden pilot for the steam locomotive #22 has been built. Copper Range combine #25 will be the next car project next year. Odds and ends in the shop have been worked on this summer.

Jeff Bloohm reported that John Winter conducted a brakeman training class this spring. Eleven completed the class. 9 have qualified as new brakemen. A conductor's class was also held; two brakemen (Jim Connor, Kelly Bauman) have been promoted to conductor status.

Sharon Crary announced that the annual banquet is scheduled for 7pm tonight, preceded by cocktails at 6pm. It will take place at the Park Place convention center in Baraboo. Paul Swanson will have a slide program following the banquet.

President's Message. Our ridership is hovering in the low 30,000's. We need to get the numbers up, and strive to get more people to the museum. When a steam locomotive returns to service, we anticipate the numbers will go up some. We did have good special event attendance this year, despite the slower summer months. These bring in a lot of good income that we normally wouldn't get. We are at a point now where there is a lot of apprehension about raising fares any higher to cover rising costs. Feedback from surveys indicated that fares have topped out. The problem is our expenses keep going up, but yet revenue will be stagnate. Some serious decisions will have to be made in the future on what we can maintain and what we can't maintain. Management is trying new things on the marketing end and we are trying to get more people here. We are here to allow our patrons to experience old-time railroading.

Skip Lichter talked about special events that other railroads are offering. Dave Schumacher reported that 450 hours have been put into the rail project at Janesville so far. 1,100 track feet of rail were reclaimed. Jim Connor has been delivering the rail using his semi truck. The Lull forklift is having a hydraulic cylinder rebuilt. Don Meyer expressed a debt of gratitude for all the hard work and volunteerism that goes on on the property. This saves us a lot of money. Jim Busse has hauled many loads of rock in for the new second camp car track project this summer. Meyer thanked Paul Swanson for all his efforts with publications and the website. These have helped increase donations and assist visitors. Meyer says there has been quite a bit of filming going on at the museum this year. A Kohls magazine insert in tomorrow's Sunday paper will include photos shot at Mid-Continent. A small-budget movie was shot at the museum this summer. The History Channel and Discovery channel are looking at filming here this winter. Meyer also recognizes Dave Lee and Larry Tourdot for their efforts on the museum property. People like what they see when they visit us. When asked what should be improved, they say leave it as is, museum is great as is. The customer survey this year was administered by Bonnie Gruber in the ticket office and compiled by Paul Swanson. These help us gauge our audience. A Santa Express TV commercial will be aired this year on local Baraboo TV and cable. We have been targeting our advertising to young families this year. It's been a challenging year as far as attendance, but every time we advertise for a specific special event, our attendance has been up compared with the previous year. The summer heat plagued us in June and July, attendance was down. For the year overall, attendance was up by 17 people compared with last year. The meeting with the Hill family took place in May. We are still awaiting word from the family about funding restoration of the A-22. Tom Jeffris has asked to wait a year to fund restoration of the "Fish Car." UP #440 has left the property in a trade arrangement with Clint Jones for the Copper Range #29.

Al Joyce asked how we compare with Wisconsin Dells attendance. Meyer responded that it is difficult to get numbers, as the Dells tourism community is tight-lipped about their attendance. Meyer did say that Green Bay Railroad museum was down this year. CWM in Baraboo has also been hurting.

One more voting member joined the meeting (Ed Ripp).

Jerry Mennenga expressed concerns about how the Camp Car Committee raised camp car rates without consulting or informing private car owners. Skip says we need to act like a team.

Next meeting will be in April 2006, time, location to be determined.

Pete Deets moved, Paul Swanson seconded, to adjourn. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.

Submitted by Paul Swanson, Treasurer