

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

MINUTES

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

March 10, 2013

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

George Isaacs Car barn – Minneapolis, Minnesota

Present: Bill Arends (Chair) Chris Heck Rod Eaton
 Todd Bender Jim Vaitkunas

Chair Bill Arends called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM. He thanked everyone for their attendance and participation given the short notice change in the date and venue because of Saturday's bad weather.

Operations Schedules for the 2013 Season.

- *Como-Harriet Streetcar Line (CHSL) schedule.* This discussion was led by Rod Eaton. Rod gave everyone a copy of the master events calendar. After general discussion on scheduling options at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line the following was agreed to by the Committee.
 - ✓ CHSL season will start with weekend service on Saturday, May 4, 2013.
 - ✓ CHSL daily service will start on the Friday before Memorial Day, May 24th. There will be no changes to the basic 2012 weekend and daily operating schedule at CHSL until Labor Day in September. Changes to the 2013 schedule are:
 - CHSL will operate weekends only after Labor Day, except for November.
 - Shift times for weekend shifts in September will be shortened by 30 minutes—12:30 PM to 4:00 PM and 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM. This includes Labor Day Monday, September 2nd but not August 31st or September 1st.
 - Weekend shift times in October will remain 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM.
 - In November, CHSL will operate on Saturday only, 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM.
 - ✓ We will continue to operate on Wednesday afternoons, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
 - ✓ Rod mentioned Aaron Isaacs' suggestion that we should consider scheduling three weekend shifts rather than two shifts. The Committee discussed this idea at some length but agreed to keep the schedule as is primarily because we suspect that not enough volunteers will ever be available to fully staff the three shifts with four volunteers on a weekend day
 - ✓ PCC No. 322 will continue to operate on Wednesday evenings. ShiftPlanning should be annotated to indicate that Foremen need to be PCC qualified in order to sign up for the Wednesday evening shift. Chris Heck said he'd do that.
- *CHSL Special events.* Rod Eaton then handed out the list of CHSL's special events for 2013 (see attached). These special events were described and discussed in turn. All of the events included information on the extra personnel requirements for the events, primarily so that these extra volunteers can be included in the ShiftPlanning schedule.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2013

- ✓ We will not hold a classic car rally this year on Sunday of the Labor Day weekend because the past event coordinator decided to not participate in the event.
- ✓ With the Father's day special event, Rod announced that he plans to schedule Isaacs carbarn open houses again in 2013 on a limited basis. Rod's idea is to have something going on in the carbarn of a shop/mechanical nature with perhaps someone actually doing some work on a streetcar component, e.g., machining one of our brass trolley wheels or working on a controller. It would also be good if we can have a modular model railroad set up in the carbarn and maybe some historical displays. Extra personnel requirements would include a docent and a shop volunteer who would demonstrate a maintenance task.
- ✓ We'll operate the Moonlight trolley again this season. But we need to do a better job promoting this special event.
- ✓ Murder mystery will be scheduled again. PCC will be used. We'll schedule only one play each night this season starting at 9:00 PM on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. If demand warrants we can reprise the play on the following weekend.
- ✓ We'll do the Streetcar camp again this season. We scheduled it on Friday to avoid a conflict with the Park Board which schedules their kids' summer camps on Tuesday through Thursday.
- ✓ Family Fun Day will be a new event and will feature the carbarn open house.
- ✓ Regular Halloween ghost trolley will again feature zombies in 2013.
- ✓ New event will be the Transylvania trolley. This will be scheduled during a regular shift and will be a low key event.
- ✓ New this year will be a Halloween late show for adults at 8:00 PM on Sunday, October 27th. This event will be more theatrical and will be geared for older passengers and adults.
- ✓ We will plan to operate the Holly Trolley for two weekends in 2013, weather permitting.
- *Excelsior Streetcar Line schedule & special events.* Todd Bender discussed ESL's operations plans for the 2013 operating season.
 - ✓ ESL's schedule has been developed and published by Superintendent Bruce Kobs (attached). This was reviewed for the Committee's information.
 - ESL will start the 2013 season on Thursday, May 9th.
 - ESL will start weekend service on Saturday, May 11th.
 - ✓ Start times for Story Time Trolley have been advanced one hour to 5 and 6 PM.
 - ✓ Several special events like Excelsior's ladies' night out were discussed.
 - ✓ Halloween trolley attendance has dropped over the years. The Historical society has been losing volunteers to staff the wayside scenes. We need to maybe get our volunteers to help with scenes.
 - ✓ Christkindlsmarkt. We are considering an additional event where Santa reads a story to the kids. We're also considering contacting a local celebrities to tell a story on the streetcar.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2013

- ✓ Todd then mentioned that perhaps ESL should consider coordinating the streetcar with Excelsior's Octoberfest festival.
- ✓ Also discussed have some special event for Cinco de Mayo event?

ShiftPlanning and Crew Schedules.

Bill Arends and Chris Heck agreed to collaborate to create the monthly schedules and then update and manage ShiftPlanning in 2013. The Committee agreed that, with a few exceptions, the ShiftPlanning system worked very well after everyone became accustomed to the new way of signing-up for shifts. It was pointed out that we have had a handful of volunteers who have dropped out because they simply didn't want to use the new system even though they were told they could still call Jim Vaitkunas to sign-up for shifts.

- Jim Vaitkunas will continue to send out e-mail updates around Tuesday of each week listing the critical shift vacancies for the next 7-10 days.
- We don't foresee any major changes to the functionality of ShiftPlanning, i.e., it will still look and function as it did in 2012.
- Bill Arends updated the staff list so it is sorted by the volunteer's last name.
- Suggested changes to make ShiftPlanning a little easier to use apparently aren't going to be made by the ShiftPlanning software managers.
- Chris Heck agreed to develop and input the basic schedule and the special events schedule based on input from this meeting and from Bruce Kobs. Chris asked everyone to look at the schedule once he announces it's ready for review to catch any errors.
- Chris also mentioned that he will create additional positions on ShiftPlanning: Station Agent and CHSL Trainee at CHSL; and, ESL Trainee and Event Helper at ESL.

Credit Cards.

The committee discussed at some length the advantages of having the ability to accept credit cards at the Linden Hills station. Feedback from Station Agents indicates that maybe one time per shift a customer wanted to pay for tokens and/or merchandise with their credit cards and we were unable to accommodate them.

- Chris Heck demonstrated how it could be done using an iPad tablet computer. This would require MSM to purchase a tablet to allow us to implement this feature.
- Chris then demonstrated the proposed system which appears, on the surface, to actually be easier to use than the current cash register. Using it will take specific training on proper use, however.
- There are also accounting issues involving the use of the tablet for credit card transactions that would need to be resolved.
- Rod Eaton commented that Wild Rumpus book store uses the old manual credit card slide to accept credit card payments. Chris Heck will look into this method of accepting credit cards. Downside is that we would have to set up a credit card account and pay the standard bank fee for the credit card transactions.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2013

- Discussion then continued on the mechanics of using the tablet, specifically on issuing receipts to customers.

Training.

Chief of Training Chris Heck gave the Committee a quick overview of this year's training program.

- *Foreman Recertification.* Anyone, including Foremen, who lays off for a year will be required to do a check ride.
 - ✓ A major problem that was identified came from reports from new (and some veteran) Operators that some Foremen have directed them to operate the streetcar contrary to our sequence of Sequence of Operations (SoO). Questions: Have some Foremen forgotten the SoO? Have some Foremen decided that their way is better? What's going on here? Foremen are supposed to be standard bearers for our streetcar operations.
 - ✓ It was suggested that we send a strong letter to Foremen outlining some of the problems we've had in the past with inconsistent application of the rules and SoO or outright ignoring the rules and/or SoO.
 - ✓ It was further suggested that we may need to have a classroom session with all the Foremen to outline our expectations. No decision on this, yet.
- *Operator Recertification.* General discussion included some of the past problems in both training and recertification processes. Recertification plans for 2013 are:
 - ✓ We will continue the policy that one third of the operating personnel will be recertified by a check ride each year.
 - ✓ All operating personnel will be required to complete an open book test by e-mail prior to being recertified for 2013, except for those who are required to be recertified by a check ride.
 - ✓ All second year operating personnel will be required to recertify by a check ride.
 - ✓ Any Operator or Foreman, regardless of their years of service, who operated for less than ten (10) hours in 2012, will be required to do a check ride prior to being recertified.
- *Foremen Training.* Do we need to promote a couple of Operators to be Foremen? Suggested candidates include Dick Zawacki and Steve Simon.
- *Trainers.* Do we need new trainers? Chris replied that last year's trainers did great and right now he doesn't foresee the need for any new trainers.
- *Station Agents.* Rod Eaton stated that he's willing to work to train current as well as new station agents. Rod also suggested that we somehow send a message to folks in the Linden Hills neighborhood asking them if they'd be interested in working in the Linden Hills station.
- *Cash Register Training and Operations.* Some of our operating personnel still can't get the knack in using the cash register. No solution was offered although Rod Eaton agreed to help anyone with cash register training.

- *PCC Training.* Chris stated that he plans to do PCC training later on in the year after the main group of new Operator trainees are well into their training.

Superintendent of Operations.

Bill Arends reported that so far no one has volunteered to replace Jim Vaitkunas as Chief of Operations. Jim commented that absent anyone taking over from him, he is willing to continue in this capacity but hopes that after 15 years as Ops Chief, someone steps forward to take over from him in 2013. Vaitkunas further commented that he really appreciates the work on scheduling and ShiftPlanning now being done by Chris Heck and Bill Arends and the outstanding work done by Rod Eaton in planning and coordinating the special events. Kudos also should go to Bruce Kobs, Todd Bender and Marv Krafve for doing the operations work at ESL, especially with the planning and execution of ESL's special events.

Vaitkunas finally commented that as long as he is the Superintendent of Operations, he intends to continue to issue the Operations and Safety bulletins, the operations newsletters and review the operating rules.

Other Issues: Coordination of training, charters, overhead work, etc.

- Scott Heiderich plans to start work on repairs and upgrades to the overhead at CHSL sometime in late April. Main effort will be to start replacing the bracket arms located to the north of the William Berry Parkway bridge. This work will mostly be done on Fridays with help from Mike Miller but some of it might spill over into Saturday.
- Rod Eaton also suggested that we need some of our younger folks to learn the skills to work on the overhead and on the track. We really need to recruit younger people to work on track and O/H. Everyone agreed with this.
- Fares and Tariffs.
 - ✓ Standard fare for one ride remains \$2.00 for one person four years of age and older.
 - ✓ The tariff for charters will remain the same: \$75 for 30-minute charter; \$65 for an MSM member; and, \$55 for an MSM member who is also an active volunteer.
 - ✓ The tariff for the reduced fare passes/tickets will remain as follows.
 - Individual day pass - \$5.00.
 - Ten-ride ticket - \$17.50.
 - Twenty-five ride ticket - \$43.00.
 - Season pass - \$49.00.
- Rod suggested that the season pass should be a different color each year. The pass should also prominently display the year of issue. Jim Vaitkunas stated that he can, and will, do this. Color and design for the day pass, 10-ride pass and the 25-ride pass can stay the same.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2013

- The Committee agreed to change the starting daily cash/change fund at CHSL on the weekends to \$250 with \$100 of that in one-dollar bills. It is hoped that this increased cash/change fund will alleviate the problem of running out of change so soon on a weekend day
- It was suggested that we need to investigate how new and renewal memberships can be paid on-line using credit cards and PayPal. This is already done for other items such as merchandise, passes, and charters. Chris Heck and Rod Eaton agreed to work with Charles Barthold and John DeWitt to hopefully implement something that is simple and workable but also compatible with our website and PayPal.
- The Committee agreed that prior to May 1, 2013 all operating personnel will receive a letter signed by the General Superintendent regarding non-payment of MSM dues. Basically, the letter will reaffirm current MSM policy that on the day following the expiration of a membership, all membership privileges, including the ability to operate a streetcar or volunteer with MSM, will be suspended until the member pays their dues to renew their membership.
- The Committee discussed the need for major truck work on No. 1300 and No. 1239. These two cars might be out of service for a long time so proper planning is a must in scheduling the necessary truck work for these two streetcars.
- Rod Eaton commented that we need to consider raising the cost of a lifetime membership. The original intent of the lifetime membership was to raise operating capital quickly in 2005 when we separated from MTM. The Lifetime membership accomplished that goal. Now we should raise the cost of the lifetime membership because if a younger person decides to sign up for a lifetime membership, we'll be "losing money" on him in a matter of a few years. This is true considering that our current single-year dues basically pays for four issues of the *Twin City Lines* history magazine and not much left over. Jim Vaitkunas agreed and offered the suggestion that the lifetime memberships could be priced based on the age of the person, i.e., the cost would be lower once the person reaches a certain age. This is what most railway Museums like MSM does in their lifetime membership price structure. Vaitkunas suggested that this is a topic that needs further study and discussed at the next MSM Board meeting in May, 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.


James A. Vaitkunas
Corporate Secretary

Attachments:

- Excelsior 2013 operations schedule and special events
- Como-Harriet Streetcar Line monthly event calendars
- Como-Harriet Streetcar Line's special events list

Excelsior 2013

Schedule

Thursdays - May 9 through
October 24 - 2 to 6 pm

Saturdays - May 11 through
September 7 - 10am to 4pm
September 14-October 12 11am-3pm

Sundays - May 12 through
September 1 - 1 to 4 pm
Board at Water Street stop between
3rd and George Street, or at Old
Excelsior Blvd.near Minnetonka Blvd.

Fares

\$2 per person,children 3 and under free

Special Events

Memorial Day

Celebrate the holiday.
Monday,May 27, 10am to 4pm

Apple Day

Celebrate the first apple harvest
Saturday, September 7,
9 am to 4 pm

Art on the Lake

~~Make a ride part of your day.
Saturday, June 8, 10am to 4pm
Sunday, June 9 1 to 4pm
Regular weekend schedule~~

Halloween Trolley

Variety show,Haunted History;
Boo-seum and spooky
Trolley rides.
Friday & Saturday

Story Time Trolley

A treat, a trolley ride, and story's
Tuesday,June 11 July 16 &
August 13 @ 5pm & 6pm

October 25 & 26 6 to 9pm

Fare: \$7 Adults,\$5 children
10 and under.

Fare: \$5 per person

Tickets available only at Excelsior
Bay Books, 36 Water Street

Trick n Treat Trolley

A ride, story's, a halloween
treat for younger children.
Sunday,October 27,1:30 & 2:30pm

Independence Day

A streetcar ride, symphony
concert, fireworks
Thursday July 4, 1 to 5 pm

Fare: \$5 per passenger
Tickets available only at Excelsior
Bay Books, 36 Water Street

Crazy Days

Water Street stores selling
outside on the sidewalk.
Thursday,July 18 2 to 8pm
Friday, July 19, 2 to 6pm
Saturday July 20 10 to 6pm

Christkindlsmarkt

Open air market,food & drink,
Santa on the trolley.
Friday & Saturday,
November 29 & 30 10am to 7pm
Sunday,December 1,11am to 4pm
Fare: \$3; children free (3 and
under).

Labor Day

Enjoy the holiday in Excelsior
Monday,September 2 1 to 4pm

**Como-Harriet Special Events
Additional Crew Requirements
for ShiftPlanning**

Father's Day

12:30 – 5:30 Sunday, June 16
Carbarn Docent
Carbarn Demonstrator
(model trolley layout operators)

PJ Parties

6:30 & 7:30 PM Thursdays, June 20, July 18, August 15
Party Car Foreman
Operator
Milk and Cookie Wrangler

Moonlight Ride

10 PM Saturday, June 22
Foreman/Station Agent
Operator

Family Fun Day

12:30 – 5 PM Saturday, July 20
PCC Foreman
PCC Operator
Carbarn Docent
Carbarn Demonstrator
(model trolley layout operators)

Streetcar Murder Mystery

9 PM Friday, Saturday & Sunday, July 26, 27 & 28
PCC Foreman
PCC Operator
Station Agent

Streetcar Camp

9 AM – 1 PM Friday, August 9
3 Camp Leaders

Farmer Ken's Pumpkin Patch

12:30 – 4:30 PM Saturday & Sunday, October 12 & 13
Foreman
Operator
2 Pumpkin Patch Wranglers
Tattoo Artist

Ghost Trolley

6 – 9 PM Friday & Saturday, October 18 & 19

Lead Foreman
Foreman
Operator
2 Crossing Guards
Station Agent
Crowd Wrangler

Transylvania Trolley

12:30 – 4:30 PM Saturday, October 26

(regular revenue crew)

Ghost Trolley

6 – 9 PM Friday & Saturday, October 25 & 26

Lead Foreman
2 Foremen
2 Operators
2 Crossing Guards
Station Agent
Crowd Wrangler

Trick ‘r Trolley

1:30, 2:30 & 3:30 Sunday, October 27

Foreman
Operator
Treats Wrangler

Ghost Trolley Late Show

8 PM Sunday, October 27

Foreman/Station Agent
Operator

Holly Trolley

1 – 4 PM Saturday & Sunday, November 30, December 1, 7 & 8

Lead Foreman/Mr. Scrooge
Foreman
Operator
Station Agent