

DRAFT

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting
10:00 AM – Saturday – July 11, 2020
Computer Tele-Conference using Zoom Application
Minneapolis, MN

Present: Ben Franske Dave French Aaron Isaacs
 Karen Kertzman Myrle Mackenzie Jim Vaitkunas
 John Dillery (log-on at 10:15AM)

Absent: Chris Heck Darel Leipold

Others Present: Dick Zawacki Pat Cosgrove Brian Long Bruce Gustafson

The meeting of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's Board of Directors was called to order by Board Chair Aaron Isaacs at 10:05 AM. The meeting was held using the Zoom web-based tele-conference application. At 10:05 AM, a quorum was established.

The agenda for this meeting was approved with no changes or objection.

The minutes for the Board of Directors meeting held on June 20, 2020 was approved with no changes or objection.

Review and approval of e-votes (Action)

- Approval of MSM Policy #12 - Opening of MSM Public Streetcar Operations

MOTION: Made by Ben Franske; 2nd by Karen Kertzman

The electronic vote taken on June 30, 2020 to approve MSM Policy #12 – Opening of MSM Public Streetcar Operations, is affirmed.

VOTE: YES – 6; NO – 0. *Motion approved.*

Board Chair's Report/Update. Chair **Aaron Isaacs** commented that this board meeting will be comparatively short. The meeting was called to consider the report of MSM's Operations Committee to cancel all public streetcar operations for the 2020 operating season (attached). **Isaacs** also stated that he wanted to brief the Directors on the plans for replacing a quantity of railroad ties at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. With that brief introduction, **Isaacs** began the discussion of the next agenda item.

Cancellation of public streetcar operations for the remaining 2020 operating season.

Chair **Isaacs'** reminded the directors of his recommendation to the Board on that subject (attached). **Isaacs** asked General Superintendent and Superintendent of Operations **Bruce Gustafson** to brief the Directors on the actions the Operations Committee has taken over the last few weeks.

Gustafson stated that several actions had been done over the last few weeks regarding the start-up of the Museum's operations. These included:

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- (1) the drafting of Policy #12 which was approved by the Board. This policy established the basic policy and procedures so the Museum could operate safely in 2020; and,
- (2) the Operator survey sent to all operating personnel that asked them if they were willing to operate or not during the pandemic. The results were that while not all stated they were willing to operate at this time, a sufficient number said they would consider it which meant that the Museum could have started operations on a limited basis.

The Operations Committee reviewed the survey results and after some deliberation, the vote among the nine committee members was five voted to not operate in 2020, i.e., begin operations in early August, and four voted to begin operations. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Museum should cancel operations in 2020, with some exceptions that have already been discussed among the Directors prior to this meeting. The memorandum to the Directors with the committee's recommendation is attached to these minutes.

Chair **Isaacs** commented that with the no votes by the two ESL representatives, it was clear that the Excelsior Streetcar Line would not operate. The question then becomes, can Como-Harriet operate? **Isaacs** reported that he made some financial projections, the results of which show that if CHSL started operations in August, given the very reduced schedule and reduced capacity per run, estimated revenue would amount to approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000. **Isaacs**, therefore, recommends to the Directors that MSM not operate in 2020. Reasons for this recommendation are low revenue, the amount of work needed to start operations, and the health risk to our passengers and volunteers. This was stated in the memorandum **Isaacs** sent to the Board on July 6th (attached to these minutes).

Isaacs then stated that as previous discussed, the Museum should consider operating charters for a family or group that would not be concerned about social distancing, that a streetcar be stationed at the Linden Hills station on certain days, and that we could possibly operate in some fashion at Excelsior's *Christkindlsmarkt* festival. **Isaacs** then asked **Myrle Mackenzie** to comment on that last item.

Mackenzie briefly commented that options for the festival have been discussed among the festival planners and with ESL Superintendent **Todd Bender**. There are many possibilities to make the festival happen, but with the uncertainties of the pandemic, it's not clear how involved MSM will be with the festival. **Mackenzie** said that we need to be flexible as time goes on and to make sure that if we do operate that everyone is safe. We also consider revisiting MSM's support for *Christkindlsmarkt* as we get closer to the festival. *Christkindlsmarkt* is scheduled for the three days following Thanksgiving.

Receiving no further comments from the Directors, Chair **Isaacs** then requested a motion regarding the cancellation of public operations in 2020. Secretary **Jim Vaitkunas** stated that he would draft it and give it to the Directors in a few minutes.

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Director **Dave French** then commented that he has been following the on-going discussion about operating or not operating in 2020 and he understands why some object to operating, but he felt that it is a big mistake to not operate. Given that we have done a lot of work already to prepare to operate, and apparently have enough Operators to fill the limited schedule, that we should operate starting sometime in August.

General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** commented that he'd like to clarify his previous comments in response to **French's** statement. While there appears to be sufficient numbers of Operators to operate the streetcars, the survey responses were not a commitment to operate. If we were to operate, the intent was to establish the schedule and then see if the operating personnel signed-up for shifts. If we started to operate in August, there was risk that we'd have insufficient Operators to fill some or all of the schedule.

Myrle Mackenzie then asked if it was possible to operate on a limited schedule. **Bruce Gustafson** responded that the proposed schedule was very limited already, especially at Como-Harriet.

Chair **Isaacs** then stated that we'll leave this topic for the moment until Secretary **Vaitkunas** develops the wording for the motion to cancel the 2020 season.

Partial railroad tie replacement at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.

Chair Isaacs briefed the Directors on the plans to replace up to 200 ties at the Como-Harriet Streetcar line. While this won't require approval by the Board at the moment, he wanted to let the Directors know about the plans. **Isaacs** reported that the track is in good shape and easily meets Federal Railroad Administration Class II track standards. However, since we're not operating this might be a good time to do the work. **Isaacs** stated that he asked Chief Engineer **Keith Anderson** to contact several contractors to see how much it would cost to have 100 ties installed. The results were that we got bids from two rail contractors to replace 200 ties. That will cost around \$25,000 but that should not bring our financial reserves below the \$100,000 minimum established several years ago.

Director **Dave French** commented that when one of the contractors survey the track at Como-Harriet they found over 300 ties that needed replacing. Why do only 200 ties? Chair **Isaacs** replied that Railroad Specialties bid only on 200 ties but that even when those ties are replaced, we'll easily have solid track that won't need any serious work for years. Several Directors commented that this would be a good time to do this work.

Vote on Cancelling Public Operations for MSM for the 2020 Operating Season.

At this point, Secretary **Vaitkunas** announced that he has drafted the motion to cancel public streetcar operations for 2020. This was posted on the chat section of the Zoom app. The motion was read to the directors by Chair **Aaron Isaacs** and then was made.

MOTION: Made by Myrle Mackenzie; 2nd by John Dillery
The Museum will cancel all regularly scheduled public streetcar operations for the 2020 operating season. Streetcar Charters, with restrictions, and designated special operations are authorized with the approval of the General Superintendent.
VOTE: YES – 6; NO – 1. *Motion approved.*

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Other Business.

Chief Mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki** offered an update on one of the motors for No. 1239. L&S electric reported a problem with one of the motors that will be fixed within the next two weeks. After that motor is finished, both motors should be ready to come to Lake Harriet. Chair **Isaacs** asked if there has been an update from **Rob Mangels** on the overall 1239 truck project. **Zawacki** replied that he had not, but he would call Rob for an update on the 1239 truck rebuilding project.

Myrle Mackenzie asked Chair **Isaacs** if we had paid for the Minnesota Tour Service and **Isaacs** replied that we had not paid the fee for the service although **Isaacs** reported that he has been receiving e-mails from the organization.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 AM.

DRAFT

James A. Vaitkunas
Corporate Secretary

Attachments

- 1 – Report by the MSM Operations Chief
- 2 – Memorandum by the Board Chair to the Directors

**Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Operations Committee
July 6, 2020**

**To: The Minnesota Streetcar Museum Board Members
From: Bruce Gustafson, General Superintendent
Re: 2020 Season Opening**

The Operations Committee has met virtually as a group and has had numerous email exchanges to discuss opening the Museum for regular operations, charters, and special events for the 2020 operating season. The Committee worked diligently to develop safety and operating procedures that are consistent with the current CDC guidelines, State of Minnesota/ City of Minneapolis legal requirements, and other best practices and created a condensed schedule that reflected the interest (based on a June survey) of a reduced cadre of operating volunteers.

The efforts of the Committee and supporting members created a plan that could safely operate in 2020.

A just-completed vote of the 9-person Operations Committee to open for the 2020 operating season was narrowly declined – 4 Yes votes; 5 No votes. Acknowledging the difficult question and thoughtfulness of the answers and although I voted to operate this year, I support the Committee’s decision not to operate in 2020.

Operations Committee Voting Members

- Bill Arends
- Todd Bender
- John Dillery
- Rod Eaton
- Bruce Gustafson
- Dave Higgins
- Karen Kertzman
- Jim Vaitkunas
- Dick Zawacki

Proposed 2020 Condensed Schedule

- CHSL – Wednesday and Friday afternoon (to Labor Day); Saturday and Sunday (1 shift)
- ESL – Saturday and Sunday; possibly Tuesday depending on the Farmers Market

July 6, 2020

To: Minnesota Streetcar Museum Board Members

From: Aaron Isaacs, Board chair

Subject: 2020 Season opening

Below you'll find the report of the Operations Committee, which has been considering whether to operate for the public this year. As the report says, the Committee members voted 5-4 against opening. Both Committee members representing the Excelsior Streetcar Line voted against opening, so all agreed not to open ESL.

The remaining question is whether to open the Como-Harriet Line and the Committee has recommended against it.

To learn the revenue implications of this decision, I did an analysis of the revenue potential, assuming CHSL opened on August 7, ran 4 days per week in August, then weekends only in September and October. I estimate that the potential revenue from such an operation would be \$4000-\$5000.

In my opinion that modest amount of revenue does not justify the effort required to open, or the potential health risk to our volunteers. Not running also removes any conflicts with the overhead wire repair project and a potential tie replacement project. It was also allow the shop crews all the time they need to do streetcar maintenance, repairs and restoration work.

With all of this in mind, I recommend that the Board of Directors cancel all streetcar operations for the public for the rest of 2020.