

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Minutes

Of the

ANNUAL MEMBER'S MEETING

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Zoom Application Tele-Conference

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Call to Order. Chair **Aaron Isaacs** called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. The Zoom web-based application was used to conduct this annual meeting. This was done for the convenience of outstate and out-of-state museum members.

Quorum. Corporate Secretary **Jim Vaitkunas** reported that thirty-nine (39) MSM Members are in attendance using the Zoom application at the call-to-order of the annual meeting. (Note: *Attendance reached a high of 45 members at 7:40 PM and the number remained over 40 members for most of the meeting.*) As of February 24, 2025, active MSM membership was 293 members. Therefore, a quorum was achieved and maintained for this annual meeting.

Opening Remarks. Chair **Isaacs** then gave an overview of how the meeting would be presented. First, there would be the state of the Museum presentation which will then be followed by reports from the Museum's officers and the General Superintendent, Bruce Gustafson. Chair **Isaacs** then introduced the museum's officers and other museum superintendents. Two important actions need to occur at this meeting: (1) the report from the MSM Treasurer and approval of that report; and (2) the election of two Directors. Following the adjournment of the annual meeting, a short Board of Directors meeting will be held for the Directors to elect the Museum's Officers for 2024-2025 and to appoint Class B Directors for one-year terms.

State of the Museum presentation was made by MSM Board Chair **Aaron Isaacs** by way of a PowerPoint presentation which is attached to these minutes. Major topics of **Isaacs'** report to the members and presentation were as follows.

The Year in Review for 2024.

Safety.

Over the last few years, the safety culture at both railways were not emphasized which resulted in several avoidable accidents. Because of these incidents, MSM Policy No. 14 – Safety, was written and approved by the Board. This effort was spearheaded by the museum's Safety Superintendent **John Dillery**. Other museums were consulted and specific instructions on how to do them are included in policy No. 14. Three activities that are particularly dangerous were examined:

- Streetcar towing.
- Working on the overhead trolley wire using the tower car.
- Streetcar jacking.

Como-Harriet Streetcar Line

- The Linden Hills station platform was repaired, and other improvements were made to the platform. The platform canopy has been approved by the City of Minneapolis and construction of the canopy is scheduled to begin in early April 2025.
- The damage to PCC No. 322 was repaired, and the car was returned to service.
- Progress continues to build the new trucks for TCRT No. 1239.
- Two hundred railroad ties were replaced at CHSL.
- New radios and a new computer for the Isaacs carbarn were purchased.

Excelsior Streetcar Line

- Repairs of the damage to DSR No. 265 were completed.
- The damage to the rear wall of the Excelsior carbarn was repaired. Kudos to **Karen Kertzman, Jerry Draeger** and **Howie Melco** for supervising and working on this important project.
- A storage shed was built adjacent to the ESL carbarn.
- The bathroom in the maintenance barn was renovated.
- The historic ticket booth at the Water Street end of ESL was repaired and painted.
- Three O-scale models of Mesaba interurban cars, including one of Mesaba No. 10, were purchased from the family of recently deceased member **Dick Stoner**. Dick was a long-time member of MTM and MSM.

History Resources

- Added to MSM history archive were more of Russ Olson's research papers, Jim Kreutzberger's manuscript on Duluth's streetcar history, and many photos.
- Over 1,200 photos and drawings were scanned and added to the database.
- Updated MSM's collections policy and the position of Curator was established.
- Updated the content of history pages on MSM's website.
- Minnesota electric railway history forum was established and the first Zoom session scheduled.
- The history signs along the CHSL right-of-way were replaced.

Personnel Changes

- **Rod Eaton** who was MSM's Special Events Coordinator for many years retired. Kudos to Rod for doing a great job. **Pat Cosgrove** also did a great job in an interim role as Special Events Coordinator. **Katie Barron** has now agreed to take on that vital job.
- Many thanks to **Rod Eaton** for his great work as the museum's Facebook editor for many years. Rod has now retired, and **Griffin Lawrence** has assumed that position.
- The extremely important job of mail pickup and forwarding, and making bank deposits, had been done by **Bill Arends** in an outstanding manner for many years. **Jim Ravell** will now take over from Bill.
- **Katie Barron, Jerry Betz** and **Jerry Draeger** were promoted to Streetcar Foreman
- **Jerry Draeger** was appointed to the position of ESL Building and Grounds Foreman at ESL.
- **Leah Harp** is now the Kid's Club Manager.

- **Brian Long** was appointed to the position of MSM Historian.
- **Aaron Isaacs** was appointed to the position of MSM Curator.

Recently Retired Volunteers

Over the years we rarely recognize the contributions of volunteers who decided to retire from active volunteering for whatever reason with the museum. So, we'd like to recognize the following individuals who retired or are deceased in the last several years.

Art Abrahams	Bill Graham	Steve Simon
Ted Colburn	Scott Heiderich*	Jim Vaitkunas
Pete Connors	Dave Higgins	Bill Way
John DeWitt	Ron Neitzel	
Tom Dulebon*	Jerry Olson	

*Deceased

Looking ahead to 2025—Projects and Events the Museum Plans to Work on. Here are the projects and activities we plan to execute during the year 2025.

At Como-Harriet

- Linden Hills station's platform and canopy constructed.
- TCRT No. 1239's first truck will be completed.
- The computer in Linden Hills station will be replaced.
- The safety run-off track at the north end will be completed.
- New historical events will be established: the Military History Timeline and Trolley Path Tour. **Katie Barron** gave a good description of these two new special events.

At Excelsior

- New window shades for MVPS No. 10 (Winona Lines) will be installed.
- MVPS No. 10 will enter into regular service
- ESL car barn lighting replaced with LEDs lighting.
- One hundred railroad crossties will be replaced.
- Electric service to the Water Street ticket booth will be installed.
- North wall history display in the ESL will be installed.
- Express boat Minnehaha model will be displayed.

There being no comments or questions from the members present, Chair **Isaacs** then turned the meeting over to the museum's officers who will render their reports, all of which are attached to these minutes.

REPORTS BY MUSEUM OFFICERS

Corporate Secretary's Report. Corporate Secretary **Jim Vaitkunas** rendered the report using a PowerPoint slide show, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He reported that as of this moment, 43 MSM members are logged on to the 2025 annual meeting, which is a good number but a couple less than 2024's annual member's meeting.

- MSM complied with all Federal, State of Minnesota and local statutory/regulatory reporting requirements.

- Because of the accident in July 2023, when Duluth No. 265 ran into the rear wall of the Excelsior carbarn, the museum's liability and property insurance policies were not renewed. We were lucky to get coverage in March 2024, but unfortunately, when our insurance agents contacted several insurance companies to get the insurance, they used valuations for MSM's buildings done in early 2013. Increasing the replacement values on the buildings was necessary because of inflation in the intervening years between 2013 and 2024 and because improvements were made to several of the buildings, thus increasing their replacement values. All MSM's buildings are insured to ninety percent (90%) of their replacement value except for the Linden Hills station at CHSL which is insured for the full replacement cost. To control our insurance costs the museum decided to become self-insured for any damage to the streetcars thus saving over \$6,100 in premium cost. The chart below shows the difference in the premiums between 2024 and 2025.

Coverage	2024 Premium	2025 Premium
Liability	\$ 14,500	\$ 16,059
Property-Buildings	8,240	18,469 ?
Property-All Streetcars	6,120	-0-
Directors & Officers	1,704	1,805
Volunteer Accident	300	300
TOTAL	\$ 30,864	\$ 36,633

- Total Membership in good standing. The membership numbers in 2023 were down slightly compared to 2022. Our member count had been steady at around 310 members until 2020 and now hovers in the 300-member range.

2024 – 293	2023 – 296	2022 – 300
2021 – 278	2020 – 291	2019 – 310
- Annual Election of Directors
 - ✓ Notices sent to members on or about February 9, 2025.
 - ✓ No nominations were received from the Museum's members.
 - ✓ Two incumbent Directors will be elected at this meeting: **Aaron Isaacs** and **Andy Jacob**. Voting will occur later in the meeting.
- Board Meetings held in 2024
 - ✓ Four Board meetings were held in 2024.
 - ✓ BOD meeting minutes are posted on MSM's website, usually no later than seven to ten days after the meeting. Members are encouraged to view the minutes.
 - ✓ Members will be informed in advance of any scheduled board meeting and are invited to attend the meetings.
- Members are encouraged to renew their memberships through the Museum website. It saves on mailings.
- Members are also asked to renew for two years. Doing that also saves our museum funds spent on printing and postage of renewal notices, reminders, second notices, etc.

Treasurer's Report. Treasurer **Dave Downs** began his report using several PowerPoint slides, copies of which are attached to these minutes. He began his presentation with the first slide showing the status of cash, savings and investments from May 2023 until the present. The information shows the amount of cash on hand, funds in savings and funds in the museum's investment account that was established in May 2023. It's clear that the good stock market over the past year or so has helped our investments grow between mid-2023 to the present with 11.1 percent appreciation which exceeds our goal of having the investments exceed the inflation rate by 4 percent. The museum also enjoyed good operational income and income from savings.

Continuing his report, **Downs** then displayed a chart showing historic information on operational income. This slide does not show donations which will be shown in the next slide. The chart shows that general income from the sources depicted is increasing, which is a good indicator of the health of the museum. Chair **Isaacs** then commented that the numbers for 2021 are an aberration because operations that year didn't start until July.

The donations slide depicts historic trends with 2022 being an aberration as that year the museum received a significant bequest from a member's estate. This large donation also caused the museum to establish an investment account as shown previously. But in general, donations year over year have increased, which is also a good sign.

Operations expenses were shown on the following slide. **Downs** commented that this information does not include capital expense, nor the expenses associated with repairs to the Excelsior car barn resulting from the 2023 accident. **Downs** then stated that the museum needs to invest in long-term maintenance and improvements to our buildings and streetcars because doing so is important to the future of the museum. **Downs** then displayed and described the capital improvement projects in 2024 and the projected capital project expenses for 2025.

The final slide displayed the budget for 2025 and this was described.

Chair **Isaacs** then commented that it has been standard operating procedure for the museum's board to act in a conservative manner both in estimating income and in approving necessary expenses. Because of this conservative financial philosophy, the museum typically receives more income in a year and spends less than is projected.

Chair **Isaacs** asked the members in the meeting if they had any questions for Treasurer **Downs**. Hearing none, **Isaacs** then called for a motion to approve treasurer **Downs**' report.

MOTION: Made by Floyd Child; Second by Leah Harp

That the MSM Treasurer's annual report as presented in this annual meeting be approved as to form and content.

VOTE: Unanimously approved by all members present.

General Superintendent's Report. General Superintendent **Bruce Gustafson** began his report stating that this annual meeting report is a combined report for both Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Excelsior Streetcar Line. Gustafson thanked ESL Superintendent **Karen Kertzman** for her help in developing this report.

Using a presentation (attached to these minutes), **Gustafson** began with an overview of the personnel status and the operational results for 2024 with a look at the upcoming 2025 season.

The number of volunteer operators at both railways remained about the same compared to past years. A good recruiting and training program helped immensely in maintaining a good crew roster. However, as in past years, there continued to be a small number of Operators who volunteered a significant number of hours compared to others on the crew rosters. This helped the museum to maintain the regular operating schedule. Also, of particular concern was the low volunteer participation by some Foremen. Three new Foreman were promoted in 2024 and there are five potential candidates who will be trained in 2025 which will hopefully make filling Foreman vacancies easier.

Gustafson then discussed the financial performance of both railways during 2024. Of note is the major income derived from merchandise sales and from the special events held at both railways. This income comprises over twenty percent (20%) of the gross revenue of the museum's two railways.

Gustafson then reviewed the ridership statistics for both railways. The numbers were comparable to past years other than the Covid years. The numbers depicted on the two graphs depicts for both railways reflect the figures coming from trip sheets rather than POS data (i.e., paid fares recorded by the cash registers). The graph for ESL shows a reduction in ridership which was because Duluth No. 265 was out of service for most of the operating season undergoing repairs resulting from the accident in 2023. Small single-truck Duluth No. 78 carried the burden for most of the season and the limited passenger carrying capacity is reflected in the reduced rider numbers both for regular scheduled operations and for the special events, many of which had to be cancelled.

The 2024 special events were shown depicting the statistics on rider counts as well as revenue generated by these events. The ESL numbers were lower because of the cancellation of the fall events resulting from the unavailability of No. 265.

Merchandise sales are also a good revenue generator as shown on the table depicted on the screen.

Operating Plan for 2025.

A major accomplishment in 2025 was forming a working group from the operations committee which reviewed the MSM rule book in detail. Changes and additions were made to the rule book which will be published soon. The rule book changes, and other safety topics, will be emphasized during the recertification training sessions prior to the start of the season.

Schedule changes in 2025.

- At CHSL, PCC No. 322 will be the operational car on Sunday's second shift to afford Operators the opportunity to operate this beautiful car.
- The regular Sunday schedule at ESL has been modified to reflect lessons learned. From 2024.
- The special events schedule for both railways has not yet been finalized.

Season Start-up Activities for 2025.

- All Operating Personnel will be deactivated in Humanity and will be activated only when they complete the annual recertification test and attend the recertification training session. Some Operators will need to take a check ride before they can be recertified and activated in Humanity.
- Foremen and Operator meetings will be scheduled for April 2025. This year we may offer recertification training using the Zoom app for those Operators who are unable to attend one of the in-person sessions.

Member **Gordy Moore** asked via Zoom chat whether Winona No. 10 will be transferred to CHSL from ESL. Chair **Isaacs** responded that it will be several years before that might happen. Right now, TCRT No. 1239, which is immobile because of the car's truck work, currently occupies the rear of the "ready barn." In addition, there are a lot of supplies and materials in the rear of the ready barn that must be moved out before that space can be effectively used for active streetcar storage. The bigger problem to overcome regarding the tight space in the ready barn is whether Nos. 78 or 10 will fit inside the Isaacs carbarn. The concern is having adequate room between the streetcars so they don't collide when being moved within the barn. The solution may be an addition to the ready barn.

Member **Leah Harp** asked via Zoom chat whether Saturday morning charters can be scheduled. **Gustafson** replied that Saturday mornings are reserved for shop operations so no charter will be scheduled during that period.

Superintendent of Training Report. Superintendent of Training **Bill Pekarna** then gave his report on the progress in training new Operators for 2025. Approximately 30 candidates stated they wish to be trained this year, but that number will likely be less as training progresses. The initial Orientation and first two classes are scheduled, and the on-the-streetcar training will begin at CHSL early April. **Pekarna** commented that he hopes that the class will be a good one like 2024 when eleven new Operators graduated.

Chief Mechanical Officer's Report. Chief Mechanical Officer **Dick Zawacki** stated that he didn't have anything to report as mechanical issues have been covered in the written report presented by **Bruce Gustafson's** presentation.

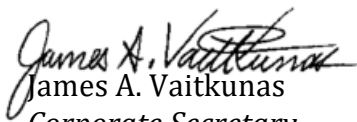
John Dillery then stated that with the new MSM rule book, operating personnel are required to keep their cell phones in their pocket except in emergencies. Many Operators use their cell phones as a watch. If an Operator wishes to check for the time while on duty, but they are not wearing a watch, CHSL Foreman **Fred Beamish** has generously donated a pocket watch that can be used by any CHSL crewmember. The watch will be kept in the drawer under the POS machine in the Linden Hills station. If you use it, please make sure it's returned to the box at the end of the shift. Member **Bill Graham** commented that during TCRT days, Motormen would hang their pocket watch on the streetcar transfer holder fastened to the front window post nearest the Motorman.

Election of MSM Directors. Chair **Aaron Isaacs** then briefed the members on the two Board Director vacancies for this election and the two nominees, **Aaron Isaacs** and **Andy Jacob**. Both members agreed to serve as MSM Directors. Chair **Isaacs** then called for a motion to elect two Directors for a three-year period by acclamation.

MOTION: Made by Floyd Child; Second by Russ Isbrandt
That Aaron Isaacs and Andy Jacob are elected by acclamation to fill Director positions on MSM's Board of Directors for a term of three years that expire in March 2028.
VOTE: Unanimously approved by all members present.

Secretary's Note: When the above motion was made and vote taken, there were 42 members present, and the time was 7:56 PM.

Adjournment. There being no further business, Chair **Isaacs** adjourned the MSM 2024 annual member's meeting at 7:57 PM. Forty-two members were present at the adjournment.


James A. Vaitkunas
Corporate Secretary

ATTACHMENTS.

Board Chair' State of the Museum report
Corporate Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report
General Superintendent's Report