

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

Minutes of the Membership Meeting of March 21, 2024

1. Call Meeting to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President John Spach.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Clif Kelly.

2. Roll Call of Members in Attendance and on Zoom

Members attending in person were Wayne Aiken, Alan Bradley, Richard Calfee, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Ken Howard, Mike Keelean, Ted Kunstling, George, Lasley, Terry Luft, Don McPherson, Larry Pearlman, John Spach, Elliot Susseles, John Wallis, and Don Weaver.

Members attending by Zoom were Ed Bottum, Jerry Davis, Pete Donofrio, Haydon Harrison, Collin Martinko, Jeff Neubert, Mike Poulin, and Bob Witwer.

3. Recognition of Guests in Attendance and on Zoom

Three guests attended by Zoom. They were James Carpenter, Greg Rehe, and Sam Ambrose. This is Greg's second meeting.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

John Wallis made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Alan Bradley and passed unanimously.

5. Treasurers Report

Mike Keelean gave the Treasurer's report. Richard Calfee made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Randy Foulke and passed unanimously.

6. Communications with the Club

a. Richard Calfee mentioned one call that resulted in a failed message.

b. Ken Howard reported that Mrs. Atkins from Fayetteville has called again, but when called back will not answer her phone.

c. Wayne Aiken reported that he had taken a call from Martin Blackburn and picked up several donated items in Holly Springs.

d. John Spach stated that he and Phil Michaud had also visited Mr. Blackburn to inspect a four by eight layout he has. They will pick up the layout in the near future.

7. Committee Reports

a. Membership Committee

Clif Kelly reported that Duncan Evans and Greg Rehe are eligible to be voted in to membership tonight. Duncan will be a Junior member; Greg will be a Senior member. Greg models in O gauge and likes Eastern roads in the 1950's.

John Spach made a motion to accept these five applicants for membership. The motion was seconded by John Wallis and passed unanimously.

b. Ways and Means

George Lasley reported that there will be no dues increase for FY 2024-2025.

c. Facilities

Collin Martinko thanked everyone that cleaned up the Clubhouse for the visit of the folks from Aberdeen. He has brought in paper towels. Collin advises any Club member who notices that we need supplies to take the initiative to procure the supplies and submit a bill to the Treasurer for reimbursement. Otherwise, let Collin know of any supplies that are needed. He also hopes to trim shrubs around the building on Saturday, weather permitting.

Wayne Aiken reported that he thinks we have an animal in the ceiling of the building. He has heard it moving around at night when the Clubhouse is quiet.

d. Engineering

N scale – John Wallis reported that there are a couple of track problems that are in the process of being fixed.

Randy Foulke reported that several members of the N scale group are considering building a modular layout.

HO scale – Ken Howard reported that the committee has determined there is a need for people to only work on projects that have been approved. Please check the yellow notebook for information on approved projects including the project lead and any other specifics about each project. The book resides on the table located between the N scale and HO scale layouts.

A subcommittee has been formed to establish standards for signals, signage, whistle posts, etc. Collin Martinko will chair the committee along with Jake Forbes and Adam Servas. Liam Bryant will also help the committee by 3D printing some of the items needed.

There are seven major projects underway on the HO layout.

Milo Poulin is building the quarry offsite and will deliver it as drop in.

Pete Donofrio is leading the effort on the lumber branch.

Bob Witwer is doing the coal mine project.

Collin Martinko is doing the yard on module nine.

Collin Martinko and Ken Howard are doing the industrial area.

Richard Calfee is working on the village.

Ken Howard is working on the design for connecting the staging yard through Germantown to Main 4.

The HO committee also has a recommendation for the Club as to when we should be open for the NMRA Mid-East Region convention layout tour. They are suggesting Friday, October 18th from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

Thanks go out to Jake Forbes for organizing the signage on the storage shelves for HO equipment. He has brought order to chaos. We are also adding additional shelving that will allow the engines to be located in the area of the staging tracks.

A work session was held on March 20th at Ken's shed to sort more donated equipment. Eighteen boxes of HO cars were reviewed and sorted. This led to four boxes being thrown out, nine boxes of cars to wholesale, four boxes for Club sales and two flats of cars to be added to Club inventory. This work session was performed by Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Ken Howard, and John Spach.

Ken Howard related a scenario that has happened at the Club with negative results. A person comes in with their own engine and finds that it does not run well on the layout. Then, the person takes it upon themselves to fix the track. This often results in substandard track work that must be done again to remedy the situation. If you encounter this situation, stop the person from making unauthorized track repairs and have them report the problem in the green book where all track problems should be reported.

We have been made aware of a problem that occurs when a decoder fails. John Spach has done some research on this problem and found articles claiming that one brand of decoder that is having trouble can cause another decoder on the layout to potentially fail. Obviously more research will be done on this situation. To be safe, any engine that is new to our layout must be run on the test track first to make sure it is running OK before being placed on the HO layout.

Ken Howard reported that the Raspberry Pi has been installed on the HO layout to provide Wi-Fi throttle access.

O Gauge – Don Weaver reported that much time is being spent checking out newly donated items. Mike Keelean stated that the circus train has come to town. Only part of it will be displayed on the shelves due to space limitations. Work is also planned to extend the mountain to the wall. Once this is completed the wind farm can be relocated.

Don Weaver cautioned people about running modern engines on an old ZW transformer due to the slowness of the circuit breakers it has. The ZW in the O gauge room has upgraded circuit breakers and does not have the problem.

e. Program and Social

John Wallis reported that we have volunteers for programs through January 2025.

Randy Foulke stated that he is working on a trip for us to visit the Golden East club in Rocky Mount on May 18th. More details will follow soon.

Randy is also working on plans for a potential trip to the Amherst show in West Springfield, Massachusetts on January 24-25, 2025. This is the biggest train show in America. It features 350,000 square feet of show including most of the major manufacturers and many layouts.

8. Old Business

a. Spring Show

George Lasley reported that we are sold out. There are around 300-325 tables at the show. We need everybody to sign up and work multiple shifts at the show. The most critical time is Friday afternoon to help the vendors get unloaded in a timely manner. We will need as many carts and hand trucks as possible.

Bob Witwer reported that he is working on getting Boy Scouts to be the porters. They are looking for service hours.

The TCA block of tables is reported to be only 50% sold, but more sales are expected before the show.

Layouts for the show will be the Atlantic Coast S gauge, the Greenville O gauge group, Steve Wills with his Lego layout, and North Raleigh T trak layout.

Members are reminded to get there early due to parking problems. The gun show is next door in the Graham building, so there will be a lot of competition for the prime parking spaces.

b. Travelling Layout

The O gauge travelling layout has served the Club well for several years, but it is time to be retired. The continuing cost of storing the layout, and the age of the layout superintendent have dictated this. The layout has been sold to a Club member.

c. Train Shows

Ken Howard reported that the Club had participated in one-day shows at both Thomasville and Mebane. We had seven tables at Thomasville and six tables at Mebane. We enjoyed brisk sales for most of the day at both shows. The average age of our show crew is about 75. We would welcome some younger volunteers.

If we decide to take on two-day shows it has been suggested that we have a second sales team. That way one team could work day one and the other team could work day two.

d. Open House

Clif Kelly reminded everyone that we have our Spring Open House scheduled for Saturday, April 20th. This is an all hands on deck event. In the past we have had 75-100 guests in attendance. We need snacks and drinks donated by the members for refreshments. The Club will have ice and coolers available. We want to have all layouts running. On the DCC layouts we could have multiple trains running on one track, if we wish.

Members are encouraged to carpool to save parking spaces.

Don Weaver suggested that we could work in shifts to save space in the Clubhouse.

Randy Foulke reminded everyone that all layouts have created operating rules for Open Houses. If used, things work better. For instance, the HO committee allows only Club-owned equipment to be run during an Open House.

Larry Pearlman asked about the possibility of installing Plexiglas around parts of the HO layout. While this is under consideration, we do not yet have consensus for this change.

e. Bylaws Rewrite

Alan Bradley reported that work continues on the Bylaws rewrite. He expects to have a draft ready to present to the Board at their next meeting.

f. Rules Committee

Randy Foulke reported that work continues on the preparation of a members handbook/rule book. He expects to have the rules for throttle usage ready for review by the Board at their next meeting.

Elliot Susseles inquired about a mentor program for new members. John Spach verbalized our goals with a mentor program. The details are still being worked out as part of the Rules Book project. When complete, Clif Kelly will have the lead in this effort.

Ted Kunstling suggested that we have a session to retrain our existing members in the operation of our layouts.

g. Misc.

Mike Keelean announced that we have a supply of parking stickers if anyone needs one or needs a replacement.

Mike also reported that we have several G scale items that need to be priced. This includes several sets and some individual track. It was suggested that Alan Servas and Jeff Neubert work together and price these items.

It was also noted that layout tours are available at Mike Keelean's and Ken Wesp's homes. Just let them know. These tours should be limited to three or four people at a time.

9. New Business

The Nominating committee has been charged by the Board. They will present a slate of officers at the next Membership meeting.

10. Program

Alan Bradley presented a program on JMRI and the Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.