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# ***HIGH BALL***

A Publication for the Mid-Michigan Railroad Club  
September 2023



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## **Business Meeting Minutes**

**Saturday August 26, 2023**

The meeting was held at the club's track site just outside the pavilion.

There were 14 members in attendance.

President Rod Pitman called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

### **President's Report**

Rod started the meeting by highlighting some of the ongoing projects that have experienced good progress and/or completion recently.

He mentioned that thanks to Steve Morris the transfer lift near the containers has newly profiled and lubricated wheels to make the lift easier to move along its track. In addition, Steve added new spacers to the lift's handles to give us more clearance for wider equipment.

Our Grand Elk caboose now has a very clean, inviting, furnished interior thanks to the efforts of Chris Morris with assistance from hubby Steve. Rod said he was happy that Chris took his only request NOT to put up pink curtains!

Rod mentioned that his wife Patti spent a day sprucing up the grounds in front of and around the depot. Things were getting weedy and overgrown.

Tom Stuck has set up a tie drilling jig to predrill screw holes in new ties. This will greatly aid us in attaching rail to new track panels as well as to work in the field replacing worn out ties in existing track sections.

Pat Patton continues to work on the bases for the new signal system masts. Pat has fabricated new metal bases to be installed on top of the concrete bases that the signal masts will anchor to.

Tom and Rod continue to spend at least an entire day mowing and trimming the railroad grounds to keep them neat and presentable prior to our run dates. Jim Triemstra tries to keep up with weed spraying all the track as well as around trees and buildings. These are BIG tasks and are greatly appreciated by all the members. However, these are not tasks that we can expect these three members to continually do in the months and years ahead. Rod asked for help from the membership in the future with these most vital of tasks. Rod said that if we can do some mulching or landscaping around the tree bases it would greatly help. He also mentioned we need to be aware of where we stack materials (mainly new track panels and supplies) as it makes it difficult to mow around these items. If you can help in any way in the future with grounds maintenance, please let Rod or Tom know.

Rod requested (and was granted) funds in the amount of around \$130.00 to purchase a new battery powered leaf blower for the club. He said he will get one that uses the type of batteries we currently already use.

Rod asked for input on the frequency of future business meetings. Discussion centered around holding them quarterly. Dates and times to be determined. Ted Hentchel suggested we hold them on the first Saturday of the months in question with the second Saturday as a rain date. The members present seemed in favor but no definitive action was taken at this time on this topic.

Discussion next revolved around coming up with a "procedures manual" for ongoing club projects like building track panels, replacing worn out ties, laying track, leveling and ballasting track, etc. The comment was made that new members might feel discouraged if they try to tackle a given project only to have a veteran club member come up to them and say "that's not how we do it". We want everyone, regardless of tenure with the club, to be able to refer to a written guide so that routine tasks can be handled by anyone. If you have knowledge and experience with track construction, roadbed prep, etc. and want to help create a manual, please let us know. Thanks to Rod there is a good start on a manual (covering building of track switches) that is located in the pole building workshop.

Rod thanked all the members who helped with the set up and tear down of this year's Calhoun County Fair display. Particularly we thanked Chris Morris and Ted Hentchel who volunteered every day of the fair to greet fair visitors and introduce them to the club. Rod felt it was a very successful event for us. We won a 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon from the judges!! Several riders at the depot have since mentioned that they learned about us at this event. The fair management people were very happy to have us there and want us to return next year. Mike Schmitzer will look into the various display location options and costs. Having a display in the Merchant's Hall may give us even more visibility but may cost more. Ted Hentchel thanked Margie Kipp for getting us invited to the fair this year and for doing the initial groundwork.

Rod said we still need to make our presence known to the public in general. Rod has come across people who live in the area, or visit Cornwell's, yet do not know we exist or where we are located.

He said that Blaine Cornwell has agreed to let us put the large screen T.V. we used at the fair up in the covered porch area of the restaurant during run days. Discussion also turned to the tri-fold brochure for the club that a friend of Pat Kinney's designed for us. Pat will look into what it would cost to get them printed.

Louis Globensky recently located and dug a hole to access the bathroom building's cleanout for the septic system. We need to have the septic system pumped out before this winter's shutdown if at all possible. To our knowledge it has never been pumped out.

Rod mentioned that he and Tom are continuing to enclose the existing pavilion. They have now installed the north side overhead door that will lead into 5 ground level club riding car storage tracks. Rod said he wasn't sure if we have enough of the used green metal siding to finish enclosing the pavilion and still have enough sheets for the new pavilion's roof. Mike Schmitzer offered to buy and donate any new sheets that might be needed to complete these projects.

#### IN OTHER BUSINESS...

Chris Morris made a motion (that was voted on and approved) for us to consider running more Saturdays next year and less Sundays. Saturdays seem to always bring in more revenue and running two days in a row can be a burden on many of the members. Rod will look at next years schedule to see what adjustments may need to be made to it.

Steve Morris mentioned that he has a friend who has a tandem-trailer truck to haul ballast for us free of charge. Now that the club ballast tiple is in its new location, we need to build a pad to store new ballast deliveries. Pat Kinney said he spoke to Del Kilbourne (a member and builder) and he said that 4 inches of cement should be sufficient. Steve will stake out and grade the area near the tiple and work on it a section at a time. We still have our cement mixer on site as well as a good supply of sand. If you would like to help with this project, let Steve know.

Ted Hentchel made a motion (voted on and approved) for us to allocate up to \$100.00 for the purchase of at least 4 brightly colored (yellow or orange) safety vests. The vests can be purchased online and will have our logo and the words "safety officer" printed on them.

Rod said we need to get back in the habit of using the F.R.S. radios for ALL Trains. A channel will be designated at the start of each run day and be posted (likely at the main pole building and at the depot). He said it is especially important for the station crew to be able to maintain contact with each train running that day.

## **Vice President's Report**

Pat Kinney handed out and introduced our newly printed Track Warrant Form. He thanked Mike and Margie for typing them up and getting some printed (no club expenditure will be needed as Mike and Margie will donate the cost of the forms). The forms can be used on non-passenger hauling days when we will schedule bi-directional running and card order operations. We are still in the planning stages of car card operation and have some work to do to name locations along the railroad. Mike is working on milepost markers (scale miles of course) that need to be installed. The plan is to have one Dispatcher and a helper work out of the Grand Elk caboose dispatching trains via F.R.S. radio using the Track Warrant Form system. Tom Stuck requested that we come up with a clearly written "how to guide" since this type of operation is foreign to most of us. Pat Kinney said he can work on that and Ted offered to copy a relevant chapter from a book he has on train operations. Car card operations and bi-directional running are a popular part of the hobby for many people and the club feels we can attract new people to our track by offering this option.

Chris Morris made a motion (voted on and approved) that we hold our 2023 Annual Hobo Party on the first Saturday of October (October 7). We invite members to bring a food item or two to add to the Hobo Stew and a dish to pass, potluck style. This is always a fun family event so bring the whole family and enjoy (hopefully) beautiful fall weather and a spooky train ride atmosphere. Dinner will start at 6:00 p.m. A bonfire and night running of trains will occur after dinner.

Rod said that at the conclusion of this meeting, he and Tom would continue enclosing the pavilion and invited the group to stay and help if they could.

Rod asked if there was any other business to discuss. Hearing no further comments, he adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Schmitzer

Corresponding Secretary

Mid Michigan Railroad Club, Inc.

**From Tina Pritchard, Communications/Membership Secretary**

**INTEREST ARTICLES**

I'm looking for members with trains to provide pictures and descriptions of how their engines operate. I plan to post on Facebook starting in November after compiling information from members. I will also post on the website.

The goal is to introduce the public to a variety of the engines that run on our railroad and how they work. This will hopefully maintain interest throughout our long winter.

Ideally, there would be a picture of the exterior of the engine, and one with the hood off to see some inner workings.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

If someone wants to become a member, they must complete a membership application (attached and available at the depot).

Once they have done so, they will then get a membership packet.

Applications can be sent to Tina Prichard through text, email, or mail.

616-204-0630

tina@bretina.net

Mid Michigan Railroad Club  
c/o Communications/Membership Officer  
4520 Shiloh Way Dr SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

## **Key Projects for 2023**

Projects that for sure need to be done this year...hopefully:

- Finish rnclosing the old pavilion.  
The overhead doors are in place. Saturday Mike Schmitzer and Tom Stuck were framing and sheeting the end walls. Dan Bockhiem is laying five tracks in the building.
- Erect the new pavilion and install the roof. Materials are at the track. The location needs to get staked out so work can start.
- Rod and Tom need help maintaining the grounds. Tom Stuck has the zero turn repaired and back in service.
- Tie replacement. The perpetual task. Ted Hentchel and Dan Bockheim have been working steady at tie replacement. We have loads of new ties.
- Patti Pittman cleaned up the garden area at the Station and planted Hardy Mums.
- Rod Pitman purchased a battery powered leaf blower to use at the Station and surrounding area. The blower is a Craftsman brand and the batteries for the circular saw in the barn will also fit the new leaf blower.
- Steve and Chris Morris placed all the new plastic ties in the poly containers and cleaned up the surrounding area.

## **2023 Run Day Schedule**

October 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28-29

**For Sale**



Steve Morris has a partially completed Little Engines 0-6-0 for sale.

Contact Steve at 517-231-1397



## Freelance Steam Tractor



This is a free lance tractor driven by what looks like a Stuart vertical engine. Boiler is a dry bottom fire box. Chain drive. There is a small water tank trailer that goes with it.

Contact Pat Patton [pattonpat@aol.com](mailto:pattonpat@aol.com)

269-929-8194



## **Officers**

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