

ALL ABOARD WASHINGTON

Meeting Minutes

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023

By Zoom and phone

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS PRESENT: Kathy Davis, Gary Wirt, Hendrik De Kock, Rocky Shay, Bob Lawrence, Jim McIntosh, Charlie Hamilton, Luis Moscoso

MEMBERS AND GUESTS: Dan McFarling, Luis Musso, Lloyd Flem, Dawha Lahti, Dave Roe

President Kathy Davis called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., saying no more railroad stamps were available at the Post Office. There was brief discussion, then Secretary Rocky Shay identified a Board quorum of six.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Done during call to order.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Vice President Gary Wirt discussed his recent interview with the Yakima Herald Republic and going to the Seattle Times, then Yakima's KIMA TV. He sought comments at [FRAlongdistancerailstudy.org](http://FRAlongdistancerailstudy.org) on restarting canceled long-distance Amtrak routes. He reviewed government and private groups involved in this in central and eastern Washington. He noted concern about the state not going after federal grants and discussed efforts to change that. He and Mr. McFarling also discussed a possible Hinkle-Pasco-Yakima-Seattle section of a restored Pioneer. Mr. Wirt noted that All Aboard Washington hasn't recommended a particular route, or a possible reroute of the Empire Builder's Portland section onto the UP between Pasco and Portland. After discussion, Mr. Wirt updated all on King County's study of enlarging Stampede Tunnel and said we're trying to arrange a meeting with the King County Council. Mr. Moscoso said state Senate Transportation Chairman Marco Liias wasn't aware of this but promised to look into it.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Hendrik De Kock said our recent fundraising-with-match campaign was successful and more was coming from it. He noted the recent need to transfer \$2,000 to Mr. Wirt's account and the need for a motion to do so. Mr. Wirt so moved, Mr. Shay seconded. There was no discussion and all Board members present voted by voice to approve the motion. Mr. De Kock said he needed Board member work hour reports for tax purposes. He updated the Board on the filing of various required reports and registrations.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Co-Executive Director Charlie Hamilton called for approval of the January and February meeting minutes. Mr. Lawrence so moved. Secretary Shay seconded. No corrections were noted. After President Davis called for a vote, All Board members present voted by voice to approve both sets of minutes.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Membership Chairman Bob Lawrence said 26 memberships lapsed last month but he gained some renewals through contacts. He showed the latest membership report on the ZOOM screen.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT: Government Affairs Director Luis Moscoso updated legislative transportation committee work, the state transportation budget, delays in revenue forecasts and possible cuts, not good news for passenger rail funding. He expressed concern about State Senate Transportation Chairman Marco Liias urging concentration on the Cascades corridor and noting funding damage from Initiative 695 20 years ago. He said House Transportation Committee Chair Jake Fey was discouraged, but he added that our media work is starting to help. Still, a recent rail tax credit bill died in committee. Mr. Moscoso noted that a recent Rail Caucus meeting was canceled unexpectedly and while he criticized its recent lack of work, he said the Caucus was in an awkward position because of the proposed high-speed rail project. He said there were no Whistle Stops scheduled now. He reviewed the deaths of the Third Columbia River Bridge and Third Airport project bills but said the aviation and tourism bills were still alive. He reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings and the Stampede Pass Tunnel Enlargement Study. Mr. Moscoso then recognized Vice President Gary Wirt, who reviewed the latest in Amtrak Cascades ridership and the lack of daily information from the state. Mr. Moscoso then discussed the next state Transportation Commission meeting and the Commission's stated desire to work more with us. He praised AORTA for its work in Oregon and called the legislature there more friendly than ours right now. He then briefed us on the Oregon legislative session, the upcoming rail week there and the Oregon Rail Caucus. Mr. Moscoso told Mr. Wirt that he would check on the train length limit bill in Washington. Mr. Moscoso also discussed developments in Kittitas County. Mr. McIntosh said he was working on that as well.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Co-Executive Director Charlie Hamilton reviewed his recent activity, including work on helping the North Sound Transit Alliance through All Aboard Northwest on three bills in the Oregon Legislature, plus continued work on Eastern Washington and on the Long Distance Service Study on which he encouraged others to be involved. He praised comments that Vice President Wirt and Dan Bilka were planning to submit, along with comments from Idaho. He reviewed work with students and efforts to get more money to do events. He discussed three recent grant applications to financial institutions in Washington with two already rejected. He also discussed our summer effort in Oregon, the upcoming regional rail summit in Idaho in July with state and Canadian officials on hand due to the participation of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region. Mr. Moscoso called it the biggest ever meeting of its kind and urged all of us to participate. Mr. Hamilton went on to review Yakima Nation and AORTA work, Train Treks and work with the WSDOT, the Regional Working Group, the Yakima Valley Council of Governments and various others, plus a recent interview with Real Change. He said he was also trying to get Spokane to work on cross-Washington daytime train service. He said the recently emailed AAWA News got a strong response. He noted the upcoming Badger Club presentation in the Tri-Cities and urged us to let him know about possible Rotary or Civic Club presentations. He also discussed serious problems with Twitter and said we are now on Mastodon.com. Mr. Lawrence mentioned a recent Everett Herald writer's trip on the Cascades to Vancouver and discussed BC's continued lack of interest.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: Mr. Hamilton praised an offer from Louis Musso to help with a printed newsletter and suggested reviving the old Communications Committee to look into a coordinated communications strategy. He showed an outline of what we've done recently and our community group work, updated what we do on social media with most success on Facebook and good success with email, plus 68 members on the print list, even with seniors and students not eligible. He said we must decide soon on whether to do a print newsletter. Ms. Lahti said print would help her and she hadn't aware of the restrictions. Mr. Hamilton then suggested an email newsletter that we could print, with a revived Communications Committee to brainstorm the idea. Mr. McFarling suggested allying with the Southwest Group and its "Steel Wheels" publication and providing Northwest articles. Mr. Hamilton summarized the issue and asked for volunteers for the committee. Mr. Flem said he supported resurrecting the newsletter mostly through email but also through print, partly because most members aren't aware of all that's going on. He then volunteered for that committee. He also said Washington used to have the best state rail program in the country, but no longer, and Oregon's is better now. On another matter, Mr. Hamilton said there would be no special train to the planned Idaho summit.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Mr. Hamilton pointed to the agenda on the Zoom screen for the list of upcoming events.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Flem said he'd been asked about our response to the East Palestine derailment. Mr. Hamilton responded that Ohio is not our territory and that RPA is covering the issue. Mr. Hamilton then sought suggestions and Mr. De Kock said it's too late for a statement but we should have a response ready if needed. Mr. Lawrence suggested waiting for the NTSB investigation and Mr. Wirt agreed but noted that many NTSB recommendations aren't feasible. Mr. Wirt still said we should defer to the NTSB.

Mr. Wirt then called for adjournment of the meeting with a discussion of splitting the Pioneer afterward. President Davis adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rocky Shay, Secretary