

HO Department Meeting
September 19th, 2009

There being 13 members present and one proxy, this constituting a quorum, the meeting was opened by HO Department Head Martin Harriss at 4:05pm.

Two additions to the agenda were proposed: Bill Jambor had a waybill status report to present, and Bill Franklin wanted to present a proposal for passenger car lighting. Bill Jambor moved and Don Kern seconded that the amended agenda be approved. The motion was passed with no objections.

The minutes of the previous Department meeting were made available. One amendment was proposed: the name "Avant Lowther" should read "Avant Lowther, Jr." Don Kern moved and Rich Cornell seconded that the amended minutes be approved. The motion was passed with no objections.

Announcements: Department Head Martin Harriss announced that the invitational operating session, held in June, was a success and that a good time was had by all. It was noted that the paperwork prepared by Pete Ezzard, a trip sheet for each train, was very useful to all the operators. (Thanks, Pete!) It was also suggested that in more extensive introduction session to the layout be help before the operating session. This will be considered for next year.

Electrical: Bill Franklin reported that a number of projects were under way: Martin Harriss is working on a new poer supply for the Gilberton aisle; Paul Preuss is wiring the west end hidden yard; Mike ? (new member) is wiring the Gilberton turntable; Bill Sohl is wiring the west end tracks; John Wilkens and Ed Kenny are wiring the east end tracks and Bill Franklin is working on the Gilberton passenger station.

Scenery: There were no scenery department members present but it was noted that new member Paul Gerson had donated a coaling stage model and was very interested in working on scenery projects. It was also noted that the Gilberton backshop being built by Ira Deutsch was very close to completion.

Master Mechanic: Russ Fiero reported that the car inspection work continues; cutoff dates for Show equipment inspection had been set; roll testing for layout equipment was now being undertaken; and there continued to be problems of damage to equipment on account of rough handling by members. Russ asked that only those permitted to handle equipment do so.

There was a brief discussion of adding capacitors to decoders to help equipment traverse dirty spots on the track; it was noted that there was no good solution to this kind of problem.

Superintendents: Neil Petillo was the only superintendent present. Neil reported that the TN was running satisfactorily and that the railroad was trying to reinstate some older equipment that had not been run for some time. It was noted that the Fountain Loop had a problem where the roadway paving had a bump and was fouling the bottom of some of the trolley equipment. Various fixed had been tried but a permanent solution has yet to be found.

Regarding the HD&O, it was noted that the various problems at Mon Junction had for the most part been resolved.

Operations: Bill Jambor gave a report on the waybill production. Bill stated that he and Bob Nalbone had developed techniques for successfully producing the waybills. About 400 had been produced thus far. All the new Gilberton waybills have been produced along with many new waybills for the staging

yards. The staging waybills have so far been replaced one for one so there should not be any shortages. Waybills currently in the pipeline include 50 for Chicago, 50 for St Louis, temporary Reading waybills and 85 Hoboken waybills. New waybills for Pittsburgh and the Gladstone branch will be worked on after the Show. Rahway river and Trenton Northern waybills will be worked on next year. No new waybills will be produced for Ashland, Summit or Bellfonte for the time being as these stations will change name and/or divisions once the layout expansion is complete. No waybills will be produced for Jim Thorpe for the time being as its sole industry, Steifel Roofing, is considered to be part of the Bellfonte district.

In other operations matters, Tom Voytec requested that the Chief be rebooted more often on order to clear out old locomotive data and avoid the "slots full" problem. Don Kern also mentioned that there had been a problem with the laptop computer that was used to control the Chief settings.

Layout Design: Rich Cornell reported that he was working on a design for mounting the "moving rail" (Paul Mallery's idea) for the hump yard.

Layout Construction: Rich Cornell reported that the track to the Gilberton turntable was complete and waiting for the wiring crews before it could be placed into service. It was also reported that work was close to being complete on the outside two tracks in the east end trench. Paul Preuss reported that he expected to have six west end hidden yard tracks completed prior to the Show.

Old Business

Show: Department Head Martin Harriss informed the membership that the Show was now just 11 weeks away. Dates had been set for the last day for new construction and for inspecting equipment that will be used during the show. It was emphasized by the Department Head and by the Master Mechanic that ALL equipment that will be run on the show loops must be presented to the car department for inspection prior to the show. The Master Mechanic will use his discretion in deciding to allow equipment that might otherwise not be 100% up to Club standards.

Paul Preuss asked that articulated and close-coupled/diaphragmed equipment not be allowed in the show trains since in cases of derailment or other problems it was virtually impossible to quickly pull bad order cars out of the train without the possibility of causing damage. The Master Mechanic will survey proposed show trains with a view to enforcing this restriction.

There was a discussion about scheduling trains at Diamond and the possibility of installing lighting there to help prevent collisions. This matter will be investigated by the Show Committee.

East End Electrification: There was no report presented.

Mon Junction: This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

New Business

Bill Franklin proposed that there be a requirement that all passenger cars have lighting, in particular the Rapido system that can be controlled externally using a magnetic wand. It was agreed that interested parties should get together and write up a proposal to be published in the Clearboard.

Department Head Martin Harriss reminded members that under the Club's Constitution, the layout should be build to follow prototype practices as far as the state of the art would allow. Martin was concerned that both construction and operation were becoming sloppy and there was a risk that the lax standards would be a detriment to the ongoing functioning of the layout. Martin invited members to look at the pictures of other layouts in the various modeling magazines and to think about how we can improve the layout and be setting the standard rather than following it. Martin urged all members to think about these issues as they worked and operated on the layout.

Following these remarks, Bill Jambor moved and Don Kern seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Department Head Martin Harriss adjourned the meeting at 5:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Harriss,
HO Department Head.