

This board meeting was conducted virtually, via Zoom, on the evening of Thursday, October 28, 2021. Officers and directors in attendance were President Mike Yuhas, Vice President Keith Schmidt, Treasurer Tara Grudzielanek, Secretary Tom Marcussen, and Directors Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, and Andrew Roach. Directors Neal and Cathy Wegner were absent. We had seven out of nine present. That met the quorum requirement of six out of nine. Therefore the meeting could proceed. Four other members were present from the beginning: National Vice President Tony White of Stamford, Connecticut, Ward Wells of Riverside, California, Dan Murray of Langhorne, Pennsylvania and Rich Hawthorne of New Berlin. Sal Ciofani of Whitefish Bay, and Norman Carlson of Lake Forest, Illinois joined us partway through the meeting.

President Mike Yuhas called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

President Mike Yuhas was not aware of any old business to be covered. Secretary Tom Marcussen confirmed that. The last virtual board meeting was held on Thursday, December 10, 2020. There was no unfinished business in those minutes.

President Mike Yuhas moved directly on to the topic for tonight—purchase of an improved audio-visual system. Our goal is to provide a high-quality experience for remote (via Zoom) attendees to our new hybrid (in-person and virtual) meetings. There was an agreement and consensus that the September and October meetings could have gone better for the remote attendees. Images from traditional film slides were small and fuzzy. Audio was poor—hard to understand, with widely varying volume. This will continue to be an important issue after the pandemic is gone. We have acquired a number of new members that are not realistically likely to attend many (or any) in-person meetings due to distance.

(The only practical answer for the small and fuzzy slide images is to individually scan them into digital format. Doing so would be a good thing for preservation.)

Ward Wells drew up an informal sketch of what we need to resolve the audio problems. Mike Yuhas obtained a quote for this equipment from Sweetwater Electronics of Fort Wayne, Indiana, for \$2045.95. That amount includes tech support, taxes, and free shipping and handling. Both documents were displayed on-screen.

Audio feedback and reverberation were big problems in October. We had stopped using our legacy audio system because of feedback. It returned when we tried to use the legacy system for hybrid meetings. Keith Schmidt said much of the trouble came from having the microphone in front of and fairly close to the speakers. A better system would allow us to have the microphone behind the speakers, and at a further distance, reducing the volume gained in going around the feedback loop. Mike Yuhas added that the mixer would have controls that allow for more adjustments to reduce or remove those problems. The new system would allow speakers to use their normal voice levels.

We will need more than one person who knows how to run the new system, from the church basement, for future hybrid meetings. It is not practical to expect one person to attend all of the meetings. It would help if those people were closer to the Fox Point location. Mike Yuhas, Keith Schmidt, and Dan Grudzielanek are the three people who can run our current system. None of them are really local to Fox Point. Mike Yuhas added that he had found it unrealistic to do double duty, presiding over both the live in-person room and virtual Zoom space (which has its own admission rules, and other IT administration to be done during the meeting). Sal Ciofani expressed some interest in running the Zoom IT and audio equipment.

Rich Hawthorne suggested that having a wireless and/or headset microphone that could move around with the presenter would do a lot to reduce the variability of the sound volume.

The next question was—where do we store this valuable equipment? Storage at the church would be ideal. Dan Grudzielanek will ask them if they can provide a secure storage space. Otherwise it could be brought to each meeting, like our valuable digital projector.

There was a consensus that purchasing better audio-visual equipment was an investment in retaining the many valuable long-distance members that we acquired during the all-virtual meetings during the pandemic, as we transition to hybrid meetings coming out of it. There was a suggestion that we start an audio-visual equipment fund dedicated to that purpose. Ward Wells volunteered to contribute \$500.00. Ralph McClure volunteered to donate \$200.00. We will be asking for contributions from our other members, to be sent to Treasurer Tara Grudzielanek at our post office box: Post Office Box 070758, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Tony White volunteered to contribute \$200.00.

At 8:07 pm, President Mike Yuhas said he would entertain a motion to purchase an audio-visual system from Sweetwater Electronics for approximately \$2045.95. (We may consider some minor changes to input microphones.) Keith Schmidt provided that motion. Dan Grudzielanek seconded it. There was a show-of-hands video vote. The motion carried. Mike Yuhas will try to order the new equipment tomorrow. We will try to have it in place, at least for trial use, for the next regular meeting on Friday, November 5, 2021. That will still revert to an all-virtual format. The meeting room will be open for those who wish to attend in person. The church basement will be one node on the virtual meeting space.

President Mike Yuhas reminded everybody of the upcoming members (and spouses)-only tour of the private Christopher Transportation Museum on Saturday, November 13, 2021. This is set on a 500-acre estate along Lake Michigan north of Sheboygan. It is normally closed to the public. There are 50 acres of gardens, and a 16-inch-gauge railroad. The main attraction will be owner Jay Christopher's extensive collection of railroad dining car china. This tour was a well-received event at the NRHS National Convention in late August. We will collect \$10.00 from each attendee. The proceeds will be donated to Sheboygan Meals on Wheels. Interested members should sign up with Mike Yuhas.

The formal meeting was declared adjourned at 8:16 pm. There was very limited informal discussion after that. The virtual meeting room was closed down quickly.

Respectfully Submitted
Thomas W. Marcussen
Wisconsin Chapter Secretary