

**OPERATION LIFESAVER COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2008**

PRESIDING: Pamela Guinan, Chairman

PARTICIPANTS:

	<u>Committee Members (5)</u>
Pamela Guinan	ConnDOT, CTOL Acting State Coordinator
Ronald Harris	State Department of Education
David Peters	Peters Rail Road Museum
Frank Sawicki	Department of Public Safety
Russell G. St. John	Providence and Worcester Railroad

Technical Advisors/ Presenters/Associates and Others (11)

Stephen Curley	ConnDOT
Randy Eick	ConnDOT - Traffic
Alex Goff	URS Corporation
Max R. Miller	The Valley Railroad Company
William Moore	CT School Transportation Assoc.
Sharon Okoye	ConnDOT
Barbara Peters	Peters Rail Road Museum
Frank Rossano	CTOL
Heather Smith	Logisticare
Valerie Sousa	Amtrak Police
Richard Towle	FRA

ORDER:

- I. Old Business
- II. New Business
- III. Administration
- IV. Committees
- V. Education
- VI. Enforcement
- VII. Engineering
- VIII. Maintenance of Crossings
- IX. General Assembly Recommendations
- X. Final Comments

Meeting opened at 10:10 A.M.

Pamela Guinan, Transportation Rail Officer I for the Bureau of Policy and Planning, Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department), introduced herself, welcomed everyone to the Operation Lifesaver Committee (Committee) meeting and opened the meeting by inviting attendees to introduce themselves.

Ms. Guinan announced that five committee members were present resulting in there being a quorum. The five committee members present were Pamela Guinan, Ronald Harris, David Peters, Frank Sawicki and Russell St. John.

I. OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Guinan announced the following:

- Donald Doherty and Barbara Henry have resigned from the Committee. Action is being taken to refill these positions and others that are under represented.
- The Connecticut Operation Lifesaver (CTOL) van and its maintenance records were reviewed, as per lease agreement, by CT Transit, who owns the van, and the van was found to be in good condition. However, if CTOL is to maintain the lease agreement for the van, then CTOL must show that CTOL intends to resume using the van.
~ Committee discussion followed and centered around under utilization of the van due to state restrictions limiting drivers to state employees only.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Guinan announced the following:

- Operation Lifesaver volunteer and CT Trolley Museum of East Windsor member and past president Alex Goff, is a returning resident and is seeking appointment to the Committee as representing a civic organization.
- Anyone interested in being appointed to the Committee is encouraged to contact the respective appointee as listed in the September report.
- Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) is in the process of revising the Presenter's Guide and is seeking comments/input from OL volunteers.

A meeting to review the September 2008 report to the state legislature is scheduled for (*Please see Note 1*) Thursday, October 23, 2008 (same place, same time); Committee members are encouraged to consider and email any comments/suggestions to Ms. Guinan.

The Committee planned to hold at least three regularly scheduled meetings in 2009.

Subcommittees and subcommittee chairs were reestablished (Please see below).

III. ADMINISTRATION:

Ms. Guinan announced the following:

- The CTOL program budget is \$20,000 and will continue at this level; however, if required, additional funds may be applied for.
- CTOL is in the process of ordering literature and other distribution materials. Supplies have been ordered (approximately \$14,000.00) and are still arriving.
- CTOL received a \$50.00 memorial donation. The check amount was credited directly into the Operation Lifesaver unit's funding account.
- CTOL has ordered a train shaped stress reliever as a thank you for active volunteers and contributors to Connecticut's OL program.
- CTOL will receive a \$1,500.00 grant award from OL for the timely filing of the 2007 annual report to national.
 - ~ The Committee discussed purchasing an LCD monitor; a laptop capable of recording meeting minutes directly onto a DVD; funding for staffing the CTOL van; and individual DVD video libraries for program volunteers.
 - ~ Mr. Goff discussed a monitor that might be available for program use.
- Expenses for the presenter training course held on December 27, 2007, exceeded \$600.00 and included \$225.00 for food.
 - ~ Dick Towle: Informed the Committee that AAA had donated \$1,000.00 toward a Grade Crossing Collision Investigation (GCCCI) course (held in MA?) and that further reduction to food budgets were had by preparing the food themselves. Others informed the Committee of additional potential program sponsors, ie. Shaws and Walmart; and suggested a fundraiser.
- Expenses, for the GCCCI course held in September 2007, included \$2,000.00 for food, and were within the Committee's \$6,000.00 budgeted for that activity.
 - ~ Discussion ensued, including reducing the number of class days, paring down course costs, a GCCCI course for emergency first responders, safety gear and convening a GCCCI course committee meeting.
 - ~ The GCCCI course was very well received by attending officers and POST, as expressed in a letter to Department Commissioner Ralph Carpenter from POST Program Consultant George Miller. POST would support offering the course again.

The Committee entertained discussion and offered comments about the possibility of looking into applying for non-profit (501c3) or not-for-profit (501c6) status.

IV. COMMITTEES:

Ms. Guinan reminded that Mr. Doherty, who had resigned from the Committee, had been the chair of the engineering subcommittee and in response the following subcommittees were reestablished:

- Engineering Subcommittee: The engineering subcommittee was reestablished with the following members who nominated, voted and unanimously approved Alex Goff as the subcommittee chair: Mr. Goff, Ms. Guinan, Frank Rossano and Russell St. John. Mr. Goff replaces Donald Doherty as the Committee's engineering subcommittee chair.
- Education Subcommittee: Ms. Guinan resigned as chair of the education subcommittee in favor of Ronald Harris being nominated as her replacement. The education subcommittee was reestablished with the following members who nominated, voted and unanimously approved Mr. Harris as the subcommittee chair: Ms Guinan, Mr. Harris, Max Miller, David Peters, Heather Smith and Valerie Sousa. Mr. Harris replaces Ms. Guinan as the Committee's education subcommittee chair.

- Enforcement Subcommittee: The enforcement subcommittee was reestablished with the following members who nominated, voted and unanimously approved Frank Sawicki as the subcommittee chair: Ms. Guinan, Sgt. Sawicki and Valerie Sousa. Sgt. Sawicki remains the Committee's enforcement subcommittee chair.

V. EDUCATION:

Ms. Guinan announced the following:

- CTOL activities between July 1, 2007, and August 31, 2008, have resulted in approximately 8,700 contacts at approximately 160 activities.
- Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) has created two new videos. The first new video from OLI "Look to Live" is for driver education students and has two parts: first, commentary from a surgeon; and second, commentary from teenagers. The second new video from OLI is "Are You In Control" and is the new OL video for middle school students.
- In a partnering effort with COSTA, CDOT and CTOL, a new DVD was created. The new DVD showcases Operation Lifesaver videos for student transportation industry drivers, driver education students and prospective new volunteers, and includes the adult general audience video, "Final Answer." Four hundred copies of the DVD were purchased.
 - ~ Two hundred copies will be distributed to CT's student transportation industry. Bill Moore of COSTA will over see the distribution of the DVD and the "Decide Smart Arrive Safe" support materials which are available on the national website OLI.org.
 - ~ The other 200 copies are for distribution to driver education instructors, CTOL volunteers, and prospective volunteers.
 - ~ Meeting attendees were encouraged to take a copy of the DVD for review.

Please see Note 2.

VI. ENFORCEMENT:

Frank Sawicki reported briefly on the September 2007 GCCI course held in New Haven, FRA activity in New Haven and POST Academy activities.

VII. ENGINEERING:

The following topics and issues were discussed:

- Randy Eick informed the committee regarding the current status of the Department's grade crossing engineering projects and commented that the problem now is manpower. In addition to other projects covered under roadway projects, funding in the amount of 1.2 million dollars per year supports one to two additional grade crossing projects per year.
- Stephen Curley informed the committee about five fatalities and two grade crossing incidents. All of the fatalities were trespass related and two of the five were suicides. The two grade crossing incidents resulted in one injury and one person who failed to stop was shaken up. In addition, Mr. Curley informed that there were twelve fatalities in 2007, all of which were pedestrian/trespass related and four of which were suicide.
- Mr. Goff, who attended the recent regional grade crossing conference that was held in

Massachusetts and sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), commented on the new FRA grade crossing reporting form and its relation to infrastructure grants.

- Frank Rossano related a complaint regarding a sightline in Windsor and Mr. Goff, who was familiar with the crossing, stated that nothing could be done there.
- Mr. Goff, who is working on the environmental assessment study for the second track on the New Haven Springfield Line, informed the Committee about that and other planned rail-revival projects in the area.

VIII. MAINTENANCE OF CROSSINGS:

Ms. Guinan commented that CTOL continues to forward comments and concerns received from the public to CDOT's Rail Regulatory unit at the Office of Rail in New Haven. Most recently, a sightline concern was received from a Wethersfield resident. Rail regulatory staff members continue to provide almost immediate response, often inspecting the concern location within twenty four hours and when required, follow up with railroads regarding any necessary remedial action.

IX. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMENDATIONS:

- The Committee discussed writing legislation in 2009 that would reestablish the program's budget to a flexibly higher level.
 - ~ A higher level of funding would allow the program to resume overtime payments for valuable services provided by Department of Public Safety staff.
 - ~ The Committee elected not to hold a budget planning meeting at this time.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan will research the budget submittal timeline.
- It was suggested that the Committee consider going to the state legislature to transition from a State run program to a program with non-profit status (501c3), in-liking with a number of other state OL programs.
 - ~ Mr. Goff suggested that if CTOL changed the administration from a state run program to a privately run program, \$150,000.00 could be raised from private companies.
 - ~ Ms Guinan asked the Committee to consider how going to a non-profit status would better position the Committee to achieve its goals.
 - ~ Mr. Peters commented that, with the upcoming election, funding would be drying up.

X. FINAL COMMENTS:

Ms. Guinan thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

(Meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.)

NOTE 1: *Due to changes in Committee members's availability, the next Committee meeting was subsequently rescheduled from Thursday, October 23, 2008 to Thursday October 30, 2008.*

NOTE 2: These minutes were compiled from a taped recording and some of the meeting may not have been recorded before the second tape became operational.