

**OPERATION LIFESAVER COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
June 11, 2009**

DRAFT: These Operation Lifesaver Committee meeting minutes are neither official nor binding until accepted and approved by the Operation Lifesaver Committee.

PRESIDING: Pamela Guinan, Chairperson

PARTICIPANTS:

Committee Members (4)

Pamela Guinan	ConnDOT, CTOL Acting State Coordinator
Ronald Harris	State Department of Education
Frank Sawicki	Department of Public Safety
Russell G. St. John	Providence and Worcester Railroad

Technical Advisors/ Presenters/Associates and Others (6)

Joseph Cristalli	ConnDOT
Stephen P. Curley	ConnDOT
Frank DiLorenzo	Metro North Railroad
Max R. Miller	The Valley Railroad
Heather Smith	Logisticare
Valerie Sousa	Amtrak Police
Clifford Tucker	Amtrak Police

ORDER:

- I. Committee Members - Old and New Business
- II. Administration and Operation of the OL Program
- III. Subcommittees for Engineering, Enforcement and Education Components of the Program
- IV. Educating the Public Relative to Railroad Safety
- V. Encouraging Enforcement through State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies
- VI. Engineering the Development of Engineering and Safety Improvements
- VII. Encouraging an Increase in the Maintenance of Crossings
- VIII. General Assembly Recommendations

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Pamela Guinan called the meeting to order at 10:25 A.M. Four committee members were present resulting in there not being a quorum.

I. COMMITTEE MEMBERS - OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:

- Ms. Guinan informed that the February 23, 2009 meeting minutes were drafted and awaiting approval; David Peters had previously expressed his approval of the minutes in an email. Frank Sawicki motioned to accept the minutes; the motion was seconded by Ron Harris; and with no discussion, members present voted unanimously to accept the minutes subject to post meeting approval of the process.
- The government official (GO) and PTA vacancies on the committee remain vacant. In addition, the local law enforcement (LLE) representative is retired and that position remains under represented.
 - ~ Frank Sawicki suggested the Danbury Chief of Police as representing either GO or LLE, and if a railroad police department would qualify as LLE, then Valerie Sousa of Amtrak PD is willing to represent and serve as LLE.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan will research to ascertain whether or not railroad police qualifies under state statute as LLE.
- A GCCI course was held on June 2-4, 2009. Eighteen students from state, local and railroad police departments attended the course. No new expenditures were incurred by the Department.
- A Presenter Trainer training course is being held in Arizona in July and the deadline for registration is June 16, 2009.

II. ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF THE OL PROGRAM:

- Ms. Guinan informed that three of the six trainees from the December 18, 2008 presenter training course received certification, and a seventh new volunteer had received training in New York.
- Ron Harris suggested reaching out to DOT retirees who might choose to volunteer for the CTOL program.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan will draft a memo for publication through the Department's email general announcements folder and Sgt. Sawicki will circulate an announcement at the Department of Public Safety.
 - ~ Valerie Sousa suggested that National Volunteer Month (April) would be a good time to recruit new volunteers in the future.

III. SUBCOMMITTEES FOR ENGINEERING, ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM:

CTOL Van Use and Maintenance Subcommittee

- Subcommittee Co-chairman Sgt. Sawicki informed that the CTOL Van Use and Maintenance Subcommittee held a meeting at the Department on March 17, 2009, and reported that Department restraints placed on who is allowed to operate the van, hinders use of the van.
- Mr. Cristalli confirmed that only Ms. Guinan and himself may operate the van.
- Mr. Cristalli commented that due to lack of usage and current budget constraints, it is only a matter of time before the van is returned to Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD).

- Ms. Guinan informed that the van received an annual inspection; however, there are maintenance procedural differences between the Department and GNHTD that must be resolved and doing so has been put on hold.
- In an effort to make the Van more accessible, Amtrak representatives expressed interest in acquiring and sponsoring the van if the Department terminates the lease agreement for the van.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan will contact GNHTD and inquire about the feasibility of the van being purchased by Amtrak.

Education Subcommittee

- Subcommittee Chairman Ronald Harris informed that the Education Subcommittee held a meeting at the Department on June 11, 2009, and reported the following:
 - ~ The subcommittee was extended the opportunity to review the Department of Motor Vehicles' current driver manual and offer recommendations for revisions to future manuals. The committee is reviewing current language pertaining to grade crossings. Currently aspects of grade crossing safety are incorporated in various sections of the manual with no clear focus on grade crossing safety in particular. The subcommittee is considering requesting the inclusion into the manual of a section dedicated to highway-rail at-grade crossings, in addition to leaving the crossing information where it currently exists in the manual.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan will contact other state OL program coordinators regarding what crossing information exists in other states' driver education manuals.
 - ~ An Education subcommittee mission statement has been drafted and is currently a work in progress.
 - ~ Presenter recognition was discussed.
 - ~ CTOL communication was discussed with emphasis on the web page, including the frequency of updates and the link to the national page.
 - ~ Ms. Guinan informed that the CTOL page is currently updated to include Committee meeting announcements, agendas and minutes.

IV. EDUCATING THE PUBLIC RELATIVE TO RAILROAD SAFETY:

- Ms. Guinan announced that new Presenter Guides have been received from OLI and OLI is mandating that all presenters receive at least three hours of training for use of the new guide.
- Valerie Sousa informed that Railroad Safety for Emergency Responders (RSER) presentations have been presented to fire fighters and first responders on the eastern end of the shoreline and will continue to be scheduled throughout the year.
- Ofr. Sousa suggested the following:
 - ~ Committee meetings and/or other meetings and/or workshops be held in the evening so that volunteers would be available to attend, and exchange ideas and socialize with each other.
 - ~ Using the CDOT commuter station bulletin boards along the shoreline to post safety information; Ms. Guinan will research the possibility with the New Haven Office of Rail.
- Cliff Tucker commented on the success of the safety blitzes at train stations during the morning commuter hours. Blitzes were held in Branford, Guilford, Madison, and Old Saybrook. The blitzes were more educational than enforcement.

V. ENCOURAGING ENFORCEMENT THROUGH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

- Frank Sawicki informed that a GCCI Course had been held on June 2-4, 2009 and reported the following:

- ~ Eighteen police officers attended the course.
- ~ P&W Railroad and Metro North Railroad had provided equipment for hands-on training in the Metro North Yard in New Haven.
- ~ Amtrak provided a crossing demonstration at Devine Street in North Haven.
- Ms. Guinan commented that the June GCCI course marked the first Connecticut application of OLI's newly revised and reformatted curriculum and praised Sgt. Sawicki's successful efforts at organizing and leading the course. Sgt. Sawicki received a round of applause from the Committee.

VI. ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGINEERING AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS.

- The status of an area being used to cross the railroad tracks behind the University of Hartford and Weaver High School was discussed and Mr. Curley commented that this is not a legal crossing and that the University might seek the installation of a private grade crossing or a pedestrian overpass at this location.

VII. ENCOURAGING AN INCREASE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF CROSSINGS.

- Stephen Curley updated attendees on the status of highway-rail grade crossing Projects, including the following: Topstone Road Crossing in Redding has been completed; Central Street Crossing in Bristol has been approved for rehab. Other crossings considered/slanted for improvements include crossings located in Bristol and Wilton and in New Canaan at Grove and at Richmond Hill.
- In response to inquiries, Mr. Curley informed and commented about whistle ban zones and exempt crossings.

VIII. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS.

"General Assembly Recommendations" was tabled to the next scheduled Committee meeting.

FINAL COMMENTS:

Motion: Frank Sawicki motioned to adjourn the meeting. Russ St. John seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Guinan thanked everyone for attending, and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.