

**OPERATION LIFESAVER COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2009**

DRAFT: The Operation Lifesaver Committee meeting minutes are not official or binding until accepted by the Operation Lifesaver Committee on or before their next meeting in June 2009.

PRESIDING:

Pamela Guinan, Chairperson

PARTICIPANTS:

Committee Members (5)

Pamela Guinan	ConnDOT, CTOL Acting State Coordinator
Al Goff	URS Corporation
Ronald Harris	State Department of Education
David Peters	Peters Railroad Museum
Russell G. St. John	Providence and Worcester Railroad

Technical Advisors/ Presenters/Associates and Others (6)

Stephen P. Curley	ConnDOT
Lou Frangella	FRA
Sharon Okoye	ConnDOT
Barbara Peters	Peters Railroad Museum
Valerie Sousa	Amtrak Police
Dick Towle	FRA

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 10:10 A.M. Four committee members were present and a fifth joined later, resulting in there being a quorum.

I. COMMITTEE MEMBERS - OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Motion (Electronic): The minutes of the October 30, 2008 meeting were approved via an electronic voting process concluded on November 13, 2008 as follows: Committee member Frank Sawicki moved to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2008 meeting with revisions as noted in the emails and committee member Russ St. John seconded the motion. Committee members Al Goff, Pamela Guinan, Ronald Harris, Frank Sawicki and Russ St. John voted and all voted in favor of approving the minutes as revised and the motion carried.

- Committee member Therese Duncan has resigned as PTA representative to the Committee. Other vacancies included the local government official and the local law enforcement representatives.
- The Committee was informed that the Operation Lifesaver Committee was originally listed by the Governor as a committee to be rescinded; however, it was not on the Governor's revised list. It is uncertain, how the current economic climate will effect the Committee and/or it's membership.

II. ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF THE OL PROGRAM:

Chairperson Guinan announced the following:

- The Committee's 2009 meetings schedule was submitted to The Secretary of State on January 30, 2009. Committee meetings are scheduled for February 23rd, June 11th and October 29th.
- CTOL's 2008 annual report to OLI was filed, timely, on January 30, 2009 thus earning CTOL a \$1500.00 bonus grant from OLI.
- Thank you letters were sent to Central New England Railroad and The New Britain Transportation Company for their donations to the program received in 2008.
- Preliminary planning has begun for a GCCCI course.
- The program's budget account for the current fiscal year will be refreshed with additional funds to increase the remaining balance to \$7,000.00.
- A presenter training course was held on December 18, 2008. Six presenter trainees were instructed by OL Presenter Trainers from Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. Scheduling of 90-Day presentations is in progress.
- As of January 1, 2009, all OL activities tracked by OLI, ie., presentations, special events and training, etc. must be recorded in the national database in addition to being recorded in the CTOL database.

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

- The Committee voted to approve GCCCI course and necessary expenditures:

Motion: Committee member Ron Harris motioned to authorize a Grade Crossing Collision Investigation (GCCCI) course, in accord with the February 21, 2009 memo submitted by Frank Sawicki, to be held by July 1, 2009 and to authorize expenditures of up to four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) and committee member Russ St John seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with votes from Al Goff, Pamela Guinan, Ronald Harris, David Peters and Russ St. John.

- Subcommittee chairs for education, enforcement and the CTOL van are preparing memos and/or

planning meetings for their respective committees.

- It was suggested that 55 Alive would be a venue for OL presentations.
- Chairperson Guinan will contact CT Transit for a van maintenance schedule.

IV. EDUCATING THE PUBLIC RELATIVE TO RAILROAD SAFETY:

- CTOL activities between October 1, 2008, and January 31, 2009, resulted in the OL message being delivered to approximately three thousand two hundred and thirty-six (3,236) members of the general public at approximately fifty (50) presentations and safety information venues around the state.
- The Committee anticipates a regional OL effort in support of the national model railroad show that will be held in Hartford in July 2009.
- The Committee anticipates positive response to the new OLI training Railroad Safety for Emergency Responders (RSER), and the possibility of participating at the Fire Academy sponsored training week in June.
- The New Britain to Hartford busway project is still active.

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

- The CTOL Van has been requested for use at blitzes in the spring.

VI. ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGINEERING AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS.

- Rail fatality on November 18, 2008 in Guilford on Amtrak.
- The newly licensed teen driver who was injured after disregarding an activated crossing gate arm resulting in a grade crossing collision in Stamford in August 2008, is pursuing litigation.

VII. ENCOURAGING AN INCREASE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF CROSSINGS.

- Gates and lights are planned for the Topstone Road grade crossing in Redding and the project is slated for completion this spring.
- It was noted that if the Freight Rail Assistance Program gets reinstated, it would include funding (70/30) for grade crossing improvements.

VIII. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATIONS.

- Committee member Ron Harris will contact the *DMV* as preliminary research into legislation pertaining to the inception of mandatory grade crossing instruction/information for driver education curriculum and instruction manuals and testing.
- The Committee received copies of "The Lopez Report" and commented on the practice of grade crossing's being staffed with crossing guards.

FINAL COMMENTS:

Member Ron Harris shared his joy with the Committee when he announced that his first grandchild, a baby girl the family named Ava, had arrived in December.

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

Chairperson Guinan thanked everyone for their participation and for attending, and closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 P.M.