

**MEETING MINUTES OF
PRAIRIE TRAILS CLUB INC.**

**BLPOA Community Center
6996 South SR 10
Bass Lake (Knox), Indiana**

October 12, 2021

MEMBERS

Diane Blais
Russell Blais
Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Joan Hardesty
Carolla Heilstedt
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Brian McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Larry Wickert

GUESTS

Bob Albert, Liaison from Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum

Call to Order by President

Carolla Heilstedt, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") on October 12, 2021 in the BLPOA Community Center, Knox (Bass Lake) at 5:31 pm, CDT (6:31 pm, EDT).

Review and Approval of Minutes of September 23, 2021

Brian McMillin found an error in the September 23 minutes that identified incorrectly who commented on an agenda item. With the error corrected, Rhonda Milner moved to approve the minutes held on September 23, 2021. Joan Hardesty seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report including Report of Restricted and Unrestricted Funds

Kathy Lucas reflected the unusually short duration between the September and October meetings resulted in an atypical financial accounting. Even though Thomas Excavating and Welding was very active during the period, it did not provide a new invoice. She said Rich Vallicelli, as well as Rich and Peggy Stalbrink, made generous contributions. There were several entrant fees received for the October 2 Erie Trail Fall Run/Walk and Ride, and new membership fees. But the restricted funds were unaffected. There was a most welcomed modest uptick in unrestricted funds. She presented the Treasurer's Report and Report of Restricted/Unrestricted Grants and Donations as follows:



**Treasurer's Report
October 12, 2021**

FIRST FARMERS BANK & TRUST (FFBT)

Balance forward from 9/23/21 **\$ 323,396.95**

INCOME

9/24/21	Membership+Donation, Dues (<i>R. Vallicelli, P&R Stalbrink</i>)	550.00
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fees (thru RunSignUp)	66.73
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fee (Dorothy Grube)	30.00
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fee (Roxanne Burrous x 2)	60.00
9/30/21	Grant from Northern IN Community Foundation <i>For PTC Walk/Run/Ride</i>	200.00
10/4/21	Cash from PTC Walk/Run/Ride	750.00
10/4/21	Memberships (NEW) & donation <i>Pastor Craig Ison, Bjorne Henderson</i>	55.00
10/4/21	Cash from PTC Walk/Run/Ride	35.00
10/4/21	PTC Entrant Fees (thru RunSignUp)	<u>95.14</u>
	Total Income	1,841.87

EXPENSES

10/6/21	Davey Johnston <i>(Entertainment for 10/2 event)</i>	(100.00)
10/7/21	John Cruce <i>(Entertainment for 10/2 event)</i>	(100.00)
	Total Expenses	(200.00)

Ending FFBT balance as of 10/12/21 **\$ 325,038.82**

*/s/Kathleen Lucas, Treasurer
Oct. 12, 2021*

Restricted/Unrestricted Grants and Donations

Luminous Fund Grant #2 (2018)	Signage BL (inc. "You are Here")	\$4,124.94
Luminous Fund Grant #3 (2019)	Matching NLT Grant	1,218.25
Luminous Fund Grant #4 (2020)	Northwest Extension	5,000.00
Luminous Fund Grant #5 (2021)	Northwest Extension or Operations	5,000.00
Hardesty Memorial Grant	Wayfinding/Historic Signage	6,911.50
Hardesty Memorial Grant (2019)	Matching NLT Grant	1,218.25
PTC Account Commitment	Matching NLT Grant	1,218.25
Marshall County Horse Assn.	Bench for Southeast Extension	350.00
Indiana Greenways Foundation	Matching NLT Grant	1,218.25
Lucas Lakehouse Guests' Donation	Future Vision/Website	700.00
Next Level Trails Grant	Southeast Extension	270,308.43
Mitchel-Kane Charitable Fund	Northwest Extension	4,000.00
Stalbrink Donation	Scholarship or Most Needed	100.00
Blais/Vlaming Bench	Trailhead @ 450/210	350.00
McMillin Bench	Trailhead @ 450/210	350.00
Maintenance Fund	General Trail Maintenance	4,000.00
KVREMC Bike Rack Grant	Balance of Grant Amount	1,500.00
VFW Grant	Trail Improvements	5,000.00
	TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$312,819.87

BANK ACCOUNT

First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)	\$325,038.82	TOTAL IN BANK
	<u>-312,819.87</u>	RESTRICTED
	12,218.95	UNRESTRICTED

Diane moved to approve the Treasurer's Report and Report of Restricted/Unrestricted Grants and Donations as presented. Rhonda seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Final Report of October 2 Erie Trail Fall Run/Walk & Ride

The membership offered perspectives on the Erie Trail Fall Run/Walk & Ride held on October 2. Special appreciation was expressed to the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum and President, Todd Flanigan, for their great cooperation and assistance in conduct of the PTC's first event to incorporate a train ride. Bicyclists who might not have otherwise been attracted to a train museum had their first such experience. Although there were logistical problems loading and unloading bicycles on the train, they were overcome, and the bicyclists were almost universally impressed by the experience. A key person who helped with accomplishing bicycle transport was Paul Byer, who is a member of both the PTC and the HVRM.

Kathy thanked Marty Lucas and Corinne Becknell Lucas for an enjoyable railroad themed musical program without fee. She then distributed a financial report focused on the event:

INCOME:

6/21/21	Grant from Convention & Visitors Commission	1,000.00
8/18/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	37.83

9/1/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	115.51	
9/7/21	PTC Entrant Fee (R. Staresina)	20.00	
9/8/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	74.46	
9/13/21	PTC Entrant Fee (S&J Mathews)	40.00	
9/15/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	458.36	
9/20/21	PTC Entrant Fee (G&M Little)	60.00	
9/20/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	208.59	
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	66.73	
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fee (D. Grube)	30.00	
9/29/21	PTC Entrant Fee (R. Burrous)	60.00	
9/30/21	Northern IN Community Foundation (for event)	200.00	
10/4/21	Cash from Walk/Run/Ride	750.00	
10/4/21	Cash from Walk/Run/Ride (B. Fingerhut deposit)	35.00	
10/6/21	PTC Entrant Fee (thru RunSignUp)	<u>95.14</u>	
-	Total Income	3,251.62	3,251.62
<u>EXPENSES:</u>			
6/29/21	Barrel Maker T-shirts	(1,018.62)	
9/2/21	National Pen for merchandise	(436.00)	
10/6/21	Davey Johnston (entertainment)	(100.00)	
10/7/21	John Cruce (entertainment)	<u>(100.00)</u>	
	Total Expenses	(1,654.62)	(1,654.62)
	NET PROFIT		\$1,597.00

Anita McMillin provided an informal summary of promotional items remaining from the event. She said there were 26 T-shirts remaining and a “lot of bags and cups.” These will be later sold or made gifts.

The consensus was that the event was a success and well-worth the effort. Numerous individuals within the PTC and HVRM helped. Members agreed there were a few “rookie” mistakes which can be resolved going forward. Walkers and runners were delivered by train from the HVRM station across State Road 10 to the former rest stop, and some of the slower walkers had not yet returned when the train returned to the HVRM station. Mapping for the longer bicycle routes needs to be augmented with directional arrows in addition to the GPS lineation. More on-the-ground marking of routes was warranted. The problems with the bicycle routes may, however, be mitigated somewhat when the two-mile southeasterly trail extension is completed.

Report of Southeast Trail Extension Workgroup

On October 7, Jonathon Geels of The Troyer Group provided advice on placement of the pads with benches and bike racks along the trail extension. In particular, he focused our attention on ADA compliance. Carolla emailed Lisa Herber of DNR’s Division of State Parks the requisite Project NLT-01-07 3rd Quarter Report on October 12. Larry Wickert reported previously that asphalt placement was anticipated by early October. The image which follows depicts the paved trail and a new gate as they existed at US 35 on October 14.



Image by Michael McGregor

Plan October 22 Southeast Trail Extension Inspection and Ribbon Cutting

The primary purpose for the meeting was to plan for the October 22 DNR inspection and ribbon cutting for the two-mile extension of the Erie Trail funded by Gov. Eric Holcomb's NextLevel Trails program. Most of the planning was detail oriented and is not included in these minutes. These few highlights may be of continuing interest.

The membership agreed to schedule the ribbon cutting ceremony for 1:00 p.m., CDT (2:00 p.m., EDT) on October 22 at the intersection of Starke County Road 700 East and the southeast end of the extended Erie Trail. Amy Marisavljevic, DNR Trails Section Chief, requested that the final inspection of the new trail segment be scheduled for 9:30 a.m., CDT (10:30 a.m., EDT) on the same day. She also asked if the PTC could have either UTVs or golf carts available to assist with the inspection. The membership agreed to her requests. Paul, Larry, and Carolla each offered to provide the vehicles.

Rhonda agreed to develop a GIS-based map to help interested persons locate the site for the ribbon cutting. She also said she would provide tables and an ice chest. Peggy and Diane agreed to make celebratory desserts, snacks, and water. Later, Kathy scheduled delivery of a portable toilet.

Report of Northwest Trail Extension Workgroup

With the emphasis upon construction and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the southeast extension of the Erie Trail, the membership has had a limited opportunity to develop a grant for a possible northwest extension. Bob Albert, our Liaison from the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, suggested that Starke County GIS documents do not accurately depict within the North Judson rail corridor the respective ownerships of the Town, the Northern Indiana Railroad, and HVRM. He added the HVRM would work to help find a way for the trail to go through town. Representatives of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy repeated enthusiasm for a northwest extension beyond North Judson. LaCrosse and LaPorte County have worked to advance the trail beyond English Lake. The consensus was, that as soon as feasible after the ribbon cutting ceremony, the Northwest Trail Extension Workgroup should resume pursuit of opportunities.

Maintenance Committee Report

Paul, Linda, and Russ rehabilitated the deck of Fell Ditch Bridge. Paul and Linda said they do not believe the bridge is likely to fail, but an engineering study that would clarify its status and suggest a strategy for more extensive repairs may be warranted.

Michael McGregor swept the trail in anticipation of the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Informal Review of HVRM Activities

Bob Albert reported the HVRM is continuing to enjoy ridership at unprecedented levels. He said if the weather holds the Pumpkin Trains are expected to operate at or near their capacity through October. The Halloween Train is set to run on October 30.

Consider Indiana Trails Community Request to Support House Resolution 4878

Jim Bishop of the Indiana Trails Community, in a September 28 email, asked the PTC and its membership to express support for US House for HR 4878. He urged the Resolution would “give greater national recognition of the American Discovery Trail”, one of the transAmerican routes hosted by the Erie Trail.

Larry reflected one of the services which rates the likely success of House Resolutions gives HR 4878 only a 1% chance of success, but the ADT has been supportive of PTC’s efforts, and he believed we should reciprocate. Russ concurred. Members requested Steve to write a letter of support on behalf of the PTC, and he agreed.

Next Membership Meeting

The next membership meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 5:30 pm, CST (6:30 pm, EST) in the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South State Road 10, Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m., CDT (8:10 p.m., EDT).