

Cumbres Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission Meeting

C&TSRR Commission Minutes

July 28, 2018 9:00a.m.

Antonito Town Hall & Municipal Building, Antonito, CO

Public Input – Public comments/questions will be allowed during each topic upon being recognized by the Chairman. Comments and questions may be no longer than 3 minutes and must adhere to any other requirements established by the Chairman. All public speakers must indicate their desires by registering in advance of the meeting on the available sign-up sheet which will become part of the record of the meeting.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Billy Elbrock at 9:05 a.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Elbrock
3. Introductions – John Bush
4. Approval of Agenda –Commissioner Elbrock moves to approve, Commissioner Love moved to approve, Commissioner Cowles seconded the motion, motion carried.
5. Approve the Minutes from April 28, 2018 Commission meeting – Commissioner Elbrock moves to approve, Commissioner Graybill moved to approve, Commissioner Cowles seconded the motion, motion carried.
6. Train Operations Report/Presidents Report – Ed Beaudette- Train Ops- 10 days away from Mid-point of 2018 season. Motor car people are coming. We hosted a music video. 15 double headers, another one this morning, we are up to 16 so far. Several special operations are planned for the summer, including an observation and re-creation of the last revenue freight operated by the Rio Grande in August of 1968.
7. President's Report- John Bush-Ridership in May was up 8.2% an amount that is in line with our predictions for annual growth. On June 1st the 416 fire started north of Durango. As a result/factor of the D&S was shut down for the month of June. Ridership in June was up 38.9% compared to 2017. On June 27th the Spring Creek fire began on the west side of La Veta Pass. The fire grew very rapidly and by July 1st US 160 over the pass was closed. The highway was finally re-opened about July 15th. The D&S resumed service on July 12th, since then has closed for two days last week and so far, two days this week. Through the 26th of July ridership is up 6.7% Overall ridership this season is up 19.9%. At this time reservations for the season are up by 18%. As a result of the changes in pricing and discounts revenue is up by 28%. So far the growth in the premium classes has been minimal. The bulk of the growth has been in coach class. This may be the result of the change in pricing. There doesn't seem to be any significant negative feedback from the changes in the discounts as reported by the reservation agents. Due to the drought conditions, the fire danger has been high. Stage 3 fire restrictions were in effect for several weeks in Archuleta County. Stage 3 restrictions were also in place in the Carson National forest. The Rio Grande National forest reached Stage 2 restrictions. Because of the strong Fire Mitigation plan we developed we were granted an exemption from the stage 2 and 3 restrictions in all three jurisdictions. I am very pleased by the performance of the entire team during this challenging time.

Maintenance and Repair Report – John Bush- We have increased the size of the MOW crew to catch up on the tie installation and ballasting program, did not make progress last season. Now the fire restrictions have been removed the crews are going back to the planned tie and ballast program. Unless the monsoon rains cause unexpected problems, John Matthews expects to install enough ties this season to reach the maintenance level by the end of the year. Ballast installation and tamping will still require another two seasons to reach maintenance levels. A motor coach breakdown on June 17th highlighted the need for all the motor coaches to be radio equipped.

- a. Historic Car Fleet update – Stathi Pappas-Special projects- 168 Capital Campaign is close to our goal. Thank you to Jerry Dziedzic, Scott Gibbs and John Bush. One thing that was unexpected we did last month the 292 was brought over to Chama to be displayed with the 315. A “Mini” grant was applied for and approved to make the necessary castings for passenger trucks for the #256 and #292 and car “F” Additionally flexibility has been approved in the funding to complete one set of the Flying bolsters. This is important because unlike #292 the #256 does not have a useable set of trucks at this time. Work on the #168 continues to go well. The 168 is on time and under budget. We have raised \$ 478,000. Thus far.
 - b. Tracks Across Borders Byway update – On-cell program can be accessed by phone. The app can be downloaded when they run the byway from Chama to Durango, it will alert them when they get to specific points of interest. They will show old photographs and some texts. It can start promoting the byway now. It also has some information from Chama to Antonito.
 - c. Marketing Report – Mark Graybill- We continue to be very happy with our Marketing Company Launch. In a couple of years, they have done a great job.
 - e. Financial Report – Ed Beaudette- We are half way through the season we are closing the books for the fiscal year 2018. Looking at the balance sheets, our cash position over May alone up half a million. Inventory for retail is where it should be. Advanced ticket sales is up 1.2 million. Equity position is up.
- The only weak point is the Commission balance sheet. Lack of funding from N.M.

8. Commissioner Reports-

- a. Chairman Report – Billy Elbrock- Local affairs- Commend the staff for having no Fires. Continue working on strong relationships with the Commissioners and the Community. And working with New Mexico Legislatures.
- b. Vice Chairman Report – Dan Love- Most of the Capital project work has already been discussed. We’re being very aggressive in terms of bringing the Railroad from a survival mode for the some odd 40 years. Two one that allows us to be self-sustaining. The best way to preserve this railroad and the jobs, is if it can take care of itself. One of the objectives that we focus on daily in the long pole as well is being self-sufficient. To be able to pay for our own way, so that we are not asking either of the States to support the Capital needs of the Commission.
- c. Secretary Report - Dick Cowles/capital projects- Seems to have a responsibility of secretary as well as finance, it has been very pleasant. The finding for Premium cars, that kind of demand has been continuing. As a consequence we have made application funding from New Mexico, to add to the premium car fleet. We were not

successful. The Candelaria fund, active with the Friends, have been willing to do a 50/50 match with the project. We have started that project. As Secretary looked at past archives, old documents, we got it all organized, and found very fundamental documents, including minutes from 1970.

d. Treasurer Report –Mark Graybill–We continue to be very happy with the Marketing program. In the last couple of years they have done a great job. One of the things that was an issue in the past, was changing the marketing every year. Sales to date are: N.M. 21% CO 22%, TX 20%. Our website is very nice up over 24% that is one indicator. Found to be impressive, more and more people are reaching our website by typing in Cumbres Toltec 40%, what that means is that we are getting name recognition that is gigantic.

9. Friends of C&TSRR Report – Tim Tennant- Moonlight train was last night, had a good time. Point out that John and the Staff made it such a success. Ending the month of July, Session E, just concluded, had 44 attends, and 8 new people, always good to see. Thank you Dan for working with Session C. We had a great banquet. One item that we want to point out, is the historic trucks that we are working on in Antonito.

a. General info

10. New Business*

a. Approval for Kuntz Track West, Power line Easement, Commissioner Elbrock moved to approve, Commissioner Love moves to approve, Cowles seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

11. Adjourned at 10:00a.m.


Billy Elbrock, Chairman

Resolution to grant NORA a Utility Easement

I move to grant Northern Rio Arriba Electric Cooperative a twenty foot utility easement along the existing right of way previously granted in 2007 by the C&TS RR Commission from Manzanita Drive to the property known as the Koontz Tract West.