



POLICY

SUBJECT AREA: MINI CONVENTIONS

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Version 1.3

This document supersedes all previous policies and directives relating to the above subject area

B&O Railroad Historical Society

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CHANGE AND ACCEPTANCE LOG

DATE	AUTHOR	HIGHLIGHTS OF CHANGES
5/5/2016	Wade Rice	Version 1.0 – Initial draft.
9/30/2016	Wade Rice, Henry Freeman	Version 1.1 – Revisions
2/18/2017	D. Allen Young	Version 1.3 – Reformatted to standard policy template
2/25/2017	D. Allen Young	Version 1.4 – Modified Change Log page to Change and Acceptance Log, dropped separate Acceptance (signoff) page from Appendix

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Mini Convention (“Mini-Con”) is to provide a one-day forum at an established location where Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Historical Society (“Society”) members and non-members may congregate to see/hear presentations on various aspects of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (“B&O”) and other railroads that it partnered with during its years of existence. The Mini-Con can provide members who are unable to attend the Annual Convention with an opportunity to network with attendees. Presentations may be centered on history of the B&O and its partners as well as the latest topics of interest to individuals modeling the B&O and its partner railroads.

2.0 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND FREQUENCY

Society members willing to organize and coordinate Mini-Cons should attempt to locate two events per year in territories that the B&O served, with one event at a location east of the Ohio River and another event at a location west of the Ohio River. The date of a Mini-Con should be scheduled at a time when most attendees can be expected to attend, and at a time that will not place it too close to other Society events, such as the Annual Convention. Note: It is expected that future Eastern Mini-Cons will usually be held at the Society’s recently acquired headquarters building in Eldersburg, Maryland.

3.0 PHYSICAL LOCATION

Selection of a Mini-Con site needs to take into consideration several factors, with fiscal economy being a driving force in the selection, as well as the capability to accommodate the number of attendees expected. Factors include:

- **Facility.** A location to hold the Mini-Con should be considered with the intention of a presentation hall accommodating approximately fifty (50) persons. If the Mini-Con is being held in partnership with another historical society’s members in attendance, a presentation hall accommodating approximately seventy-five (75) persons should be considered. The overriding factor in selection of a facility will be the maximum number of persons a presentation hall is licensed to accommodate, as dictated by the local Fire Marshall.
- **Parking.** Parking for attendees’ vehicles should be considered with the primary assumption that each attendee will travel to the Mini-Con in his own vehicle. For example, if a maximum capacity of the Mini-Con presentation hall is 50 persons, lot parking or street parking approximate to the Mini-Con facility should accommodate 50 vehicles.
- **Facility Climate Control.** Determine if the facility has adequate and fully-functional all-season climate control equipment (heating for cooler weather, air conditioning for warmer weather).

4.0 SECURING THE FACILITY

Once a potential site for the Mini-Con has been found, contact the owner or administrator of the facility to address the following issues:

- **Facility Rental:** Determine what the one-day cost for rental of the facility will be, as well as any other ancillary costs associated with its rental. If cost(s) for rental of the facility and other benefits are found and determined to be reasonable, undertake negotiation for any offerings that are deemed to be reasonable.
- **Facility Food Offerings:** Determine if benefits may be offered by the facility along with the rental cost, such as coffee/donuts in the morning, and lunch. Costs for such benefits may be cost- and labor-effective compared to the Society having to cater food itself for the event.
- **Insurance:** The Society is covered with an Accident/Liability Insurance Policy to protect it in case of accidental injury or incident happening coverage during the duration of the Mini-Con. Determine what the amount of coverage the Society has against the coverage that the owner/administrator of the facility may require. If coverage is adequate, have the Society's insurance carrier provide the owner/administrator of the facility an official certificate of insurance.
- **Equipment:**
 - **Chairs/Tables:** Determine if the facility has an adequate number of chairs and tables to accommodate the number of attendees expected. This is important not only for presentations, but also for lunch, if provided on premises. Tables for display of Society Company Store and other vendor sales merchandise need to be provided. Available facility space may preclude the number of sales tables per vendor or the number of vendors that desire to sell their merchandise, but priority for space is to be given to accommodating the Society Company Store. If space permits, a table may be made available for Mini-Con participants to display models, photos, and memorabilia.
 - **Audio-Visual Equipment:** The facility may or may not be able to furnish the necessary audio-visual equipment for the Mini-Con, and it will be up to the Mini-Con organizers to make that determination. If the facility cannot provide the necessary equipment, the organizers shall make the necessary efforts to secure the equipment that will accommodate the needs of the presenters. Such equipment shall, but may not necessarily be limited to: computers, computer projectors, screens, microphones, and amplification systems. The last two items may or may not be needed, depending on the size of the presentation hall and the number of attendees expected. Use of member-owned audio-visual equipment is encouraged in cases where a facility is unable to furnish such equipment. Rental of such equipment at Society expense should only be considered as a last resort.
- **Event Conclusion.** Discussion with the facility owner/administrator should be made as to what is expected of the Society upon conclusion of the Mini-Con. Such items to be discussed and agreed upon should be, but not all inclusive, disposal of trash generated during the event, breakdown and stowing/storage of chairs and tables, any clean-up of food preparation facilities, and return of any audio visual equipment secured by the Society from the facility owner/administrator for the event.

5.0 CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As applicable, a written agreement or contract should be completed with the facility owner or administrator as to exactly what the facility will provide to the Society for the Mini-Con, based on discussions and verbal agreements conducted during the negotiation phase, on items outlined in Section 4. The Society Vice President for Operations, or other Society official as designated by the Society President, should have signatory authority to obligate the Society in fulfillment of its obligations established in any contract or agreement entered into, as well as to secure the services of the Society Treasurer in providing advance and/or final payment for all costs associated with rental of the facility and any associated benefits offered.

6.0 AGENDA PLANNING

When near or full completion of arrangements for the Mini-Con location and necessary assessorial services/equipment have been made, programming for the agenda or content of the Mini-Con can commence. In some cases, planning for the program may occur before the final site is selected.

- In most cases, location of the Mini-Con and timeliness of topics may likely govern much of what ends up on the agenda. It is recommended that the Mini-Con coordinator have a good overall knowledge of what is, or has recently come up as likely topics to include on the agenda, and where possible, the individuals who may be presenters on likely topics.
- The ultimate intent is to develop an agenda or list of topics that will generate the most interest to Society members and guests to assure optimum attendance at the Mini-Con.
- It is advised that the Mini-Con coordinator contact not only such presenters, but also to contact the Society President, The Society VP for Operations, the Coordinator of Society Publications, and the Society Archivist for any input as to who may be possible candidates for presentation of topics at the Mini-Con, at a minimum.
- Subject areas for presentations may generally include history of the railroad in a given area, or modeling of the railroad.
- Time limits for presentations should not exceed one hour, except in special cases where a topic could be divided into two parts with a break. During the event, the Mini-con coordinator or designate should monitor the actual delivery times to ensure that all presenters will be able to start their presentations at their designated time slots as per the agenda.
- Where possible, the Mini-Con coordinator should provide an opportunity for the Society President to give a short update on the status of the Society.
- Adequate time should be included at midday for lunch, as well as for the Society Company Store and vendors to make merchandise sales, and for Mini-Con participants to display models, photographs, and memorabilia they may bring to the event.

7.0 PUBLICITY AND REGISTRATION

A flyer publicizing the Mini-Con must be prepared and a hard copy be in the hands of Society members no later than 90 days prior to the scheduled date of the Mini-Con, and posted to the “Events” page of the Society web site at the earliest date as soon as all agenda and necessary registration information is finalized. The content of the flyer needs to contain the following information:

- Date, time, and location of the Mini-Con, plus registration fee, and if applicable, price for lunch, though this may be included as part of the registration fee. A deadline date should be given for receipt of registrations, as well as an increased price for late and walk-in registrations.
- Tentative agenda, to include times, presentation subjects, and names of presenters.
- Complete directions to the Mini-Con location, with relevant map(s) included as necessary.
- Available lodging in the general area of the Mini-Con, with addresses and rate information, if available.
- Disclaimer stating that the Society cannot be held responsible for personal injury or loss of personal property en route to, during, or return travel to domicile after the Mini-Con.
- Mini-Con Attendee Registration Form for completion, to include name, address, phone number, e-mail address, number of participants, deadline date for registration, and statement to make check for registration payable to “B&O Railroad Historical Society”.
- Information giving name, mailing address, and phone number of Society Convention Coordinator or Mini-Con Coordinator for mailing of registration forms/checks.
- Upon completion/approval of the Mini-Con flyer, the approved flyer must be transmitted to the Society Publications Coordinator as soon as possible for inclusion in the next mailing of *The Sentinel* and to the Webmaster to be posted on the Society’s web site. Timely submittal of the flyer is important so as to meet the mailing deadline of *The Sentinel*. For example, if the next Western Mini-con will be held in May, the flyer should be ready for mailing with the second quarter (early April) issue at the latest—the first quarter (early January) is preferred. If the next Eastern Mini-con will be held in August, the flyer should be ready for mailing with the third quarter (early July) issue at the latest—the second quarter (early April) is preferred.