

Boston Street Railway Association, Inc.

Sixty-First Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2020

Summary

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 2020) on the day to day operations and long-term projects of the BSRA, the Association has successfully navigated many of the limitations imposed by this difficult situation. Despite setbacks in a number of areas, we have seen success in others, offsetting what could have had, overall, serious impacts on your Association.

On the negative side of the ledger, a few of our members have left us from Covid-19 related illness. They are a loss to our Association and to their families, to whom we express our sincere condolences.

Another consequence of the pandemic was an unavoidable cancellation of our late April Green Line fantrip, intended to commemorate the end of Lechmere Station. A number of our members did attend the station closing the last night, however, and we were able to use their pictures then and in the last days of Lechmere Station operation in a special edition of *RollSign*, which covered Lechmere from construction to closing.

Our long-term project to complete the restoration of Type 5 No. 5706 was placed on hold. Our contractor had to postpone the completion of his new shop facility, expected this summer, but which now will not happen until 2021. On the positive side, however, we were notified of a sizable bequest, \$30,000 of which we have already received, strong donations to the 5706 Fund, and a grant from the Mass. Bay RRE. This increased funding will advance the project considerably.

We had to suspend the printed version of *RollSign* until June. In its place, however, we were able to publish an electronic version and distribute it those who opted into a newly instituted email distribution program. The printed version has resumed production. We are sending the printed and electronic types to all members.

Since April, in-person meetings at the Midtown Hotel have not been possible. Using our new email list and the Zoom conferencing platform, we began holding monthly meetings on the Internet. Members attending these electronic meetings average twice the number of our meetings at the hotel.

Financially, FY 2020 ended with strong balances in both the General and 5706 Funds. Expenses were lower than normal due to reductions in mailing, rental, and catalogue printing costs. We saw some expense increases for Covid-19 related membership mailings, but overall, the results were positive. The Annual Report of the Treasurer on the last page is a detailed summary.

Despite these challenges, we are optimistic about 2021. Assuming that Covid-19 and its restrictions will be behind us, we expect a return to normal operations while keeping the positive outcomes that we have achieved in coping with this pandemic.

Report of the Publications Director

In FY2020, the BSRA Publications Department produced six full Publications Catalogs, as well as several additional print and digital flyers, all of which produced significant sales via mail order and our online store at www.thebsra.org. Now more than ever, we owe tremendous thanks to Publications Manager Ron Clough, who has braved heat, cold, and the Post Office to fill customers' orders and maintain our stock at our warehouse. We appreciate all orders we receive, as the proceeds from these sales help us reach our goals by providing revenue in difficult times.

In January, we again participated in the Amherst Railway Society's Annual Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, MA. The show raises funds through sales of our merchandise and books. It also promotes public awareness of the BSRA to the large audience that attends. We owe many thanks to those who assisted at the show and at our home base, including Mike Prescott, Nick Tomkavage,

Dana Frisbee, Paul Tomkavage, Bill Pollman, Danny Cohen, Brad Clarke, Charlie Bahne, and Ron Clough.

Work has continued on the next installment of our *Streetcar Lines of the Hub* series, but we have had to sideline it due to the challenges that Covid-19 posed to our other activities. We are resuming work, though, and look toward publication in 2021.

Speaking of Covid-19, your Publications Director also oversaw several projects in his role as the Association's Webmaster, which have enhanced and increased our digital presence in light of pandemic-related restrictions:

- We established an email communication program via MailChimp, using email addresses provided and verified by members for this purpose. We then began a regular "eBulletin," which updates members on recent events, provides upcoming meeting information, and often includes items of historical interest. Additionally, these emails allow us to provide BSRA Bookstore updates to our members on a rolling basis, as each email contains a small selection of new books and other items, which link directly to our online store. We thank everyone who has registered for our email list thus far, and encourage those who have not yet signed up to do so by visiting www.thebsra.org/emailsSignup.
- Next, we began digital distribution of *RollSign* magazine via the same email list, using Dropbox as the method of delivery. The Board and many members, in recent years, have expressed interest in providing a digital edition of *RollSign* as an alternative to the print edition. When our printer and mailing service temporarily shut down due to the pandemic, we decided to start distributing *RollSign* digitally via the Internet while we waited for print production to resume. Since then, we have continued to provide a digital copy to members in advance of the mailing of the print edition and will continue to evaluate this procedure in the coming months.
- Finally, we began holding virtual monthly meetings via the Zoom platform beginning with our July meeting. Once our email list was established, we used it to send out meeting information to members, with an easy one-click button to join the meetings. With three meetings behind us, we are getting the hang of the digital experience, and have received a strong and positive response thus far. A surprise bonus of holding digital meetings is that it allows our members who live outside New England, and even outside the country, to attend and enjoy our entertainment programs. While we look forward to the day when we can meet in person again, we are grateful to have the ability to connect virtually with our members and thank everyone who has attended our virtual meetings thus far. If you have not attended one, you can get the details by signing up for our email list at www.thebsra.org/emailsSignup, or by emailing us at info@thebsra.org

Report of the *ROLLSIGN* Director

In FY 2020, the BSRA published six issues of *RollSign*: July-August 2019, September-October 2019, November-December 2019, January-February 2020, March-April 2020, and May-June 2020.

The July-August 2019 *RollSign* featured the second part of an article prepared by Edward A. Anderson on the 1937 arrival of Boston's first PCC car, No. 3001, the "Queen Mary." This superb article included many historical photographs and was so substantial that it was divided between two issues. This *RollSign* edition also had an article covering the revenue service debut of the #14 Orange Line cars and a summary of MBTA news. It was sent to print on October 21, 2019.

September-October 2019 covered the delivery of the #4 Red Line pilot cars to the MBTA's Cabot facility in South Boston, the BSRA bus fantrip with MBTA GMC "Old Look" No. 2600 and RTS No. 0309 on September 29, 2019, and BSRA member Joe Lynch's victory in the annual MBTA Rail Rodeo. Included was a summary of current MBTA events and a *This Time in History* segment that featured open cars, center entrance cars, and Edward Dana. This issue of *RollSign* went to print on November 25, 2019.

The November-December 2019 lead article was *Fifty Years of the Silverbirds*, with vintage photos of the cars prior to their mid-life overhaul, and MBTA news on the #14 Orange Line and #4 Red Line cars. *This Time in History* segment highlighted historic Red Line equipment. This edition was sent to print February 13, 2020.

The January-February 2020 *RollSign* had the annual MBTA vehicle inventory, compiled by Jonathan Belcher. Jonathan works throughout the year to get accurate information for this edition and we are grateful for his efforts. The front and back cover featured a consisted of a full-bleed image captured by Brandon Barlow of #14 Orange Line and #4 Red Line cars flanking each other at the MBTA's Cabot facility in South Boston. This issue was released to the printer on June 9, 2020.

The March-April 2020 issue had an article on the MBTA's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with photographs showing MBTA employees wearing face coverings, empty trains, Covid-related signage, and barriers in vehicles. A *This Time in History* segment was included along with a list of BSRA members who passed away in 2019. This edition went to the printer on June 9, 2020.

The May-June 2020 issue featured an article by Bradley H. Clarke that examined Lechmere Station throughout its 98-year existence, with historical and contemporary photos. The article spanned the construction of the East Cambridge viaduct followed by that of the Lechmere transfer station, equipment operation from center-entrance and PCC cars through buses and trackless trolleys, and service changes through the years right up until the bitter end. The May-2020 issue of *RollSign* was sent to print on August 31, 2020.

The July-August 2020, in production, will include MBTA current events, including the Authority's continued response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as a *This Time in History* segment.

The Covid-19 pandemic delayed the printing of the January-February 2020 and March-April 2020 editions and showed the need to to electronically distribute *RollSign*. This idea had been suggested earlier by the *RollSign* Director and approved by the Board. An analysis of the digital distribution of *RollSign* made it clear that the Association needed an overall digital communications strategy. Much of the credit for implementing this program goes to our Publications Director, Mike Prescott, who led the effort.

The Association selected MailChimp to provide digital communication services. All members were notified via USPS explaining why *RollSign* was delayed and our intention to begin electronic distribution for those who wanted to receive it that way. Electronic distribution was optional and we would resume printing *RollSign* as soon as we could. After a significant amount of testing and correspondence, we sent an electronic version of the January-February 2020 edition on May 18, 2020. The March-April 2020 electronic edition was distributed on June 13, 2020. The January-February and March-April 2020 issues went to print on June 9, 2020 and were later mailed together.

Feedback, overall, was generally positive. Several members expressed a desire to continue receiving printed copies of *RollSign* because they don't have email access or that they enjoy collecting hard copies. Others asked to receive the digital version only.

RollSign would not be achievable without the hard work and contributions of many BSRA members and friends. Fitting all of this content into 112 pages each year is a challenge. Your *RollSign* Editor extends his thanks to all those who make *RollSign* possible.

Report of the Vice-President

During 2020, the Vice President monitored the mailbox on the BSRA website, answering requests directly or appropriately distributing them. He also wrote responses for memorial donations.

The Vice-President handles correspondence with our insurer, most recently with regard to purchasing internet liability insurance. He assists the other officers and directors by proofreading reports and drafts and by reviewing financial statements, including annual filings by the Treasurer for the Internal Revenue Service and the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office of Public Charities.

As Clerk of Corporation, the Vice-President prepared the report of the nominating committee for presentation to the membership. He also submitted Annual Corporate reports to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Most recently, the Vice-President has helped with test Zoom meetings for the July, August and September business meetings and in planning future meetings to meet pandemic concerns. Until March, he assisted in monthly meetings, and composed meeting press releases. After this date hotel meetings were not possible.

Report of the Secretary

Our mailing list now totals 707. Since October 1, 2019, we have added 36 new paid members and subscribers. We lost 51 members and subscribers from attrition, including 10 deceased and 41 who did not renew, for a net loss of 15. Our membership and ROLLSIGN circulation statistics, as of September 30 of each year, were as follows:

Mailing List Category	2020	2019
Regular	422	428
Intermediate	5	6
Associate	173	179
Subscriber	78	79
Honorary	5	5
Complimentary	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
Totals	707	722

The Secretary maintained the minutes of the monthly Business Meetings and the quarterly Directors' Meetings during the year. He also processed membership renewals and managed the annual election of officers and directors at the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Report of the Director of Car Restoration

Work on No. 5706 this year had to be curtailed. Our contractor's new shop, which we planned to move into this summer was not completed due to Corvid-related difficulties which affected construction and our contractor. While this has set back the project schedule, financially, the 5706 Fund has rebounded with the addition of a sizeable bequest, putting us in excellent condition for supporting the work when the project resumes.

A lookback at where we are now shows how far we have come. The car exterior bodywork is complete, including a new floor and roof. Most of the interior parts, seats, seat pedestals, window sash, doors, and interior metal trim, have been restored or purchased, and we have rebuilt six Westinghouse 508A motors, new air tanks, and have installed underbody equipment mounting brackets, among many other things.

Completion of the carbody is our next task. This will start with the interior. First will be installation of control power, heating and lighting wiring and fixtures, headlights, and the roof monitor lights. Major wiring will occupy a wire trough on one side of the floor. On

the other side is a trough for the air brake and door piping. Final interior work will include two exterior and interior topcoats in the window and door areas before the new window sash and doors, purchased a number of years ago, are set in place.

The last phases of the project will include rebuilding the trucks and installing our rebuilt motors. Installation of underbody piping and wiring, brake rigging and brake cylinder, and our new air tanks, all of which we have on hand, will follow. The remainder of the carbody will then receive at least two paint topcoats. Finally, the car will undergo operational testing.

We have raised \$409,677 as of September 30, 2020, for the 5706 restoration. Your contributions will speed this work on its way to the day when the car will run on its own, a major achievement and a matter of considerable pride for the BSRA and its members and friends. Thank you all very much for your past and continued donations. We also appreciate the outside support that we have received over time, including grants from Amherst Railway Society, the Boston Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, the Mass Bay RRE, and the Mystic Valley Railway Society, and the National Historical Railway Society.

Report of the Entertainment Chair

Our Entertainment Chair, Lucius Chiaraviglio, continued in this position in 2020. His principal effort was arranging shows from presenters and organizing the Entertainment Calendar.

Dana Frisbee, our Entertainment AV Manager, earns a round of applause for thorough work before and after our entertainment presentations until March 2020. At this time, the pandemic rendered the room off-limits for further meetings.

The BSRA extends its sincere thanks to all who presented at our 2019 - 2020 meetings, as well as those in years past.

October 5, 2019. *The Last Days of the Main Line Elevated.* Donald Nevin showed his photos taken in the mid-1980s and those of BSRA members Stanley Genthner, Tom Engels and others, of the old southern Orange Line, the Orange Line through Charlestown before its end in 1975, the new Orange Line, and some related Green Line shots.

November 2, 2019. *Midwestern Transit Through Time.* Clark Frazier showed photos of St. Louis Public Service streetcars in 1958 and 1959, MetroLink in the 1990s; the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee; the Chicago South Shore & South Bend; and Chicago Transit Authority.

December 7, 2019. *Classic Streetcars and Interurbans of the World.* Clark Frazier returned to present classic streetcars from around the world still in service in the 1980s, in a tour of systems from Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Isle of Man, Japan, China, and Mexico.

January 4, 2020. *Montréal, Québec City, and their Interurbans.* Leo Sullivan showed traction in Québec province. Montréal's large city

system lasted until 1959. Extending 50 miles to the south was the Montréal & Southern Counties Railway. The Québec city system ended before Leo was there, but the interurban division lasted until 1959.

February 1, 2020. *The RollSign Archives.* Nick Tomkavage presented scenes that were never published or published long ago from the *RollSign* archives, which have more than a century of unique Boston images from contributors through the years.

March 7, 2020. *George Chiasson's Pennsylvania and Midwestern Travels.* Taken in June 2019, George's show included Pittsburgh Light Rail; Ohio Railway Museum near Columbus; Delmar Loop Trolley and MetroLink in St. Louis; Cincinnati Bell Connector Streetcar; Railways to Yesterday trolley museum in Orbisonia, PA, and more!

April 4, May 2, and June 6, 2020. *These meetings were canceled due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.*

July 11, 2020. *The Road to the Green Line.* Bradley Clarke gave a presentation on Boston's streetcar system evolution into today's Green Line. This was our first Zoom meeting.

August 3, 2020. *Transit in Rhode Island.* Donald Nevin showed views of trolley operation in Rhode Island, from the collection of Leo Sullivan. Scenes of horse and cable-powered cars in downtown Providence continued with early electric trolleys and their car barns, suburban and interurban operations, as well as local operations in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Westerly, and Newport. Photos were taken in the 1930s and 1940s by railfans of passenger cars and work equipment. Early trackless trolley and bus operation scenes were also shown. Streetcars and trackless trolleys last ran in Providence on May 14, 1948, and June 24, 1955, respectively. This was our second meeting using Zoom.

September 12, 2020. *New Mass Transit for Honolulu.* In our third Zoom meeting, Allan Jayne presented steam railroad, horse/mule car, and electric streetcar service in Honolulu, Hawaii. Next was a 20-mile elevated rail rapid transit line under construction in Honolulu. This line will serve areas including Aloha Stadium, Pearl Harbor, the airport, downtown Honolulu and residential areas. Service on the outer half of the line should begin in late 2020 with full service to downtown is expected in 2025.

Final Remarks

Your Association implemented significant pandemic-related changes in FY 2020, improving our outreach to members through Internet-based meetings and the use of electronic media for notifications and *RollSign* distribution.

In 2021, we will refocus on our Type 5 streetcar, No. 5706, *RollSign* enhancements, continue work of our next volume of *Streetcar Lines of the Hub*, and hold in-person meetings when possible. We also look forward to the opening of the MBTA GLX – Green Line Extension to Somerville and Medford. We will keep you closely informed on this work as events unfold.

Your support of our programs makes all we do possible, now and as we enter 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

**The Directors and Officers of the
BOSTON STREET RAILWAY ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Bradley H. Clarke, President and Chairman

Thaddeus S. Anderson, Secretary

Thomas Athearn, Vice-President and Clerk of Corporation

Charles Bahne, Jr., Treasurer and Director

Jonathan Belcher, Director at Large

Lucius Chiaraviglio, Entertainment Chair

Daniel George Chaisson, Assistant Treasurer

Ronald Clough, Publications Manager

Daniel R. Cohen, Director at Large

Dana Frisbee, AV Manager

James E. Gately, Librarian

David F. Harling, Director of Car Restoration

Michael R. Prescott, Publications Director

Nicholas M. Tomkavage, RollSign Editor and Director

**Boston Street Railway Association
Annual Treasurer's Report**

**Fiscal Year 2020
(after adjustments)**

General Fund			
Cash on Hand:	General Fund	October 1, 2019	\$11,733.62
INCOME FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			
Donations and Grants, General Fund		\$16,050.76	
Dues, Regular		\$10,575.00	
Dues, Intermediate		\$80.00	
Dues, Associate		\$3,500.00	
Roll Sign, Subscriptions		\$1,216.00	
Postage Surcharges from Members		\$174.00	
Roll Sign, Retail		\$538.00	
Roll Sign, Wholesale		\$297.00	
BSRA Publications, Retail		\$1,467.80	
BSRA Publications, Wholesale		\$856.62	
Publications, Resale		\$17,572.50	
Publications, Sales Tax Collected		\$501.68	
Publications, Shipping & Handling		\$2,306.72	
Fantrip Income			
Other General Fund Income		\$2,534.81	
TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME FOR FY 2020:			\$57,670.89
EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			
Management & General Expenses		\$6,000.53	
Roll Sign Printing		\$10,758.90	
Roll Sign Postage & Mailing Service		\$3,124.11	
Other Roll Sign Expenses		\$1,473.84	
BSRA Publications Printing & Production			
Other BSRA Publications Expenses			
Purchase of Inventory for Resale		\$12,957.46	
Publications Marketing & Show Expense		\$4,332.06	
Publications, Sales Tax Paid		\$555.21	
Publications Shipping Expense		\$2,424.25	
Other Publications Sales Expenses		\$7,814.70	
Monthly Meeting Expense		\$258.06	
Library Expense		\$1,700.00	
Fantrip Expense		\$44.17	
Fundraising Expense		\$952.33	
Refunds Paid & Returned Checks			
Other General Fund Expense		\$50.00	
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSE FOR FY 2020:			\$52,445.62
GENERAL FUND SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			\$5,225.27
Cash on Hand:	General Fund	September 30, 2020	\$16,958.89
5706 Fund			
Cash on Hand:	5706 Fund	October 1, 2019	\$14,226.75
INCOME FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			
Donations and Grants, 5706 Fund		\$52,471.22	
Interest, 5706 Fund		\$16.18	
Other 5706 Fund Income			
TOTAL 5706 FUND INCOME FOR FY 2020:			\$52,487.40
EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			
Car 5706 Restoration Expense			
Car 5706 Maintenance & Housing		\$5,400.00	
Car 5706 Project Management		\$133.70	
Car 5706 Fundraising Expense		\$1,923.56	
Other 5706 Fund Expense			
TOTAL 5706 FUND EXPENSE FOR FY 2020:			\$7,457.26
5706 FUND SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020:			\$45,030.14
Cash on Hand:	5706 Fund	September 30, 2020	\$59,256.89
COMBINED CASH ON HAND:	September 30, 2020		\$76,215.78
PROOF OF BALANCE:			
Cash		\$0.00	
Checking		\$4,046.27	
Money Market		\$70,595.14	
Savings		\$1,012.56	
PayPal		\$561.81	
Square		\$0.00	
GRAND TOTAL CASH ON HAND		\$76,215.78	VARIANCE: \$0.00
5706 FUND GRAND TOTAL RAISED TO DATE:		\$409,677.33	