

Branford Electric Railway Association



General Information

Contact Information

Nonprofit	Branford Electric Railway Association
Address	17 River St East Haven, CT 06512 2519
Phone	(203) 467-6927
Web Site	Web Site
Facebook	Facebook
Email	info@shorelinetrolley.org

At A Glance

Year of Incorporation	1945
Former Names	Branford Trolley Museum Branford Electric Railway Association
Organization's type of tax exempt status	Public Supported Charity
Organization received a competitive grant from the community foundation in the past five years	Yes

Mission & Areas Served

Statements

Mission

The mission of the Branford Electric Railway Association doing business as the Shore Line Trolley Museum is to share with a diverse audience the story of the trolley and related forms of public transportation in their historical context.

A Great Opportunity

Description

Because of the low elevation of most of the Museum property, our trolley cars are at constant risk of severe water damage from the frequent Nor'easters, hurricanes, and other major storms. To prevent catastrophic damage to the invaluable Shore Line Trolley Museum collection, the Museum is constructing two buildings and an associated trolley yard above the salt marsh floodplain. This project also includes installing track, electricity and plumbing. Both buildings will be linked to the existing railway line and facilities by way of new track and traction wire construction.

The campaign is named "Elevating the Collection" because not only have we built two trolley storage buildings at a higher elevation, but also to elevate the living heritage that this collection embodies. Our goal is to raise \$2,500,000 by December 31, 2018 to ensure the long-term preservation of our cars.

A Great Opportunity Ending Date

Dec 31 2018

Background

Museum History

The Shore Line Trolley Museum, its collection of street railway vehicles, and the existing mile and a half long segment of the Branford Electric Railway are all listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Branford Electric Railway Historic District. The district was nominated to the Register in 1983.

The Shore Line Trolley Museum has been an important part of the community since its incorporation in 1945 as the Branford Electric Railway Association. It was founded to preserve the unique heritage of an endangered species — the trolley car — and today boasts a collection of nearly 100 vintage vehicles as well as artifacts and documents from the trolley era.

The Museum continues to operate predominantly through the dedication and support of its over 1,000 member/volunteers. A visit to the Museum is a multi-sensory voyage into the past, from the moanful growl of the motors, to the smell of the electric arc, to the feel of rattan seats and varnished hardwood detailing. The Shore Line Trolley Museum operates the Branford Electric Railway, which together with the collection of cars is a nationally-recognized Historic District. The railway is the oldest continuously operating suburban trolley line in the United States.

The Museum is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.

Impact

- Visitor experience - improving quality/increasing quantity. In 2016, the museum saw 21,382 visitors a year over year increase of 9% since 2014. The museum strives to implement and improve educational events such as school charters, home-school programs, reading programs, scout merit badge programs, photography education programs and astronomy programs. Our general daily operation provides an educational and entertainment venue as our visitors learn the history of urban and suburban mass-transit. Private functions are held year round and bookings increase significantly during the holiday season. We are focusing outreach to local community organizations, schools, libraries, tour companies and collaboration with other nonprofits for in-kind exchanges.
- Donation increase/outreach. The museum holds directed donation campaigns in May and December. Focus is being made on corporate matching gifts and bequests. The museum has approximately 1,000 members with varying levels of membership. While this is an important source of funding, the museum needs to cultivate new financial support within the membership and corporate sponsorship.
- Capital Campaign - Trolley Yard Potable Water. The museum has begun the discovery phase and hopes to be ready to launch a capital campaign in 2018. The museum owns 4.7 acres of undeveloped land in Branford. This parcel has been earmarked as a critical path to bring fire protection, domestic water and sewer into our trolley yard. Future plans may also include new structures to add additional storage for our collection.
- Storm rebuilding. In 2012 & 2013 the museum and its collection sustained significant damage from historical storms. Damage was estimated by the SBA to be approximately \$4.5M. Nearly the entire collection of 95 antique electric traction cars has motors and electrical components flooded with salt water. Building mechanical systems were destroyed. Most of our rail line sustained some form of damage. FEMA funding is still in place and the museum continues its major efforts to match funding through grant application and private donation solicitation.
- Physical Plant revitalization. In 2017, the museum hopes to work with the UCONN's Master Gardener's Program to assist in the removal of overgrown debris, replacing these with native plantings and beginning an overall beautification project for the campus. In addition, many of the structures housing our trolley collection are nearing 70 years old. Our campus either borders or encroaches on salt marsh, creating an elevated degree of maintenance. We are reaching out to local vendors with the hopes of gaining some support through financial, materials or labor contributions.

Needs

Shore Line Trolley Museum has identified a number of important long-term goals. These include:

Recognition of excellence in the industry and a valued institution to the local area. To accomplish this, we need to be both inviting and accessible to visitors, continually increase our membership, remaining a family-oriented educational venue, increasing our reach as a research resource and providing Connecticut residents with an enhanced sense of place and history.

To help reach these long term goals, the Shore Line Trolley Museum has established the following:

Document Policies and Procedures of the museum, and codifying the museums existing and new policies

The creation of the Community Council in 2013 which serves as the connection of the museum to the community.

Removing unsightly material from the property to further enhance the visitors experience at the museum.

Creating opportunities for the museum's 1000 plus membership to become more engaged in the museum.

Increasing bi-annual appeal donations by 10% in each of the next three years.

Maintaining our agreement with Gateway Community College

Seeking grant opportunities to: digitize photos, complete car restorations, repair historic track and maintaining the current campus

Continuing to promote the planned giving legacy society.

CEO Statement

In 1945, a small group of individuals founded the Branford Electric Railway Association. Two years later, 7000 feet of private right-of-way was turned over to these founders from the Connecticut Company as the "F Line Trolley" became the "F Line Bus." I don't think any one of these individuals could have imagined that their vision would have spanned 70 years. They certainly couldn't have imagined that, at that moment in time, they had created what is now one of only a handful of museums of its kind in the United States.

What I find even more impressive is that the museum has continued growing despite several recessions, natural disasters and other obstacles. Aside from disaster recovery, we don't receive federal funding. Our existence has relied on volunteer labor, donations and membership since 1945.

The history of trolleys in Connecticut is indeed rich. All major cities and many suburbs had trolley lines that eventually inter-connected with New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Hartford was the last city in our state to end trolley service before our country entered into World War II. With rubber, gas and oil in short supply, the demise of the trolley systems came to a halt. New Haven, the last city in CT to end trolley service in 1948, had a 70+ year history of street railway that began with horse-drawn cars and evolved into the iconic open-air electric cars, over 200 passenger service cars and over 250 miles of track and boasted "one of the most complex trolley systems in the country."

Our museum is at a critical point in time where first hand memories are turning into history. With a resurgence of interest in street rail coupled with the "romance" of the trolley era in CT our mission is evolving into not just a history lesson, but a lesson on how mass-transit can sustain our cities and suburbs in the future.

Board Chair Statement

Our organization has achieved many successes. One of the biggest is that fact that it still exists!!

The Branford Electric Railroad Association, BERA, was formed in 1945, and took over the "F" line of the Connecticut Company fleet on March 9, 1947. So, for 70 years now we have been running trolleys as a museum and we are still here. That is a huge success story!!!

That story was made possible by other successes which span the many years of our existence. In recent years, our Elevate the Collection Program has been a tremendous success. This program, many years in the planning and spurred on by hurricanes Irene and Sandy, resulted in the construction of 2 entirely new buildings to house much of our collection above the flood plain.

Another different kind of success is our successful partnering with Gateway Community College. College students take part in a 70 hour rail related internship. We believe this is the only such program in the country.

From a governance perspective we achieved a great success in completing the revision of our by-laws. This was a multi year effort that brought our by-laws in compliance with current nonprofit state regulations.

Our list of successes are many, but we are not without our challenges.

Our fleet of approximately 100 vehicles was ravaged during hurricanes Irene and Sandy when over 50 cars were flooded. Thankfully, we have been able to secure FEMA funding to repair our flooded motors but this funding only covers 75% of the repair costs. The remaining 25% must come from our own resources.

Many of our facilities are over 50 years old and require upgrade to last for the next 50 years.

To face these challenges, we have a active and successful fund raising program. Our Development Committee is constantly pursuing new campaign opportunities.

Keeping alive the History of Street Rail transportation as the generation of those who actually rode these vehicles passes on is a large challenge. Making the visitor experience meaningful is a ongoing strategy of our board. The addition to our collection of Car 745 from the PATH system and the retelling of its survival on 9/11 is but one way we have made our visitor experience relevant to new generations.

The average age of our membership continues to increase. Our future survival demands that we attract younger members to our ranks. This and other challenges were the topics of discussion at our recent annual retreat. The Retreat is an opportunity for our Board members and Officers to spend the day reviewing our strategic plan and our progress in achieving our long and short term objectives as well as identifying new opportunities for growth.

Our Board itself continues to transition from a managing board to a governing board. Focusing less on day to day and more on strategic actions for the future.

We have recently added a full time Executive Director to our organizat...

Service Categories

Primary Organization Category

Arts,Culture & Humanities / History Museums

Secondary Organization Category

Education / Libraries

Areas Served

Bethany

Branford

East Haven

Guilford
Hamden
Madison
Milford
New Haven
North Branford
North Haven
Orange
Oxford
Seymour
Shelton
Shoreline
State wide
Wallingford
West Haven
Woodbridge
National
Ansonia
Cheshire
Derby
Lower Naugatuck Valley
Other

Programs

Programs

Trolley Reading Program & Home-School Program

Description	This program provides an opportunity for children 4 to 8 years of age to listen to a story in a real trolley car. The day begins with a trolley ride and is followed by a visit to our “Story Trolley” to listen to each week’s children’s story, read by one of our volunteer educators, followed by time to explore the other trolley cars on display. In addition to the reading program, each child will receive a snack.
Budget	\$3,000.00
Category	Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other / Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other
Population Served	Children Only (5 - 14 years) / Children and Youth (0 - 19 years) /
Program is linked to organization’s mission and strategy	Yes
Short Term Success	We have increased our attendance in this program by 5% each year since the program began in 2014.
Long Term Success	This program is an additional venue for childhood summer educational activities. We believe that these programs will become a critical part of our local community as parents and educators look to outside venues for affordable summer education. There is a strong focus on expanding these programs each year to include week-long summer programs and creating additional educational activities during winter and spring recess.

School Charters

Description	This program provides a year round venue for children of all ages. School charters provide educational visits and special event visits.
Budget	\$5,000.00
Category	Education, General/Other / Educational Programs
Population Served	Children and Youth (0 - 19 years) / People/Families with People of Developmental Disabilities / Families
Program is linked to organization's mission and strategy	Yes
Short Term Success	Educators are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable field trip venues. Our special event school charters in December are booked every day from Thanksgiving break to Christmas break with up to four classes per day. In 2016, we extended our weekday special event charters to include Pumpkin Patch in October. While our special event charters are rising, our educational charters are falling due to the increased cost of transportation to and from school. We will continue to work with schools and libraries to find solutions for this problem. We are also working on programs that would entice older children to visit.
Long Term Success	The museum offers these school-related charters at a nominal rate for children and at no charge for adult chaperones and educators. Our signature special event programs have increased from weekend-only to weekday events for the sole purpose of catering to these customers. Our long range goal is to continue to develop educational programs for older children and young adults.

Special Events

Description	<p>Special events make up the majority of the museum's revenue. Family events include the Easter Bunny, Super Hero's Day, Fire Truck and First Responder Day, Pumpkin Patch, Haunted Isle and Santa's Winter Wonderland.</p> <p>Educational special events include Astronomy Night and Photographer Night as well as private charters.</p> <p>The museum holds one adult special event, Ladies Night.</p> <p>Co-sponsored free events include a Bird Watch and a Scout Rail Merit Badge.</p> <p>Beginning in 2017, the museum is hosting up to four in-kind events for nonprofit organizations.</p>
Budget	\$30,000.00
Category	Education, General/Other / Extracurricular Activities
Population Served	Children and Youth (0 - 19 years) / Families / People/Families with People of Developmental Disabilities
Program is linked to organization's mission and strategy	Yes
Long Term Success	The bulk of the museum's annual revenue comes from special events. With this in mind, we are striving to provide some give-back to the communities we serve. Through this outreach, special in-kind sponsorships are achieved in like-kind services and advertising.

Archive and Library Exhibits

Description	<p>Our archival collection consists of over 65,000 historical photographs and hundreds of rail journals, maps and blueprints of electric railways. Along with this, the museum houses hundreds of physical artifacts above and beyond our 'rolling stock' of electric rail cars. Many of these artifacts are one-of-a-kind dating back up to 150 years. The museum's position on these items is one of visibility and sharing through exhibits, local museum exchange borrowing and private research.</p>
Budget	\$10,000.00
Category	Education, General/Other / Library
Population Served	US / Adults / Children and Youth (0 - 19 years)
Program is linked to organization's mission and strategy	Yes
Long Term Success	Although the museum has had an exhibit hall since the 1960's, an emphasis is being made to share artifacts as there is much more than the museum can display. While this is important, the museum is also looking to ensure the preservation of these artifacts through climate control, limited ultra-violet exposure and proper display.

Daily Operations

Description

The museum is open weekends in May until Father's Day and again in September. The museum is open daily from Father's Day until Labor Day. We maintain nominal ticket prices of \$10/adult, \$9/senior and \$6 for children. Children under 2 years of age, active service members and veterans ride at no charge. We work in conjunction with AAA, Big Y and several other rail museums providing \$1 off each admission ticket for their members. Tickets are good all day and include as many rides as the visitor chooses.

The typical 'tour' includes a ride in a fully restored antique trolley car along 1.5 miles of the original right of way opened in 1900 followed by a tour of our trolley barns where visitors can view and 'photo op' displayed trolley cars. Our exhibit hall contains some interactive exhibits and is open from 10:30AM-4:30PM.

A small gift shop is also open during daily operations.

Budget

\$20,000.00

Category

Education, General/Other / Educational Programs

Population Served

Children and Youth (0 - 19 years) / Adults / Families

Program is linked to organization's mission and strategy

Yes

Leadership & Staff

CEO/Executive Director

John Proto

Term Start

Feb 2017

Email

director@shorelinetrolley.org

Experience

The Executive Director has a 20 background in nonprofit management and budgeting in health care, 10 years fundraising and development and 30 years information technology background.

Staff

Number of Full Time Staff	1
Number of Part Time Staff	4
Number of Volunteers	150
Number of Contract Staff	0
Staff Retention Rate	60%

Staff Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0
Caucasian	5
Hispanic/Latino	0
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0 0

Staff Demographics - Gender

Male	4
Female	1
Unspecified	0

Plans & Policies

Organization has a Fundraising Plan?	Yes
Organization has a Strategic Plan?	Yes
Years Strategic Plan Considers	5
Date Strategic Plan Adopted	Jan 2016
Management Succession Plan?	Under Development
Organization Policy and Procedures	Under Development

Nondiscrimination Policy	Under Development
Whistleblower Policy	Yes
Document Destruction Policy	Yes

Formal Evaluations

CEO Formal Evaluation	Yes
CEO/Executive Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
Senior Management Formal Evaluation	Yes
Senior Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Quarterly
Non Management Formal Evaluation	Yes
Non Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually

Board & Governance

Board Chair

Peter Callahan

Company Affiliation

Volunteer

Term

Jan 2017 to Dec 2017

Board of Directors

Name	Affiliation
Rodger Addil	Volunteer
John Aurelius	Volunteer
Charles Dennis	Volunteer
James Poulos	Volunteer
Wayne Sandford	Volunteer
Judy Sittnick	Volunteer
Roberto Tillman	Volunteer
William Wall	Volunteer
Alan Zelazo	Volunteer

Board Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0
Caucasian	9
Hispanic/Latino	1
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0 0

Board Demographics - Gender

Male	9
Female	1
Unspecified	0

Governance

Board Term Lengths	3
Board Term Limits	2
Board Meeting Attendance %	95%
Number of Full Board Meetings Annually	8

Written Board Selection Criteria	No
Written Conflict of Interest Policy	Under Development
Percentage Making Monetary Contributions	100%
Percentage Making In-Kind Contributions	100%

Board Co-Chair

Alan Zelazo

Company Affiliation

Volunteer

Term

Jan 2017 to Dec 2017

Email

subwayal@aol.com

Financials

Financials

Fiscal Year Start

Jan 01 2017

Fiscal Year End

Dec 31 2017

Projected Revenue

\$127,388.00

Projected Expenses

\$120,562.00

Endowment Value

\$25,000.00

Spending Policy

Income Only

Percentage (if selected)

0%

Detailed Financials

Prior Three Years Total Revenue and Expense Totals Chart

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Total Revenue	\$719,049	\$608,014	\$982,753
Total Expenses	\$816,951	\$634,623	\$976,763

Prior Three Years Revenue Sources Chart

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Foundation and Corporation Contributions	\$261,779	\$220,920	\$672,787
Government Contributions	\$137,114	\$50,045	\$37,967
Federal	--	--	--
State	--	--	--
Local	--	--	--
Unspecified	\$137,114	\$50,045	\$37,967
Individual Contributions	--	--	--
Indirect Public Support	--	--	--
Earned Revenue	\$195,516	\$222,265	\$219,617
Investment Income, Net of Losses	\$1,092	\$1,093	(\$6,089)
Membership Dues	--	--	--
Special Events	\$102,726	--	\$65,185
Revenue In-Kind	--	--	--
Other	\$20,822	\$113,691	(\$6,714)

Prior Three Years Expense Allocations Chart

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Program Expense	\$708,682	\$540,843	\$860,862
Administration Expense	\$96,269	\$82,780	\$99,901
Fundraising Expense	\$12,000	\$11,000	\$16,000
Payments to Affiliates	--	--	--
Total Revenue/Total Expenses	0.88	0.96	1.01
Program Expense/Total Expenses	87%	85%	88%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue	2%	4%	2%

Prior Three Years Assets and Liabilities Chart

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Total Assets	\$2,395,336	\$2,411,331	\$2,411,609
Current Assets	\$356,840	\$329,970	\$460,282
Long-Term Liabilities	\$120,952	\$124,345	\$129,655
Current Liabilities	\$164,696	\$79,369	\$47,755
Total Net Assets	\$2,109,688	\$2,207,590	\$2,234,199

Prior Three Years Top Three Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven \$19,500	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	Mystic Valley Railway Society \$5,000	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--

Solvency

Short Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Current Ratio: Current Assets/Current Liabilities	2.17	4.16	9.64

Long Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Long-Term Liabilities/Total Assets	5%	5%	5%

Capital Campaign

Currently in a Capital Campaign?

Yes

Capital Campaign Purpose

The current capital campaign, winding down in 2018, is to complete the flood mitigation project "Elevating the Collection" with two trolley barns located above the 100 year flood mark

Goal

\$2,100,000.00

Dates

Jan 2013 to Jan 2018

Amount Raised To Date

1500000 as of Feb 2017

Capital Campaign Anticipated in Next 5 Years?

Yes

Comments

Foundation Staff Comments

This profile, including the financial summaries prepared and submitted by the organization based on its own independent and/or internal audit processes and regulatory submissions, has been read by the Foundation. Financial information is inputted by Foundation staff directly from the organization's IRS Form 990, audited financial statements or other financial documents approved by the nonprofit's board. The Foundation has not audited the organization's financial statements or tax filings, and makes no representations or warranties thereon. The Community Foundation is continuing to receive information submitted by the organization and may periodically update the organization's profile to reflect the most current financial and other information available. The organization has completed the fields required by The Community Foundation and updated their profile in the last year. To see if the organization has received a competitive grant from The Community Foundation in the last five years, please go to the General Information Tab of the profile.



The Community Foundation
for Greater New Haven

70 Audubon Street, New Haven CT 06510
203-777-2386

POWERED BY



GUIDESTAR