

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:)
SEPTA Fire) Accident No.: RRD25FR006
)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tuesday,
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Interview of: WAYNE GEYER, Director of Maintenance for
Roberts shop and the outlying points for
SEPTA

APPEARANCES:

TODD KRAHOLIK, NTSB Assistant IIC

BRETT JOHNSON, NTSB, Motive Power Group Chair

RICHARD SHERRY, Federal Railroad Administration

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1 MR. GEYER: My name's Wayne Geyer. I'm a Director
2 of Maintenance for Roberts shop and the outlying
3 points for SEPTA. My last name's spelled
4 G-E-Y-E-R.

5 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry. Last name spelling,
6 S-H-E-R-R-Y. FRA IIC on this investigation.

7 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right, Wayne, do we have
8 permission to record our discussion with you today?

9 MR. GEYER: Yes.

10 MR. KRAHOLIK: Do you understand the
11 transcription will be part of a public docket, and as
12 such, we can't guarantee any confidentiality?

13 MR. GEYER: I understand that.

14 MR. KRAHOLIK: And you don't have a
15 representative with you today, is that correct?

16 MR. GEYER: That is correct.

17 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Just please speak
18 clearly so we can get a good recording.

19 INTERVIEW OF WAYNE GEYER

20 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

21 Q Wayne, can you give us a synopsis of your work
22 experience? Take us up to your present job and how
23 long you've been in your present role.

24 A I started with the company in 1994 as an intern,
25 and I've moved up through the company through the

Heritage [REDACTED] poration

1 ranks of Electrician and Front-Line Manager and
2 Assistant Director and now my current role as a
3 Director, which I've been a Director since the
4 beginning of '21, so January of '21, and then I've been
5 at the current location on that since May of this
6 year, May of '25.

7 Q Where were you a Director before? Was it a
8 different -- just a different shop?

9 A Yes, still with the same railroad mechanical
10 group, but before I came here, I was the Director at
11 Wayne Car Shop for about a year.

12 Q I got you.

13 A And then, before that, about three years at
14 Overbrook Shop as the Director.

15 Q Okay. And what exactly does a Director do?
16 Like, what are your job responsibilities?

17 A Responsibilities are to manage the shop, to
18 review the manpower, parts needed, make sure we're
19 staying on budget, basically to supervise the Front-
20 Line Supervisors, to give them assistance with
21 whatever they need and make sure proper protocols are
22 followed.

23 Q So below you would be a Front-Line Supervisor,
24 and then below that would be the actual people making
25 the repairs, the union folk? Is that how the

1 structure is?

2 A Not exactly. So below me there's an Assistant
3 Director and then Front-Line Manager below him and
4 then the union.

5 Q I got you. I got you. Let's go back to the
6 first fire we had at Ridley Park. Did you, did the
7 shop folk, mechanical folks, did you guys put anything
8 in place that was different than what you had been
9 doing previously as far as anything like the way you
10 were inspecting equipment or anything like that? Was
11 there any changes after the first fire that you
12 remember?

13 A Yeah, there were some changes made to how they
14 were inspecting the cars as they came through the
15 mileage inspection.

16 Q And what kind of changes were they?

17 A They started focusing on some of the wiring
18 because this one pointed to it was a possible wiring
19 issue, so we started focusing some of our efforts on
20 making sure the wiring was good, they were cleaning
21 debris from some of the wire troughs underneath.

22 Q And then I know we had five of them, so it might
23 be difficult, but after the second one, did you change
24 anything after the second one?

25 A Could you clarify which one was the second one?

1 Q No. Let's just say in general, the practices you
2 have changed since all of them, let's just go down
3 that road. Like, what have you changed since the
4 first one to now? What are we -- what all are we
5 doing different?

6 A So, from the first one 'til now, a big difference
7 was instead of checking the insulation on the wiring
8 to just ground, they figured out ways to check the
9 insulation wire to wire leading to the traction
10 motors. So that is now done on a periodic inspection.

11 Q Are you guys changing any -- are you converting
12 stuff from fiberglass to stainless? Are you doing
13 anything like that? Any --

14 A Yes, yes. Because of one of the events, they're
15 changing the fiberglass duct on the roof to a
16 stainless duct. I can add more stuff that we're doing
17 too. So Engineering Group is working on a thermal
18 sensor, and the thermal sensor is going to be placed
19 in the smoothing reactor, the two outputs of the
20 double-ended blower, the cam group, the cam controller
21 group, and I'm also told the main group. And it's a
22 sensor that when tripped at about 250 degrees I'm
23 being told, engineers are still working on it, so I
24 don't know the exact details. But, when it trips,
25 it'll lower the pan immediately and the sensor will

1 not be resettable.

2 Q Okay. So the -- when you mean reset, the
3 engineer of the train can't reset at that point?

4 A No. Nobody can. It'll have to be replaced by
5 our electricians.

6 Q Okay.

7 A So it's a non-resettable thermal. Once it's
8 tripped, it's throw-away.

9 Q Oh, so the sensor is -- the sensor gets --

10 A Yes, the sensor. Once the sensor fails --

11 Q And then you can't get --

12 A -- that sensor gets replaced.

13 Q Right.

14 A So we have to look at the equipment, find out
15 why, and before we replace the thermal, we've got to
16 fix the problem. So it's to ensure that nobody can
17 just go reset it and let the equipment go back out.

18 Q And so one thing that we have noticed is that the
19 train crews for the past forever have been resetting
20 lights daily as they're going down the track. They're
21 doing self-diagnostics let's just say. Did you guys
22 know that was happening as far as the Mechanical
23 Group? Did you guys understand -- and that can be --
24 I know you have, like, a Engineering Group. Just the
25 whole broad -- did you guys understand what was going

1 on?

2 A No, I didn't realize that it was happening like
3 it was. I knew they had the capability of doing
4 resets with their control plug, but I had no idea that
5 it was being done as much as I've heard has come out
6 of this investigation.

7 Q And the train crew folks were telling us that
8 they have some form of training to do that. Was that
9 training performed by you guys? Or who was doing that
10 training? Do you have any idea?

11 A No, they get trained by their own department. So
12 any training they had as far as the equipment was
13 given by their own group.

14 Q So the Transportation Group is training
15 transportation employees on how to work on mechanical
16 parts? Is that what you would say?

17 A Yeah.

18 Q Has anybody ever come to you with input on what
19 you guys want the transportation folks to be doing or
20 what you don't want them to be doing? Has that --

21 A Not that I'm aware of, no.

22 Q Got you. And if that was happening, would you
23 expect you to know that?

24 A Not necessarily. The only way I would know was
25 from having a conversation with our Training

1 Department, which I do frequently, but it wouldn't be
2 outside the realm for me to not know this.

3 Q Okay. So, hypothetically speaking, somebody in
4 Mechanical Department may be doing that training and
5 you're just not aware?

6 A It's possible because I'm not part of the
7 Training Department. But I'm pretty sure it's not
8 happening.

9 Q It's not happening? Okay. Now one of the major
10 focuses has been going towards these, and I can't
11 remember now if it's MP-11 or MD-11, but that form.
12 Have you seen an uptick in those forms in the last
13 let's just say six months, or is it pretty much the
14 same as always?

15 A I can't confirm that because they don't come
16 through my shop. They come through the Mechanical
17 Desk, so I do not have the statistics on how many
18 we've been getting after all this.

19 Q Okay. And explain -- I guess I don't understand
20 that. Can you explain -- explain to me the process of
21 an MP-11 then as far as you know, as much as you know
22 about the MP-11.

23 A All right. What I know about it now, they can
24 actually go in through a QR code and put it in
25 electronically, which is a very recent thing. Before

1 that, it was just a paper copy of the form that they
2 would fill out the car number, the train number, the
3 date and time, and their defect, and they would leave
4 a copy in the cab for the mechanics to find, and they
5 would also take a copy with them to report it to their
6 managers. So --

7 Q But you're not seeing MP-11s?

8 A I wouldn't see them in my position. I would see
9 them as a front-line supervisor because, when our
10 mechanics find them, they'll bring them into the
11 office so that the manager can open up a work order on
12 them.

13 Q Okay. So the front-line supervisor is getting
14 the MP-11s and knows what to fix, or is it only going
15 to the mechanic?

16 A So the MP-11's left on the train where the
17 mechanics will get it first.

18 Q Okay.

19 A And then it's their job to bring it in to the
20 manager so that it can be recorded in the computer
21 system and addressed accordingly.

22 Q So today the paper sheet's gone away, we're told.
23 So how is that going to work now?

24 A So now that the paper sheet's gone and they're
25 doing them electronically, the Mechanical Desk gets an

1 email whenever one is turned in and it's their job to
2 put them into the maintenance system, in the computer
3 system for maintenance.

4 Q Okay. So the Mechanical Department will put in
5 the system that Car 1234 has reported whatever it is,
6 and then your mechanics will get those on a -- do
7 they -- I guess they have a tablet as well?

8 A So no, but it'll go in as a work request, so
9 then, when the cars arrive in the yard, the
10 maintenance manager for whichever yard they're at,
11 they will run a hit sheet to give out those work
12 requests to the mechanics to address.

13 Q Okay.

14 A But they're logged in the computer for the next
15 person to find wherever they're yarded.

16 Q Okay. And how do we know that that work is being
17 done?

18 A We could go through the computer system and look
19 up the work request to see how long it's been in
20 there.

21 Q But is there -- so is there, like, a box that
22 pops up that says this work needs to be done and then
23 it closes somehow? Or, without you digging into it,
24 how do we know that work's being done?

25 A Basically, you're relying on the manager to make

1 sure he's running the car to see if there's any hits on
2 it.

3 Q Okay. Is the manager, just for clarification,
4 the manager's the front-line supervisor?

5 A Yes, yes, yes.

6 Q Okay. Is there some way, so he has to be
7 checking, it's his duty to make sure they're getting
8 done?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And how do you know if you have a failure of the
11 mechanical manager not doing that? Is there any way
12 you would find out?

13 A Not -- no, not really. The only way I'd find out
14 is if it came up at another yard and I was notified
15 why was this still in there.

16 Q So is there another job that would know other
17 than the manager? So I guess my question is let's say
18 you have a poor performing manager, front-line
19 supervisor. How do you know he's poor performing and
20 not following through on these MP-11s? Does somebody
21 get that information, or is that just not being
22 tracked currently?

23 A It's, I guess it's not currently being tracked.

24 Q Okay. Okay. So, on any work, let's just say on
25 the job currently, does each job have a task sheet,

1 blueprints, I don't know what we want to call it,
2 diagrams of, when you're doing this job, you need
3 these tools, these parts, and this is how you do it?
4 Is there an instruction sheet like that currently at
5 SEPTA?

6 A There are but not for every job. There are for
7 specific jobs.

8 Q Okay. What percentage, if you can, just rough
9 percentage, what percentage of the jobs would you say
10 have a sheet like that?

11 A I don't know if I could even come up with a
12 number. I could maybe say less than half.

13 Q Okay. So how do those jobs get taught to the --
14 I mean, I'm assuming you get new people occasionally
15 in here, so how do they learn how to do each job?

16 A Through the training we do for, we call them
17 NEOPS, new employee. They have to go through a six-
18 month training program and there's a whole booklet
19 that they have to go through of different jobs they
20 need to hit in order to pass the program.

21 Q Is there, at the end of this program, is there,
22 like, a test at the end of it or, like, a weekly while
23 they're in training, like, you're making sure they're
24 doing those tasks and they're being done right?

25 A There's both. There's checkups by the Training

1 Department to see how they're doing. And then, at the
2 end of the six months, they do have to test out --

3 Q I got you.

4 A -- for either classification, electric ones or
5 mechanics.

6 Q So, and after these fires or just in any case,
7 what if there's a job that comes up that we've never
8 seen before? How do we know how to fix that stuff?
9 Do you go to, is there like a database you can click
10 on, manufacturer, or how would we know how to -- or
11 just you guys are good enough mechanics that you're
12 experienced and think you can do it?

13 A I can say some of us are good mechanics. Some of
14 the guys are good mechanics. But there's also, if it's
15 not in the heavy maintenance manuals that were written
16 up when the cars were new, if it's not there, we
17 contact Engineering a lot. So we'll get Engineering
18 to come in and help us out with difficult situations.

19 Q And that would be SEPTA's engineering?

20 A Yeah, yeah.

21 Q And they -- talk to me about the difference
22 between the mechanics and the engineer. What's the
23 difference between the two?

24 A The difference between them?

25 Q Yeah, like between -- you say you call in

1 Engineering. What's the difference between them and a
2 mechanic?

3 A Our Engineering Department has more resources and
4 they'll really dig in to figure out how to do
5 something, and then they can write an Engineering
6 Change Notice that'll be set in stone of what the
7 mechanics will have to follow to do the job.

8 Q And you guys work closely with them every day?
9 Like, you talk to them daily pretty much?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And then my last question and I'm going to pass
12 it to Brett, but does every shop do different repairs?

13 A Every shop does do different repairs. And some
14 of us also do similar work. So, yeah, there are
15 different things done at each location.

16 Q So do you hire mechanics at each location for
17 their specific traits, what they're good at? Is that
18 how they get put at these different shops?

19 A No. They get put at these different shops based
20 on their seniority and whether they can hold the job.

21 Q Okay. So they can bid anywhere?

22 A Yes.

23 Q When they bid, is there somebody that checks to
24 make sure they're qualified to do the repairs that are
25 required at that shop?

1 A During the training program, they're sent around
2 to all the shops to see the different work that's done
3 at each location so they're considered qualified at
4 all the locations.

5 Q So let's say a new hire bids at a shop because
6 it's close to his house and he's there for 10 years
7 and he moves and he goes to another shop. How do we
8 know, it's been 10 years, he's not expected to remember
9 that stuff from 10 years, is he?

10 A We do take that into consideration, especially
11 when I was at the Overbrook location, if we had guys
12 come in there that hadn't been there in a while, we'll
13 put them with somebody to get them up to speed because
14 that location does a lot of our inspections, our
15 periodic inspections. So we put the newer person or
16 the person newer to that shop with somebody that's
17 been doing the job just so they can get up to speed.
18 It was a practice I used there and it seemed to help.

19 MR. KRAHOLIK: Okay. Got you. I'm going to pass
20 it over to Brett.

21 MR. JOHNSON: Brett Johnson, NTSB. How are you
22 doing, Wayne? You need to take a break or anything?

23 MR. GEYER: I'm good. Thank you.

24 MR. JOHNSON: All right, buddy.

25 BY MR. JOHNSON:

1 Q Hey. So you've been a Director since 2021 with
2 SEPTA, right? I think you said that earlier.

3 A Yes.

4 Q So how many managers report to you, like company
5 officers?

6 A Currently, there's 10 Maintenance Managers and
7 one Assistant Director that report to me.

8 Q Okay. And then how many employees and what
9 crafts report to those managers?

10 A So reporting to those managers, there's about 140
11 employees here.

12 Q Okay.

13 A And that's in different crafts between
14 maintenance, custodian cleaners, mechanics,
15 electricians, and HVAC.

16 Q Okay. And then you also have outlying points,
17 right?

18 A Yes, they're included in that number.

19 Q Okay. And how many outlying points do you have?

20 A There's eight.

21 Q And what's the difference between an outlying
22 point and a main shop like here at Roberts facility?

23 A So the outlying points are the end of the line
24 for that line, and that's where the cars lay over at
25 night so we can inspect them and prepare them to run

1 into the city for rush hour.

2 Q Okay. And so those are staffed -- do they have
3 three shifts of mechanical folks in those outlying?

4 A No, they're only staffed on the overnight shift.

5 Q Okay. And that's to perform work at night in
6 anticipation for the morning rush back into town, into
7 Philly, is that --

8 A Yes. Yeah. So they're there to perform the
9 required FRA inspection, the 24-hour calendar day
10 inspection, on the equipment that's laying over there.

11 Q Got you. Okay. So you've been at SEPTA for
12 quite a while. You've seen a lot of change at SEPTA
13 since you started?

14 A Yes, I have.

15 Q What comes to mind when you reflect on, you know,
16 years back to present day? What are some of the big
17 things, changes that you've seen?

18 A I've seen some big changes in how we do things.
19 Back when I first started, we did some stuff with the
20 transformers that you would never see done today,
21 changing the fluid out in them.

22 Q Mm-hmm.

23 A I like to think I've seen safety get better in
24 light of what's been happening, and I've seen different
25 management styles come through. I've seen guys come

1 through with management styles that were kind of harsh
2 on the guys, and then I've seen some that are a little
3 more friendly to work with.

4 Q Yeah. I understand. So, in that same vein, I
5 mean, how has SEPTA's culture changed for good or bad
6 or both through your career up to present day?

7 A In my opinion, I think it's improved.

8 Q And how?

9 A I think it's improved by focusing more on the
10 stuff we need to do as far as employee safety,
11 procedures, documenting stuff. Some of the documented
12 procedures that I spoke of with the previous
13 conversation, that happened in my career, so they're
14 only about less than 20 years old.

15 Q I understand. So you've been a Director since
16 2021. Tell me about your day as far as starting out
17 in the morning. What are your responsibilities as a
18 Director from the time you show up to work to the time
19 you leave? Just walk me through a typical day for
20 Wayne.

21 A A typical day starts with coming in and reviewing
22 my email to see what's there. I'm specifically looking
23 for shop reports for our whole department so I can see
24 where some of our vehicles are at. I go down, I have
25 a meeting with the overnight supervisors, get a

1 turnover from them, see if we can try and figure out
2 how we're going to work the stuff that's here. We have
3 a morning meeting with our Senior Director at a
4 specific time every day where we meet with all the
5 other locations for Assistant Directors and Directors.

6 Q And who is the Senior Director? So you report to
7 a Senior Director, is that correct?

8 A Yes, I report to a Senior Director.

9 Q And who has that position? Who's the --

10 A (Inaudible.)

11 Q All right. So, Wayne, in your morning ops, how
12 do you interface with Transportation Operations or
13 during the day? It doesn't have to be in the morning.
14 I mean, is there a call or a broadcast or anything
15 that says, you know, we're short cars or we're having
16 issues, or, you know, is there any -- how do you
17 interface with them to understand their needs and make
18 sure you're meeting their needs?

19 A So every single day there's a meeting at 1:00 to
20 discuss shortages at the different yards.

21 Q And who's on that call?

22 A It's all the yard managers, and it's run by their
23 director.

24 Q Which is Transportation or --

25 A He's the Evening Transportation Director.

1 Q Got you.

2 A And aside from that, not every day, but I'll
3 often talk with our yard manager here to discuss
4 things that might come up.

5 Q Got you. Does Transportation -- let me make sure
6 I word this right. Does Transportation have
7 expectations as far as having capacity or cars online
8 and communicate those to the Mechanical Department
9 either through you or a supervisor or somebody?

10 A Well, there's car counts, so they have a required
11 number of vehicles they need to make the line.

12 Q To meet the schedule that's for the customers?

13 A To meet, yes. Yes.

14 Q And if there aren't enough -- well, let me
15 rephrase that. Has there been instances where they
16 were just short trains to be able to meet the needed
17 capacity requirements that they had for their
18 schedule?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Is that often or just every once in a while or
21 rare? What do you think? Just normal operations.

22 A Recently, it's been often.

23 Q Okay. Prior to the fires, how was it?

24 A Prior to? We did all right at making sure there
25 was enough vehicles, especially since after Covid hit

1 we didn't have to run as many cars, so that gave us a
2 bigger buffer that we could hold shot as we call it.

3 Q Okay. And so, if they are, we can say prior to
4 the fires, and then we can answer, you know, after the
5 fires with the new processes that you've put in place,
6 with the demands to meet the schedule for the
7 customers that Transportation's put on Mechanical, has
8 there been, you know, added pressure to get stuff out
9 the door as quick as possible to get on the main line
10 to take care of customers?

11 A Yes, I could say there's been some pressure, but
12 we still would focus on making sure the stuff was
13 good.

14 Q Got you. Manage through it, work through it.

15 A Yeah, we try and hit the low-hanging fruit
16 that -- yes.

17 Q Got you. Okay. So, with the operations you have
18 at Roberts or anywhere else, whether it be under your
19 oversight or another shop that's not under your
20 oversight, does SEPTA have goals for time to repair
21 cars? Let's say you shop a car or you shop a married
22 pair due to a traction motor. Is there -- are there
23 goals that say, you know, X amount of time you should
24 have a traction motor removed, repaired, replaced, and
25 back in service on the main?

1 A No. The only goal we really have is to try and
2 keep the overall count at a specific number.

3 Q Got you. So it's more of a failure count. That's
4 the primary focus, keeping those failures to a certain
5 level?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Got you. Okay. So, as the Director in your
8 position, what are some of the biggest challenges that
9 you face in the day-to-day operation?

10 A Some of my biggest challenges are trying to find
11 the right guys to fix the stuff. Like, a lot of the
12 newer employees don't have the knowledge that our guys
13 that just retired had, and that's my biggest
14 challenge, is trying to find good talent to get a
15 quicker fix on the cars, to find that problem.

16 Q So, obviously, SEPTA has, like, an HR Department,
17 right, that takes care of your hiring, getting people
18 onboarded and so forth.

19 A Mm-hmm.

20 Q Do they ever discuss, you know, strategies or
21 trends or just the metrics of your workforce you have
22 as far as years of service, you know, any type of
23 demographics like that?

24 A They do, and I do know one of my peers is in a
25 group that has that discussion often.

1 Q Okay.

2 A I believe it's weekly.

3 Q Okay.

4 A Maybe monthly. But I do know one of my coworkers
5 goes to those meetings.

6 Q So have you seen where strategies have been
7 implemented based on, you know, being aware of your
8 struggles of having that lack of knowledge with, I
9 don't know if it's a younger or less tenured, you know,
10 trending workforce, but are there strategies that have
11 been implemented at SEPTA to help you with that?

12 A Not that I'm aware of.

13 Q I understand. So tell me about the biggest
14 challenges you have with the Silverliner IV fleet.

15 A Keeping them running.

16 Q Okay. I understand.

17 A The biggest challenge is having the parts.

18 Q Okay.

19 A I mean, it's an aging fleet, so parts.

20 Q When did those, when did the Silverliner IV,
21 like, when did they make those?

22 A Between '74 and '76.

23 Q Okay. And you're saying the parts aren't readily
24 available. Is it because of material shortage or,
25 like, sourcing or --

1 A Yeah, obsolescence.

2 Q Okay.

3 A When we need certain parts, sometimes we have to
4 reverse engineer stuff and then get a vendor to
5 manufacture.

6 Q Does that take a lot of time to reverse engineer
7 a part?

8 A Yes.

9 Q I understand. Is that, like, something that's
10 just a common challenge every week or every month that
11 you're finding parts that have to be reverse
12 engineered and --

13 A It's become more of a challenge in, you know, the
14 past 10 years maybe.

15 Q I understand.

16 A I believe we're the only ones that run this type
17 of equipment, so there's really not that drive to keep
18 going with the parts.

19 Q Mm-hmm. Yeah. Any other challenges with the
20 Silverliner IV that come pop into mind?

21 A Just the technology that's not there that's in the
22 newer fleet.

23 Q I understand.

24 A That's a challenge, especially when it comes to
25 trying to troubleshoot them.

1 Q So what's in the newer fleet that the Silverliner
2 IV fleet doesn't have that makes it easier to
3 troubleshoot?

4 A Basically, it's got its own event recorder in the
5 central diagnostic terminal, so you can go back and
6 review things. The challenge with the Silverliner IV
7 fleet is you don't have that ability, so you're relying
8 on what you can see may have gotten damaged.

9 Q I understand. I understand. And the last couple
10 questions here before I pass it to Mr. Sherry here.

11 As a Director and having your knowledge of the
12 operation as far as Mechanical Operations, your shop
13 operation, and also the needs that the Silverliner IV
14 fleet present to you, are you involved in any of the
15 financial or capital planning for, you know, upgrades
16 or retirements or, you know, overhauling of the SEPTA
17 fleet?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. Is that like a monthly, yearly thing, a
20 week? Like, how does -- is there a structure behind
21 that of how that strategy works?

22 A So it basically follows the fiscal year, which
23 for SEPTA starts on July 1. And we'll have meetings
24 that even start now to talk about what we want to do
25 the next fiscal year. So the meetings may be monthly.

1 It really depends on where we are in the process.

2 Q I understand. So, with the Silverliner IV fleet
3 being made between I think you said '74 and '76, has
4 there been -- are you aware of discussions of
5 escalating, you know, the need and communicating the
6 need either from you or your peers, you know,
7 Mechanical, that we need to do something or, you know,
8 SEPTA has to do something with these Silverliner IV's
9 because of the challenges that you face?

10 A I'm aware of both increasing the vehicle
11 overhaul, which, you know, Maintenance has changed
12 stuff out. There's an increase to get us back from
13 our current schedule of about seven and a half years
14 back down to five years. So every five years every
15 car would go through it. And I'm also aware of us
16 trying to procure new cars.

17 Q Now, in that overhaul, what components are
18 typically addressed during a overhaul?

19 A So there's a couple different programs done at
20 two different shops.

21 Q Mm-hmm.

22 A The one that really helps us with the mechanicals
23 and the electrical part is where they change out the
24 traction motors, the gear units, the blower motors
25 underneath, and we're talking about changing this

1 dreaded smoothing reactor as part of that program and
2 putting brand-new rewinds in.

3 Q I see. And so it's mostly like the heavy power
4 systems, is that fair to say, those, or components?

5 A The components of it. So the contactors and
6 stuff were done as part of a vehicle overhaul at the
7 second location. But the location that does the heavy
8 repair part, it's motors, axles, and then the blowers
9 that feed them.

10 Q Got you. And as far as the logic that controls,
11 you know, those components, the logic controllers or
12 relays or whatever, is there an overhaul program for
13 that or have they ever been overhauled, those systems?

14 A The only overhaul that I'm aware of is the heavy
15 contactors --

16 Q Okay.

17 A -- changing out the heavy contactors or the cam
18 controller.

19 Q Now, when you say contactor, these are just like
20 robust components that handle heavy current?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. Electrical current?

23 A Yes.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Got you. All right. I've got no
25 further questions. Mr. Sherry?

1 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, FRA.

2 BY MR. SHERRY:

3 Q Wayne, how do you feel the morale on the shop
4 floor is from your front-line workers?

5 A Currently, I think it's decent.

6 Q Do you feel it's better or worse than 20 years
7 ago?

8 A I feel it's better. Absolutely.

9 Q Morale is better? Is that the same feeling for
10 your outlying points as well?

11 A I think so.

12 Q Okay. Earlier, you discussed MP-11s as pretty
13 much a front-line manager. Would it benefit you to
14 have a report of MP-11s daily without you really
15 having to dig into it?

16 A You know what? Yeah, I think it would, yeah,
17 because we get an in-service failure report from
18 anything that was called in. So not all the time the
19 MP-11s are called in, so that would be a helpful tool.

20 Q So you believe an MP-11 report to your level
21 would benefit the checks and balances in your system?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. I have a few more questions here.

24 Recently, we had an incident with a workmanship repair
25 of a plug on a dynamic brake resistor. Where in your

1 opinion do you feel the system failed?

2 A By not having a proper parts catalog for it. I
3 mean, I understand that it was an item that's not
4 often touched, so there wasn't really a procedure for
5 it. But I think not having a good parts reference for
6 that vehicle kind of hurt us.

7 Q So you feel that's the number one, is a parts
8 catalog, a parts inventory, something in place for
9 that. At no means do you feel it was a training issue
10 or checking on your front-line workers' workmanship?
11 You feel that the main component was a parts catalog,
12 correct?

13 A Yes, I think it's a parts issue because, and this
14 is just from experience. Oftentimes you're going to
15 use what you're given, and sometimes you don't know
16 that it wasn't the correct, but you're making it work.
17 And I know what you're referencing, like, whether it
18 had the two holes or the one hole. So I kind of see
19 where the electrician was coming from.

20 Q Okay. What procedure did you put in place so
21 this doesn't happen again?

22 A Proper parts, the proper parts list for those
23 jobs, that procedure, and then having procedures to
24 follow for whenever they do that type of work because
25 it's hard to spell out every single one, but if you

1 spell out what type needs to be done for this area,
2 like what type of part to use for that area, I think
3 that would have helped a lot in that situation.

4 Q Has that been a discussion after that event?

5 A Yes.

6 Q All right.

7 A Yeah. Engineering is working on that.

8 Q Have those things ever been brought up prior to
9 this event happening? I mean, in your
10 responsibilities, say you overlook the shop floor

11 budget inventory. Have you ever took those thoughts
12 before this event to your leadership of a Senior
13 Director and so on and so on down the food chain?

14 A We have discussions of parts because we have
15 parts issues all the time, so they are brought up and
16 addressed, and we usually bring them up with
17 Engineering and our supervisor higher-ups.

18 Q Okay. And other than you made a reference
19 earlier to a question that the Mechanical Department
20 had no idea before these investigations started about
21 how many fault lights have been occurring and been
22 taken out or unscrewed or reset, is there -- what is
23 Mechanical doing about that now?

24 A What we're doing about it now is making sure that
25 it's getting reported to us. I mean, we're addressing

1 everything that we can before we release the train so
2 that it doesn't go out with any kind of fault light.
3 And then they're also asking guys in the
4 transportation side to turn in an MP-11 even though
5 they called it. Like, call it in and turn in an MP-
6 11. So we should, if they follow that, we should see
7 the MP-11 that matches up with an in-service failure.

8 Q Are we checking up on that? At every call into
9 Mechanical, are we checking we have an MP-11 and vice
10 versa?

11 A I couldn't answer that right now. It's kind of
12 early.

13 Q Okay. And as we've seen, some of those fall
14 safes haven't happened. Is there anything in place
15 for video evidence or random video footage to start
16 checking on those things?

17 A Not that I'm aware of.

18 MR. SHERRY: Okay. I have no further questions
19 at this time.

20 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik, NTSB.

21 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

22 Q And I'm going to ask you a couple questions that
23 Brett said and Rich did, and I apologize for asking
24 twice, but I just want to clarify. The five-year
25 overhaul that you were talking to Brett about, that's

1 been happening for years now, or is that something
2 that's new?

3 A So the five-year overhaul has been happening
4 since the '90s that I know of. So, since I've been
5 here, I know there's been a five-year overhaul on the
6 Silverliner IV fleet.

7 Q Okay.

8 A And I can elaborate on that too, so --

9 Q Go ahead, yeah.

10 A The Silverliner V's were started possibly about
11 six years ago. When we started those, they dropped
12 back the Silverliner IV fleet to about a seven-,
13 seven-and-a-half-year program to fund the program to
14 do the V's, which are only on a 10-year program.

15 Q I got you. All right. And another one of
16 Brett's things was he talked about the communication
17 with Transportation. I know you said you had a call
18 at 1, but is that enough? Like, do you feel like, and
19 I know you said you were talking to them occasionally,
20 but is that enough? Do you feel like they understand
21 your needs and you understand their needs? Or is
22 there something in place that you need to see more of
23 or something you guys should be doing?

24 A For my location, I feel it's enough. I have
25 communication with the yard manager on this side and I

1 know as a group we have our Mechanical Desk that now
2 sits in the control center. They can talk right with
3 the dispatchers, and I know that's been helpful.

4 Q Okay. And then just to elaborate on another
5 thing of Brett's was he was asking you, like,
6 basically, do you feel rushed by Transportation? Is
7 there a rush for you guys to get stuff fixed? Like,
8 do you feel like I've got to get five cars out today,
9 we've got to make it happen, and you feel the pressure
10 of getting that out?

11 A I don't.

12 Q Okay.

13 A Because I know it's our goal.

14 Q Okay. And is that felt the same way by your
15 upper managers for Mechanical? Do they feel the same
16 way? Like, you're a Director and all that, do you
17 think they feel the same way?

18 A Yeah.

19 Q Okay. And then elaborating on what Rich said, so
20 you've kind of -- you've worked on the ground and you
21 worked your way up, so I'm sure you have a lot of
22 ideas on how things could get better, right? If
23 you've done the jobs as a manager, you can see -- do
24 people listen to you when you go with ideas on how
25 things should get better? Like, if you bring up an

1 idea, is it well received and they actually implement
2 some things you talk about or --

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. Okay. And then the bulletins that were
5 put out, I know they're mainly a Transportation thing,
6 but did you guys know they were going out?

7 A No.

8 Q All right. And the second part of that is, did
9 they put out a bunch of stuff that they should have
10 talked to you first on?

11 A I don't think so because, I mean, they put out
12 the bulletin to report what they're seeing.

13 Q Okay. So let me -- so those bulletins pretty
14 much made your shop numbers, I'm assuming, double or
15 made them go up by a substantial amount.

16 A Absolutely.

17 Q But you only have so many shop personnel. Like,
18 I heard a number that you used to have 160 shop
19 employees. Now you only have 65. Would that have
20 been good to know that, hey, we might need to start
21 bumping up our hiring to handle this workload? Or is
22 that -- is that a worry of yours, or you think you
23 guys are going to be able to work it out or?

24 A Of course, it's a worry. But it happened so
25 rapidly, you couldn't do -- it takes so long for us to

1 bring an employee in fully trained, so it wasn't
2 something we could do at the blink of an eye with what
3 was going on. It was more important to pull the cars
4 off and if they had to sit and wait until we had
5 available personnel to work them. That's what we're
6 doing.

7 Q But is that a long-term fix? Like, is that going
8 to -- I know while we're here it's a fix, but when we
9 leave, is that going to be something --

10 A Looking into the future? Yeah, it'll be great to
11 have more heads because these cars aren't getting any
12 better.

13 Q Right.

14 A They're going to constantly have -- it's just
15 going to be something else and something else.

16 Q So I heard a number that the Silverliner IV's
17 make up two-thirds of your fleet, is that right?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q And how many number V's do you have?

20 A There's 120.

21 Q What percent is that? That doesn't make up the
22 rest of the 30 percent does it?

23 A No. There's 120 V's and there's 45 push/pull
24 coaches and 15 engines to pull those coaches.

25 Q Okay. Got you.

1 A And then the original Silverliner IV fleet was
2 231.

3 Q I got you.

4 A Well, the original, since I started, before all
5 the events happened.

6 Q I got you. And another to touch on Rich's
7 questions. So, when you make that load repair or any
8 repair, let's just say any repair, is there any kind
9 of quality control to make sure that employee did what
10 he was supposed to do? Like, do you -- is anybody
11 looking behind the repairs or spot-checking to say
12 this guy's doing good work or this mechanic's doing bad
13 work? Is there any kind of process like that?

14 A No, there's no formal process. There's an
15 occasional a supervisor will check on an employee's
16 work, QC it.

17 Q Is that something being talked about now, or is
18 that --

19 A Yes.

20 Q I got you. Okay. And then my last question is
21 this outside contract you got brought in, what are
22 they doing? Like, are they being helpful to you? Are
23 they just kind of in the way? Or are they actually
24 bringing good stuff up? Or what's your opinion on
25 what they're doing?

1 A My opinion right now, I'm unsure. They're closely
2 working with the Engineering Department and I haven't
3 been that involved with them. I sat in on one meeting
4 that they sat with us for, so I can't really form an
5 opinion yet on that.

6 MR. KRAHOLIK: I got you. I'm going to pass it
7 to Brett.

8 MR. JOHNSON: All right. Brett Johnson, NTSB.

9 BY MR. JOHNSON:

10 Q Wayne, I'd like to pick up where I left off. We
11 were discussing about capital planning for rolling
12 stock and stuff like that. Now we've got -- SEPTA has
13 the Silverliner IV's that have been in service for a
14 long time, and have you ever heard a reason as to why
15 they have, you know, the planning committee or
16 whoever's in charge of that type of capital
17 investment, you know, planning, why SEPTA has not, you
18 know, accelerated or replaced these Silverliner IV's
19 up until now? I mean, why are they still in service
20 after 50 years? Have there been, like, in those
21 conversations, have you been privy to, hey, we're
22 going to spend money somewhere else, like, on stations
23 or track or whatever?

24 A No, I can't answer for sure.

25 Q Okay.

1 A I mean, I can only say what I thought, but I
2 can't really answer that question with a solid answer.

3 Q Okay. That's fair. All right. So let's change
4 gears here. So does SEPTA have a Systems Safety
5 Department or program, like a Safety Department?

6 A Yes. Yeah, they call them Systems Safety here.

7 Q Systems Safety. Is Systems Safety their own,
8 like, department that reports to somebody that's not
9 in your chain of command?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. And do you know what is their
12 responsibilities that you're aware of? Like, what do
13 they do?

14 A Oversight for safety. They do safety audits.
15 They come out and help with investigations for big
16 things. Yeah. They assist with investigations and
17 they're like -- they're our oversight.

18 Q Okay. And those, let's just say the audits that
19 they come, what are -- are they looking for safety
20 rules stuff or conditions, environmental concerns?
21 Like, what's a safety audit?

22 A All the above. So they'll audit us periodically
23 to make sure we're hanging up our Injury Report Log,
24 which is a federal requirement. And every two years
25 they'll come in and do a full audit of the facility

1 where they'll walk around and jot things down that
2 they see issue with.

3 Q Okay. And is there a safety rule manual that
4 SEPTA employees adhere to or a guide or anything?

5 A Yes, there's two different ones that I'm aware of.
6 The authority standard rules.

7 Q Okay.

8 A So they're just general rules. And then there's a
9 safety rule book that according to the book, it was
10 printed in 1981.

11 Q I understand.

12 A

13 Q Okay.

14 A And that's the rule book that the manager will
15 use to pick out a safety rule of the day.

16 Q Okay. And so those safety rules, are they craft-
17 specific, or do they encompass all crafts or?

18 A The safety rule, the second one I talked about,
19 is more craft-specific.

20 Q Okay.

21 A Where it's more focused on our craft as opposed
22 to the Transportation craft.

23 Q All right. So Transportation has their own
24 safety rule book, the Mechanical Department has their
25 own safety rule book, and maybe the Track Department

1 has their own safety rule book, is that correct?

2 A I can't speak on it, but --

3 Q Okay. Yeah. But you have a safety rule book?

4 A Yes, we have ours, yes.

5 Q And so is Systems Safety that -- are they kind of
6 the keepers of that safety or the stewards of -- maybe
7 not stewards, that's not the right word. But are they
8 kind of the administrator for that safety rule,
9 like -- or how does that work?

10 A I couldn't answer that. I know the authority
11 standard rules, I don't even know if Systems Safety
12 wrote that, but our Mechanical safety rule book, it
13 hasn't been changed since I got here.

14 Q I understand.

15 A So I don't think it's being --

16 Q So, with these new cars you've got, let's say
17 you've got the ACS 20 --

18 A Sixty-four.

19 Q -- 64. ACS, you've got new technology, you've
20 got new rolling stock. Are there new risks or hazards
21 that can be specific to those new cars? I mean,
22 anything from climbing, walking, gripping, anything
23 that's different than the Silverliner IV or V's?

24 A There could be more with the newer technology,
25 yeah.

1 Q Okay. And if you see a risk in something that
2 you feel that needs to be added to a rule book so
3 everybody in all shops are aware of it, is there a
4 mechanism to be able to say, hey, we've got to create
5 this new rule that says, you know, such and such,
6 you've got to be careful, and this is the procedure to
7 not get hurt? Is there a mechanism for you as a
8 Director, your managers or your people to get that out
9 there?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. How does that work?

12 A That is done not with the safety rule book. We
13 do it with tech bulletins.

14 Q Okay.

15 A And we work with the Training Department to write
16 up the bulletin and pass it out to all the employees.

17 Q Okay. So --

18 A And if we need to include Engineering -- we work
19 with the other departments, but the Training
20 Department's the one that'll write up the tech
21 bulletin for us.

22 Q Okay. So Training Department, because they're
23 the technical experts, they would know best the --
24 okay. And how many technical bulletins are there,
25 like, out there for folks to adhere to?

1 A I couldn't give you an exact number right now.

2 Q Ball park.

3 A Over 50.

4 Q Okay. And is there a database or a book that's,
5 like, how would an employee know where to go to find
6 that stuff?

7 A Yeah. So there's booklets made up and it's also
8 available online.

9 Q Okay.

10 A I can't confirm that it's on the VTIL, which is
11 the Vehicle Technical Library.

12 Q Got you. And the Training Department, those
13 trainers are kind of the administrators for that tech
14 bulletin stuff?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. All right. Good deal. All right. Have
17 you ever had to get help from Systems Safety to
18 address something, whether it be financial help,
19 expertise help, administrative help? Have they ever
20 been a resource to you for something?

21 A Yeah. Yes.

22 Q Can you give an example?

23 A An example would be dealing with the asbestos on
24 the cars.

25 Q Okay.

1 A They assisted in getting a contractor in and
2 working everything out. I can give another example of
3 dealing with the PCB issue that we had working at
4 Wayne Junction.

5 Q And what's PCB?

6 A It's in the fluid that they would use in the
7 transformer. It's poly --

8 Q It's cancerous, I think?

9 A Yes. Yes.

10 Q Okay.

11 A Yes. It's not healthy for humans.

12 Q Right.

13 A So they've been involved with coming in and
14 sealing stuff that needed to be sealed or cleaning
15 stuff up at the location to help mitigate that.

16 Q I understand. Has Systems Safety ever been
17 involved with maybe shop procedures or task procedures
18 or processes?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. Can you give an example?

21 A So, if I need a job safety hazard analysis --

22 Q Okay.

23 A -- I've contacted them for that also.

24 Q Okay. And then they would come in and work with
25 the training people or --

1 A So, no, they will actually come in and work with
2 the manager and the hourly --

3 Q Okay.

4 A -- to study the job --

5 Q All right.

6 A -- and figure out the hazards with it and then
7 write up a report with suggestions of what they want
8 to see changed.

9 Q I see. And then, if those -- who -- if they make
10 a suggestion that there should be something done or --
11 who would be accountable to make the decision as to if
12 you're going to do it or not? Or is it a case-by-case
13 scenario?

14 A I would say case by case. It would be the
15 location management where they're doing the work.

16 Q Okay. Fair enough. All right. So I've just got
17 a couple more questions here. So, on the Silverliner
18 IV's, let's go back to some of the components of that.
19 Are there components that have been in service on the
20 Silverliner IV, like electromechanical, pneumatic
21 components, any of such, that have been in service
22 since the car was built and haven't had to be
23 overhauled or anything like that?

24 A I believe there are.

25 Q Okay.

1 A Might not be a lot, but I do know there are some
2 that just haven't been replaced.

3 Q Sure. Okay. And do you know, like, the moving
4 parts, whether it be a relay or a contactor or it can
5 be non-moving parts, like capacitors, you know,
6 components. Is there specifications or are you aware
7 of specifications that have essentially, like, duty
8 cycle or life cycle, you know, parameters specified?
9 An example can be a relay can actuate 50,000 times
10 during its life and then it needs to be replaced
11 before -- is there anything like that, like, when the
12 car was originally manufactured in the documentation
13 that you work off of now?

14 A Not that I am aware of.

15 Q Okay. I understand. All right. And so, as a
16 SEPTA manager or Director, do SEPTA managers have
17 annual goals, like performance goals?

18 A Yeah. Yes.

19 Q Can you tell me what those goals are? It doesn't
20 have to be all of them, just to be able to understand.

21 A Examples would be like reduce the shop count by
22 such and such or reduce accidents, injuries, stuff of
23 that nature. Yeah. Different goals like that of --
24 maybe one might be fill your vacancies by a certain
25 time.

1 Q Okay. And as far as safety, I mean, this is --
2 I'm not trying to make a dumb question, but if you
3 have X amount of injuries this year, is it safe to say
4 that your safety goal will be to have less the
5 following year, you know, moving forward?

6 A Yes. Yes.

7 Q Okay. And what about operational goals? You had
8 mentioned something about shop count. Any other
9 operational goals that you can think of?

10 A Yeah. There might be goals, like, some with the
11 vehicle overhaul program, maybe my goal would be to
12 get the scope of work going, you know, be at this
13 point with the scope of work by a certain time period.

14 Q Understand. And as a -- do front-line managers
15 have goals as well, or is this just Directors?

16 A No, they do get goals too.

17 Q Okay. And as far as the compensation structure
18 for your, you know, personal salary of a manager
19 working for SEPTA, are those goals tied to their,
20 directly tied to their compensation package?

21 A Not necessarily.

22 Q Okay, understand. All right, one last question.
23 Is there a process either in your department or just
24 in SEPTA in general where, if an employee or a manager
25 or a director sees an opportunity to be innovative and

1 make something better, is there a process to take that
2 idea and, you know, see if it goes to fruition and
3 becomes, you know, something that can be a value-added
4 to the agency?

5 A Not that I'm aware of.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. All right. Thank you,
7 Wayne. That's all I have. Mr. Sherry?

8 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, FRA.

9 BY MR. SHERRY:

10 Q Earlier, you spoke about today you have how many
11 cars we want online and how many can be shops and
12 there's really just a car count number. There's not
13 really a dwell number, so to say. How do you
14 determine what comes in the house and what stays out?
15 Like, how do you put in order your cars? Is it
16 easiest to grab? Is it easy to repair? Or is it
17 Silverliner V's over IV's? How do you --

18 A It's usually based on we want to do married pairs
19 because, typically, it's just one of the cars is bad
20 and you'll get two out of that. And then it's what do
21 we have the parts for and then, yeah, what's closer,
22 what's easier to move in.

23 Q Okay. So it could be a bunch of different -- it
24 could be --

25 A Yeah.

1 Q It's not always the same structure?

2 A No. No.

3 Q Okay.

4 A The only thing that I usually try to keep the
5 same is I focus on is let's get as many out as we can
6 by we'll fix married pairs over a single car because,
7 typically, on a married pair, it's not both cars that
8 are bad, so you're fixing two for one.

9 Q Got you. So, on your report, it looks better.

10 A Yeah.

11 Q Understood.

12 A You get more cars going. You get more cars off
13 of the yard.

14 Q Yeah. I totally understand. On SEPTA as a
15 whole, and maybe you only can speak on the mechanical
16 side. Maybe you can speak on the transportation side
17 too. How do you feel accountability is here at SEPTA?
18 Do you think it could be better or worse, or it's fine
19 the way it is?

20 A I feel it could be a little better.

21 Q And how so?

22 A As a whole, I would like to see more
23 accountability with the crews for, like, when they
24 don't do things or do stuff that messes up our
25 equipment, we would like to see better accountability

1 so maybe it would cut down on that happening.

2 Q Where do you see that it's failing?

3 A If they're not being held accountable, then the
4 failure would be with their managers.

5 Q Okay.

6 A And to push on that, it could be that there's not
7 enough of them.

8 Q Not enough managers?

9 A Yeah, because they don't have that many, they
10 call them road supervisors. There's not that many of
11 them. I thought I remembered there being more earlier
12 in my career.

13 Q And as far as accountability, would that be
14 monetary, would that be time off? What would be the
15 accountability? What are the processes here for
16 accountability? Is there a verbal, is there a
17 writeup, is there time on the street, is there, you
18 know?

19 A Yeah. So, in our department, it can depend on
20 the severity.

21 Q Okay.

22 A So I might hold somebody accountable for
23 something that we would think is minor, that didn't
24 affect safety and all that, and I'd give him a written
25 instruction. And that doesn't go towards discipline

1 as far as their contract. But then, when it does come
2 to discipline, there's a whole structure in their
3 contract of different steps up to discharge.

4 Q Now what if you had just a repeat offender? It
5 didn't affect safety or anything like that, but over
6 and over you have to talk to this individual about the
7 same thing. Do those things add up and then become a
8 time off or --

9 A Yeah.

10 MR. SHERRY: Okay. That's it, Todd.

11 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik with NTSB. Is there
12 anything you would like to add, Wayne, anything we
13 didn't ask you we should have or anything you just
14 want to add?

15 MR. GEYER: I don't think so. I think I'm good.

16 MR. KRAHOLIK: If we have any more questions, is
17 it okay to contact you?

18 MR. GEYER: Yes.

19 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. On behalf of the NTSB,
20 thank you for your time and cooperation.

21 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
22 matter was concluded.)

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24 //

25 //

CERTIFICATE

CASE TITLE: SEPTA Fire
ACCIDENT NO.: RRD25FR006
LOCATION: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
DATE: September 30, 2025

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the National Transportation Safety Board was held according to the record and that this is the original, complete, true, and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Date: October 7, 2025

[REDACTED]

Marcia Thurmond
Official Transcriber
Reporting Corporation

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