

Pittsburgh Space Command (PSC 473)  
2026 Annual Business Meeting

PSC 473 business meeting was held at Panera, Water Works Shopping Center, Blawnox, PA on December 7th, 2025. In attendance were social media and Marketing Manager, Duane Wilkey, PSC Chief Financial Officer, Charles Garnes, Media & Events Manager Mia Vento, former club President and current section advisor, Rod Schafer; former club Vice President, John Brohm, PSC member Ernie Marsh, current PSC club President, John Pace, Jerry Kraus, and Kai Olander. The following outlines discussion points and action items identified during the meeting:

**Administrative:**

**2026 PSC Launch & Event Calendar** – The following highlights important dates as well as launch dates approved for calendar year 2026.

- January – No Launch
- February – No Launch
- February 21<sup>st</sup> – NARCON On-Line Web Event
- March 8<sup>th</sup> – Daylight Savings Time
- March 22<sup>nd</sup> Sport & HP Launch & Fun Event – March Missile Madness – 10:00 am. to 4:00 pm.
- April 19<sup>th</sup> PSC Sport & HP Launch – 10:00am. to 4:00 pm.
- May 17<sup>th</sup> - PSC Sport & HP Launch – 10:00am. to 4:00 pm. Rain date May 24<sup>th</sup>. 40<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Launch
- June 13<sup>th</sup> – SCST XXVI/ Sport & HP Launch – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- June 14<sup>th</sup> – SCST XXVI / Sport & HP Launch – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- July 19<sup>th</sup> - Sport & HP Launch – 10:00am. to 4:00 pm.
- August 16<sup>th</sup> – R&R Picnic/Sport & HP Launch/ Paint it Not Like The Kit Event - 10:00am. to 4:00 pm. Picnic at noon.
- September 13<sup>th</sup> – Cluster Buster! / Sport & HP Launch– 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
- October 17<sup>th</sup> – CMMF XIII / Sport & HP Launch – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- October 18<sup>th</sup> – CMMF XIII / Sport & HP Launch – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- November 1<sup>st</sup> – Return to Standard Time
- November 8<sup>th</sup> – Open Spot Turkey Shoot! / Sport & HP Launch – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.
- December 6<sup>th</sup> – 2027 Business Planning Mtg – Panera, Water Works Shopping Center, Blawnox, PA – 9 am to noon.

NOTE: Sport & HPR Flyers are welcome at both the SCST XXII and CMMF XI Event. The low, mid and high-power launch racks will be available during any 2-day launches.

**Other Notable Events:**

- April 22<sup>nd</sup> thru the 26<sup>th</sup> – NASA Student Launch, Huntsville, AL
- May 16<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> (rain date) – TARC, Great Meadows, VA
- ECRM Regional Launch – Mt. Airy, MD. Date TBD
- June 28<sup>th</sup> thru July 2<sup>nd</sup> – NARAM 67, Muncie, IN

**NOTE:** \All PSC launches in 2026 will be held at Weber Farm. **Since the high-power waiver is in effect for all monthly launches, Tripoli and all other high-power flyers are welcome to launch at any PSC event.** A porta potty will be on site from March (weather permitting) through October and possibly November (weather dependent). **There are no PSC launches in January, February, or December 2026.** NAR Sport, NASA college teams, any HP club, TARC contestants and NRC launches are welcomed at all PSC sponsored events.

### **Notable Milestone for Pittsburgh Space Command:**

PSC will turn 40 in 2026. Quite a milestone for our club. What I find comforting is our club continues to grow at a time when our hobby is not a hobby/activity that is popular in the new digital age. In celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a NAR section, we will be looking to our members to design a new patch to honor this achievement. To help us with the patch design, we will be holding a patch design contest. Any PSC Club member can design and submit a patch design. Your submittal must include your name, e-mail, and cell phone number. All patch designs must be submitted to Mia Vento by 3/17/26. Patch designs will be reviewed by club officers on or before 3/24/26 with a winner chosen on 4/3/26. The winner will receive a special out of production model kit. **As part of our 40-year celebration we would like our members to bring and fly one or more of their oldest model rockets at the April Launch.** I'm sure many of our younger members will appreciate seeing some of the early designs.

**ECRM Regional Launch:** Need to confirm dates & events

### **Steel City Smoke Trail XXVI – June 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026:**

The events for SCSTXXVI are as follows: S3 (FAI) 1/2A Parachute Duration; S6 (FAI) 1/2A Streamer Duration, S9 (FAI) 1/2A Helicopter Duration, S4 (FAI) "A" Rocket Glider, A-Altitude.

**Carl McLawhorn Memorial Fly-off XIV – October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>** - Waiting for new contest events from NAR. A Carl McLawhorn contest event will be added to this memorial event.

### **Website & Social Media (Duane Wilkey):**

- **PSC Facebook** – Per Duane, there are 168 followers on the PSC Facebook page. On average we are adding 1-2 followers per month. To draw more attention to our club we would appreciate more photos and videos from club members. All submittals should be sent to Duane.
- **Q&A, Open Forum, Rocketry Discussions Various Topics** – If you're interested in learning more about the hobby, tips and tricks in model construction, competition or high power, or any other topic on model rocketry the first step is to become a NAR member. Once you have a membership card, set up a NAR account, with a username and password. This will allow you access to NAR Groups.
- **Website Links** - Links to "NAR" and Facebook can be found in the upper right-hand corner of our website page.
- **Club Support** – PSC supports TARC, 4H, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, and NASA S1. If interested in any of these groups, click on the appropriate link on our website under the tab, "Groups and Programs we Support."
- **Club Safety (Please Read)** – NAR's HPR Safety Code #3 prohibits smoking/open flames around motors and more importantly Black Powder. Black powder is easy to ignite, can cause serious burns, and can start a fire in a matter of seconds. We expect all flyers, whether

you're a member or not, to abide by these rules. Safety is our #1 priority. We can't have our flyers and friends suffer serious burns or start the field on fire. Thank you.

- **Club Safety (Please Read) – Walking into the Corn During a Launch** – During the hot summer months when you go in search of one of your models, be sure to wear a hat to keep the sun off, take a bottle of water and your cell phone with you, and let someone know your going into the corn. When you return from the corn/woods, check in at the tent. Duane plans to write an article on **"How not to get lost in the Corn"**. It will be available on our web page.
- **Launch Check – In** – We will continue to use 2 tents at check-in. We found it beneficial in reducing check-in time.
- **Flight Forms** – Duane recommended and I believe he volunteered to build a 6"x 9" box with alphabetical slots to store the flight forms. Those in attendance liked his idea.
- **General Business** – Duane recommended we hold a year-end officers' dinner with spouses. The officers liked the idea and intended to start the tradition in 2026. He also recommended a group cleaning equipment day. However, Rod felt the time spent on this would be minimal and recommended he continue to clean the equipment after each launch.

**High Powered Flights at Weber Farm:** PSC's foremost concern with HP flights is the safety of all those at the launch and living in proximity of the launch. The #1 safety concern at the meeting was launching low-level HP flights on the sports pad. To improve the safety of our launch area the club officers have decided to add one or two mid-range pads half the distance between the sport and HP pad (approx. 150 feet), for "F" and "G" motors. We will also be bringing back the caution tape to prevent attendees from walking between the announcing table and the launch racks which can lead to system and tripping issues. Going forward PSC and its officers encourages all members to use "rail buttons" on any "F" impulse powered models and above. If you don't have buttons on your mid-powered models ("F" impulse or greater), they will have to be moved to one of the Mid-Power or High-Power pads which can accommodate an appropriately sized launch rod. In keeping with past practice PSC will be limiting motor impulse to nothing greater than an "M" motor and altitude flights to a maximum of 4000 feet. PSC will continue to require rail buttons on all level 1 and level 2 certified high-power flights. For all level 2 certified flights, the model should include the Center of Gravity (CG) and the Center of Pressure (CP). All models will be inspected by the RSO prior to any launch for vehicle integrity, recovery system, and impulse. If the RSO deems the model unsafe for whatever reason, it will not be allowed to fly. High power launches are also dependent on weather conditions on the day of the launch. If the RSO feels the rail angle needs to be changed due to wind conditions, the appropriate action must be taken by the owner of that model. Low cloud cover is also a factor in all high-power flights. 2 new Mid-Power pads have been purchased to reduce the wait time on these pads.

**Rail Buttons Mid & HP Flights** – As noted in the section above on HP and Mid-Power flights, "F" impulse motors and above must have rail buttons. Rail buttons are available from several model rocketry online supply stores. Here are a few sites that offer rail buttons – Apogee Rockets, Loc Precision, Estes Education, ModelRocketryGuy, Dragon Rocketry and Sirius Rocketry.

**NARAM-67** - The annual event will be held June 28<sup>th</sup> thru July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, in Muncie, Indiana. The competitive events are: S3 (FAI) 1/2A Parachute Duration; S6 (FAI) 1/2A Streamer Duration, S9 (FAI) 1/2A Helicopter Duration, S4 (FAI) "A" Rocket Glider, A-Altitude, C-Egg loft Altitude, Scale, and Concept Scale.

**Club Officers:** Aleksandr (Aleks) Krachanko, has decided to step down from his position as VP. We wish Aleks much success in his new endeavors. Aleks will remain active in all certification flights. In his absence, Duane Wilkey will assist in flight certifications. Chuck Garnes agreed to take on the role

of PSC Vice President in addition to his current position as Club Chief Financial Officer, which includes paying for all club expenses, managing our checking account and dues collection which is a difficult task. We wish Chuck much success in his new role at PSC. All other club officers agreed to volunteer their time through calendar year 2026. We welcome anyone with a deep interest in the future of PSC and our hobby to step forward and take a more active role as an officer of the club. The future of the club will depend on volunteers, who possess an interest and passion for our hobby, to step forward. PSC is 40 years old. A few of our current club leaders have been active club members for roughly 40 years. Who's going to lead the club over the next 35 years or are we going to let it fade away? We look forward to hearing what Aleks would like to do at the launches he attends.

**Master Address and E-Mail Listing of PSC Club Members:** Chuck Garnes is responsible for the upkeep of the master e-mail address list on G-mail. If you have a new e-mail due to a change in employment or for another reason and would like to receive e-mails from the club, please inform Chuck or any other club officer. You can find their contact information on our website, [www.psc473.org](http://www.psc473.org).

**Section Advisors Update:** Rod Schafer filed for our Charter and will file for NAR field insurance by March 2026. Anticipated equipment purchases for 2026 include:

- New Trailer- Estimated purchase price \$6,000 to \$7,000 before trade in.
- 2 New Mid-Power Pads - \$580.00 (purchased in December).
- **Trailer Donations:** John Pace to call NAR Headquarters. We would like all donations from PSC 473 members and friends of PSC to NAR Headquarters with specific instructions that these funds be sent to PSC for the purchase of a new trailer. This would allow the donors to file this as a donation on their annual tax return.

**DUES:** Dues for 2025 will remain at \$20 per year for a family or an individual. Dues and donations at each launch are our primary source of revenue. It's used for all equipment upgrades, annual maintenance, unexpected equipment expenses, the Weber annual donation, any NAR administrative expenses (i.e. site insurance), FAA Waiver, and regional events. Whether you're a long-time member or a new member of the club, please fill out a PSC membership form and submit it with or without your dues. The PSC membership form can be found on our website [www.psc473.org](http://www.psc473.org). Chuck uses this information to keep our membership current. Please make checks payable to Pittsburgh Space Command, and mail it to: Chuck Garnes, 4609 North Pike, Monroeville, PA. 15146.

**FAA Waiver:** The current FAA waiver expires on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026. John Pace will be filing for a new 2-year waiver in February possibly earlier.

## **Sales & Marketing:**

**Shirts Hoodies, etc.** – Mia and Duane to discuss shirt sizes, colors, logo pricing, etc. End game is to have a screen shot of available colors, to all active PSC members as identified by Chuck Garnes. We plan to order extra shirts for purchase at the launch site. Shirts, hoodies, etc. will be available in May. We will not only post shirt availability on e-mails to the membership, but will also have them displayed on hangars at check-in.

**Available Kits for Prizes and Awards** - The Google Drive has been updated to reflect what kits are in the PSC inventory and available as prizes and awards.

**University/College Rocketry Clubs**: The question was raised, “Does Grove City College have a rocketry club or participate in an annual rocketry project/competition? Are they aware of our club and our monthly rocket launches on the outskirts of Grove City from March through November? John Pace to send a note to the college with these questions.

**Monthly Announcement** – PSC has seen significant growth these past few years, an exciting development for the club. But this also means our launches have become quite busy from a launch operations point of view. We need more members to step forward and help with check-in, pad management, pad support (i.e.: correct igniter hook up!), and Range Safety/Launch Operations (i.e.: pushing the big red button!). While some of these functions might appear to be intimidating, they’re pretty straightforward, and just about anybody can do them once trained, especially on the equipment. If you’re interested in helping the club with these functions, then email Mia Vento and indicate your area of interest. We’ll make sure we provide a club officer to train you in your area of interest and shadow you during a launch to help get you comfortable and up to speed. This is a great way to help the club and pay it forward.

### **Financial Report:**

**Treasurers Report (Chuck Garnes)**: The following is the financial status of the club as of December 2025:

**Dues & Donations**: Membership (based on PSC membership forms submitted): 2024 – 105, 2025 – 90. Down 15 from the previous year.

**Dues Collected**: \$913.00

**Donations**: 2024: \$1976, 2025 - \$4936. \$2820 of the \$4936 was donations for a new trailer. Actual donations non-trailer related: \$2116.

### **Expenses:**

**2024**: \$1670

**2025** - \$3177.01: (Porta Potty: \$920, Mars Expense (every 2 years) - \$1068.09, Pins & Patches - \$576.00, Weber Christmas Gift Card for use of his farm - \$500, Misc. Expenses) - \$112.92.

Current PSC checking account as of 1/1/26 stands at \$7641.79 which includes donations made by members and friends of PSC towards the purchase of a trailer.

**Donations**: Due to the generosity of the Weber family, our 2025 annual donation in the amount of \$500.00 has been sent to the family.

**Other Equipment Needs**: See Section Advisor Update.

### **New Business:**

#### **Volunteers & New Launch Rules:**

- We greatly appreciate the new level of interest in sport and HP rocketry. With the growth in the club, we ask all members to volunteer a little of their time during the monthly launches to help with rocket check-in. Also, to speed the launch process, please pick up a flight card from the table and prepare it prior to model check in.

- Anyone planning a level 1 or 2 certification launch is to contact an officer of the club the week prior to the launch. The list of club officers can be found on our website.
- A launch rule page outlining site flight requirements will be available to all fliers on the day of the launch. Please pick one when you pick up your flight card(s).
- All heads-up flights will be launched from the mid or HP rack not the sport racks.
- Duane Wilkey to share the site launch and responsibilities document used by the Erie Rocketry Club

**Wireless Launch System Update:**

- John Brohm couldn't recreate the issues we experienced at the September launch. John will keep the controller and swap out the unused bank switches for momentary switches to preclude inadvertent control box disabling.
- Operating instructions for our wireless launch system will be available on our website before our March launch. We ask all those interested or active in using the launch system to read and understand these instructions.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

John Pace  
President  
Pittsburgh Space Command (PSC 473)