

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive Liaison Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 3, 2023 – 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

- 1.) COVID Update and Outlook – Marshall and Mark noted that the emergency COVID orders are no longer in effect. WSDOT will work with partners to establish their new normal. Work expectations will continue to evolve:
 - WSDOT recognizes the value of face-to-face meetings and engagement, but this will not be required daily. Offices will choose consistent times to come into the office and meet with their teams.
 - Most daily work meetings will remain hybrid, but some of the statewide meetings will be held in person.
 - Mark noted that for this WSDOT/ACEC-WA ELC Meeting, he sent out a survey about in person or virtual meeting preference. They received 13 responses, 7 said virtual, 6 said in person. The feedback is to not lose in person/hybrid abilities. He will be setting up the March 1st meeting as hybrid and it will be located either in Fife or Kent. The plan is for members to either meet in person or attend via Microsoft Teams.
 - The Annual Meeting will still be held in person.
 - The plan is for the first meeting of the new year to be in person. A goal will be to hold half of the meetings in person and half virtual. We should avoid winter for in person attendance due to potential weather/travel concerns.

- 2.) Budget and Staffing Update – Mark noted that at our last meeting we said goodbye to Kevin Dayton. Mike Gribner is the new Chief Engineer, and he will bring a strong program delivery focus to the position. He does expect to be involved in the WSDOT/ACEC meetings but was not available for this one. Other workforce changes include:
 - Mark’s Executive Assistant, Janelle Fletcher, has taken a promotion and will be transitioning to work with Marshall. She is still helping on a few things in the Design Office, which includes planning the Statewide PE Meeting in March. Mark has started the recruitment process to fill this position.
 - Sedra Zlock-Hanson, Chris Christopher’s Executive Assistant, took a promotion to become Mike Gribner’s Executive Assistant. Chris is working on getting the recruitment started to fill Sedra’s position.
 - Mike North, Assistant Secretary of Finance and Administrative Services, is leaving WSDOT for other opportunities. Doug Vaughn will be acting in his position until it’s filled.

- Jeff Pelton, Director of Human Resources & Safety, provided a recent presentation regarding overall agency staffing and hiring. While the agency has been treading water in some areas, they have had success in others.
- TE2 hires have been moderately successful, though there are still 12 unfilled vacancies. Some of the outlying regions did not get as many interested applicants as not all E2 candidates were willing to relocate to Wenatchee, etc. Ultimately, the eastern side of the state did not see as much success as the west side.
- WSDOT's engineering employee numbers are at 2200. This number is not expected to grow a lot bigger, though it still feels too lean on the delivery side. Also, not all the right resources are in the right places.
 - Mark noted that there have been 17 new positions hired into the Design Office, and three (3) in the Consultant Services Office. In spite of these hires, WSDOT will still need more consultant support.
 - The current WSDOT budget front loads the Move Ahead Washington funding. As a result, the program is very large for the next several years then drops off significantly. While the legislature has indicated that it will provide additional funding, to address all of the major initiatives underway, this is not guaranteed. It is difficult to plan for long-term staffing levels with this budget uncertainty.
 - Understanding program needs is a benefit for the agency as well as the consultant community so that hiring is handled in an appropriate manner.
 - Having the right workforce is not just a matter of numbers, but also about having the right experience base of personnel. It will be a challenge to get the new employees' experience built up and it will take time.

3.) Legislative Update – Marshall noted the following:

- Roger's new State of Transportation will be presented to Legislators the 2nd week of January. Marshall will share the document with this committee as it's worth paying attention to.
- The Move Ahead WA program had expectations for a lot of front-loaded delivery. Considering resource limitations, it will be difficult to achieve this front loading.
- This program remains the largest WSDOT delivery program funded to date. WSDOT will need their consultant and contractor partners to help deliver the program.
- Van noted that the budget process starts with the Governor's proposal, then moves to the two transportation committees where so much happens. ACEC plays a role in advocating for a robust budget, but generally does not get into the specific details of where and what. The current delivery expectations are also concerning to ACEC, and they are trying to send a message, in an informal way, that Legislators need to look at their budget expectations.

- Van also mentioned that the Leg Session starts next week. To date, he has not seen a great agency effect due to pre-filed bills. There are some bills on prevailing wage, which could be impactful to projects, but he has not seen a lot of impact areas yet.

4.) The Subcommittee Chairs provided the following updates:

- Business Administration Subcommittee - Ron Paananen noted that the first meeting of the year will be next Monday, January 9th.
 - They will take a serious look at their plan for the coming year.
 - They plan to hear updates from Jackie Bayne and WSDOT's progress towards making overall DBE, MWBE's, SBE's, etc. goals.
 - They will also discuss contract pricing and rate approvals as firms enter into new agreements.
 - They will have more to share after the next meeting.
- Design-Build Subcommittee – Art McCluskey discussed a slide they prepared for the AGC Annual Meeting. They updated their work plan to show the 10 check marks of key activities that were completed in 2022. Their 2023 plan includes actions and activities as follow:
 - Request for adopting a fuel price adjustment per the AGC and Admin. Committees.
 - Perform a check-in on the new OCOI Manual – planned for mid-year.
 - Continue work on utility language changes.
 - Check-in on the D/B Manual as they are due for an update in the summer. They will poll a group and see what technical sections they want to look at this year.
 - Update all D/B training modules this year.
 - Deliver design build performance reports this year.
 - Kimberley is requesting that the team look at Design Build fish passage projects and how to better deliver them. Progressive Design Build fish passage lessons learned should be considered.
 - Provide an update on PDB and what's going well and what can be thought about differently.
- Project Delivery – Kevin Miller and Steve Olling mentioned they have brought in subject matter experts to discuss the following topics:
 - Chris Tams provided a great presentation of Buy America/Make America.
 - Hydraulic Certifications: there is not a uniform application of hydraulic certifications amongst regions and different parts of the state and is an opportunity for improvement.
 - ASDE group provided an update regarding the design parameter documentation process. Eastern Region will beta test the policy and process.
 - Change order lessons learned. For change orders that are \$500,000 or greater, there is action required by the DOT to see if the change was the result of a design error. There is a great opportunity to share lessons learned from this process.

- Alberto Valentin and Char Kay provided a presentation on the HEAL Act and Celeste Gilman provided an update regarding Complete Streets and a new Project Delivery memo. These subject matter experts were pleased to share how this policy update will shape design delivery. The subcommittee is excited to dig into these new requirements.
- Structures & Geotechnical – With the retirement of Bijan Khaleghi, Evan Grimm, State Bridge and Structures Engineer, has taken over the subcommittee co-chair position for WSDOT. Evan noted that their team meets quarterly. Workplan topics they are considering include:
 - Digital delivery requirements from the Bridge and Structures Office.
 - New tsunami requirements for bridges.
 - Revised bridge design manual to consolidate and include D/B delivery.
 - New seismic design policy for retaining walls.
 - Project highlights to learn from each other i.e., ferry terminal, design and construction provided by Bridge and Structures and Consultant.
 - The fish passage program is playing a role in getting Hydraulics, Bridge and Structures, and Geotechnical staff to work together.

5.) OCOI Manual Update – Mark Gaines provided an update and noted that the OCOI Manual is at printing services and almost ready to be published. At our previous meeting, January 10th was identified as a date to hold for a training meeting. Since the manual is not quite published, this meeting needs to be moved out 2-3 weeks.

- Van added that the training would be free to ACEC members, and it will be recorded and made available to the broader group.
- Mark mentioned that he had heard a lot of concern regarding fish passage hydraulic design PHD requirements. He got together with the hydraulic team, and they reduced the experience requirements in half to make it easier to qualify. Also, he is recommending some changes to moving away from only considering “successful” projects as applying towards the experience requirements. Success of a project is often difficult or impossible to define.
- Template updates will come out in March. Let Mark know if there are other concerns.
- Van mentioned that Sound Transit is also engaged in OCOI discussion with ACEC. ACEC is using members from the WSDOT work group to bring continuity between the two agencies.
- Mark noted that he or Chris could be available if Van needed WSDOT support.

6.) Local Programs Update – Jay Drye provided the following:

- Jay had noted challenges and delays on local program projects as a result of NMFS consultation. The local program NMFS consultation and stormwater process has been updated. Unfortunately, consultation will still take 2 to 5 years to get through the process. There are eight (8) projects that have been sitting in the queue now for two years. There are quite a few more projects waiting to get in the process. Local

Programs is working with FHWA and NMFS to see if they can get more resources on their side and a liaison in place to help with reviews.

- We all need to pay attention to project end dates. He noted that in November and December there were several that were missed.
- The Federal Omnibus bill included 25 earmarks for \$70+ million for local projects.
 - Another local bridge call will be coming up.
 - There is also a county safety cycle coming up this year. They are starting to work through this process. He expects approximately \$35 million plus additional state dollars.
 - There are also Section 130 awards and railroads are working their way through the process.
 - Fish passage local projects are now starting to join into the federalized fish passage projects at the local project level.

7.) Annual Meeting Planning – Van, Mark and Linea discussed the following:

- Annual meeting date: after a group discussion and consensus, the annual meeting date was confirmed as Thursday, June 29, 2023.
- Based on positive feedback from last year the location will be the Hotel Murano in Tacoma. Van will ask Claire to check the availability of the hotel.
- It's also time to start the planning process for the annual meeting and we need committee volunteers to help with the agenda planning, etc. Linea and Mark will solicit committee members for volunteers.

8.) Mark reviewed the following upcoming meetings and action items:

- Upcoming Scheduled Meetings:
 - Wednesday, March 1, 2023, from 9-11 am (Hybrid, either Fife or Kent)
 - Monday, May 1, 2023, from 9-11 am (Hybrid)
- Action Items:
 - Van and Claire will work on Hotel Murano set up.
 - Linea/Mark will solicit members for the Annual Meeting Planning team.
 - Connect with Chris Christopher on OCOI training date & time
 - Mark and Janelle will determine the venue location for the March 1st meeting and update the meeting invitation.

9.) The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.