

**ACEC/NHDOT
Consultant Quality Initiative (CQI) Committee**

Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2021

Meeting Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Day/Time: Friday (1:30 pm – 3:00 pm)

In Attendance:

Bill Oldenburg, NHDOT
Mike Long, MJ (Chair)
Ted Kitsis, NHDOT (Scribe)
CR Willeke, NHDOT
Jim Marshall, NHDOT
Michelle Marshall, FHWA

Darren Blood, GM2
Marty Kennedy, VHB
Loretta Girard Doughty, NHDOT
Chris Mulleavey, HTA

Unable to attend:

Alex Koutroubas, ACEC
Rob Faulkner, CHA

Bold=Action Item

1. Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes from the last meeting were accepted.
2. Assigned Scribe for Meeting: Ted Kitsis
3. Topics for Discussion:
 - a. Escalation Rate
Bill Oldenburg confirmed that the 2021 escalation rate of 2% was approved via an internal memo by Chief Engineer Bill Cass and Director Peter Stamnas. As this rate only affects the budget of standalone contracts, the ACEC group will have no further discussion of this rate for this year. It was mentioned that all consultants are paid the actual pay rates at the time services are rendered.
 - b. Establish Core Goal(s) of this Committee for 2021
The CQI committee is looking to identify items or topics that can be improved upon to help move project along faster and more efficiently. The committee identified the following topics that should be considered for further discussion:
 1. Agreement development and execution procedures.
 2. Project Development continuity.
 - a. Try to keep same people on projects.
 - b. Jim Marshall noted that Highway Design tries to keep the same team on a project but due to staffing shortages that isn't always possible. This was one of the reasons the Bureau of Highway Design re-organized its sections recently.
 3. Scoping fee negotiation process before execution of an Agreement.

4. And for projects that are underway let the consultants take a greater lead role.
 - a. DOT PM's are overwhelmed and the committee sees this as an area that needs to be improved.
 - b. The committee's goal is to advance projects faster.
 5. There isn't a DOT PM manual to help with the transition of new PM's.
 6. DOT working to have more standardized agreements so all bureaus have access to them and can use them.
 - a. Looking to streamline the Agreement process/effort to be more efficient.
 7. Engineer of Record Policy (currently in draft form).
 - a. Look at steps to engage Consultants during construction.
 - b. ACEC would like to provide comment on draft Policy.
 8. Improved communication and marketing of all the good things that the project is or is going to do.
 - a. Make sure FHWA direction is disseminated to all staff.
 9. Processes and procedures are constantly evolving due to audits that occur from time to time. The DOT finds it a challenge to effectively communicate these changes to Communities and Consultants.
 - a. Example: Bid analysis after bid openings.
 - b. Example: FOPIS
 10. Seems that in the last couple of years we have made things more complicated. It's good to document things but many question the added value this brings to projects.
 - a. Having some flexibility would help mitigate some of the changes.
 - b. Many of these changes are mandated to the Department, usually as a result of audit findings or by FHWA directives.
 - c. Department has been looking to have a record of past decisions for liability issues as well as the inevitable staffing changes (FOPIS).
 11. Highway Design sub-committee is looking at a process (live document) that replaces the Engineering Report. The hope is to save time in the end and to assist engineers filling out the FOPIS.
 - a. FOPIS is actually a log of decision dates/events.
 12. Due to limited and reduced resources, the Department will be providing less reviews and the consultants will have a greater role in project management, including internal coordination, in the future.
- c. Identify Individual Topics for Consideration and Prioritize
 After some discussion the committee identified the following topics for immediate follow-up:
1. Improve the Agreement process. (The DOT supports this effort.)
 2. Engineer of Record collaboration.
 3. Other topics not identified at this time.

4. LPA Topics:

ACEC has been getting a lot of questions regarding the recent LPA RFP's (On-call Design services and CE&I services) and is looking for an update to provide to its member firms.

- CR noted that the Department is looking at this consultant selection process and will provide more information by the end of March or in early April.
- A recent audit has found issues with the LPA G&C approval process that needs to be addressed before we can move forward with the On-call and CE&I Agreements.
 - This will most likely require several changes to our LPA procedures.
- All those consultants that submitted prequalification packages will be placed on a list that will be available on the NHDOT website for Towns to utilize in contacting forms for possible LPA assignments.
- The RFP soliciting for On-call design consultants and CE&I consultants that the NHDOT will utilize for projects where the towns request that NHDOT preform the design or construction inspection is still under review

5. Status of Sub-Committees:

- a. Contracts – Darren noted that the subcommittee continues to make progress on a standard scope of work – next meeting Feb 19th.
- b. Bridge – Loretta noted that the subcommittee did not meet since our last meeting.
- c. Highway – Jim noted that the sub-committee meets monthly and the group is developing checklists to aid in the reviews. The checklists are available on the NHDOT website for internal and external use.
 - Link:<https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/highwaydesign/committees/index.htm>

6. Other items:

- a. April Tech Exchange
 - 1. The conference sub-committee has completed the agenda. This year's conference will be virtual and all presentations will be pre-recorded.
 - 2. The conference will be the entire week of April 12-16, 2021.
 - 3. Registration fee is lower this year so we are anticipating more attendees this year.
 - 4. The DOT can send all staff that want to attend due to the cost and virtual setting.
- b. May Partnering Meeting
 - 1. We don't have a topic for this meeting at this time.
 - 2. Usually The CQI committee provides a recap of what we have been talking about at our meetings.
 - 3. The ACEC group thought it would be good to have an update on the budget and projected revenues in the highway fund.
 - 4. Bill Oldenburg will check with the Commissioner to ask if she would consider doing a Town Hall meeting that was originally scheduled for this past January. It would be a timelier discussion if we can have the Town Hall meeting in late March, just before the April conference.
- c. New Topics for Next Meeting
 - 1. Consultant manual will be sent to the ACEC group for their review.
 - 2. Design Build manual will follow shortly thereafter.

7. Next Meeting – March 17, 2021.

cc: CQI Committee