

ACEC/NHDOT CONSULTANT QUALITY INITIATIVE (CQI) Meeting

Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2021
1:30 -3:00 PM

Meeting Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

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

Darren Blood, GM2
Marty Kennedy, VHB
Chris Mulleavey, HTA
Alex Koutroubas, ACEC
Rob Faulkner, CHA (Scribe)

Unable to attend:

Loretta Girard Doughty, NHDOT
Michelle Marshall, FHWA

- 1) February CQI Meeting Minutes were accepted
- 2) Topics of Discuss:
 - a) Scope and Fee Development for Standalone Projects
 - i) Scope Development (Custom vs. Standard)

D. Blood reported on the following:

- About ½ of the Part A Draft Standardized Scope has been completed and reviewed;
- Next meeting is in April with the goal of having the complete Part A scope developed. The Final Design scope will be developed afterwards.

M. Long asked if scope could be used for standalone contracts or on-calls. It was discussed that it could be used for both and would be a good basis for developing the Standardized Fee Matrix.

B. Oldenburg noted that the standardized scope would be “all inclusive” and could be customized for specific projects by hiding or deleting scope items that wouldn’t apply. (for instance for various types of bridge projects or if a highway project, bridge scope items could be eliminated.

It was further discussed that the intent would be that the standardized scope wouldn’t need to be customized very much at all – similar to MassDOT’s standardized scope. R. Faulkner noted that the MassDOT scope refers to specific manuals or processes and that it is the expectation that those documents will be followed and are part of the scope.

D. Blood further noted that the subcommittee used a compilation of existing scopes of work to develop the standard scope template.

M. Long asked if the intent moving forward would be that the standard scope would be set as is and wouldn't be significantly modified for each project, to which the general response was "yes".

There was a further discussion regarding the number of assumptions or caveats that are added to certain scopes of work to further qualify or quantify the expectations or level of effort for certain tasks and whether or not these would still be needed

It was agreed that the CQI Committee should review the draft standardized scopes prior to further discussing the need for caveats, however, certain assumptions will always need to be made. M. Long mentioned that in some cases, there is a disconnect in what the consultant envisions for effort versus what the Department envisions. Again, it was emphasized that the scopes, and associated levels of effort should be more consistent to help make the process more efficient.

M. Kennedy began a discussion on the schedule for scope and fee development and questioned whether or not the schedule needed to be reviewed and possibly made more aggressive, as well as enforced, to help push the process along and expedite getting contracts executed.

B. Oldenburg reviewed the current schedule:

- from the solicitation posting there is 4 weeks for LOI submissions;
- the short list is typically developed at the following Consultant Selection Committee meeting;
- Ideally, the draft scope of work should be developed by the time of shortlist. However, there are some exceptions for more unique work.
- Once the scope of work / shortlist is released, consultants have 4 weeks to submit Technical Proposals;
- 2 weeks after Technical Proposals are submitted is typical for selection.

He further noted that the process / schedule can break down during fee proposal development and that sometimes this is NHDOT's fault, sometimes the consultant's.

He further noted that the internal process can break down and used On-Calls as an example: the Department tries to execute all of the On-Call agreements at the same time – if one consultant is behind, it can hold up others.

M. Kennedy again asked if the schedules could be more aggressive. B. Oldenburg replied that he sets the schedules and that he already makes them aggressive.

There was a discussion that the consultants use the Draft Scopes of Work issued with the shortlist only as a guide for the Technical Proposal development because they are pretty general in nature and not necessarily the basis for fee development.

It was further discussed that the Scope of Work Checklist provides more detail to help facilitate final scope and fee development.

C. Willeke noted that if draft Scopes of Work were required from PMs when they bring the solicitation to the Consultant Selection Committee, it would better motivate NHDOT's PMs to get that done. M. Long continued saying that consultants do not necessarily pay attention to Article 1 provided with solicitations and the specific details for a project are usually discussed with PMs one-on-one and that the scope checklist might be better. B. Oldenburg replied that the checklist typically doesn't provide enough detail. The consultant group generally agreed that the Article 1 included with the shortlist is not really a basis for the Technical Proposals developed by consultants and that specific scope details are not really needed for Technical proposals.

M. Long referenced CTDOT's process and the position D. Mancini holds in the Consultant Selection office. In that position, he shepherds projects through the solicitation process very effectively. Mike questioned if a position like that at NHDOT would help NHDOT move projects forward.

B. Oldenburg stated that the Department is restructuring the Contracts and Specifications Section after Jake's retirement which should help with NHDOT's internal process for solicitations. He further noted that he will bring forward to the Consultant Selection Committee what will be required for solicitations and emphasize that if PMs don't have the necessary information needed for a solicitation, it may not move forward.

It was agreed that the Contracts Subcommittee needs to put forward the standardized scope(s) for the CQI's review and that at the next meeting we would discuss the next steps after scope development (Fee Spreadsheet and Independent Estimate).

3) NHDOT Website Updates

B. Oldenburg noted that the long list of LPA qualified firms has been added to the website. He continued that the website had a new look but nothing changed internally – he then reviewed the location where the LPA qualifications for all consultants were located on the website and noted that all of the consultants that submitted for the prequalifications were approved and put on the list. This list can be referenced by municipalities looking for consultant services on LPA projects and that the prequalification will need to be updated by the consultants every year.

A. Koutroubas asked if the consultants can update their prequalification at any time. B. Oldenburg responded that prequalification will only happen in January. He continued that consultants will have the option to update the package as much or as little as they want to and that the packages will be used more as a "Yellow Pages" listing for municipalities.

C Willeke noted that the annual prequalification solicitation will likely not require a complete resubmission to stay on the list. If there are wholesale changes within a firm, the Department might require a full resubmission. It was further noted that it would lighten the Department's workload if they didn't have to do complete reviews every year.

B Oldenburg noted that the Project Solicitation and Short List areas have been updated to a certain degree but also noted that most of the projects on the Shortlist page are very outdated. He also stated that the Possible Action page was also outdated. He continued that the new process will be that once a project has been shortlisted, and the selected firm, fee and G&C approval has been updated, the posting will remain up on the website for 6 months.

C. Willeke provided an update, noting that the State Bridge Aid Enrolled Project Status section has been updated with firms that have been selected for projects.

4) LPA Topics

C. Willeke provided the following updates:

- The internal checklist for invoice review has been updated and may be circulated to the CQI for review;
- TAP applications are coming in will be ranked;
- Additional LPA training sessions are being scheduled and will likely be in April or early May

5) Status of Sub-Committees

- Consultant Contract Subcommittee: Previously discussed above
- Bridge Subcommittee: No update
- Highway Subcommittee: No update

6) Other Items for Discussion

a) May Partnering Meeting – It was discussed whether the Commissioner could speak at the May meeting instead of her doing a separate Town Hall. It was agreed by all that this made sense.

b) B. Oldenburg provided the following staffing updates:

- i) Jason Ayotte – new Project Manager, filling L. Doughty’s position;
- ii) Don Lyford and Joe Adams are retiring;
- iii) The new Chief Project Manager has been selected, but yet to be announced and will be on the CQI committee.

7) Next Meeting – Wednesday – April 21st, 2021.