

**NHDOT/ACEC
CONSULTANT QUALITY INITIATIVE (CQI) MEETING**

Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2023

1:30-3:00 pm

Meeting Location: NHDOT Room 211 (Highway Design Conference Room)

In Attendance:

Tobey Reynolds, NHDOT (Chair)	Darren Blood, GM2
Loretta Girard Doughty, NHDOT (Scribe)	Marty Kennedy, VHB
Jennifer Reczek, NHDOT	JoAnn Fryer, F&O
C.R. Willeke, NHDOT	Alex Koutroubas, ACEC
Nickie Hunter, NHDOT	Rob Faulkner, CHA
Jim Marshall, NHDOT	Mike Long, MJ (Co-Chair)

Unable to attend:

Chris Mulleavey, HTA

Minutes:

- 1) Welcome Jennifer! Assign Scribe (DOT even months, ACEC odd months)
 - NHDOT Scribe: Loretta Girard Doughty.
 - Welcome: Jennifer Reczek, Administrator, Bureau of Bridge Design.

- 2) Accept June CQI Meeting Minutes (1:30 - 1:35)
 - Nickie Hunter, NHDOT, was efficient and got the last meeting minutes out quickly.
 - Motion to approve June Meeting Minutes; all in favor.

- 3) Topics to Discuss:
 - Updates on CQI Subcommittees (1:35 – 1:40)
 - Consultant Contract Subcommittee (Darren)
 - Met July 5, 2023; good meeting. Draft Standard Scope of Work document developed for Preliminary Design and Jennifer volunteered to review the draft for alignment with current Department process.
 - Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2023.
 - Also discussed general ideas about improvements to the Departments Standardized Invoicing format/requirements.

 - Bridge Subcommittee (Loretta/Jennifer)
 - Bridge Subcommittee meets quarterly; therefore, has not met yet since the last CQI Meeting.
 - Next meeting scheduled for September 8, 2023.

- Highway Subcommittee (Jim)
 - Highway Subcommittee met two weeks ago, discussion included:
 - Reviewing checklists and discussed utility relocation requests, trying to get all utility coordinators on the same page.
 - Idea to set up a "Utility Summit" meeting to allow utility companies to come in to discuss utilities on regional projects; so, they know priorities and what is coming in their region.
 - Verification and relocation requests and timelines.
 - The Department does call utility companies on urgent projects, prioritized projects, if needed.
 - CADD Standardization is close to being put out.
- Standardized Scope of Work Update
 - See notes above under Consultant Contract Subcommittee.

4) Program Administrator Position Responsibilities (1:40 – 1:50) (Loretta)

- Overview of responsibilities:
 - Still manages the Project Management staff and some projects.
 - More involved with the overall Department Program; due to staffing changes and retirements it was decided that there was a need for more redundancy.
 - Involved with Overall Program meetings such as Ten-Year Plan planning, Financial Constraint, Status of Funds, Project On-Shelf Strategy, among others.
 - Consultants can reach out with any questions or concerns on projects that are being managed in the group.

5) Submission Streamlining Update (1:50 – 2:00)

- General discussion:
 - Something Bill O. mentioned at the Partnering Meeting.
 - Tobey mentioned it was discussed at the Contract Subcommittee Meeting.
 - Not all projects require every submission, and is there a quicker process when submissions are sent in?
 - Jennifer asked about whether now that consultants are involved with Preliminary Design, where the Department typically did Preliminary Design before, whether it may now lend itself to less submissions required.
 - Loretta mentioned it depends on the type of project and what is needed.
 - Darren mentioned that the Dept.'s PM and the Consultant's PM would need to agree/coordinate.
 - PMs should be able to make the decision depending upon the type of project, it will depend upon the experience of the Department's PM and also the experience of the Consultant's PM
 - Streamlining should be looked at as an efficient use of time.

- LPA: CR notes LPA projects have a more streamlined submission process than NHDOT in-house projects. Three steps: Engineering Study, Preliminary Design, and Final Design. PS&E could be considered a fourth if there are major changes in Final Design that require another submission.
 - Have "skipped" Engineering Study before in certain streamlined projects or used a more abbreviated / existing corridor study as credit for the engineering study.
 - Have also combined Engineering Study and Preliminary Design into a "pre-NEPA" submission with a corresponding "post-NEPA" submission to follow on straight forward projects.
- Look for ways to keep the scope efficient; does it add value to the project and could we do it a different way.
- Pre-Ad Meeting: Construction's time to weigh in, through COVID some steps were skipped, and projects were not at a design point where it should be at Pre-Ad. Committee discussed being able to bring Construction into the design development process earlier.
- May not be able to streamline submissions when we are in a MS4 area.
- May be able to combine Slope & Drain and Preliminary Design for smaller projects.

6) Extra Invoicing Dates Update (2:00 – 2:10)

- General discussion:
 - Bill O. mentioned at Partnering Meeting
 - Right now, certain PMs are requiring it
 - Bill O. talked with Audit and Tobey talked with Danielle
 - Only the end of the State Fiscal Year is required
 - Loretta to send out notification to Program Management team

7) Website Update (2:10 – 2:20)

- General discussion:
 - Last update we got was 2-3 weeks ago; DOT received websites back from OIT review.
 - There were more comments than we expected, and one person (Jen Lane) is working through comments.
 - Marty asked if there was a way to communicate information to the Consulting Community until our new website is active.
 - Selection Shortlist is most important.
 - Consultants do not get notification of when they are not shortlisted.
 - Maybe send out a notification to the ACEC Notification List; until the website is up and running.
 - Upcoming 6-month projects, look-ahead; DOT will update the 6-month horizon on the old website.

8) Fall Partnering Meeting (2:20 – 2:30)

- General discussion:
 - Will there be a Fall Partnering Meeting, did one in October last year

- Modeled the meeting after the Vermont ACEC Meeting, where they did a technical presentation at one of the Partnering Meetings.
- Potential topics:
 - Department Updates
 - TYP Update (Pete did this two-years ago)
 - New Website
 - EOR changes
- Was held on October 7th in 2022.
- Alex has a standing Agenda, so Alex will propose an Agenda and work with Tobey to finalize.
 - One item will be the Ten-Year Plan presentation.
- Bill O. has the conference room reserved for October 6th, 2023; therefore, Tobey will send out a "Save the Date".

9) Project Delivery Plan Implementation (2:30 – 2:50)

- Mike L. wondering how/if/why are we including some services to be performed by consultants with various projects
- Geotechnical:
 - Many projects going out will have Geotech; the Department is asking Consultants to do more and more work now, due to staffing vacancies; therefore, including more services in the Consultant's scope of work for projects.
 - Also considering providing borings to Consultants, then they do the Geotechnical Report.
 - Should consider whether there are any risk items that should be discussed with the Geotech.
 - Understanding that the Consultant is the EOR.
 - The Department would consider hiring a third party to perform a Peer Review, if we feel it is complicated enough or risky; we are open do doing this.
- Right-of-Way:
 - There are a minimum number of consultants that can do operational side of ROW.
 - Need to follow specific federal guidelines for timing.
 - Evaluating the viability of using consultants for these services on projects.
 - Acquisition work is typically irregular, so tough to sustain the staff to perform the work.
 - The Department's risk tolerance, without an OH Rate, is \$200k threshold.
 - Alex to check with other states to see if they are putting out this type of work and if so, how are they doing it.
 - ROW is trying to keep their condemnation % down, so taking more time to negotiate.
 - Jennifer feels that the Department has swayed more towards this.
 - Vermont works towards negotiating with property owners, and Public Hearings is last option.
- Design Services:
 - Mike L. noted that "back in the day" they had the utility coordination in their scope for the Airport Access Road and pushed it through.

- Feels there is not enough of a discussion going on with the utility companies during the project.
- At a minimum, the consultants should be in the room when there are discussions are with the utility companies.
- Why are utility plans after slope & drain? Sometimes this is too late in the project; but it is our process.
- Jim Marshall noted that Mike Mozer is open to changing our process.
 - Get all the utility companies in the same room.
 - We currently do it at a Pre-Hearing Meeting; however, not all utility companies say they know about the meeting.
 - CONNECT also causing some issues in showing the utilities.
 - Darren mentioned that maybe this is something that should be added to the Preliminary Design Standardized Scope of Work .

10) No discussion on the following Agenda Items:

- How are things going?
- Ideas on Moving Forward
- Guidelines for Review – Highway and Bridge Subcommittee Task?
- Consultant Construction Support?
- Progress Measurement
- Update with Bill Cass?

11) LPA Topics (CR) (2:50 – 2:55)

- General discussion:
 - Looking at bids over the past four years, avg 6% over PS&E estimates in 2020, 8% in 2021, 21% in 2022, 26% in 2023.
 - Sometimes we receive no bids; so, contracts are retooled and put back out to bid.
 - Developing a schedule to go with Project Agreements when sending to Municipalities; asking them to do a rough schedule. Then will ask Consultants to fill out the schedule as well once the project is thru the QBS process and they are on-board.
 - Roadway Soil for Class 5 roads; DES is not thinking of this as LRS, it is more street waste - information from our Env. Folks.
 - Looking to get one-on-one feedback from the Consultant Community and/or communities on the LPA process; Community Assistance is willing to set up meetings to get feedback.
 - May consider pulling back the requirement to have a separate Construction Phase Consultant (from the designer) for State funded projects only.
 - Feedback so far received is that it helps to have an active and proactive Community Assistance project manager to help work through the internal coordination between Bureaus.
 - LPA projects with Rails/Trails - for the corridors, thinking of looking at an agreement between the DNCR (corridor maintainer) and the LPA for maintenance that will better define roles on who is responsible for what items. The goal would be to have these agreements in place prior to bidding an LPA project.

12) Other Items for Discussion Next Time (2:55 – 3:00)

- Alex is asking whether there is interest/need for a list of firms that could help out with Emergency Services for Natural Disasters
 - Tobey thinks it may not be a bad thing to have.
 - Alex will lead this effort to pull together the list; he will discuss with consultants
- Next Meeting – Wednesday – September 20th, 2023
- New Topics for Next Meeting
 - Any items from the Parking Lot? – No discussion
- The Parking Lot (Additional Topics)
 - Details of project delivery process
 - Items Identified So Far - PM Assistant, Consultant Selection Process checklist
 - Statewide Unrecoverable Costs
 - DOT Plan Addendums vs. Consultant Plan Ownership