



## Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

### AGENDA:

1. **Welcome/Good News (All-5min)**
2. **Review/Approve Meeting Minutes (All-5min)** – Approved with No Dissent
3. **Board/Administrative Updates (All-5min)**
  - a. Board Opportunities — Nominations closed, committee currently evaluating and vetting nominees
  - b. Election of Chair and Vice Chairs – Brock Storrusten plans to serve another term as Chair, Patrick Waterman and John Weavil plan to serve another term as Vice Chairs. If anyone is interested, please reach out to them or Jim.
4. **Legislative Update (Jim Smith-10min)**
  - a. Current Session Update - NC General Assembly back in session
  - b. NC Bills – No proposed legislation that affects Engineering Companies. There are on-going discussions regarding a transportation bond; waiting on DEQ omnibus bill; There is potentially a Statewide school and/or transportation bond on the way
  - c. National Bills – Biden administration currently legislating by executive order; Impeachment of Trump has been the focus of congress; A large multi-modal transportation package could be coming in the next couple of months; Pete Buttigieg is the new transportation secretary; ACEC is working to correct the FAR overhead credits clause, more than likely will be included in an infrastructure or stimulus bill;
  - d. NC/US Representative Updates – **NATIONAL**: House split for NC, 8 republicans, 5 democrats; **STATE**: Republicans picked up 4 seats in house, and lost one seat in senate; So republicans still control senate and house; Representative John Torbett is no longer in the transportation committee; senate transportation committee led by Senator McGinnis; Representative Brendan Jones leads house transportation committee
  - e. John Davis - Election Implications presentation – March / April hoping to setup virtual meeting/call with John

#### General Discussion:

- Question asked regarding Transportation Funding: Legislature does not want to see DOT get bigger so ACEC focusing on advocating to legislature to increase outsourcing goals. Reality is NCDOT has elected to start more construction projects than projects in design phase. Jim Smith encouraged group to discuss issues/concerns with each of our legislators. We still need a long-term change to how we fund transportation projects. Motor fuel tax revenue is not sustainable



long term. Vehicle miles traveled – Legislature has no appetite for this as of right now, so will have to find another solution. Legislature open to highway user fee for alternative fuel vehicles. Probably need 30-40% increase in budget to meet current need. Jim encouraged us to advocate with governor's office as well. Transportation will be a top 3 issue with legislature in 2021. There may be a local funding piece to this as well. Funding Subcommittee will be focused on these local funding challenges. Funding subcommittee is connecting with Metro Mayors group and League of Municipalities to begin these discussions.

- Question Asked regarding our state legislators – Is there a way to get information on our local representative to find out if they are a friend of ACEC prior to contacting them? – Jim Smith – Legislators have historically lumped us in with contractors but are beginning to differentiate. Jim can try to help provide information if needed. May be able to try and put together a quick information sheet as well. Regardless of they are a friend or not, we need to educate our legislators so talking to them is beneficial either way.
- Question asked regarding COVID Vaccine - Last spring state deemed engineers essential workers (not front line), engineers are included in Phase 3 vaccinations. Not much ACEC can do to try and change the distribution plan, the plan is controlled by CDC guidelines for the most part.

#### **5. PAC Updates Fundraising (Jim/Brock-15min)**

- a. National PAC 2020 Update MADE GOAL! – Exceeded our 2020 goal by \$2,000! A Big thank you to everyone that stepped up. NC came in #7 nationally for total dollars raised, and had the 2<sup>nd</sup> most total number of contributions
- b. State PAC 2021 Update – Currently close to \$3,000 (was below \$500 at start of year). Goal for year is \$20,000. We need to build up the account now since we are in a non-election year
- c. ECNC (IE) Update – Annual event moved to June. IE positions us a key leader with legislature and with the governor's office. IE can accept personal contributions and firm contributions.
- d. Events and other PAC Updates (Patrick Waterman)
  - i. Top Golf/Drive Shack; Clay Shoot – ACEC/NC Pitch for PAC event planned for Top Golf in Charlotte on March 25. Event at Drive Shack in Raleigh will be planned for later in the year. Clay shoot will be planned for summer as well.
  - ii. Raffle, Auction – Online Raffle/Auction has not been planned yet but will happen at some point this year

**6. Subcommittee Updates (10min)**

- a. Federal Subcommittee Update (Patrick Waterman) – Subcommittee has started compiling lists of entities to reach out to and begin building relationships with. ACEC had a federal committee until around 2014. With the growing military program and focusing on Pacific rather than Atlantic, it is a good time for ACEC to get back involved, educated, and to begin making contacts. It will take some time to build relationships before we can move the ship.
- b. Funding Subcommittee Update (Brock/Jessica Leggett) – Municipal funding will be initial focus of this subcommittee led by Jessica Leggett (NC native, graduated from NC State, previously with NC Department of Environmental Quality). Subcommittee will engage with other coalitions (REBIC, TREBIC, Homebuilders Association, etc). Water /Wastewater will be a big emphasis moving forward. George Collier interested in assisting this committee.

**7. Legislation Initiatives (15min-Jim/Brock)**

- a. Electronic Seals Update – ACEC has touched base with NCBELS board and will work them on a simpler solution. This issue may not need legislative action. Update coming soon from Jim Smith on how to handle remote working during the pandemic, etc.
- b. Engineering Firm Ownership – outside ACEC – Scott Stone working on getting current ownership requirements changed. Currently engineering firm ownership must be 2/3 licensed engineers. However, there are work arounds to the existing laws. The requirements are similar to attorneys, medical groups, etc. ACEC board split between pushing for change or leaving it alone. ACEC would discuss with member firms prior to taking a position on this issue.
- c. Interior Design – Moving to a requirement to have licensed interior designers. ACEC has worked with them over the past few years to make sure they didn't infringe upon engineers and our licensing arrangement. They have agreed to work with Board of Architecture to be licensed under their board. AIA has not fully jumped on-board with this plan yet.
- d. Design – Build – Proposed tweaks and adjustments to DB program; AGC to introduce minor corrections, they have been working with Representative Dean Arp. ACEC will be monitoring this but have not gotten involved thus far.

**8. Board Liaisons (Brock/Liaisons-10min)**

- a. Liaison Update
  - i. Board: Liz Phipps – Last board meeting was in December. NC First commission has come out since that meeting. Will be discussing top 3 initiatives based on commission. One of the initiatives of the board is to get more connected with the committees. The board plans to give committee chairs an opportunity to address board more than once a year.



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES  
of North Carolina

*Engineering North Carolina's future.*

- ii. Environmental & Energy: Ryan Mitchell – Meeting in January focused on PFAS and lead contamination. Next meeting not scheduled yet. Requested Jessica Leggett link with environmental committee to discuss potential funding opportunities. Jim Smith added that quarterly meetings with DEQ will be picked back up after covid
- iii. Transportation: John Adams – No update
- iv. Business Practices: Patrick Waterman – postponed annual exposition to summer/fall
- v. B & I (Econ. Dev.): Walt Gray – postponing annual symposium to summer/fall
- vi. **Executive** Leaders Forum: Jim Smith – No updates. Will be trying to have virtual event this spring

#### **9. Open Discussion (30min)**

- Scott Hinesley requested feedback on what we are struggling with as engineering firms. Scott encouraged everyone to get that message out to others.
- Greg Boulanger – Initiative to remove cap on sales tax for Mecklenburg county will likely come forward in March. One penny increase for the county would raise \$6.5 billion. Greg requested ACEC consider supporting the initiative.
- Legislative day for 2021 – There will be no joint legislative day. Jim Smith to discuss planning a slightly different event, a smaller event with maybe a key legislator doing a 1 hour webinar. Webinar to touch on things like what is happening in legislature, how legislature operates, how to get involved. May also try to schedule online meetings with legislators over a week or a month.
- ACEC Summit in Washington will be virtual – the end of April – no advocating in Washington this year but will probably have legislative month and be trying to schedule online meetings with key legislatures.

#### **10. Future Meeting Dates - Apr 8, Jun 10...then new ACEC year!**