**Legislative Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

11:30am – 1:00pm

ACEC Office, 13th Floor Wells Fargo Building + Virtual Meeting

**Purpose**

ACEC/NC is the sole organization in North Carolina that represents the business interests of the engineering industry in our state.  A key component of ACEC/NC’s mission is to “promote the business interests of engineering companies by providing *legislative advocacy*”.  We work on behalf our member organizations to support and promote issues that are of importance to them and the engineering industry, both on the state and federal level.

**Meeting Notes**

The notes below represent the general discussion, information and resulting action items:

1. **Welcome/Review/Approve Meeting Minutes**

* Claire Brinkley, Interim Legislative Committee Chair, called the meeting to order. She reiterated the purpose of the ACEC/NC Legislative Committee.
* Claire asked the group if anyone had comments on the Meeting Notes from February 7, which were included as an attachment in the Meeting Reminder Email. No comments were provided.
* Claire asked if attendees had any additions or modifications to the Agenda. No comments were provided.

1. **Board/Administrative Updates**

* Claire highlighted the recent leadership transition within the Legislative Committee.
  + Claire Brinkley serves as the Interim Chair and Board Liaison
  + Seth Poole serves as the Successor
  + Jenny Flemming serves as the Vice Chair
  + Tori Meister serves as the Liaison to the Buildings & Infrastructure Committee and Business Practices Committee
  + Everett Loving serves as the Liaison to the Transportation Committee and Environmental / Energy Committee
  + Joe Angell is the Champion for ACEC/NC National
  + Will Larsen and Josh Slusarczyk are our Jr. Board Liaisons
* Tori Meister said that Legislative Day is rescheduled for June 5.
  + Tori is the Champion for Legislative Day this year.
  + Claire will get an updated list from David Ferrell of the names.
  + Robbie Hoffman will engage the Future Leaders to participate.
  + As a next step, Tori will schedule initial planning call, then will reach out individually to people to schedule meetings with their representatives.
* Claire showcased the new Advocacy webpage and Legislative Tracker. The purpose for the update was to allow member firms a forum to provide feedback on the legislation that we have identified. The link to the ACEC/NC Legislative Tracker – Pending Legislation is: [Legislative Tracker - ACEC of North Carolina (acecnc.org)](https://www.acecnc.org/legislative-tracker/)

1. **FEDERAL Legislative/Regulatory Updates/Discussion**

* In Joe Angell’s absence, Claire and Tara read his notes:
  + The Federal Government is a BIG client, our member firms should seriously explore competing in this space. Please take the survey provided.
  + OTAs (Other Transactional Agreements) are an unexplored mechanism for project execution that needs a framework of guidance (delineate types and sizes of qualifying jobs, etc.) and possibly provide training.
  + DOD (Navy and Army) Project Delivery systems - we should continue to support and push for Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and Integrated Design and Construction (IDAC) if doing so delivers high-quality and cost-efficient project delivery.
  + PLAs - Establish more guidance, Protecting the exemption for engineers and establishing more guidance, like ensuring that non-union contractors are treated fairly and not forced to pay dues or fees to compete fairly.
* Joe sent a request that member firms participate in: [Project Labor Agreement (PLA) Survey for Southeast Region Federal Construction 2024 Summit (apps.mil)](https://forms.osi.apps.mil/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=unZN_HzxUEy5p48xY9J1grhiO-nrhKtNiwap6weIQJhUM1g0TkdIWFhNWjRWMTY3UEI5WlBVRlFZMi4u)
* There is a request for volunteers to support of National Legislative efforts.

1. **STATE Legislative/Regulatory Updates/Discussion**

* David Ferrell provided a North Carolina legislative update:
  + The Agency Bill that gives NCDOT the authority to issue the next round of bonds was not passed last year. David said there is a strong likelihood it will be passed in the short session.
  + David recently met Representative Brendan Jones to talk about Transportation; his focus is on NCDOT and NCDMV.
  + It is not likely to see significant new funding for initiatives in 2024, but there will be provisions for water / sewer infrastructure in the budget.
  + NC TEN has not been meeting regularly, so it is unclear the priorities for modernization of transportation funding in 2025. Nick Tennyson said that demonstrating the value of our industry and purpose of the funding (or rather how far the funding goes) should be a priority.
* There was a question about Climate Resilience. David said that NCDOT does have a sustainability plan, and they do seem to be actively looking at funding opportunities. There are several important coastal legislators who are focused on coastal storm resiliency issues.
* For the Future Leaders in our meeting, David provided an overview of our strategy for the Short Session. The impending election will likely keep this session short but it depends on how quickly they want to settle some of the high profile issues. He will circulate the issues that affect ACEC as we hear about them.

1. **LOCAL Legislative/Regulatory Updates/Discussion**

* Jenny stated that Emerald Isle ruled that local stormwater plans do not need to be signed by and engineer to help local developers. The Committee will continue to watch this change and engage NCBELS on the ruling.

1. **PAC Updates Fundraising**

* Mike Holder said that we are tracking well this year on our fundraising efforts. The PAC Trustees are deciding how to spend the balance on specific candidates given this is an election year. There will be a strategic effort to preposition to tackle big issues (e.g. QBS, E-signatures, etc.) in the next long session.
* Claire emphasized importance of the PAC contribution to give us a seat at the table. A Future Leader sent in a question about the PAC dollars. We are focused on finding common ground on the issues to increase the effectiveness of our committee. Mike emphasized being open minded to all parties is the only way to be successful. Matt Fogelman said our commitment is to policy focus rather than politics.
* The upcoming fundraising events are Sporting Clay Fundraiser on 5/31 and the Golf Tournament on 6/24. We are looking for sponsorship for these events.

1. **STRATEGIC PLAN (Claire/Others-10min)**

* Claire provided an overview of the surveying effort that occurred in February 2024 to solicit general feedback from member firms. From the feedback, the Legislative Committee developed eight strategic priorities.

1. Highlight the Value of the Engineering Industry
2. Establish a Workforce Development Strategy
3. Develop a Model-Based Design Transition Plan
4. Promote Qualification-Based Selection (QBS) Legislation
5. Build Relationships to Benefit Engineers
6. Advocate for Transportation Funding Modernization
7. Enhance Educational Opportunities in the Legislative Committee Meetings
8. Support National Initiatives

* Seth, Jenny and Everett presented more details on the strategies:
  + Elevating Engineering Industry
    - Tara has requested data from the ACEC Research Institute.
    - Jenny said ACEC-SC launched their own 501(c)(3) to research the return on investment for infrastructure. We will continue to watch their progress.
  + Workforce Development Strategy
    - Based on survey feedback, Executives are concerned about middle staff making the leap to PMs. The industry as a whole is concerned about the pipeline of talent entering the workforce. NCDOT is very interested in partnering on a STEM taskforce.
    - Regarding workforce, the Legislative Committee will specifically identify legislative actions we can support.
    - ACEC National recently hired a new staff member to focus specifically on workforce development. We can invite this person as a speaker for our committee.
  + Model Based Design:
    - One of our earlier next steps will be to advance the conversation regarding Model-Based Design. Seth will set up an initial meeting to discuss our action plan.
    - Tara has been asked by NCBELS to provide comment on policy language specifically about BIM.
  + Quality Based Selection (QBS):
    - Quality Based Selection (QBS) is a recent topic that has come up due to funding requirements being relaxed. Safety and public health is the main focus of this issue. Our industry does not want to see erosion to this type of procurement.
  + Relationships:
    - We recognize the need to make and maintain strong connections between agencies like NCDEQ, NCBELS, NCDOT and State Construction Office.

1. **Open Discussion**

* No comments were provided.

1. **Future Meeting Dates**

* Claire closed the meeting by saying the next Legislative Committee meeting will be on June 20 in Raleigh at the ACEC/NC office or virtual.

**Action Items**

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| **Topic** | **Action** | **Point Person** | **Deadline** |
| Legislative Day | Schedule initial planning call with Claire, Robbie Hoffman and Ferrell Nicholson | Tori Meister | 4/22 |
| Legislative Day | Obtain updated list from David Ferrell | Claire Brinkley | 4/22 |
| ORD | Schedule initial planning call with Radha | Seth Poole | 4/22 |
| ORD | Schedule “large call” to engage two people in each member firm | Seth Poole | 5/31 |
| Speakers | Invite Workforce contact at ACEC National to speak at an upcoming Legislative Committee Meeting | Claire Brinkley | 6/30 |