

# MEETING MINUTES

## 2025 Board of Directors Meeting #3 - Minutes

November 20, 2024 - 7:30am to 10:30am

Location: Hershey Country Club, Hershey, PA

### Attendees Present:

Board Members: Mark Markosky (President), Mike Bougher (Immediate Past President/National Director), Mike Girman (President Elect), Rosanna Smithnosky (Vice President), Eric Meyer (Treasurer), Casey Moore (Secretary), Maggie Talarico, Colleen Meiswich, Mark Kinnee, Josh Wilson, Tony Dougherty, Damon Rhodes, Dan Laird, Scott Zeevaart, Jim Maloney, Joseph Riley, Matt Macey, Larry Bankert (**Quorum satisfied – all present**)

ACEC/PA Executive Director: Brent Sailhamer

ACEC/PA Staff: Sarah Babski

Not present: N/A

Guests: Jim Ritzman, Mike Kenawell

### **I. Call to Order/Roll Call – Mark Markosky**

- Markosky called the meeting to order at 7:40am.
- Markosky reminded attendees of the antitrust policy and to review.
- Attendees were informed the meeting would be recorded to prepare a summary of minutes.
- Roll call was conducted by Moore. (*Quorum satisfied – all present. Attendees above.*)

### **II. Prior Meeting Minutes and 11/20/24 Consent Agenda – Casey Moore**

- Reviewed final draft board meeting minutes from September 11, 2024.
- No comments.
- *Motion made by M. Bougher; Dougherty seconded to approve consent agenda. Unanimously passed.*

#### Consent Agenda

- Discussion: Clarified the inclusion of committee reports in this item since there was not a separate consent agenda cover page.
- *Motion made by Rhodes; Meyer seconded to approve consent agenda. Unanimously passed.*

### **III. Financial Report and Audit – Eric Meyer**

- Refer to Treasurer's memo provided in Board packet for meeting – budget vs. actuals
- Reporting Period through September 30, 2024.

#### Events Discussed:

- Infrastructure Day

- Western Regional Meeting
- Golf Outing (9/9): Profitable, but with lower attendance and yielded less. Revenue directed to scholarship fund.

## Financial Highlights – October 2024 vs. September 2024

- Infrastructure Conference:
  - Revenue: \$14,000 profit (initially mislabeled as revenue).
  - Expenses: \$50,000
  - Net Profit: \$14,000 after correction. Approximately \$12,000 below budget, due to lower attendance.
- PAC not in Board report packet – showed at meeting

## Other updates by B. Sailhamer

- Membership Status:
  - 3 members with outstanding dues. Follow-up ongoing.
- Membership Changes:
  - EL Moore Engineering notified ACEC/PA of non-renewal.
- Savings in salaries with one less ACEC/PA employee.
- Will save \$6k/month using R. Morris externally for assisting with financials.
- Novi and QuickBooks integrated so R. Morris has access to online system.
- *Motion to approve made by Markosky; seconded by Rhodes. Financials unanimously passed.*

## Action Items:

- Correct financial report terminology from "revenue" to "profit."
- Continue to monitor budget projections and adjust strategies as necessary.

## **IV. Membership Report – Rosanna Smithnosky**

### Current Status:

- Membership Changes: Down by four firms YTD since fiscal year started in July. Refer to report in Board packet.
  - Reasons: Varying (e.g., low value, mergers).
- New Members: Up by one (Rodriguez Engineering)

### Membership Survey:

- Launch Date: November 15th.
- Completion Time: 15-20 minutes.
- Objective: Gather member feedback for strategic planning.
- Deadline: mid-December 2024.

### Upcoming Meeting:

- Date: December 3rd.

- Agenda: Liaison outreach and data-driven decision-making.

Strategies to Improve Membership:

- Discussed potential member and lost member outreach with firms sharing cost and benefits value gained as some reasons they are not members.
- Need to update/enhance Member Value Statement potentially with new strategic plan.
- Create brochures and videos highlighting membership benefits.
- Showcase advocacy successes and member/client testimonials. Videos can make stronger people connections and can be added to website. Maloney offered assist to Smithnosky to create videos for membership and supporting ACEC/PA PAC.
- Emphasize unique differentiators compared to technical associations.
- Include diversity of firms that are members, both primes and DBE's. Show firm size variations.
- M. Bougher suggested we add education into Board orientation on membership.
- *Motion to approve made by Meyer; seconded by Riley. Membership report unanimously passed.*

Action Items:

- Membership Committee to take lead on products to improve education and promotion of ACEC/PA membership value.
- Create and distribute membership marketing materials (brochures/videos).
- Board members encourage ACEC/PA point of contacts to facilitate participation within their firms to complete survey.
- Follow up on member survey participation to ensure comprehensive data collection for strategic plan and beyond.

**V. National Director Report – Mike Bougher/Brent Sailhamer**

- ALL ACEC/PA Board Members have contributed to ACEC/PA and ACEC National PACs

National Dues Increase Discussion

- Proposal:
  - Increase dues by 5% plus CPI adjustment of 2.7%, totaling 7.7%.
- Budget Allocations:
  - Advocacy Positions: \$202,000 for two vice presidents.
  - Membership Recruitment Professional: \$202,000.
  - Technology Professional: \$253,000.
  - Data Management: \$162,000.
  - Salary Benchmarking Adjustment: \$575,000.
  - MO Strengthening Program: \$100,000.
- Concerns on ACEC National Budget:
  - Sudden staffing additions are already in place.
  - Potential financial strain on member organizations, especially larger firms.

- Transparency on how increased dues will be utilized.

## **Actions Items:**

- **Listening Sessions:** Sailhamer requested that MOs be heard on budget concerns and be collaborative. Promote to membership and also gather member feedback.
- **Communication:** Inform members about the implications and seek input.
- **Official Position:** Monitor ongoing discussions and outcomes of national dues increase. Prepare to formulate an official board response based on member feedback. Develop board stance post-feedback.

## **VI. Events Report – Sarah Babski**

- Recent Event Attendance:
  - Western Region:
    - Pittsburgh: 73 attendees (low)
    - District 1: 107 attendees (increase from previous year)
  - Central Region:
    - Turnpike Commission Event: Lowest attendance recorded
  - Government Affairs:
    - Mixed attendance; some events as low as 22 participants
  - Fall Day:
    - Total Attendance: 90+ (below expected and contracted 200 people)
    - Financial Impact: Contracted food and beverage minimum not met; penalty to be offset by a future event in 2025
    - Sponsorship:
      - Status: Exceeded sponsorship budgets by \$4,000 due to a last-minute premier partner sponsor
- Event Issues Identified:
  - Low attendance attributed to member busyness and event timing conflicts
  - Difficulty in booking high-profile speakers consistently
- Diamond Awards:
  - Project Submissions: Some poor areas with few or no submissions. Winners were notified.
  - Special Awards: only two (2) nominations received for two areas and none for two (2) others.
  - Registration for January 23, 2025 event now open.

## **Strategies for Improvement:**

- Focus on securing valuable speakers and compelling event topics
- Consider regional relocations to enhance accessibility
- Emerging Leaders – future NOW series. Sarah is emphasizing to do more.
- Move award event to Fall? - Diamond Awards
- Settle into marquee events and not continue to move around and change all we do.

- Explore collaborations with other organizations to co-host joint events and avoid scheduling conflicts
- Idea to have a centralized calendar with peer professional organizations to reduce issue

### **Action Items:**

- Reevaluate the viability of continuing Fall Day as it currently exists; consider restructuring or discontinuing.
- Investigate potential partnerships with other associations to boost attendance and reduce event competition.
- Analyze successful events to identify replicable strategies for future planning.
- Consider more meet & greet social events to increase participation at various levels.

## **VII. Government Affairs – Jim Ritzman**

- Monthly Calls: Average Attendance: Mid to upper 20s members.
- Recent Event: October Meeting with Congressman Scott Perry: Low attendance (22 participants); received positive feedback. Evening event, and likely better for legislative members.
- Upcoming Event: January 15th: Planned meeting with Congressman Chris D’Aluzzio from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

### **Strategies to Increase Attendance:**

- Utilize social media for event promotion.
- Invite new members to receptions to get integrated into ACEC/PA.
- Implement hybrid (in-person and virtual) formats to broaden reach, with potential of paid webinar format to increase accessibility to legislators. Ritzman to discuss with committee.
- Highlight the value of access to legislators and advocacy opportunities.

### **Action Items:**

- Explore virtual webinar options to enhance legislator accessibility.
- Strengthen event promotion through various communication channels.
- Encourage committee members to engage with local legislators proactively.

## **VIII. Committee Reports – Mike Kenawell**

- **Water, Energy, Environmental Committee:** Met in early November and have good momentum and engagement of 15-20 participants. Discussing permitting process with PennDOT, and they are very engaged. Next meeting in December scheduled. Refining and setting new goals. Recommendation made by J. Ritzman to contact Natasha Fackler at DEP to also engage with the committee and ACEC/PA.

## **IX. Strategic Plan Update – Jim Maloney**

- Ongoing Goals: Progress made; some tasks revised or removed on Teams working group.
- Data Integration:
  - Membership Survey: Incorporate feedback into strategic planning.



- Committee Inputs: Gather strategic goals from committee chairs.
- Industry Advisory Group:
  - Members: Mark Compton, Cheryl Moon, Nolan Ritchie, Matt Reifer, Bob Latham, and possibly Danielle Okai (Deputy Chief of Staff to Gov. Shapiro)
  - Objective: Identify organizational blind spots and industry-wide opportunities.
- Upcoming Workshop: March 3-4, 2025 in Central Pennsylvania (TBD). Details to come.

## **Action Items:**

- Send save the date to Board for 2025 strategic plan meeting.
- Finalize strategic goals based on member survey and committee feedback.
- Engage Industry Advisory Group to provide comprehensive insights.
- Prepare for the upcoming strategic workshop with consolidated data and recommendations.

## **X. Executive Director's Report – Brent Sailhamer**

- Other Committee Updates:
  - **Land Development:**
    - Engaged with PennDOT on Habitat Preservation and Development Act (HLP).
    - Conducted surveys with conservation and DEP staff to assess permitting processes.
  - **Technology Working Group:**
    - Focus on digital delivery and engaging with PennDOT on technology initiatives.
  - **Workforce Development Taskforce:**
    - Triad leaders. Initiatives in K-12 education, alternative career pathways, and emerging leaders' programs.
- DBE Rule:
  - Issues: Federal challenges could impact Pennsylvania's DBE requirements.
- Indemnification:
  - Status: Ongoing negotiations with PA Turnpike Commission; awaiting responses.
- Advocacy Efforts:
  - Continued focus on permit processes and regulatory improvements.
  - Engaging with PennDOT and DEP to streamline permitting and provide resources.
  - Transportation Chairs in House would like ACEC/PA input on items that should be in consideration for future legislation going into 2025. A list of items was brainstormed by Board as follows: Engineer of Record, Design Build Best Value, Inspection Wage rates, Transportation Funding, and Transit Funding

## **Action Items:**

- Address uncertainties surrounding the DBE rule and communicate potential impacts to members.
- Finalize indemnification language and resolve contractual issues with the PA Turnpike Commission.

- Enhance advocacy efforts by maintaining strong relationships with key regulatory agencies.
- Provide list of areas to legislators important to ACEC/PA members to stay front of mind.

## **XI. President's Report – Mark Markosky**

- Steve Hall's November 2024 Election Report via Virtual Meeting
  - ACEC champions fared well in election.
  - 18-2 in Senate and 315-10 in House for ACEC PAC supported candidates.
  - Key Takeaways: Overall better regulatory policies good for ACEC firm businesses. Reauthorization of IIJA expires in 2026 but will be renewed as different bill with likely lower dollars. R&D still alive for discussion to resolve.
- Meeting with Secretary Carroll
  - Discussed Conflict of Interest on contractor side and SOI items.
  - Asked if Michelle Harter could provide tool from PennDOT that could be used to determine conflicts. She said she would look into it.
  - Infrastructure funding – waiting until post-election for direction
  - Discussed that ACEC/PA is working with the PA Turnpike to resolve indemnification language, as PennDOT has previously done.
  - Asked that Sec. Carroll inform Districts they could sign off on Diamond Awards that it is an acknowledgement not an endorsement.
  - Nothing new brought to ACEC/PA leaders from Sec. Carroll.
- ACEC Insurance Trust
  - Law keeping smaller member firms from being in trust,

### **Action Item:**

- Ongoing communication with insurance department regarding membership in the Insurance Trust. Brent Sailhamer to look into it and why PA is not available. Need to resolve as part of value proposition.

## **XII. New Business – Mark Markosky**

- Winter Schools for PennDOT
  - T. Dougherty asked if ACEC/PA presentation could be freshened up.

### **Action Item:**

- Update ACEC/PA presentation for PennDOT Winter School

## **XIII. Member Feedback – Mark Markosky**

- S. Babski noted she got email from potential new member saying National would only allow them as Affiliate member. Discussed that ACEC/PA is same price for any size of an Affiliate firm, but that they cannot be on the ACEC/PA Board or a Committee chair.

## **XIII. Executive Session – Mark Markosky**

- N/A

## **XV. Meeting adjourned at 10:22am.**

- *Motion to adjourn made by Meyer, seconded by Rhodes, and unanimously approved.*

### **Action Items:**

- **Treasurer (E. Meyer):**
  - Correct financial report terminology.
  - Monitor and update budget projections regularly.
- **Membership (R. Smithnosky):**
  - Membership Committee to take lead on products to improve education and promotion of ACEC/PA membership value.
  - Create and distribute membership marketing materials (brochures/videos).
  - Follow up on member survey participation to ensure comprehensive data collection for strategic plan and beyond.
- **ACEC/PA Board (All):**
  - Board members encourage ACEC/PA point of contacts to facilitate participation within their firms to complete member survey.
  - Assess and respond to the national dues increase proposal as a group.
  - Participate in listening sessions to gather feedback.
  - Formulate an official board position on the dues increase based on collected feedback that Sailhamer will draft.
- **Government Affairs (J. Ritzman):**
  - Implement potential virtual and hybrid event formats to enhance attendance.
  - Strengthen promotion strategies through social media and other communication channels.
  - Encourage committee members and all members to proactively engage with local legislators.
- **Strategic Plan Committee (J. Maloney):**
  - Integrate membership survey and committee feedback into the strategic plan.
  - Collaborate with the Industry Advisory Group to identify and address organizational blind spots.
  - Prepare for the strategic workshop scheduled for March 3-4, 2025.
- **Executive Director (B. Sailhamer):**
  - Continue advocacy on key legislative issues affecting members.
  - Address DBE rule uncertainties and communicate potential impacts.
  - Finalize indemnification language negotiations with the PA Turnpike Commission.
  - Maintain and continue to strengthen relationships with regulatory agencies like PennDOT and DEP.
  - Provide list of areas to legislators important to ACEC/PA members to stay front of mind.
- **Events (S. Babski):**
  - Reevaluate the viability of continuing Fall Day as it currently exists; consider restructuring or discontinuing.



- Investigate potential partnerships with other associations to boost attendance and reduce event competition.
- Analyze successful events to identify replicable strategies for future planning.
- Consider more meet & greet social events to increase participation at various levels.

## **Follow-up Items:**

- **Membership Survey (R. Smithnosky):**
  - Ensure completion by end of December.
  - Analyze and incorporate feedback into strategic planning.
- **Membership Committee Meeting:**
  - **Date:** December 3rd.
  - **Agenda:** Liaison outreach and data-driven decision-making.
- **Establish Strategic Plan Workshop Details:**
  - **Date:** March 3-4, 2025. (Send out Save the Date to Board)
  - **Location:** Central Pennsylvania (TBD).
- **National Dues Increase (M. Bougher/B. Sailhamer)**
  - Monitor outcomes of listening sessions.
  - Formulate board response post-feedback and coordinate with full Board.
- **Indemnification and Insurance Trust (B. Sailhamer):**
  - Resolve membership barriers for smaller firms.
  - Communicate updates to members regarding changes and solutions.
- **Government Affairs Events (S. Babski/J. Ritzman):**
  - Schedule and promote upcoming meetings with legislators.
  - Implement virtual webinar formats to increase accessibility.
- **Event Planning (S. Babski):**
  - Finalize plans for events in 2025 to offset Fall Day penalties.
  - Consider strategies discussed at meeting for event improvements.
  - Consider regional/joint society collaborations to enhance event success and attendance.