NEVADA STATE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS
Minutes of the Professional Association Liaison Committee Meeting

Held via Zoom, Wednesday, May 14, 2020, at 8:00am PDT

Committee members participating were Chairman, Gregory DeSart, PE; Patty Mamola, Executive Director; Matthew Gingerich, PLS board member; and Tracy Larkin-Thomason, PE. Also joining were Andrew Hanson, ASCE; Topher Barnes, City of Henderson; Lynn Nielson, City of Henderson; David Slater, ACEC; Rob Bates, NSPE; Bob Thompson, NSPE; Lynette Russell, APWA; Jason Higgins, NALS; Randall Rice, ASCE; Brian Kalina, NSPE; and Murray Blaney; Operations/Compliance for the board.

1. **Meeting conducted by Committee Chair Greg DeSart, call to order and roll call to determine**

Mr DeSart called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

2. **Public comment period (Discussion Only)**

Mr Barnes: *This is Topher Barnes from the city of Henderson, we wanted to come to comment on this meeting, I don’t know if it’s on the particular agenda in regards to the experiences that we’re having at the City of Henderson; enforcing the current regulations for digital signing for engineer plans. It’s become problematic in the sense of the digital signatures are, in terms of requiring, to be on the plans. The plans are commonly combined with other plans. It has made it hard. With paper it was easy because it was just how you collated files, but the collation of electronic files has become difficult or in some cases slower, depending on the stamps that we need. In addition, there’s not a lot of comfort that some folks have with the digital signatures yet. What we’re finding is that when they finally figure out how to digitally sign it, it is in a way that we’re unable to comment within the plan to be able to assist them and do reviews. So, it’s a problem for us because we want to provide the best customer service for development, including engineers in terms of getting these plans in but we are facing some problems in trying to review and give them the type of review they need.*

Mr Nielson: Lynn Nielson here with City of Henderson. I’d like to also give a little bit of additional information beyond what Topher offered you already. One of the biggest problems we’re seeing is in building submittals. Because building submittals often involve an electrical engineer, a mechanical engineer, a civil engineer, and each of these different disciplines will be locking down their plans. Then when you try and bring the whole thing together as a cohesive submittal, in other words one digital file that comes in to us for review, we are having problems, and I can’t over emphasize this enough, in allowing markups and allowing us to do what we need to do in order to add our stamps or our approvals - yet allowing the engineers over each discipline to ensure the security of their documents. So, the sooner you can get the task force meeting the better because multi discipline submittals in particular are highly problematic.*
Mr DeSart said that that the digital signature task force is a perfect spot to really talk about it and air out all the different agency concerns and start to build a consensus. We've been having all these theoretical conversations, there's only a couple of agencies that were fully digital, now out of necessity we've all had to pivot overnight.

Mr Barnes said they could only guess what issues might arise in being fully digital, and now we're in the thick of it. We understand a lot more of our workflow and the requirements, and that is why we are looking to partner with the board to ensure that it meets that standard and how that impacts the time of review.

Ms Mamola said she was in the process of scheduling another digital signature task force meeting for later in May or early June. She added that many agencies are probably having issues and it's time we have a discussion and figure out a workable process for all. Ms Mamola said that some licensees don’t have a good understanding of what they need to do to allow agencies to do mark-ups. Settings are available to secure the documents while allowing for agency markups and comments. She continued to say staff is working on an adaptation of a guide put out by North Las Vegas to explain the basic process. **(ACTION item)**

Mr Barnes said Henderson also provides a guide for electronic submittals in Adobe and Bluebeam formats, but there are still issues that need to be worked through.

3. **Introductions**

Those participating in the meeting introduced themselves.

4. **Approval of March 4, 2020, Professional Association Liaison Committee meeting minutes (For possible action)**

PAL-03 A motion was made by Mr Gingerich, seconded by Ms Mamola to approve the March 4, 2020 committee meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Discussion of changes to Nevada Revised Statutes 625 and 327 and Nevada Administrative Code 625, 327, and 329 to update laws and rules (Discussion Only)**

Mr DeSart reviewed the status of the current review of statues and regulations. He clarified that any proposed language the board has approved to date, and is considering at today’s board meeting, doesn’t make a regulatory change, it just starts the process of public review. At that point there will be opportunities for public comment and input from the professional community.
Ms Mamola said a survey will be sent out next week regarding the proposed amendments to gather comments and feedback. It will be emailed to the board’s database of active, inactive and retired licensees, and will also go out to other wider industry stakeholders. She asked that members share the information with their wider affiliated groups for feedback.

6. Discussion of Digital Signature/Electronic Submittal Working Group (Discussion Only)

Ms Mamola said she wanted to reiterate that the urgency to get a working solution is understood. As soon as the next meeting date is set notifications will be sent out. (ACTION Item)

7. Discussion of Nevada State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors public outreach efforts (Discussion Only)

Mr DeSart reviewed the progress of the board’s public outreach social media program. He said the board was now actively posting multiple times per week on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. He added that a blog was also active on the website. Mr DeSart said the campaign was starting to gain traction and encouraged individuals and organizations to follow and share to add connectivity with the wider industry stakeholders.

Participants commented that activity was being noticed and beginning to be shared through a number of the professional associations.

Ms Mamola said that the upcoming board newsletter would have a blurb about how to find and follow NVBPELS on the various platforms.

8. Nevada State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors activities (Discussion Only)

Ms Mamola said other than the legislative review and public outreach, the board has been focused on continuity of operations. Staff have been working remotely and the office will likely remain closed to the public through to mid-June. As soon we have a date for public access again, we will let you all know.

Ms Mamola said the board is considering extending a grace period of 180 days for professional development hour requirements for the July 1, 2020 license renewal period. She added that late fees will be waived for those who may be unable to renew by the expiration date and that licenses that are due to expire will not immediately be placed in delinquent status. A ninety-day grace period will be put in place.

9. Professional association / industry activities (Discussion Only)
Mr DeSart asked for the professional association representatives to give an update on their activities

ACEC – Mr Slater said they have been connecting with local and state public agencies through zoom conference calls to get agency perspectives on the COVID-19 impacts currently and what may look like in the future. We also wanted to find out their plans moving forward and specifically how ACEC could support them in their plan. In general, there will be little impact to this year’s budget as funds have been allocated so design and construction projects will move forward. The greater impact will be felt into the next fiscal year. Mr Slater said the exercise was carried out so companies can better forecast the workload and the opportunities in the future. It helps us to understand what the agencies are looking for, and if they’re looking for federal support where they can, or they’re looking for support with bonds approvals etc.

ASCE – Mr Hanson said luncheons have been discontinued, but they will be doing a web-based event with a guest speaker in June and fundraising events have been bumped to later in the summer. He said the organization is doing its best to stay engaged and keep moving forward. Mr Hanson said, related to the PDH discussion at the previous committee meeting, the board seemed ok with a reduction in PDHs with a higher level of focus. He added that for those seeking PDH opportunities, ASCE offers online courses and the Society of Mining Engineers does so as well.

NALS – Mr Higgins said the organization has remained active and had a virtual board meeting on May 1, 2020. He said NALS sent a letter to the board supporting the current 30-hour PDH requirement with the inclusion of ethics and state law specific components. A letter of support has also been requested from NSPS. Mr Higgins reported that Great Basin College is moving forward with hiring a second professor for the land surveying geomatics program. The NALS legislative and 2022 datum committees are staying active virtually and the Nevada Traverse has a new editor – Trent Keenan.

NSPE – Mr Thompson said NSPE is also remaining engaged virtually. He said NSPE national has hired a consultant to help us with our recruiting efforts. We are trying to retain and increase our membership. He said the national conference that was planned to be in Philadelphia is going to now be a virtual conference in August this year.

Mr Bates said the chapter level is continuing with their education programs. He said they are offering an online ethics session webinar for members looking for PDH opportunities.

Mr Kalina said NSPE in southern Nevada would be having a virtual meeting next Tuesday 11:30am and are seeking interest from members in joining the NSPE leadership boards at the chapter or state level. He said the Future Cities program, which NSPE has taken the lead with, have continued to grow and be successful and they’re getting to the point where it’s almost two too much for one organization to handle. We are reaching out to anybody that is interested in the other organizations to help be a part of that great opportunity to inject surveying or engineering, or other professional expertise into those programs.
APWA – Ms Russell said APWA hosted a web-based meeting last week with a roundtable and had our best attendance ever, we had over 230 people on the call. It was a great forum and the plan is to continue the web-based meetings. The focus is to maintain engagement and continue with learning opportunities for membership – and explore new opportunities to stay connected.

10. Discussion of quality of engineering and land surveying services submitted to public agencies (follow-up to March 4, 2020 PAL meeting discussions) (Discussion Only)

Mr DeSart said the City of Henderson came to our last committee meeting and expressed concern that a number of professionals were doing design by review. Submitting incomplete plans and then letting the entity guide the design with the review comments. They wanted to get feedback from industry, about what the industry thought would be a good way to prevent this from happening. Mr DeSart said the action item from that meeting was for the professional associations to go back to their memberships to get feedback, so that the city could have consensus from the industry about an approach that they could get support from.

Mr Neilson said part of the issue is getting the word out through the professional associations that design by review is not acceptable. We appreciate that professionals are under pressure from clients, but doing design by review is impacting the review process for all.

Mr DeSart asked for input from the professional associations.

Mr Salter said the issue had not yet been discussed. He said he would add to an upcoming board meeting agenda for discussion and report back to the PAL council.

Mr Hanson said some of the comments from ASCE centered around consistency on the reviewing side: having the same reviewer from start to finish; being consistent in each round of reviewing – comments added in a subsequent round that weren’t made initially can be frustrating; and communicating issues clearly – so the licensee knows where the “goal posts” are located. Mr Hanson added that there was a consensus about the value of pre-submittal meetings.

Mr Higgins said it had not yet been discussed by NALS, and he thought the issue likely related more directly to engineering than land surveying.

Mr Thompson said NSPE had not discussed the topic, but it could be brought up at the next meeting.

Ms Russell said it maybe something that should be brought up in their next meeting.

Mr Barnes said the city is looking to the board for input on thresholds that would cause issues with a submittal to come to the attention of the board. He added the city has internal triggers already in determining certain types of behavior that would seem warranted for the board to look at. Mr Barnes
continued to say we want to know as we are looking at our procedures, some guidance from the board on how they would like to be informed of any activity like that.

Mr DeSart said that's probably a separate conversation that we would have at a board meeting which we could add to a future board meeting agenda.

Ms Mamola said there has been a proposed amendment to NAC 625.550 which the board is going to discuss at today's meeting. After the meeting I will forward the proposed changes out for comment from association members. (ACTION item) The amended language should provide more clarity to licensees employed by government agencies – but please review and offer feedback.

Mr Kalina said NSPE would be willing during the coming months to entertain a coordinated luncheon virtual meeting as a forum to discuss these items.

Ms Mamola said she would be willing to review the proposed regulatory amendments with NSPE in a virtual meeting. (ACTION item)

11. **Open discussion topics (Discussion Only)**

No topics were put forward for discussion.

12. **Next meeting date and location (Discussion Only)**

Mr DeSart set the next virtual meeting for Thursday July 9, 2020, at 8am PDT.

13. **Public comment period (Discussion Only)**

There was no public comment.

14. **Adjourn**

Mr DeSart adjourned the meeting at 9:06am

Respectfully,  

Patty Mamola  
Executive Director