

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS
Minutes of the Professional Association Liaison Committee Meeting
Held virtually, Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Committee members participating were Chairman, Gregory DeSart, PE; and Tracy Larkin-Thomason, PE. Also joining were Patty Mamola, Executive Director; Louisa Kern, Administrative Assistant; Greg Phillips, NALS; Dr David James, NSPE; Andrew Howard, ASCE; Topher Barnes, City of Henderson; Lynn Nielson, City of Henderson; David Alexander, CMAA; Mark Casey, ACEC; Steve Gould, SEASoNs; and Gerald Gunny, City of Henderson.

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

2. Public comment period

There was no public comment.

3. Introductions

Those participating introduced themselves.

4. Approval of May 14, 2020, Professional Association Liaison Committee meeting minutes

PAL-04 A motion was made by Mr DeSart, seconded by Dr James to approve the May 14, 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

Ms Mamola said the proposed language update changes to NAC 625 were approved by the board to move forward at its meeting last week and they have been submitted to the legislature and that R #s have been assigned. She said five (5) numbers were issued as the amendments were grouped into five categories based on content. Ms Mamola said they are now posted on the LCB website. She added that changes proposed have been through an extensive public process and there will be further opportunities to provide public comment as part of the LCB public review process.

Ms Mamola said the board was going to have one bill draft request with two NRS 625 updates proposed. One is related to decoupling the PLS exam, meaning candidates would no longer need to

accrue four years of experience before being eligible to sit the national PLS exam. The second is related to some verbiage put forward by the Public Utilities Commission on removing the PE exemption in our law for Natural Gas Utility companies.

6. Discussion of Digital Signature/Electronic Submittal Working Group

Ms Mamola reported that the digital signature task force met recently and “war gamed” sending and receiving documents with digital signatures. She said it was enlightening for her in seeing the issues in real-time and understanding the frustration that licensees and entities must be going through in trying to get digital signatures to work. Ms Mamola added that the group went away from that meeting with homework to do on trying to work out some of the issues and to come back and meet in the next couple weeks to report on findings.

Mr Nielsen expressed frustration on behalf of the City of Henderson with the digital signature component of the electronic submittal process. He said as an agency they are effectively enforcers of the rules and are spending a considerable amount of time educating professionals on the process, to the point where it is causing delays.

Ms Mamola said some changes have been proposed to the specific regulation that helps clean it up and will make it better for the entities and the professionals, but it doesn't address all the issues. The City of Henderson has one unique issue that I want to get with them offline, separate from the digital signature task force and see if we can come up with a solution that will work for them.

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

Mr DeSart reviewed the board's social media public outreach. He said regular posts (about 5 a week) had steadily been gaining traction with good levels of engagement and website traffic from social media had seen a significant increase. Mr DeSart said the Public Outreach Committee of the board was in the process of redefining the next scope, to follow on from the initial scope of establishing a social media presence, of how we make this a long-term plan in alignment with the strategic goals of the board.

8. Discussion of Nevada State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors strategic plan update Nevada State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors activities

Mr DeSart said the board is planning on doing a revisit of our current strategic plan on Friday,

September 11, 2020. He said the current plan is a little over three years old and the board is looking to review and refresh as necessary. Mr DeSart added that the planning meeting would be a public meeting and encouraged PAL members interested in being involved in the process to connect with Ms Mamola to be included on the meeting invite list. He said the meeting is scheduled to be a four-hour virtual meeting.

9. Professional association / industry activities

Mr DeSart asked that association representatives get an update on activities.

DrJames said NSPE is doing a scholarship call with UNLV, and that they continue to meet quarterly – virtually. He also reported on how the UNLV engineering program has been impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions and the transition to a full remote learning environment.

Mr Phillips said NALS is staying connected with meetings being held virtually. He said the August conference that was to be held in Las Vegas would transition to a virtual event. Mr Phillips added that NALS publication, The Nevada Traverse, has undergone a make-over and has a new editor.

Mr Gould said that SEASoNs takes a hiatus during the summer, so there is nothing current to report. He added that the group was working on the logistics of resuming meetings virtually in September.

Mr Alexander said the CMAA board has been meeting monthly but membership meetings have not yet resumed. He said the decision on when they start up again will be made next month – and the driver is creating opportunities for members to accrue professional development hours.

Mr DeSart reminded the group that the board had granted a six-month grace period for accruing PDHs for the June renewal cycle, and if things don't improve pandemic-wise, it is likely a similar action will be taken for the December renewal group.

Ms Mamola added that a number of organizations were hosting virtual education events to provide access to PDHs.

Mr Casey said ACEC has been monitoring the pandemic's impact on the general fund – and the shortfalls expected in capital improvement projects. Emails giving information updates have been sent out to membership and it is planned to continue to give quarterly reports. He added that the northern and southern chapters have been hosting virtual meetings.

Mr Howard said ASCE was in the same boat as the other organizations in that planned luncheons had

transitioned to virtual meetings.

10. Discussion of quality of engineering and land surveying services submitted to public agencies (follow-up to March 4, 2020 and May 14, 2020 PAL meeting discussions)

Mr DeSart said the next agenda is kind of a follow-up to the issue put forward by the City of Henderson relating to the quality of engineering and land surveying services submitted to public agencies. He said it had been discussed at the March and May PAL meeting and the hope was that the industry would self-police or at least offer suggestions about how Henderson can do this in a way that gets industry backing.

Mr Nielsen said he was interested in how the board is going to encourage licensees to self-police themselves, self-check themselves, to make sure they're actually in compliance before they submit for review.

Mr DeSart said the item was directed to the PAL committee first because of industry participation in the committee and it seemed like the appropriate place to bring this up and to initially look to the industry to self-regulate themselves. The thought was to get and generate possible courses of action directly from the consultant associations, but to date there has not been a lot of direct feedback. Mr DeSart said it may be worthwhile to schedule a partnering meeting with the City of Henderson and several of the industry associations to start an open dialog – where the board could act as a facilitator.

Mr Nielsen said Henderson would definitely be open to a partner meeting.

Mr Casey asked where the city was experiencing the majority of the issues.

Mr Nielsen said he believed it came from the public works area reviewing civil improvement plans.

Dr James said that a previous national NSPE meeting it was discussed about creating a “check list” for a good set of plans but stalemate developed as certain groups didn’t want to be bound by a “good” plan set checklist. He added that the disagreement on the checklist led to a breakdown in the discussion.

Mr DeSart said with that perspective, any meeting likely needs a moderator or a host who can help find consensus and the common ground within the two camps. He said it would be most productive to start with ACEC and NSPE representatives, and the City of Henderson public works participants. Mr DeSart added that he will connect with the groups involved to put together a list of names to invite to the meeting and suggested that a board representative be the facilitator.

Ms Mamola suggested September 15, 2020, with a 3pm start time for the partner meeting. She said it would be posted as a PAL meeting but would just have the *City of Henderson Public Works Quality of Engineering Plans* forum as the single agenda item.

11. Open discussion topics

Mr Gunny commented on the proposed amendment to NAC 625.550, and asked for clarification on the removal of text in sections 1 and 2. He highlighted his concerns related to substantially incomplete plans and possible impacts on smaller jurisdictions that may lack resources to do in-depth reviews.

Mr DeSart said the edits were made to focus the intent of the regulation on lack of competency and to acknowledge, particularly in public infrastructure projects, that some projects require more than three review cycles.

Ms Mamola added that by removing the “three” relating to review cycles, and replacing with “more than one set of plans” the regulation is less restrictive to the agency.

12. Next meeting date and location

The next PAL meeting was set for Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 3pm.

13. Public comment period

There was no additional public comment.

14. Adjourn

Mr DeSart adjourned the meeting at 5:17pm.

Respectfully,

Patty Mamola
Executive Director