Missouri Department of Transportation (HQ) / ACEC Missouri Liaison Committee ZOOM Videoconference

Tuesday, July 14, 2020
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Attending from MoDOT:
Steve Atkinson, CADD Services Engineer
Laura Ellen, Design Support Engineer
Ed Hassinger, Chief Engineer
Dennis Heckman, State Bridge Engineer
Travis Koestner, State Design Engineer
Michelle Kratzer, Multi-Modal Ops Director
Julie Stotlemeyer, Asst State Design Engr-LPA
Kevin Vollet, Computer Aided Draft Support Engineer
Kenny Voss, Asst State Design Engineer

Attending from ACEC-Missouri:
Ed Alizadeh, Geotechnology, Inc.
Buddy Desai, Hg Consult, Inc.
Kevin Eisenbeis, Burns & McDonnell
Bob Gilbert, Bartlett & West, Inc.
Howard Gotschall, Hanson Professional
Aaron Kober, Modjeski and Masters, Inc.
Vicki LaRose, Civil Design, Inc., Board Chair
Dave Maxwell, HR Green, Inc.
Dan Meckes, Crawford Murphy & Tilly, Inc.
Linda Moen, EFK Moen, LLC, Cmte. Chair
Rod Sachtleben, GBA, Inc.
Steve Wells, Hg Consult, Inc.
Todd Welz, Quigg Engineering, Inc.
Bruce Wylie, ACEC/MO President

1) After introductions (see attendee list below), Linda noted that Bruce Wylie is retiring at the end of 2020 and the job opening is posted on the ACEC-Missouri website.

2) Discussion of MoDOT Staff Situation – Thank you, MoDOT, for reaching out directly to ACEC to share this information earlier in June. For 12 weeks through August, MoDOT staff are working 32 hours/week or taking a 5% pay reduction (~20% of staff took the 5% reduction option including all of the Senior Management Team). Through the CARES Act benefits, staff can receive compensation to “make them whole”. This plan when ran for 12 weeks will result in $12-$15M cash savings which can be used to match federal funds to create 4x the construction purchasing power and fill in some of the gap created from gas tax funding shortfalls.

3) PPP Loan Opportunity and Outlook for Member Firms – ACEC has been forecasting the industry outlook, predicting a recession similar or worse than the Great Recession and preparing member firms to plan for a delayed affect on our industry of up to 18 months before we experience the economic impact. Over 90% of ACEC member firms applied for and received PPP loans to help us maintain our staff and help the industry continue to provide service to our clients through the COVID crisis.

4) MoDOT Budget Impacts from COVID – The full impact will not be known for quite some time. MoDOT is preserving cash as much as possible and watching the data. A 30% shortfall in gas tax and other roadway-dedicated revenue was predicted to last 18 months, adding up to a $100M shortfall in the MoDOT budget. Data for April-May is more optimistic, showing $35-40M shortfall, but the duration is not known and MoDOT expects there to be several more troughs before the economic impact runs its course. Note that a $100M shortfall in state funds has a $400M impact on the construction program due to federal matching funds.

5) Existing Project Contracts Outlook – No cancellations to-date, but several project delays. The Buck O’Neil Bridge replacement is moving forward. Governor’s Bridge Plan $200M + $50M is moving forward. MoDOT is waiting for more data to plan the August letting and will continue to adjust month-to-month as revenue data is available.
There are 3 federal legislative ideas (not mutually exclusive) that could help the MoDOT funding situation: 1) Backstop that would provide federal funds to state DOT’s to fill in the revenue gap created by COVID (federal $$ that can be used by the state DOTs for anything including matching federal $$); 2) Feds providing 100% match on state DOT projects; 3) Reauthorization/New Transportation Bill.

If none of these happen soon, FHWA has hinted that cash management of the Trust Fund is being considered which could mean that federal funding reimbursements to contractors on active projects could be delayed. That’s a huge impact in Missouri because the state does not have the funds to cover the federal reimbursement.

Past COVID legislation that gave money to the states went to counties and had use restrictions that did not benefit roadways/infrastructure. However, Michelle noted that transit received 3x their normal annual allotment and aviation got a good amount of cash that had no use restrictions. This was very useful to those modes because transit ridership is down and jet fuel receipts are down by almost 90%.

So far, none of this MoDOT funding crisis has spurred any state legislative reaction toward increased state infrastructure/transportation funding. The state is still focused on the COVID crisis and how to address $0.5B in budget cuts.

6) Upcoming RFQ’s – FARM Grant project must be completed by 2026 – there is not a reason to pay for speed on that project and that design-build procurement process should begin in early 2021; the Central District ADA Design-Build has been delayed and may be expanding in scope with other STIP projects – should begin in spring 2021; Rocheport is moving forward; Mineola Hill climbing lanes are under construction; I-70 design build for outer road/access improvements in St. Charles County will be out late in the fiscal year; Buck O’Neil is advertised and right of way is being purchased; I-270 North is moving along well; Bootheel Bridge Bundle will seek commission approval in August. MoDOT hopes that by September the financial situation will allow more asset management and bridge projects to move forward. In mid August the districts will review their lists and their revised budgets and plan the next steps for sending RFQ’s out to consultants.

Ed noted that this has been the biggest construction year for MoDOT in 10 years – contractors are ahead by $100M partly due to favorable weather conditions. This will be a $1.1M season and MoDOT expects next year to be $900M. On the professional services side, Travis noted that MoDOT exceeded their FY budget of $45M by spending $47.7M on design services. They have budgeted $50M for the next Fiscal Year.

Ed noted it is MoDOT’s intent to keep the industry intact to be able to deliver a bigger program in the future. A best-case scenario will be Backstop funding or 100% federal match secured before the August Federal Legislative recess and a Transportation Bill passed before the FAST Act expires in September.

Bruce noted that ACEC has been hosting state congressional visits with senators and congresspersons and has had a great response with live (in-person) video meetings. ACEC is very active on these topics.

7) The centralized consultant negotiation pilot is still planned, but on hold for a bit.

8) ProjectWise365, Microstation/ORD Update – Steve Atkinson and Kevin Vollett attended this meeting to address some of the software changes MoDOT is working toward. Steve noted that MoDOT is moving their ProjectWise system to the cloud to allow more external access and they plan to use ProjectWise 365 to allow external consultants access to the document management system to upload submittals and provide an audit trail. Consultants will probably need to have at least one ProjectWise 365 license to access this. MoDOT intends to test the process with consultants and will reach out to ACEC for volunteers when the time comes.

Kevin noted that prior to January 2021 MoDOT will do a minor upgrade from SS4 to SS10. Then with ProjectWise storage in the cloud, they will move to ORD managed workspace stored in ProjectWise. MoDOT has submitted requests to Bentley to fix some “bugs” in ORD and would like to have those fixes in place before they roll that out to the Districts.

Both Steve and Kevin offered to answer consultant questions as needed to help everyone move forward with these software changes. Julie noted that they are working on youtube webinars to help train their internal staff and those will be available to consultants also, probably in the fall.

9) We compared notes on COVID-19 work responses and everyone is doing things similarly – staff working from home; some internet challenges; essential surveying tasks are about the only overnight trips being taken;
driving in separate vehicles is common; in-person meetings are being replaced by remote/virtual meetings and everyone values seeing people’s faces.

Starting staff on new projects is more difficult with remote staff; right of way negotiation/purchase process is more difficult; some delays in paperwork due to changes in work environment; some local agencies not sure of funding streams or seeing delays due to remote work changes; PDH opportunities are limited. All agreed to reach out proactively when we see delays to help keep things moving – everyone wants to help make things work smoothly.

MoDOT has on-line PDH opportunities through MoDOT-U - consultants can register for an account to access that sharepoint site using this link: https://lsglm700.learnsoft.com/LSGLM/Login/MODOTlogin.aspx?ecart=1.

Also attached is a help sheet for MoDOT U written for internal MoDOT users (consultants will need to adapt) MoDOT and other consultants have PDH webinars available through the coop program with Missouri Universities (MCTI).

10) MoDOT expects to continue social distancing through the end of the year, subject to change if the COVID-19 situation makes a drastic improvement. Do not count on MoDOT staff attending a conference or meeting through the end of the year. MoDOT staff may still attend the 10-33 Golf Tournament on their own time.

11) FAA DBE statewide goal of 12.45% was submitted for approval.

Freight enhancement RFQ was published recently.

MoDOT is nearly complete with 88 On-Call Contracts! These will be in place for 3 years and are a great opportunity for consultants.

12) Next Meeting Date will be after the September 2 Commission meeting. There will be more revenue data available and Commission direction to share.
To access MoDOT U, visit the HRED SharePoint page and click the MoDOT U icon.

To login, your user name is your MoDOT user ID. If it your first time logging in, your password will be “password”. After you log-in, the system will prompt you to create a new password. If you do not have a User ID and would like to access the system, please contact the IS Help Desk at (573) 751-5000. If you forget your password, use the Click Here link on the login page. Do not create a Guest User Account.

View Your Transcript

To view your transcript, go to the Home tab and look under the User Dashboard. Click the Print Transcripts Report button. This will not print it out, but open a PDF version of your transcript. Another way to view your transcript is to go to the Home tab and look under My Task. Click the drop down next to Displaying and change it to My Transcript.

View Your Current Enrollments

To view the course you are currently enrolled in or to cancel yourself out of a course go to the Home tab and look under My Task. You can un-enroll yourself from a course by clicking the Unenroll button to the right. You can launch an online course by clicking the Launch button. You cannot cancel an enrollment to a class that your supervisor or an administrator has enrolled you in.

Employee Profile

When you click on the Profile tab it will bring up your MoDOT U profile. This information is uploaded from SAM II every night, so changing anything on your profile will get erased. If something is wrong on your profile, let Human Resources know.
Search for Courses

The Search tab can help you search for any in person class or online class. Type a keyword from the title of the course or the course number to find it. You can also type in a topic and search to see if MoDOT U offers any courses on your topic. MoDOT U offers over 1500 online courses with a wide range of topics. You can also use the Catalog to look up courses based on specific topics. A description of the course is listed underneath the title.

Enrolling in a Class

After you have found the course using the Search tab, click on the Enroll button to the right of the course. This will bring up a new window with more details of the course. To Enroll in the course, click on the ENROLL button in the top right corner. Once you have successfully enrolled, the course will appear under My Task on the Home tab. If it is an in-person course, MoDOT U will send you an Outlook calendar notice.