

ACEC / NCDOT JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSTRUCTION & MATERIALS

January 15, 2025
Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held on January 15, 2025 at 1:00 PM. In attendance were the following:

Name	Company	Email
Tim Harper	MBI	Timothy.Harper@mbakerintl.com
Liam Shannon	NCDOT-CCU	lwshannon@ncdot.gov
Casey Bowman	NCDOT-CCU	ccb Bowman@ncdot.gov
Todd Whittington	NCDOT-M&T	twhittington@ncdot.gov
Jim Sawyer	NCDOT-M&T	jcsawyer@ncdot.gov
Ted Adams	RK&K	tbadams@rkk.com
Mezak Tucker	NCDOT	mtucker1@ncdot.gov
Shane Hayes	MBP	shayes@mbpce.com
Brian Skeens	NCDOT-CCU	beskeens@ncdot.gov
Troy Brooks	NCDOT-CCU	tbrooks2@ncdot.gov
Jason Salisbury	NCDOT Div 6	jsalisburg@ncdot.gov
Phillip Johnson	KCI	phillip.johnson@kci.com
Max Buchanan	MB3	mb3engineering@yahoo.com
Leila Boulos	NCDOT-CCU	lboulos@ncdot.gov

Online

Thomas Payne	NCDOT-PSMU	tpayne@ncdot.gov
Matt Hilderbran	NCDOT-M&T	mrhilderbran@ncdot.gov
Marty White	Transystems	mwhite@transystems.com
Brian Hunter	NCDOT-M&T	Bjhunter@ncdot.gov
Robert Stroup	NCDOT-PSMU	rjstroup@ncdot.gov

- **Meeting Introduction:** Troy began the meeting with introductions and apologized for the schedule and location changes. He thanked everyone for their patience and attendance and mentioned that hard copies of the agenda and CEI needs for Western North Carolina recovery projects would be provided momentarily.
- **Committee Goals:** To kick-off 2025, Troy emphasized the goal of the committee to work in partnership with NCDOT and ACEC member firms. As a reminder to new attendees, he highlighted the importance of voicing complaints and concerns while also putting forth solutions to problems such as staffing challenges and training hurdles.
 - **Partnership Emphasis:** He highlighted that the committee's goal is to collaborate effectively to address various challenges and improve overall operations.

- **Voicing Concerns:** Troy encouraged members to voice their complaints and concerns, emphasizing that the committee is a platform for addressing issues. He welcomed feedback on problems such as staffing challenges and training hurdles.
- **Solution-Oriented Approach:** Troy also underscored the committee's focus on being solution-oriented. He stated that the goal is not only to identify problems but also to propose and implement solutions to overcome the challenges faced by the committee and its members.
- **Committee Structure:** Phillip Johnson (KCI; Subcommittee Chair) discussed the structure of the committee, mentioning that there are six people from the ACEC side who serve three-year terms. They also noted the history of the committee working together with NCDOT.
- **Reimbursement Issues:** Troy Brooks discussed the challenges of getting reimbursed for certain projects, particularly those involving FEMA and Federal highways. He mentioned that contractors have a responsibility to maintain their projects, which are not reimbursable.
 - **Reimbursement Challenges:** Troy explained that reimbursement for projects involving FEMA and Federal highways is difficult. Contractors are responsible for maintaining their projects, which are not reimbursable. He emphasized that despite the extenuating circumstances, such as massive debris or propane tanks washed down the creek, reimbursement remains a challenge.
 - **Case-by-Case Basis:** Troy Brooks and Brian Skeens mentioned that while they are open to considering cases individually, there are no blanket time extensions for cleanup beyond what has already been granted. Requests for submittal agreements have been made, but the bottom line is that reimbursement is not feasible under current conditions.
 - **Specific Examples:** Specific examples, such as 500 propane tanks washed down a creek, were offered up, which qualify for consideration however still face reimbursement challenges.
 - Troy reiterated that despite the potential for qualification, the overall reimbursement process remains problematic.
- **Training Workshop:** Troy announced the upcoming Resident Engineer training workshop in Greensboro from March 11th to 13th. He mentioned that the workshop would include a registration fee and a cap on the number of attendees per firm.
 - **Workshop Details:** The Resident Engineer training workshop is scheduled for March 11th to 13th in Greensboro at the Koury Convention Center. He mentioned that the workshop would start at 1:00 PM on the first day, with a small reception planned for the evening. The second day would be a full day from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and the final day would conclude before lunchtime.
 - **Registration and Fees:** Troy explained that the workshop would have a registration fee and a cap on the number of attendees per firm, similar to the CAPA workshop. Embedded employees would not count towards the two allocations per firm. Details about the registration fee and other logistics would be provided in a memo to be released soon.
 - **Workshop Agenda:** Troy mentioned that the workshop agenda would include various engagement pieces and would reflect the values and best practices outlined in the new Resident Engineer Guide. The guide aims to build

foundational skills in construction management, risk understanding, and scheduling, among other areas. (See hyperlink below...)

- <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/construction/Construction%20Documents/REGuide.pdf>
- **Inspector Training Modules:** Brian Skeens and Aaron Earwood provided an update on the inspector training modules for 2025, including sessions on Work Zone Signs, traffic control signs, and basic structure inspector training. They mentioned that the classes will start in February across the state at various different locations..
 - **Training Sessions:** Brian provided details on the upcoming inspector training modules for 2025. The training would cover work zone and traffic control signs with sessions planned across various locations in the state. The first session would start on February 18th in Greensboro.
 - **Training Logistics:** Aaron mentioned that the structure training would be conducted in a day-long format, with two consecutive days at each location to accommodate different groups. The training would be focused on newer staff, particularly those with five years or less of experience.
 - No need to send the upper-level structure technicians to this training.
 - **Registration Process:** Aaron explained that the registration process would be managed through the resident offices, allowing for flexibility in scheduling and adjustments. This approach aims to streamline the registration and ensure that the right personnel are trained.
- Jim Sawyer reviewed the training classes for 2025 Q1.
 - M&T Training Schedules are live and open for folks to register:
 - [Materials and Tests Unit Training Schools](#)
- **Western North Carolina Recovery Projects:** Troy discussed the revised CEI needs for Western North Carolina recovery projects. He provided details for the on-call needs and project-specific advertisements with their respective let dates. (*Handout provided*)
 - **Revised CEI Needs:** The overall number of technicians required decreased slightly, while the number of engineering positions increased. This adjustment was based on feedback and reevaluation of project setups by the divisions.
 - **Project-Specific Advertisements:** Troy provided details on the project-specific advertisements, including the dates for Yancey County and the emergency Express design-build projects. The advertisements would include positions for ARE's and supporting technician staff, with specific dates for each project.
 - **Division-Specific Needs:** Troy also highlighted the specific needs for Division 13 and Division 14, mentioning the project-specific contracts and the required staff for each project. He noted that the number of engineering positions increased due to the complexity and scope of the projects.
- **Funding Update:** Troy provided an update on the funding for the Helene recovery projects, mentioning that \$250 million had been spent to date. He discussed the financial modeling exercise and the efforts to ensure that the recovery projects do not impact the regular program. (*Update attached*)
 - **Funding Spent:** \$250 million has been spent to date. Troy explained that the expenditures are primarily from highway fund monies, not Highway Trust fund monies, to avoid impacting capital project investments.
 - **Financial Modeling:** Troy discussed the financial modeling exercise, which involves forecasting expenditures and managing cash flow to ensure that the

recovery projects do not affect the regular program. The modeling includes projections for the next 48 months and close communication with the secretary's office and legislators.

- **Federal Reimbursements:** Troy also mentioned that they have been successful in working with federal highways and FEMA to secure additional ER funds, which help bridge the gap in cash flow. He highlighted the recent release of a couple of hundred million dollars in ER funds as an example of their efforts.
- **Cash on Hand:** NCDOT currently has \$2.4 billion in cash on hand, which remains strong.
- **Division Workload:** Troy mentioned that they are waiting for the last bit of information from the divisions to update the staffing model. He highlighted the importance of the staff modeling tool in managing workload and resource allocation across the state.
- **Staffing Challenges:** All participants provided input and discussed the staffing challenges in Western North Carolina, including the need for additional inspectors and the possibility of bringing in out-of-state staff. They emphasized the importance of being realistic about consulting capacity and making strategic decisions to ensure project delivery.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Resident Engineer Training Workshop:** Send out the formal memorandum regarding the Resident Engineer training workshop in Greensboro, including registration details and fees. (Troy)
- **Resident Engineer Guide Feedback:** Review the Resident Engineer Guide and provide feedback on any areas that need improvement or additional coverage. (Committee Members)
- **Inspector Training Modules:** Finalize and send out the schedule for the inspector training modules for the 2025 Roadway training. (Brian, Aaron)
- **Western North Carolina Recovery Projects:** Review and confirm the Industry's capacity to handle the staffing needs for the Western North Carolina recovery projects and provide realistic feedback for the Department so accurate assessment and decisions can be made regarding the advertisements. (Committee Members)
- **Per Diem Consideration:** Evaluate the inclusion of per diem for staff working on Western North Carolina projects to attract more experienced personnel. (Troy)
- **Division Workload Update:** Complete and share the updated staffing model tool with the divisions once all information is received. (Troy, Leila)
- **Funding Request Monitoring:** Monitor and report on statewide spending and commitments monthly to ensure funds are available for new PO or PO renewals. (Leila, Committee Members/Industry Partners)

Next meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2025 at 1:00 pm at our regularly scheduled location at the Materials & Test Unit on Blue Ridge Road.

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.