

MaineDOT Utility Task Force Meeting
March 6, 2012
MaineDOT Conference Room
Chair: Mike Moreau
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marty Pease, Gerry Norton, John Smith, Morris Leathers, Julia Spinney Gordon Johnson, Steve Cox, Calvin Seeley, Jeff McEwen, Derrick Carleton, Steven Doody, Rick Paraschak, Jerry Quirion, Mike Barden, Brad Foley, Brian Burne, Jeff Tweedie, Shelly Wood

Mike introduced himself as the new Utility Engineer to the group and thanked all for attending. Introductions were done by the group as well. Mike shared a little of his background with MaineDOT and only being in the position for a month, has a lot to learn.

Agenda:

Follow Up Items From Last Meeting: Meeting scheduled w/ MWUA and Wastewater Industry, did it happen? Aerial Utility MOU: where are we? Partnering?

New Items: Project Advertise Schedule and Plan; Letter 1's; Open forum/other business.

Follow Up Items from September Meeting

Did the MWUA and Wastewater Industry Meeting happen?

Gordon indicated the meeting did not happen. He will be in touch with Mike to discuss and get back on track with the issue of contracting methods for working around buried utility facilities.

Aerial Utility MOU – Memorandum of Understanding shared with the group RE: PUAs.

Where are we? What is the issue surrounding the use of Project Utility Agreements? Not seeing the document being used.

Rick P. - with CMP's retirements there hasn't been much contact. Projects seem to be working through schedules so seeing no need for the PUA. Utility are apprehensive on using.

Jeff T. – MOU was signed by former Commissioner David A. Cole and has the backing of the current Commissioner and Chief Engineer as the way the Department wants to go. The document was created upon request by the Utilities for better communication on projects and schedules. To work together to get the work done. The Department still would like to see the PUA used.

Comments/Issues

- In many cases person who is attending the meeting doesn't have the authorization to sign the document or isn't comfortable doing so
- Many cases company's legal staff must review all 'Agreement' and the representative can't sign
- All may be in agreement with the schedule but document not signed

- Or many times, especially with small utilities they do not attend the meeting. Construction process discussed with them away from meeting and get verbal agreement but again no signature
- Might help if the wording was softened and if the word 'Agreement' was changed 'understanding' with a less legal feel to the document
- Mike – does it make since to use on large projects? Still case by case bases
- Pre-construction meeting good avenue to discuss the schedule and obtain signatures. Contractors present at these meeting and they should sign the document also.

Q - Can a couple of pilot projects be selected for using the PUA?

Mike: We will try to simplify the document and simplify the process to use on all projects

Group agree it is important for all to keep parties working together to meet schedules.

It is not a perfect system but do your best to obtain a signed document. If not able, let Mike know so we can isolate problems with the process

MaineDOT Residents do need to know the hierarchy if schedule slide. Should be established during the Pre-construction meeting

2012 Project Advertise Schedule and Plan – hard copy of both shared with the group. Mike shared the Maine DOT web link to the documents as well:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects.htm>

- There are two lists at this web page (among other links):
 - 1)The **Current Construction Advertisement Schedule** lists actual advertised dates for upcoming projects through the end of the year – updated monthly
 - 2)The **Current Construction Advertisement Plan** lists all the projects planned to be delivered this year with a ballpark delivery month or specific dates if the advertisement schedule has been set

Q – Isn't there another list looking 5 years out? Yes (see update), on the same web page location. Web page also provides glossary of work type descriptions.

Update after meeting: There are no 6 or 20 year project projections for Bridge and Highway Programs. Only the Multi-Modal Program has a 6 year project plan. However, there are several general long range planning documents on the web available for review. Here's the link:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planningdocs/index.htm>

Comment – still receiving short notice on project happening, may have made the list late. This causes issues with utilities who have to set their budgets/schedules in November when DOT material is shared in December/January.

This is two-way street though. If the utilities gave MaineDOT a heads up about their project plans soon enough, MaineDOT would consider changing project schedule to minimize impact.

Cities change their project schedule which is the cause of some of these short notice issues. These are separate from DOT which causes issues with the Utilities.

Some seem to be coming from Multi-Modal Program. Mike plans on having the coordinator's be more involved with the LAP projects.

Mike will share all project schedule updates as soon as they are available. Remember, the **Current Construction Advertisement Schedule** is updated monthly.

Letter 1's

Changes were made to the letter this year. We are requesting pole owners to identify any attachers on their poles. How is the new letter working? Good but seeing different letter's being used still. Consultants are using different letter which does cause some confusion.

Mike will work with internal staff to share current Letter 1 with the Consultants and make sure all utility coordinators have the updated version.

It is important for DOT to receive the Letter 1 back for several reasons:

- needed for Federal funding
- part of the Project process- MaineDOT required to verify existence or lack-of utilities
- part of the accommodation policy
- update database

Open Forum/Other Business

Q – Directed to Brian Burne – Utility Permit Maps, what will happen with these Maps? This is internal MaineDOT question. All are scanned so can be destroyed. It's just easy to just look at the original Map instead of Tedocs. At next coordinators meeting Brian will discuss searching for the Maps in Tedocs.

Q – Is there a contact list available for DOT staff?

Yes, on the MaineDOT Utility web page. Has all of the coordinator contact information. Here's the link:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/utilities/index.htm>

Q – Highway Openings, requiring GPS coordinates. Can guidance be provided on web on how to locate? Options available: Google Earth.

Yes, they can call us and also available on our MaineDOT map viewer. Brian will look into setting up window with instructions

Q – Can we do something different with the escrow accounts?

Bonding or Letter of Credit are option available for large projects.

Q – Problem with Outstanding Checks

Problem was checks were being held for months causing issues with utilities accounting departments. Permit fee checks should be cashed within a month or so. Call us if there is problem

Q - What if utility owned before the State came in?

Then reimbursement right exists. Utility would have to provide documentation showing they are eligible for the reimbursement.

Other

Issue with CMP line supervisor stating they are not needed at field utility meetings.

This has been addressed by Jeff T. with CMP. Contact Gerry Norton with CMP if issue develops again.

Request from Brian Burne

- Pole Replacement Permitting – seeing a lot of poles being replaced without the permit process being followed.
- Seems to be a misunderstanding with wording regarding the 5 are allowed without a permit.
- Seeing many being moved closer to the roadway then before which is an issue.

Update after meeting:

This issue was discussed at the recent Region Engineers meeting. To help the Utilities and MaineDOT interpret the rule, the following policy will be implemented:

If less than 5 poles are being replaced, (not new installations) within 10 feet of original location and no closer to the road then no permit needed.

If more than 5 poles are replaced within a corridor 5 miles long or less in the period of one year or less, than the Utility must obtain a permit.

MaineDOT reiterates that:

- It is in the best interest of the Utilities to notify us about consecutive pole replacement projects to avoid the cost of moving new poles when a project comes through.
- Any pole replacement moving poles closer to the road is creating a potential safety hazard to the traveling public

Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting Thursday, September 20, 2012, 1pm-4pm.

Minutes by
Shelly Wood
Edited by
Mike Moreau
03.27.2012