**GLS Tech Team Meeting Minutes**

**September 21, 2022 (Virtual Meeting)**

**Introduction/Welcome** – David Staab

* Welcome GLS members.
* Membership updates:
  + Bob Arndorfer retired.
  + David Staab is new chair.
  + Membership list was attached to meeting invite.
* Meeting Notes - Brian DuPont/Dave Staab
* Meeting audio will be recorded to help capture discussion and person speaking. Transcripts will be deleted after minutes are finalized.
* Teams meeting function will also be used to capture meeting attendance.
* Previous meeting minutes (March 16, 2022) were attached to the meeting invite. No discussion. Meeting minutes final.

**Environmental Topics** - Hans Hallanger and Jeremy Ashauer

* **Erosion Mat Trenching (proposed spec. updates)** - Revising the specs to make sure entrenchment is performed on all installations. Josh Wade asked for clarification on if this is being required on each row of e-mat installed and Jeremy stated the trenching requirement is only for the leading edge with all other rows being overlapped like shingles on a roof.
* **Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP) Update** - Draft of new permit will be reviewed in the fall of 2022 for implementation in 2023.
* **Polyethylene sheeting** - Hans mentioned that he is looking to expand the use of poly-sheeting for environmental applications, and this will probably appear in the 2024 spec book.
* **Anti-Seep Collars for Wet Ponds** - Hans showed two different types of anti-seep collars to keep water in a detention basin from flowing along the outside of discharge pipes. The collars could be made of clay similar to the pond liner or from a sheet of corrugated metal that surrounds the pipe. There were no comments from the committee on a preferred method.
* **TS4 Update** - Hans explained this is the Transportation Separate Storm Sewer permit for urbanized areas. This permit will be renewed in 2023 and may have additional requirements and possible training requirements for contractors. Related to TS4 permits is the maintenance of stormwater ponds. Hans stated that WisDOT is looking to perform maintenance on its ponds and this is work for GLS contractors. He asked if the contractors had experience with performing maintenance on ponds. There was minimal experience and often the work was tied to a new construction project in the area.

# Previous Meeting Carryover Topics:

**QMP Subgrade Update** – David Staab

Status of spec review and updates.

* In response to a letter WEMA sent to the department in March 2022, a sub-committee (department staff) was formed and has met twice to discuss potential updates to the QMP Subgrade SPV. Consideration is being given to adjusting the moisture content requirements, but not eliminating them. Former project data is being studied to evaluate potential moisture limit adjustments. The sub-committee is also looking at improved designer notes to reduce instances of the QMP Subgrade SPV being used on projects that are not appropriate, such as projects with relatively small earthwork quantities.
* The sub-committed has discussed reducing the depth of the upper zone, but there is consensus that the sub-committee is not in favor of changing this requirement.
* Jake David mentioned that there have been times when soil is pumping but has passed QMP and other times when it is a stiff base but has failed QMP, which is frustrating for contractors. He expressed concerns that WisDOT is putting too much emphasis on QMP Subgrade requirements instead of traditional methods of evaluating earthwork construction. He asked that once WisDOT responds to the WEMA letter, WEMA and WisDOT should sit down face-to-face to discuss. David Staab thought that was a good idea and hoped a response would be sent by the end of November. (Note: In lieu of response to letter, a joint meeting between department staff and WEMA members was scheduled to discuss the contents of the letter.)
* Shawn Hoffman asked that the goal of QMP should be in the spec to help justify its use. There have been projects that they have constructed and spent time making sure the fill being placed doesn’t settle and then the underlying soils settle. David Staab agreed this can be frustrating and we need to take a wholistic approach to settlement, and QMP Subgrade only addresses the embankment fill material, so settlement of the underlying soils due to the weight of the new embankment fill needs to be considered.
* WEMA’s letter discussed a standardized proof-roll method, with an example provided from Wisconsin Dept. of Administration (DOA). It is the opinion of the QMP Subgrade sub-committee that proof-rolling is better discussed as a separate topic as it is not directly involved in the QMP Subgrade SPV.
* Sub-committee plans to meet with WEMA this fall. (Note: WisDOT and WEMA had a constructive initial TEAMS meeting on December 8, 2022 and plan to meet in early 2023 to continue discussions regarding potential updates to the QMP Subgrade SPV.)

**Rock Excavation Incidental to Culvert Installation** – David Staab

* A question was previously raised on why there is a separate bid item for rock excavation for storm sewer, but not for culvert pipe. Currently, rock excavation is incidental for culvert pipe.
* The department reviewed the question and agreed that updates to the culvert specifications were appropriate. The updates will follow the same guidance as Storm Sewer (Std. Spec. 608) regarding rock excavation.
* Updates to Standard Specification 520, 521, 522, 524, 525 and 530 have been drafted and are being reviewed internally. Draft spec. updates were sent to FHWA for review. Jake David thanked WisDOT for clearing up this discrepancy.

**Grass Seed Mixes & Seed and Sod Specification Updates** –

Mark Polega

Mark Polega gave an update on grass seed availability. For the most part projects have been able to get seed, but it may be in a different form like a “coated seed”. This seed weighs more because of the coating and therefore application rates based on weight need to be adjusted.

* Josh Wade mentioned that they are not getting seed in Wisconsin but have been able to get it in Minnesota with extra shipping costs.

* Mark stated that the seed growers have had a good crop (in 2022) and next season should not be as big a problem to get seed.
* Josh Wade asked about revisions to seed rates? He stated this would help with the 70% ground cover requirement for WDNR to accept the project. Mark indicated that he is working on revising the specs to raise the application rates and revise the seed mixtures. Also looking at specifying hydroseeding where appropriate. It is likely these changes will be in the 2024 spec.
* Another item is the use of BioChar which is burnt wood pellets that are added to soil around tree plantings. This is being done on I-39 near Beloit, and BioChar helps to hold soil nutrients and release them slowly to help new trees survive.

**Waste Bid Item** - David Staab

David recapped the experiences of the first six (6) projects to try using the waste bid item (Excavation Waste SPV). Bob Arndorfer had reviewed the results of the pilot projects, and WisDOT still has concerns regarding measuring the waste bid item, especially with other earth moving activities occurring on the same project (i.e., utility trench spoil and cut/fill operations). Due to on-going concerns, the department is not ready to incorporate the waste bid item statewide at this time.

* Jake David mentioned that WisDOT does not do extensive soil borings for the contractor to get a good handle on what soils are useable for fill and what needs to be wasted. He thought the direction we should go is to agree on a method of load counts to quantify the waste leaving the job site.
* Shawn Hoffman stated that they have some experience in Iowa with the waste item, but that was on a relocation job which doesn’t occur regularly in Wisconsin. Shawn also thought an agreed volume for a load count (say 12 cu. yds.) would be a reasonable way to measure the waste item.
* It was agreed that additional pilot projects are needed, and WEMA would like to weigh in on how the waste items is measured on these projects. David said we would look for additional pilot projects. There is specific interest in a pilot project in the SE Region since there was not a pilot project in this region yet and the waste item is a bigger issue on urban projects where it can be difficult to waste material on-site.

David will reach out to designers to see what pilot projects could be initiated in 2023. (Update: The SE Region plans an excavation waste pilot project in 2023. Additionally, another pilot project (WIS 15), which was not included in the original summary, was recently completed. This project was larger and more complex project than previous projects. Project staff and contractors will be interviewed for feedback.)

# New Topics:

**Site/Borrow Site Access through R/W** – Brandon Lamers

Brandon stated that FHWA has voiced concerns about interstate access for construction purposes. In particular, the removal of fencing and crossing the right-of-way line for construction access. Although this may be shown in an ECIP, FHWA would require a more formal process to approve new construction access. Brandon is working with Nick Perna, FHWA to streamline this process. Brandon is looking to put a checklist of required information into the CMM, so if a contractor is looking to get an approval for construction access, that was not acquired in design, the contractor would know what to provide and how long it may take for approvals of both WisDOT and FHWA.

* Shawn Hoffman asked if there are any conditions that would prohibit approvals so that a contractor knows to bid a project to travel to the next interchange instead of just crossing the right-of-way line to an adjacent property.
* Brandon mentioned the concerns of securing the work zone, so there was not an unsafe access to live lanes by the contractor or the public. He thought that in most cases if the contractor was securing the work zone properly, that FHWA would be favorable to approving the construction access, but this cannot be guaranteed.
* Shawn said he understood that and felt the contractors would work to alleviate any concerns as soon as possible if they have early communication of the concern from either WisDOT of FHWA. He said the last project with this issue all the feedback they got from WisDOT is that it is being worked on and that took over two months which was very frustrating.
* Brandon acknowledged the frustration and recommended reaching out to the Bureau of Project Development on future situations to see if they can get this determination addressed more quickly. He felt the streamlining of the approval process would help to minimize approval timeframes.

**What is the Preferred Method to Provide Feedback on Contractor Data Packets?** – Steven Popke

Stevenwas interested in feedback regarding how the data packages that are sent to the contractors are meeting their needs. He has included a comment form when the packets are sent out but has not received much feedback.

* Steven showed how on-line feedback can be provided by the contractor.
* Shawn Hoffman commented that the data information they are getting now is very helpful. He asked if WisDOT is considering providing pavement surface models to the contractors?
* Steven said they had provided pavement models in the past but thought there was extra effort invested by WisDOT that may not have been used by the contractors.
* Jake David said that other contractors had told him that the data packages had gotten better.

**Standardized Proof-Roll -** David Staab

David provided a brief history of a collaborative (department and industry) effort to create a standardized test roll method using a custom fabricated trailer. After considerable time and effort was invested in this project, but prior to implementation, the project received pushback from the industry and was never implemented. Proof rolling (test rolling) is subjective, and there is no specific guidance on what an acceptable proof roll process in WisDOT specs. Studying a standardized proof-roll could be another group effort similar to QMP Subgrade.

* Shawn Hoffman agreed it should be separate from QMP Subgrade and thought it should be a bid item by station. The concern was what is an acceptable proof roll in different soil types?
* David agreed that ruts will vary based on soils so a single threshold for deflection would not work universally. He was not thinking of a separate bid item, but it being incidental with guidance on what is an acceptable proof roll.
* Erik Lyngdal suggested that the spec call for proof rolling and the CMM outline the details on how to evaluate the proof roll based on different soil types.
* Matt Grove thought this was a good tool that needed experienced engineers observing the proof roll for consistent approvals or direction for rework of a failed area.
* Erik suggested making videos of acceptable and failed proof rolls so that inexperienced engineers had a frame of reference to compare their project proof roll.

Jake David offered to have contractors meet with new engineers to provide knowledge exchange on proof rolls and other earth moving topics. David said he would look into what training opportunities might work for such an exchange.

# Other/Additional Topics -All

# Jake David brought up a scenario of a contractor who bid a pipe installation that could be either concrete or plastic. The contractor bid it as plastic pipe because the material cost was significantly less than concrete. Then due to supply issues the plastic pipe was not available, and the engineer was directing the contractor to install concrete pipe to continue with the project work. Jake felt this was not fair to the contractor and asked if WisDOT could bid out both concrete and plastic and pay for whatever was installed.

# Ed Lilla explained this was discussed and responded to by Beth Cannestra, that material acquisition was the responsibility of the contractor and WisDOT was not going to change the process due to periodic supply chain issues.

# A long discussion ensued of the pros and cons of Jake’s request, and it was ultimately decided that this was a topic for many materials that should be handled by a committee other that GLS (say CCAW).

# Ed Lilla said he would check back with Beth after this meeting and report back at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting**

March 22, 2023; 1-4 PM (Virtual/In-person TBD)

# Attachments:

* Meeting Agenda



* Attendance List (from TEAMS)



**GLS 9-21-2022 Minutes - DRAFT.docx**

**BDP/DAS**