



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of Ohio

ACEC OHIO – Small Firm Committee Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2020– 9 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Conference Call

Attendees: Mary Sharrett, Ray Bencivengo, Susan Daniels, Patrick Schwan, Matt Hasel, Fred Seling, Laurie Adams, Ron Quesenberry, Joy Lanham, David Moody, Nathan Quicksall, Patrick Loper, Beth Easterday, Dan Bender, Alexis Johnson, Paul Goodhue, Lynn Miggins, Caroline Duffy, Brad Wilson, Craig Wilson, Bill Marty, Amy Portis, Shaune Skinner, Jeff Kennedy, Mark Henderson, Doug Briggs, Brian Coghlan, David Klinge

1. Kickoff Discussion on COVID-19 Impact on Small Businesses
2. Current Practices Implemented. Somewhat dependent on office size, existing infrastructure, and technology.
 - a. Open as usual
 - i. Increased hygiene awareness
 - ii. Additional cleaning
 - iii. Purchasing equipment so more/all can work remotely. Some staff taking advantage of remote work option.
 - iv. Open/transparent discussions with staff on possibilities, including layoffs. Recommendations for staff to be educated and consider their finances.
 - v. Requesting contract authorizations to get work in the pipeline.
 - vi. Management cost considerations on impacts to business (current funds, requirement to pay for leave of absences, additional pay for sick leave, etc.)
 - vii. Tracking time to address COVID-19 (e.g. taking down and setting up a new office) in case there is reimbursement in the future.
 - b. Open, with some staff working remotely
 - c. Office closed, all working remotely
 - d. All - field staff were still working. Some had additional hygiene precautions.
3. Anticipation of Office Work Ban. Most were preparing for this case.
 - a. Setting up staff to work remotely. Purchasing laptops, cameras, etc.
 - b. Set company-wide conference call schedule.
 - c. Not to make same mistakes from last recession, e.g. laying off staff earlier. Need to have a policy/consistent procedure.

4. Remote Work. No ideal, and generally, production is less than at the office. Allowing 40 hours over 7 days was helpful. Use of “tomato clock” on google – which gives structured breaks for downtime.
5. Additional Concerns
 - a. Confusion on rapidly changing regulations and guidelines, want to ensure we understand the requirements.
 - b. Having a tax credit does not help small businesses with cash flow. Low interest rates could provide some help.
 - c. Traffic counts cannot be performed since we are not in a typical situation.
 - d. This is a global issue – not just ODOT or Ohio. If jobs are lost, there will be minimal opportunity elsewhere.
 - e. One payroll service requested wire transfers instead of ACH.
 - f. Workers Compensation for contracting COVID-19. Attorney had provided a statement that this would not be a compensation claim. Post a “Do Not Enter” sign was a suggestion.
6. Other
 - a. Some owners now requiring electronic proposal submittal instead of paper copies.
 - b. Owners continuing with interviews, but remote, such as WebEx.
 - c. ODOT construction inspection firms waiting on ODOT to give assignments.
7. Requests/Questions
 - a. ACEC send updates on regulation trainings.
 - b. How is ODOT handling required testing/certification when the classes have been cancelled?
 - c. How is unemployment handled. Spouse of worker already laid off.
8. Additional Comments from Beth Easterday

Beth has had conversations with ODOT’s Mat Mauger, Dave Holstein and Lloyd MacAdam this morning and here is what we know:

 - a. Inspector training: Take all online classes that are offered. If it is a class that has to be in-person and cancelled ODOT will give an extension.
 - b. Safety studies: They will try to get some guidance out in regards to data to use without traffic counts, their goal is to keep the program going. More to come.
 - c. Overall training: since classes are postponed, consultant services will look at resumes now and determine prequalification. The person can take the class when it’s available again.
 - d. Meet and greets for May programmatic will be virtual, it is up to you if you want to request and participate in this type of meeting. They are looking at Skype as the platform of choice.
 - e. The goal of ODOT is to keep their program going, Lloyd called today to reiterate this.

- f. Follow Bill's advice, get ODOT to authorize your projects that need to be now, I have alerted ODOT we are asking for this.
- g. Unemployment Information below:

Governor DeWine recently issued an executive order granting the Department of Job and Family Services the ability to approve requests to suspend the normal one-week waiting period for unemployment compensation. A copy of the order is [HERE](#)
Click <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/CoronavirusAndUI.stm> to a frequently asked questions page regarding COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefits, there is also a special COVID 19 form you can distribute as an employer.

Additionally, Ohioans can apply for unemployment online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at unemployment.ohio.gov. It's also possible to file by phone at **(1-877-644-6562)** or TTY at **(888) 642-8203, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** Employers with questions should email UCTech@jfs.ohio.gov.

9. Adjournment