

Utility Subcommittee Meeting

October 23, 2008

Minutes

Attendees:

Greg Cook, U.S. Group
Marion Leaphart, Coleman-Snow Consultants
Bryan Jones, SCDOT
Joel Wimberly, SCDOT
Yvette Oliver, SCDOT
Tim Henderson, SCDOT

The meeting was called to order by Greg Cook with introductions.

Tim Wilhelm and Alan Cahill with Blythe Construction provided information for the meeting on what contractors need from DOT regarding utilities. This will be shared with the discussion that follows.

The meeting was a discussion on various points regarding contractors, SCDOT and the utilities and what we can focus on to help all concerned.

- A. Locating utilities by SCDOT. Could the problem be the wording of Section 105.06 of the Standard Specifications which reads “endeavor to have all necessary adjustments” and “made as soon as practicable”. These are open ended statements.

Yvette added that Mark Attaway has suggested holding permits for the utilities on upgrades only. Joel stated that when he was a resident engineer he was told that could not be held. Others stated that have done this and if the utility calls they refer them to Tony Chapman or Clem Watson.

Recommendation: Ask Mark Attaway to meet with Tony Chapman and/or Clem Watson and ask for specific guidelines for withholding permits and coordinate with Legal.

- A. Utility Schedule in bid documents defining scope of work for all.

Currently the contractor provides a schedule and this can leave a lot of “holes” in the process.

Yvette has asked for a narrative and timeline and cannot get. The biggest problem is the project limits and right of way cleared. One thought is a clearing and grubbing contractor on call to get this done before hand.

Greg is for clearing it and then have a utility window.

Tim Henderson – We are trying this now on a project in Dorchester county. The contractor clears, resets fence and the utility is given a window to perform.

Greg – College Park in District 6 is another example. Had a utility window and the project finished ahead. We don’t want a set aside contract, but clearing early and then a utility window with a definite time line seems to work well.

Marion added it has worked well on projects in Horry County.

Sometimes everything can be the same as to the type project, but have a different contractor and for some reason the window does not work. We have to make contractors commit also.

Joel commented the Utility knows what is expected and the contractor can continue to work where it does not interfere with the utility work.

It changes the posture of the meeting with the Utilities as well and they have a chance to “buy into the project” as well.

Recommendation: Contact Pre-Construction – John Walsh or RPG – about using a Utility Window widespread in contracts. Do we need “teeth” to make it work and if we get the buy in from utilities this may be all that is needed. Also, consider a memo of understanding that is signed.

The currently utility agreement does not have the time frame in it and that is usually discussed at pre-construction. DOT needs to get more “bang for the buck” for SUE and what it saves Utilities by working around there lines, etc.

B. Discussed above.

C. Utility should be accountable to SCDOT and contractor for delays.

Discussed above. Bryan added he thinks we if can have a Memo of Understanding that is signed and then the Utilities do not honor, that would be when we should consider legislation with consequences for not complying.

D. SCDOT liable for accuracy of utility locations.

Section 105.06 addresses this. SUE work providers are charged with accuracy, stamped and signed for accuracy. However, sometimes utilities are missed.

E. Contingency account for utility delays.

This idea was presented to account for definite delays/losses. This could be difficult to manage and probably not likely to happen.

Recommendation: The committee feels at this time we need to narrow our scope to having utility windows and withholding permits for delays.

Joel commented that if we can define a reasonable amount of time and time lines for the various utility work that has to be done, this could go a long way in partnering with utilities.

Other Business

Greg brought up the issue with abandon lines. On some projects SUE shows a conflict and it has turned out to be abandoned lines. This never came out at the meetings. Is there a way to designate/mark lines that are abandoned or either not show them at all. If it is safer to mark, the contractor needs to know it is abandoned.

Marion will contact Patsy Sharpe at PUPS. PUPS takes the ticket and then sends to the utility company.

The meeting was adjourned.