

## MINUTES OF AGC-DOT JOINT BRIDGE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

(Approved April 10, 2024)

The AGC-DOT Joint Bridge Subcommittee met on August 9, 2023. Those in attendance were:

Brian Hanks	State Structures Engineer (Co-Chairman)
Victor Barbour	Carolinas AGC – Highway Division Director (Co-Chairman)
John Pilipchuk	State Geotechnical Engineer
Gichuru Muchane	Assistant State Structures Engineer
Trey Carroll	Assistant State Structures Engineer
Brian Skeens	Assistant State Construction Engineer – Western Region
Brian Weathersby	Reeves Construction Company
Adam Holcomb	Dane Construction, Inc
Kerry Kennedy	Conti Civil
Larry Cagle	Thompson Arthur-APAC, Inc.
Mark Newman	NHM Constructors, LLC
Erick Frazier	S. T. Wooten Corporation
Patrick Buckley	Crowder Construction Company
Chris Britton	Buckeye Bridge, LLC
Justin Carter	Sanford Contractors
Natalie Bravo	M&T Unit
Jason Civils	M&T Unit - Concrete Products Engineer
Thomas Santee	Geotechnical Unit – Eastern Regional Operations Engineer
Scott Hidden	Geotechnical Unit – Support Services Engineer
Aaron Earwood*	Construction Unit – Regional Bridge Construction Engineer
Aaron Griffith	Construction Unit – Regional Bridge Construction Engineer
James Bolden, Jr.	Structures Management Unit – Project Engineer
Tim Sherrill	Structures Management Unit – Preservation & Repair
Nicholas Pierce	Structures Management Unit – Project Engineer
Samuel Megahed	Structures Management Unit
Asa Godfrey	Structures Management Unit
Lisa Penny	Contract Standards and Development

\* Joined Via Microsoft Teams

Another attendee via Microsoft Teams

During the review of the April 21, 2023 meeting minutes, the following items were discussed:

1. Roadway tie-in on Bridge Deck Rehab with Deck Overlays  
Mr. Pierce and Mr. Sherrill reiterated that they would work with Project Engineers to add a small amount of standard approach roadwork to most projects.
2. NS RR Protective Services PSP  
Mr. Skeens stated he is still working on this PSP with the firms in-charge of providing flagging services and Norfolk Southern (NS) RR. Mr. Barbour and other AGC members noted the two firms that provide the flagging services are too busy and not well staffed to

handle the workload when contacted to schedule flaggers. Mr. Holcomb also noted that they require the flagging firm to have a bond for projects where services are over \$100k and they are not sure how the bonding works from the Department's perspective. He noted that the Department's current contract doesn't specifically call out these flagging firms as subcontractors. Mr. Skeens stated that the Department was looking at those firms as "Services of NS RR," and are not considered to be subcontractors. Mr. Holcomb and Mr. Frazier both noted that people at those firms are very friendly and responsive, but they don't have the staff to handle the demand.

3. Asbestos Program Update

Mr. Carroll noted SMU is working on setting up POs to handle this.

The minutes of the April 21, 2023 meeting were approved.

The following items of new business were discussed:

1. Projected Bridge Lettings

Mr. Hanks shared slides that were presented by Mr. Earwood at the AGC summit and noted year one is 300M, year two is 330M, and that the bump up in funds is only accounting for the increase in what we see in construction fees. He stated that Divisions have varying budgets for bridge replacements due to carry-over from last year's funds.

Mr. Barbour asked a question about replacing the low water bridges in Division 11. Mr. Hanks responded that the Department does not yet have a signed agreement with USDOT. He added that the Department is working ahead on PE work, but projects won't be let until agreements are signed. He also stated that most of those projects will be design bid build projects, except there's one project in Caldwell County that will be design build.

**Action Item:**

**None**

2. Watertight Integrity Test for Foam Joints

Mr. Weathersby shared a situation from a preservation project where the special provisions required that the foam joint seal have a watertight test. He noted that he had only seen that requirement on the gland for expansion joint seals (EJS). Mr. Weathersby also noted that sometimes it's difficult to provide the test on in-service bridges, there can sometimes be issues with areas around the joint leaking which is not the joint material replaced as part of the project. He asked what the expectation from the Department is for this requirement. Mr. Griffith stated that he had talked with people in his area and there are places where there are issues, like ramp bridges, that might require special exemptions from this testing but otherwise has not had any issues with this test being performed. Mr. Sherrill noted that this requirement was added in 2018 and this was the first time someone asked about it.

While on a preservation related topic, Mr. Hanks noted that currently SMU handles all the preservation projects, but the Department is looking at Divisions handling smaller

preservation projects. SMU will continue to handle larger bridge preservation projects (20-30M dollar projects). Mr. Hanks also noted the Department is working on how this work will be handled by Divisions. Mr. Newman asked if these projects would be let by the Divisions, and whether they will be looking for bids on pay items for types of work to be done on bridges across the Divisions or bridge specific contracts. Mr. Hanks replied that it would be bridge specific based contracts, not Division wide.

**Action Item:**

**SMU & Construction Unit to discuss internally how to adjust the PSP.**

3. Permanent Vegetation Establishment Specification

Mr. Frazier spoke about some ambiguity in the permanent vegetation establishment specification. He noted that he has had some projects that received a letter accepting their seeding and vegetation, but the project required more work to be done in which the grass was torn up. They were going to regrade and reseed, but the resident wanted them to re-topsoil the area and then reseed. Mr. Barbour noted that there is no definition of what 80% vegetation is. Mr. Skeens noted that they have had some conversations with the Divisions about not holding up projects where a small area of vegetation is not established. He asked Contractors that if they are having issues on a project like this to contact the Area Construction Engineer.

**Action Item:**

**None**

4. Lane Closures as a pay item like flagging

Mr. Holcomb presented this topic, sharing a project with utility work where lane closures were a pay item that worked out well for the Department and his company because they didn't need all the closures they bid on. Mr. Skeens noted that on Interstate maintenance projects the Department does put lane closures as a pay item for each. Mr. Barbour noted that the Department should probably look at using the lane closures as pay items for interstate and NHS routes projects. Mr. Holcomb noted that when it's not a pay item for each they add more cost to it because they don't know how many closures are needed.

Mr. Britton stated that he had a project with bridge preservation work and interstate maintenance work with both pay items for both lane closures as each and pay items for traffic control, which got confusing as to how to handle billing for lane closures. Mr. Skeens noted that it should not have happened, but the Department needs to coordinate when WZTC plans are created.

On a related topic, Mr. Sherrill asked if Contractors like Interstate Maintenance projects combined with bridge preservation work. Mr. Barbour and others noted that they would like to not see interstate maintenance work with bridge preservation work if they can be two separate projects. It was also noted that Contractors would like one project to be completed before the other starts to not have issues with lane closures.

**Action Item:**

**SMU will talk to Ken about this issue to make sure not to use different pay items for traffic control on the same project.**

5. Introduction of Admixtures Plant or Job Site

Mr. Newman shared an unusual situation on a cored slab bridge replacement project at a remote location where the concrete supplier said they would introduce the admixture at the plant versus on the job site. Mr. Newman noted that the water reducer admixture is known to only have a 30-min pot life, so his subcontractor did not want to have the liability for the admixture not working by the time the truck arrived on-site and the concrete was tested.

Mr. Earwood talked with M&T, and it has been the expectation to add admixtures at the plant, only allowing air admixtures on-site if it tests low. This is to provide better quality control and many of the admixtures perform better if added early. Mr. Earwood noted that if there are some special situations, talk with the Construction Unit about it beforehand.

Mr. Civils noted that only certified technicians can add the admixtures, not drivers. Both Mr. Civils and Mr. Griffith agreed that if the haul distance is too long, the Department can look at introducing the admixtures on-site with approval.

**Action Item:**

**Mr. Civils will speak with Mr. Law about this issue.**

6. Steel Price Adjustment

Mr. Earwood noted that the SPA1 went well, but we are getting to the time where SPA2 will need to be submitted. The two projects they checked in on, the resident and contractor had forgotten about it. Mr. Earwood reminded the Contractors that they need to remember if they checked that option, they are responsible for keeping up with submitting the paperwork based on the category and the date that applies to that category. He is seeing items submitted using this system but are not items that apply. He noted that the 2024 updates will be included as standard pay items. The items shown on the spreadsheet are also items to be included.

Mr. Barbour and AGC members in room noted that it's a great program, but none of them have used that option because they have seen the prices stabilize. Contractors noted that once the Department created this system, the suppliers were more willing to provide more stable prices and estimates. Mr. Earwood stated that if Contractors want to use it in the future, the Construction Unit is there to help.

Ms. Penny asked the group if the list on the spreadsheet shared were the last items to be added or if there were other items they wanted to see included. Mr. Griffith and Mr. Earwood said these seem to be it.

**Action Item:**

**None**

7. Saw Cutting Bridge Joints

Mr. Griffith wanted to remind everyone that with the number of new subcontractors being used, they are trying to free-hand cut instead of cutting the joints with guides. This creates issues with the surface being uneven and the foam joints will not be seated correctly to bond.

The Department likes to have a representative there when saw-cutting. Mr. Britton asked if the Department allows drilling into the deck to attach the track down, because they have had issues with the Resident not allowing them to anchor to the deck. Mr. Earwood noted that this is the one case where anchoring to the deck is allowed.

**Action Item:**  
**None**

8. Link Slabs

Mr. Carroll noted that Mr. Earwood shared these details with AGC at the conference. He noted that the goal is to reduce the number of joints. The design calls for debonding the deck from the girders for about 5% of the span length to allow rotation. The Department is monitoring larger span bridges but is currently using them on smaller spans.

Mr. Carroll also showed some strap options for attaching SIP forms to girders in the link slab area. Mr. Hanks asked Contractors if there is a better way to illustrate not to weld SIP forms in the Link slab region from what was shown in the detail. He noted that he has been to some bridges where the forms have been welded to the girders. Mr. Buckley suggested that the Construction Unit might want to add that to the dry run checklist for when SIP is installed.

Mr. Barbour asked if that was the current detail. Mr. Carroll showed a slide with typical bridge information and when they should be used. AGC members noted that they like the use of link slabs. Mr. Hanks stated that if AGC members have some bridges with longer spans and want to use link slabs, reach out to Mr. Carroll. Mr. Frazier asked about skew limitations, to which Mr. Hanks responded that there are currently no skew limitations.

**Action Item:**  
**None**

(NEW) Intermediate diaphragms on skews

Mr. Frazier asked about the intermediate diaphragm dimensions being detailed using the skew of the bridge vs. the diaphragm skew plus the angle of the diaphragm (3rd dimension). Can this dimension be detailed on the plans? asked Mr. Frazier. So that it provides the length of the diaphragms from end to end instead of bolt to bolt. Fabricators should provide that but sometimes they are off.

Other

Mr. Barbour and other Contractors noted that night work continues to be dangerous. Mr. Cagle described several of his projects that have had people crash into their work zones in the past few months. Mr. Hanks asked Mr. Skeens about the previous action item for this topic. Mr. Skeens noted that he had been working with Ken to update safety requirements.

\*Mr. Frazier to send plans/pictures.

Mr. Barbour noted that traffic control devices are being stolen and Legislators looking into making this an increased penalty.

Post Meeting Note

None

**\*\* Upcoming 2023 Meeting Dates:**

October 11<sup>th</sup> (Cancelled)

December 13<sup>th</sup> (Cancelled)