**GLS Tech Team Meeting – MINUTES**

**WEMA, WisDOT, Industry and Partners**

**Wednesday, March 19, 2025 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

**{Hybrid Meeting – WisDOT Truax Building – Antigo Silt Loam Conference Room/Teams Virtual Meeting}**

**Meeting Attendees (Truax Building):** Erik Lyngdal- WisDOT BTS, Dave Staab – WisDOT- BTS, Jake David – WEMA, Josh Wade – Arbor Green, Mark Polega – WisDOT BHM, Brandon Lamers – WisDOT BPD; Andy Luehmann – HNTB; Carl Fischer - FHWA

**Virtual Attendees (TEAMS):** Brian DuPont - WisDOT BPD, Steven Maxwell - WisDOT SE Region, Jesse Hansen WisDOT, Kevin Kaufman – Hoffman Construction Comp., Jonathon Engerson – WisDOT, Steve Doocy – WisDOT, Nathaniel Schumaker – WisDOT Mark Zander – WisDOT, Steven Popke – WisDOT, Ryan Peterson – Peterson Construction, Brian Boothby – WisDOT BPD, Michael Hoelker - WisDOT BPD, Matthew Bare – County Materials, Jennifer Schaff – County Materials, , Steven Nachreimer – Edgerton Construction, Carl Fisher – FHWA, Matt Grove - WTBA

**Introduction/Welcome** – Dave Staab

* Membership updates:
  + **Added**: Travis Giese (WEMA, Hoffman Construction); Ryan Peterson (James Peterson Sons, Inc.); Carl Fischer (FHWA)
  + **Departed**: Shawn Hoffman (WEMA, Hoffman Construction); Tim Peterson (James Peterson Sons, Inc.) (membership list attached)
* Meeting Notes: Brian DuPont/Dave Staab
* Meeting will be recorded for note keeping purposes.
* Approval of previous meeting minutes (10-16-2024 Minutes attached): No comments/objections, so minutes approved.

# Recurring & Previous Meeting Carryover Topics:

**GLS Priority Initiatives –** Dave Staab/Brian DuPont/Jake David

* EBS and EBS Backfill
* Excavation Waste Bid Item
* Separate items for asphalt and concrete pavement removal, not included in common excavation.

Brian DuPont provided an update that the GLS Spec Committee had met twice since the last GLS meeting, most recently on February 4th. WisDOT staff are going to meet internally, hopefully in the next week or so (Monday, April 28) and Julie Slota will be leading the effort for WisDOT while Brian is recovering from health issues. It is anticipated the full spec. committee will meet again in the next month or two to continue working on updates.

Jake David indicated that WEMA appreciated the spec committee efforts. Brandon Lamers mentioned that the spec committee was requested by Industry, and WisDOT is trying to see if there can be spec revision that is acceptable to Industry and the Department.

**Landscaping Updates** – Mark Polega

* Landscaping Subcommittee formed to discuss landscape topics.

Landscaping Subcommittee met on 2/17/25 including Arbor Green, RES, LaCrosse Seed and WisDOT staff and discussed new seed mixes and better descriptions of the mixes for designers.

* Mark provided updated seed rates for 2025:
  + No. 10 – 1.5 to 3lbs./1000sf
  + No. 20 – 3 to 5lbs./1000sf
  + No. 30 - 2 to 5lbs./1000sf
  + No. 40 – 2 to 5lbs./1000sf
* Cool Season Grass Mixtures:

No. 35 is meant for higher pH soils (used with good success)

No. 45 is a fescue blend for areas with minimal maintenance.

* Warm Season Native Prairie Seed Mixes (A for northern areas and B for southern areas)

85A and B (sandy soils)

90A and B (Loamy soils)

95A and B (wet soils)

**QMP Subgrade Updates –** Dave Staab

* Pilot Project – I-41 - Southbridge

Approximately half a million cu. yds. that is about 50% complete (started in 2024 and should finish in 2025). David, Andy Zimmer and Neil Michaelson met with WisDOT construction staff and will meet with the contractor (Michels) to see how the spec is working. Although there was a learning curve, the contractor was diligent about excavating in layers (from off-site borrow sources), and taking Proctors for each layer, so that test variability could be reduced. Soil was fairly consistent clay and reasonable moisture content. David will continue to monitor and report back.

Jake suggested doing a pilot project on soils similar to what was experienced on STH 15, where the soil layers were only 1 to 2 feet thick and kept changing.

Ryan Peterson thought the pilot was working because the material was being taken from a borrow source and not from the project site on a balanced earthwork project. On a balanced project there is more chance for Proctors to vary. It was suggested that a pilot project in an urban environment be considered.

Also, the existing QMP spec is being used on the I-43 projects in the SE Region and they have tight time frames which necessitate earth work in late fall and early spring in wet conditions.

Jake mentioned that this is a big risk to the contractors and something project staff should consider when developing project schedules.

**Rock Excavation at Inlets, Manholes and Catch Basins (SS611)**– Dave Staab

David reported that he sent out a survey regarding this topic to all the regions and received three responses. They generally agreed that if rock excavation was needed for the storm sewer then the payment for that effort should extend through the distance of the bottom of the manhole or catch basin.

Jake asked if WisDOT could add a line to the specs to clarify that position? David said he would discuss with BPD and Brandon added that we don’t want the specs to be duplicative, but we can look to clarify so all field staff are interpreting this consistently.

**Environmental Topics (2:15 pm)** – Hans Hallanger, Jeremy Ashauer

* **Trans 401 Rulemaking**

Jeremy gave an update on the rulemaking for certain activities like batch plants. Stakeholder meeting planned for March 20.

* **Select Site Transfers**

Working with WDNR on restricting select site transfers so that they don’t become ad hoc industrial sites. Going to meet with WTBA in the next month to discuss details.

Matt Grove asked about having to go through WDNR permitting for leaving a pond on a select site as part of a final site restoration. He indicated that permitting could be an issue due to time constraints and additional costs to the contractor if they couldn’t leave a pond. Jeremy appreciated the perspective and will continue the discussion.

* **ECIP Form Update**

Trying to get the updated form ready for 2026 construction. More information to come.

**Stripping topsoil and making all incidental to the topsoil item -** Jake David/Dave Staab

Jake thought that WisDOT should not have topsoil stripping be incidental to the common excavation because it puts excess risk on the contractor. David said he thought this was an isolated situation and Jesse Hanson confirmed that this did occur on one of the early I-41 projects in the NE Region, but that future projects on the corridor were not going to spec topsoil stripping as being incidental.

**Contractors would really like DOT to provide road centerline data on all projects, including local program projects** – Jake David/BPD

Discussions continue with various stakeholders and potential cost impacts. No significant updates at this time. Nathaniel Schumaker said he designed a number of county road projects over the years and felt that providing the centerline data was a minimal effort and should not cost the locals much because the engineers have created the centerline data and it is just a matter of sharing the data in a uniform manner. He did say that providing surface models is a larger effort, but not centerline and profile data.

**Action Item:** Inquire how would contractors use centerline data?

**Updates to Std. Spec. 614** – Erik Emerson, Brian Boothby

* Updated for 2025 - Site grading prior to barrier/post installation.
* Possible conflict with SS 104.6.1.2.4(2).
* Update: A CCAW subcommittee was created and has met a couple times to review 104.6 language.

Brian Boothby (BPD) and Matt Grove (WTBA) are working on how grading can be accomplished before beam guard is installed while maintaining hazard protection.

**Using topsoil stripped from the project, that was growing grass, DOT testing it and failing it because the organic matter was below 5% -** Jake David

David indicated that he has not done any significant work on this item. Jake could not recall the specific contractor who brought this up. The discussion involved the SE Region freeway special provision that required any topsoil to be placed on the project to meet specific pH levels. The contractors stated that if the existing topsoil does not have the acceptable pH level, then WisDOT should provide a bid item to treat the soil to achieve acceptable pH. This should not be left to the contractor to test the pH before bid or to bid in the risk that the existing topsoil could not be used, and new topsoil needed to be imported.

Brian stated this was specified because SE Freeways are heavily salted, and the existing topsoil did not provide for an acceptable basis for the new seed to establish a ground cover that could be accepted by WDNR.

Josh Wade felt that the new seeding mixes and rates have a better chance of establishing a ground cover and we should be using these with the existing topsoil to see if they work. Ryan Peterson said there is excessive risk on the contractor with the current special provisions.

Brandon stated WisDOT can reach out to SE Freeways and continue to work through this group to find a better solution.

Matt Grove indicated he appreciated that because he could see this as a conflict point.

Jonathon Engerson mentioned that there are SPV requirements for Topsoil which require organics and acceptable pH on non-freeway projects in the SE Region, but these requirements don’t apply to Salvaged Topsoil.

Matt said that is fine because the contractor can control what he brings to the jobsite, but not what exists on the jobsite.

# New Topics:

**Pond Liner SPV Updates** - Dave Staab

BTS and NER are working on updating the Pond Liner SPV for situations when the contractor chooses to excavate below the bottom of pond liner grade. This is to ensure the pond liner subgrade is stable after completion of the pond.

A second pond liner SPV is being developed to address situations when groundwater is above pond liner grade and needs to be lowered below the bottom of the pond and maintained until the liner is installed and the pond is filled. If groundwater is not adequately controlled, there is a risk of the pond liner heaving and compromising the integrity of the liner.

**Proposed Standard Spec Excavation and Shoring Updates –** Mark Zander

Mark Zander explained that BPD is considering removing multiple references to OSHA related to excavation and shoring and relying on the global reference to following OSHA requirements in section 1 of the standard specs. Mark indicated this would be an effort in 2026 with proposed wording provided in the future.

**Weather Days –** Jake David

Jake brought up the subject of projects with tight schedules that require grading in the spring or fall and have large liquidated damages (LD’s) that are a significant risk to the contractor and force the contractor to increase their bid to cover the excessive risk. He thought that WisDOT should include weather days and schedule flexibility to reduce excessive risk and additional cost to the taxpayers.

Brandon clarified that this is more about project scheduling than strictly high LD’s. He said that it is a balancing act between different stakeholders of how the project affects the traveling public or access to businesses in the vicinity and the cost of a compressed schedule. In some cases it may be an education of newer designers on providing more time to the contractor.

Steve Doocy gave several examples of complications of construction that he was not aware of until discussions with the contractor. Designers that don’t take these complications into consideration may be creating a difficult schedule. Nathaniel Schumaker asked if there are set time frames for individual operations that require cure time or material testing?

Matt Grove thought that at least 20% of the projects bid have tight schedules which minimize the number of bidders and increase the bid cost. Matt said industry has asked for the designers linear schedule prior to bid so they could review it and ask better questions through Bid Express.

Nathaniel asked if contractors put schedules together before bid. Steve Nachreiner said they do try to look at this but not in a detailed way with limited time to prepare the bid (or multiple bids per letting). He also commented that the contractors are generally willing to work quickly but need the tools to address complicating factors such as weather or the discussion about salvaged topsoil that doesn’t meet pH requirements. Ryan Peterson agreed.

Discussion continued about local’s expectations and commitments. The design needs to be realistic on the impacts that construction will cause.

**Cut (Common Excavation) Undistributed Quantity** – Jake David

The example brought up was a unique situation where a local design had multiple undistributed items and was corrected by an addendum prior to let. This was addressed with the designer and is not expected to occur again.

# Other/Additional Topics -All

# Josh Wade asked how the conflict between 614 and 104 was going to be handled while the Department is working with CCAW to resolve? Brian Boothby indicated that the contractors should plan for multiple mobilizations and bid accordingly until there is a resolution. Contractor could also propose CRI’s. Matt and Brian agreed to hold another meeting on the topic soon.

**Next Meeting:** September 17, 2025 - 1-4 PM (Virtual/In-person TBD)

(There is a let on September 9, 2025.)

# Attachments:

* GLS Membership List (March 2025)
* Previous Meeting (10-16-24) Minutes -Virtual meeting

**GLS 3-19-2025 Minutes (Draft).docx**

**BD/DAS**