



Structural Engineers Association of Montana Meeting Minutes

Date: November 4, 2004

Location: Montana Joint Engineers Conference (JEC), Red Lion Colonial Hotel, Helena, MT

Attendees: (approximately 35 in attendance, sign up sheet is included with SEAMT meeting records)

The meeting was called to order by Carol Pivonka at 9:00 pm.

1.0 Election Results:

Jerry Stephens had collected and tallied the officer election ballots on November 3, 2004 and reported the results to SEAMT members via email earlier in the day. Carol announced the results of the officer election as follows:

- ✓ President – Carol Pivonka
- ✓ Vice President – Dave Roberts
- ✓ Secretary – Kurt Keith
- ✓ Treasurer – Janna Moser
- ✓ Directors – Dan VanLuchene
Lee Ebeling
Greg Benjamin
Matt Schmidt
Lance Redinger

Carol stated that the reason 5 directors were elected as opposed to the 4 required in the bylaws is because we have no past president at this time and we are required to have 9 officers. As reported by Jerry Stephens' email, 43 out of the 77 ballots that were sent out were returned for 55-percent participation.

2.0 Discussion of SEAMT Purpose and Objectives:

Carol opened the discussion by asking what the group wanted to accomplish. Daniel Bisso handed out his suggestion for "Planned Activities of SEAMT" for discussion. It was the general consensus that Daniel's list was a great start and that the formation of a Structural Engineers Emergency Response (SEER) support team should be the first objective of the group. The training session on the SEERPlan scheduled for the next day as part of the JEC will be an important part of initiating this process.

The following is a summary of suggested purposes and objectives for SEAMT:

- 1) Develop a SEER program and support team.
- 2) Provide input to and participation in the National Counsel of Structural Engineers Association (NCSEA).

- 3) Provide leadership for and assistance in the continuing education of structural engineers in the State of Montana.
- 4) Provide a forum for discussion of structural engineering code issues within SEAMT.
- 5) Provide a go-to source of structural engineering technical information and consensus for local government and code enforcement agencies.
- 6) Promote and elevate the profession of structural engineering within the State of Montana.

➤ **Action Item 1**

Assignment: All SEAMT members

Review the proposed purposes and objectives and provide feedback and/or additions to this preliminary list.

Status: open

3.0 Committees:

In alignment with the first draft of planned activities and objectives of SEAMT, the following possible Committees were identified. A short description of proposed committee activities is included. It is noted below when an attendee volunteered to serve as a chairperson:

✚ **Structural Engineers Emergency Response (SEER) Committee**

Chairperson: Neil Poulsen

Local Community Representatives: Billings – Lance Redinger, Missoula – Dave Roberts

Description: Develop the framework and volunteer organization necessary to respond to local, state, or national emergency situations requiring structural engineering evaluations and assessments.

✚ **Building Code Committee**

Co-Chairpersons: Greg Benjamin, Jason Hicks

Description: Facilitate discussions of building code discussions amongst membership and development of consensus opinions for local building enforcement agencies.

✚ **Government Relations Committee**

Chairperson: open

Description: Encourage and support governmental actions that provide protection of the general public and enhancement of the structural engineering profession within Montana.

✚ **Membership Committee**

Chairperson: Alfred Hendrickson

Description: Promote and maintain membership of SEAMT.

✚ **Continuing Education Committee:**

Chairperson: open

Description: Provide opportunities for continuing education of SEAMT membership and suggestions for technical presentations at statewide conferences (i.e. MSE Joint Engineers Conference, MSU Spring Engineering Festival).

✚ **Information Committee:**

Chairperson: Ken Penney

Description: Development of a quarterly newsletter, press releases, advertisements, etc., to support the objectives and efforts of SEAMT.

➤ **Action Item 2**

Assignment: All SEAMT members

Review the proposed committee structure and purpose/objective. Provide input on additional or alternate committees as well as comment on the proposed purpose/objective of each committee. Members interested in chairing or serving on a committee need to let an SEAMT officer know and an assignment will be made. **For the SEER committee, we need local representatives for Helena, Butte, Kalispell, Great Falls, and Bozeman. Please contact Carol or Neil Poulsen for details.**

Status: open

4.0 Bylaws:

Carol indicated that she had received only one comment on the Bylaws that have been posted on the SEAMT website for several months. Ben Hurlbut (not in attendance) felt that bylaw Article IX – Expulsion and Recall could allow a single “grudge” to cause a person to unjustly be removed from the membership.

A general discussion of the article in question ensued. It was pointed out by Carol that expulsion would require 75% of the membership to agree on removing a member. All of those in attendance that spoke stated that the article provided protection against unjust removal of a member while still providing for a method to remove someone who has engaged in unprofessional conduct or criminal activity.

It was suggested by Alfred Hendrickson to tie the definition of unprofessional conduct and/or criminal activity of professional members to actions taken by the Board of Professional Engineers.

➤ **Action Item 3**

Assignment: Carol Pivonka

Discuss bylaw Article IX with Ben and see if he has further concerns in light of the discussion at the meeting. Carol will also check into the feasibility of using the MT PE board’s definition of professional members in “good standing” as the yardstick for allowing an expulsion or removal of a member.

Status: open

5.0 Annual Dues and Budget:

Carol asked the group what the annual dues should be for SEAMT. As background information, Carol provided the following information:

- The NCSEA requires \$10 per member.
- Annual non-profit filing fee is approximately \$400 (see next item 6.0).
- Other SEAMT expenses include sending a delegate to the NCSEA convention in September. This cost is currently not defined.
- Dan VanLuchene is maintaining and providing the website at no cost.
- Newsletters can be distributed via email at no cost.
- SEAMT will receive a portion of the proceeds for the JEC.

Doug Brekke with the Montana Society of Engineers (MSE) is the organizing entity of the JEC. He reported the sharing of proceeds will be distributed based on the number of participants that identified in their application an association with SEAMT. As a sponsoring organization, SEAMT is required to have 2 persons on the MSE – JEC organizing committee. The JEC

committee sets the program selection, identifies speakers, and helps select topics for the next JEC.

He requested that these representatives from SEAMT attend the JEC meeting the next morning (Friday) at 6:00 a.m. to discuss the proceeds obtained from the 2004 JEC and begin planning for the 2005 JEC. Greg Benjamin and John Schlegelmilch volunteered to attend the JEC meeting and report back to the SEAMT membership.

➤ **Action Item 4**

Assignment: Greg Benjamin, John Schlegelmilch

Attend JEC meeting, report back to SEAMT secretary.

Status: **Completed 11/05/04.** Greg reported back on Friday, November 5, 2004 the JEC expects to make \$7500 to \$10,000 with SEAMT receiving 15% of the proceeds. This means we can anticipate receiving \$1125 to \$1500 for future operations. Further input will be given to the JEC committee in regards to suggestions for future topics, speakers, etc.

After general discussion, the following annual dues structure was proposed:

- Professional Members = \$75 per year
- Student Members = \$10 per year
- Affiliate Members = \$75 per year
- Associate Members = \$75 per year
- Life Members = \$0 per year (this was not discussed directly but is inferred in the bylaws)

It was moved by Lee Ebling to accept the above annual dues structure. The motion was seconded by Matt Schmidt. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

6.0 Discussion of Application Process for SEAMT members:

Carol asked the attendees how they wanted to initiate the membership application process. The attendees indicated that an initial, open application process with forms available online at the SEAMT website would be the best way to proceed. The membership applications and dues will be developed so SEAMT can officially begin operations in by the 2005 calendar year.

➤ **Action Item 5**

Assignment: Carol Pivonka, Dave Roberts, Kurt Keith, Janna Moser

Develop membership application form (Carol and Dave), develop/maintain membership roster (Kurt), Develop accounting ledgers and bank account for depositing dues (Jana).

Status: open

7.0 Discussion of SEAMT Non-profit Application:

Daniel Bisso reported that his research has determined that SEAMT is defined under that tax code as a Business League, 50C6, Non-profit. Carol asked if the application was complicated or time consuming and Daniel responded that it was neither. He stated that it is fairly straight forward.

➤ **Action Item 6**

Assignment: Daniel Bisso, Carol Pivonka

Obtain and complete application for non-profit status.

Status: open

8.0 Newsletter:

It was agreed that we should try to put out a quarterly newsletter. It was discussed whether to issue the newsletter in hardcopy format or via email. The group in attendance thought that email would be sufficient to start with. Carol asked Lance Redinger whether Ken Penney (not in attendance) was still interested in leading the effort on producing the newsletter. Lance was unsure and would check and report back to Carol (**Update: Ken Penney agreed to lead the efforts for producing the newsletter and to serve as chairman for the information committee**).

9.0 Website:

Dan VanLuchene reported that the website is up and running. He is interested in knowing what the group would like him to include on the site. Carol presented printouts of websites from several other state SEA organizations. Dan asked that any suggestions be forwarded to him via email or the SEA forum.

➤ **Action Item 7**

Assignment: All SEAMT members

Provide feedback to Dan VanLuchene on what we should include on our website.

Status: open

10.0 Structural Certification:

Carol presented her understanding of the NCSEA development of the Structural Certification program. The main goal of the certification program is to differentiate and elevate the practice of structural engineering.

Structural Certification by the NCSEA is simply recognition of engineers with specialized expertise in structural engineering. It has no impact on state licensing or authorization to use the Structural Engineer title. That authority will still be the responsibility of the various state licensing agencies.

Currently, the NCSEA is offering a “grandfather” provision for all engineers practicing structural engineering. In the future, as engineers become licensed and desire to receive the Structural Certification, they will need to pass the Structural II exam.

There was a lengthy discussion of the merits of structural certification. More information will be needed to help the group understand the program and how it might impact structural engineers in Montana.

➤ **Action Item 8**

Assignment: Carol Pivonka

Obtain information of SE Certification from NCSEA and distribute to membership by posting it on the website.

Status: open

11.0 Representation at NCSEA National Convention:

SEAMT will be eligible to send one voting delegate to the NCSEA National Convention. Since the next NCSEA National Convention is not until September of 2005, no decision was made on

if we would have a delegate attend or how that delegate would be selected. Alfred Hendrickson suggested nominations could be made and then the membership could vote to determine who would represent SEAMT. Further discussion of this issue was tabled until the next meeting.

12.0 Future Meeting Schedule:

It was proposed by Carol and agreed to by the attendees that SEAMT would initially have two general meetings a year. One in March at the Spring Engineering Festival in Bozeman at MSU and one in November at the Joint Engineering Conference in Helena.

13.0 Suggestions for Future Technical Sessions at the Spring Engineering Festival:

Dan VanLuchene requested that the group provide him with some suggestions for technical sessions at the 2005 Spring Engineering Festival. The following is a list of suggestions from the group:

- Aluminum design
- Fire Safety/Construction Assemblies
- Rehabilitation and Evaluation of Buildings
- Post Tension Slab Design
- Case Studies and Project Presentations by SEAMT Members

➤ **Action Item 9**

Assignment: All SEAMT members

Provide other suggestions for technical sessions at the MSU Spring Engineering Festival to Dan VanLuchene.

Status: open

Steve Meismer moved to adjourn. Jay Fischer seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 p.m.