



## MINUTES BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING April 5, 2023

### Members Present:

Chris Anderson	Ray Starr
Brian Connolly	Ben Wallace
Dan Munthe	Patrick Warden
Jason Ponciano	Ward Westphal
Sam Richert	
Mark Sellin	

### Counsel present:

Dean E. Parker, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP  
Kevin J. Moore, Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP

### Guests:

Tammy Gardner, General Manager, Minnesota, OCC  
Kimberly Boyd, Customer Relationship Manager, OCC  
Adam Franco, Director of Operations, OCC  
Jon Wolfgram, Deputy Director, MnOps  
Amanda Swenson, Interim State Fire Marshall  
Barbara Cederberg, Chief Operations Officer, GSOC

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On April 5, 2023 at 9:00 a.m., in person and by Zoom videoconference, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Acting Chair, Patrick Warden. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined to be present. Dean Parker was asked to act as recording secretary.

### **Chair's Report; Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion made and duly seconded, the minutes for the January 11, 2023 Board meeting were approved.

Dean Parker updated the Board concerning multiple legislative proposals for possible changes to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216D. Currently, some of the changes suggested by MnOPS are in the House bill but not in the Senate's counterpart bill. The discrepancy will need to be resolved at some point prior to passage and sending to the Governor for signature. There is industry opposition to a number of proposals and GSOC understands that Representative Kraft would like to see some industry discussions to see if consensus can be reached as to some of the proposals.



## COO Report

Barbara Cederberg reviewed GSOC's mission and core values in its Strategic Plan. She noted these values continue to drive GSOC initiatives. Ticket volumes for the first quarter of 2023 are down almost 25% from 2022 levels. This is attributed primarily to weather.

GSOC continues its meet ticket initiative by highlighting the use of meet tickets in the Spring damage prevention meetings. A "Learn from the Unexpected" video is also being used along with a MnOPS case study. Damage prevention meeting attendance dropped significantly during the pandemic as the meetings went to an online only format. Now that damage prevention meetings are once again in person, attendance has rebounded. Barb believes this is the best year she has experienced for damage prevention meetings as a result of really good cooperation with MnOPS regarding content and variation in the format, including use of damage prevention videos produced by CGA as well as MnOPS case studies. Pat Warden reported that several of his employees confirmed how engaging they were this year. About 30 total meetings are scheduled and roughly half of them have taken place already. They are scheduled throughout the State.

Barb described current progress of the underground utility mapping project team (UUMPT). The prototype system was completed in the Fall of 2022. Production level open source software with APIs connected to OCC's ITIC system is now under development. A memorandum of understanding has been executed with the developer of the software, SharedGe.. Fundraising is in progress with a need of \$25,000 from a third party source to complete first round funding. It is anticipated that a number of interested parties will be contacted regarding possible funding and consulting on development to assure the software will function in a useful manner. Second round funding may be accomplished through a variety of public and private efforts.

Kris Anderson asked who will be able to see the shared data in the maps and what will be seen. Precise details remain to be determined. Much will depend on the desires of the facility operators. Initially, Barb anticipates that only line data will be shown and that parties will start with design engineers while details for sharing maps with others will need to be worked on by the industry.

The mapping group is giving a number of presentations including the 2023 Global Excavation Safety Conference, the 2023 CGA Conference and the Minnesota Transportation Conference and Expo. A CGA Next Practices case study was published on February 9 highlighting this project.

GSOC has created a visioning team to formulate priorities and development application of technologies. The priorities are (1) to develop an easy to use communication platform for infield communications and (2) develop a platform for project scheduling and documentation including contact information, marking agreements, photos, etc. Four possible platform providers have been identified that may meet the needs of such a system. Interviews will take place during the next month to assist with the selection process.



Barb reviewed certain non-excavation ticket processes and indicated that it would be desirable to have a committee of the Board assist in a thorough review of practices and processes for non-excavation tickets. Brian Connolly and Jason Ponciano each commented regarding certain anomalies and noted that there is some confusion in the usage of tickets. After further discussion, a consensus developed that a committee should be formed of the following people to review the excavation ticket processes and make suggestions, which might include revising 216D to align with actual industry practice if different:

### Non-Excavation Ticket Processes Review Committee:

Brian Connolly  
Mike Mendiola, MnOPS  
Jason Ponciano  
Mark Sellin  
Barbara Cederberg

OCC will also provide support for the technical side of the review, if needed by the committee.

### PR/Awareness Report

Barbara Cederberg provided a brief update. Olivia Phillips is currently attending Damage Prevention meetings. New content is being sent to GSOC's various media partners to include the "click or call" before you dig message. This acknowledges that most tickets are now submitted online. Barb briefly reviewed a new awareness campaign in conjunction with KARE Channel 11 which has created a 2 minute "look live" video message. There are also a number of 15 second messages which will be aired between April and October.

There are good quality excavator and home owner videos which have been created by CGA. These are being utilized by GSOC and are available on the CGA website. Approximately thirty in person DP meetings have been scheduled for 2023 as well as an online meeting. GSOC is approximately half way through its schedule of meetings. The content of the damage prevention meetings was substantially revised this year. Videos are being used starting with highlighting facility operator responsibilities and then excavator responsibilities. MnOps and GSOC have coordinated their presentations. Barb also demonstrated an 811 Jeopardy game which is being utilized to call attention to certain issues. It has created a good deal of participant interest.

GSOC is promoting the 811 5K run to raise damage prevention awareness. The event will take place Saturday, August 12 in Minneapolis.

### MnOPS Update

Jon Wolfgram briefly reviewed 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2022 damage data. Additional data is available publicly on the MnOPS website. He pointed out that voluntary damage reporting has diminished



with only some electric utility and very modest communications utility reporting to add to the mandatory pipeline damage reporting. This lack of information makes it more difficult for MnOPS to accurately assess the extent of damages in Minnesota and analyze data to determine how best to assist damage prevention efforts. That is the reason MnOPS is requesting mandatory reporting from all larger volume facility operators in a proposed statutory change. The top 5 code violations which are subject of enforcement actions continue to be the same. Failure to locate/late locate was the single largest category in 2022. This was followed by failure to maintain clearance, digging without a valid ticket, failure to hand dig/pot hole and failure to white mark the excavation site.

Damage prevention violation complaints and cases are on the rise over the past 5 years. Nevertheless, MnOPS personnel continue to devote substantial time to inspection of Minnesota's pipeline system and over 1,000 inspection days were conducted during 2022. These inspections are partly the result of PHMSA federal requirements for pipeline inspection and safety code enforcement.

MnOPS continues to request that its proposed bills be passed by the legislature, HF 1275 and the companion SF 1134. The reporting requirements would provide data to help guide future changes. In addition, the bill proposes an increase to the pipeline safety civil penalty amount to align the fines with federal requirements. MnOPS also continues to pursue its general fund appropriation for 3 additional damage prevention personnel to assist with investigations of complaints and enforcement.

Jon Wolfgram reported that facility operator concerns voiced in testimony at hearings on the bills revolved around the possibility of bogus tickets filed with GSOC (tickets where there is no good faith intent to dig within the valid excavation period), receiving more time to perform locates and lack of compliance by excavators with the white lining requirement for perimeter of excavation areas. With respect to meet tickets, one facility operator/contract locator remains reluctant to comply with industry standards and MnOPS is continuing to work on education with that party. Jon Wolfgram inquired as to whether GSOC might perform some kind of study to determine the extent of the concerns regarding bogus tickets and whether light can be shed on the extent of the problem and whether it is isolated to a few parties.

## **OCC Report**

Tammy Gardner advised the work from home model continues to be pursued by the notification center as well as the direct hiring of new employees. There are currently 87 total employees with 6 working at the notification center. Approximately 25 staff were held over winter this year. Many were cross trained in multiple functions to help alleviate staff shortages during peak periods. KPI compliance has been high this year with call KPI interval compliance at over 99.9%. Ticket volume is the lowest in the last 5 years for the first quarter of 2023. Home owners are over 1,000 tickets lower than last year at this time and homeowner ITIC percentage usage is also down. The notification center is making changes to the initial recording announcement to encourage more online filing of tickets. Overall, the online submission percentage is at an all time high for the first quarter of 2023, so compliance by commercial users continues to improve. Help



desk calls are also down. General questions about ticket searches and requests for tickets are leading the subjects the help desk is asked to respond to.

The notification center continues to pursue a number of projects. Where users require callbacks, a substantial program has been conducted this winter to educate the users in order to reduce callbacks and provide for higher quality ticket information submission. The notification center reviewed the impact of dynamic start time messaging for 2022. Approximately 40% of the normal and update tickets provided more than the minimum time to locate. The dynamic start time feature was turned on again April 1 and will be effective through October 31 in the 11 Metro Counties.

OCC continues to strengthen its IT group and has added additional experienced personnel to provide leadership. A number of systems changes are being made and map updates continued to be performed throughout the winter. The notification center has also requested facility operator updates to record their observed holidays and provide updated contact information.

The new My Tickets Analytics tool was demonstrated. The tool will provide excavators and facility operators with additional means to easily analyze their tickets. Key among them will be the electronic positive response measure as to whether that response was made prior to the ticket start time/date. My Tickets Analytics will now be available to excavators and facility operators upon request. A communications plan is being developed which will include submission of articles in trade association newsletters as well as direct email contact with stakeholders.

## **Finance Committee Update**

Pat Warden briefly reviewed 2022 financial data. The notification center had a smaller than projected operating loss as a result of lower expenses even though revenue was also lower than projected. He noted tickets volumes for 2023 first quarter are down but it is expected that certain broadband projects will help pick up volume as the weather turns milder and excavation season proceeds. Discussion ensued by the Board concerning the variety of reasons for the lower than expected ticket count in 2022. These included material/equipment shortages as well as equipment fabrication/assembly problems due to labor shortages experienced by some equipment makers.

Tammy Gardner reminded everyone of the OCC Users Group Conference taking place in September and the request for more attendees to assist with national board engagement and development new ideas.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business coming before the Board, upon motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dean E. Parker  
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting Dates:

August 9, 2023

November 8, 2023

January 9, 2024

April 3, 2024 [date subject to change to conform with PS Pipeline Safety Educational  
Conference]

*Shorter interim meetings may be set*