

Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials

**2012 NASTO Board Meeting
Monday, November 19, 2012
AASHTO Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
7:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.**

The following handouts were e-mailed prior to the meeting to all NASTO Members:

- Agenda
- June 10, 2012 – Baltimore Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Travel Subsidy & Dues Proposal
- Draft Portland (ME) Agenda

Welcome & Roll Call

NASTO President James Redeker (CT) opened the Board meeting with a roll call. The following states sent a Board member or alternate representative: CT, DE, DC, ME, MD, NH, PA, RI, MA, NJ and VT. A quorum for voting was established. In addition, Anne Stubbs (CONEG), Jack Basso (AASHTO), Renee Sigel (FHWA), as well as several consultants were in attendance. A complete list of attendees is attached.

President Redeker welcomed all to the meeting and offered congratulations to Mike Lewis (RI) for becoming AASHTO's president for the upcoming year. President Redeker pledged NASTO's support to Director Lewis as he takes over the reins of AASHTO and prepares for the transition of new leadership at the Association. Director Lewis pledged to sit down with all the regions in order to get an understanding of their operations and vowed to get everyone's issues to the table.

Minutes & Reports

President Redeker asked for any comments/changes on the draft minutes from the June 10, 2012, meeting in Baltimore, MD. With no further comments and discussion, President Redeker solicited for a motion to approve. Motion received, seconded and the minutes were approved.

Treasurer Michael Baker (PA) presented the key financial activities since the last Board of Directors meeting in Baltimore, MD on June 10, 2012. He identified a current cash balance of \$278,527 which includes two \$100,000 certificates of deposit and a cash balance of \$78,527. Mr. Baker also reported that the 2011-12 membership dues invoices were mailed in January

and that all dues have been collected except for one state. A reminder has been sent for those dues in arrears.

Mr. Baker provided an update of the finances for the 2012 Annual conference in Baltimore. Although NASTO is still awaiting a final close out from the meeting planner, early indications estimate that the conference made a profit of approximately \$15,000. He identified only \$30,479 of the "full member subsidy" (\$48,000) was utilized and that a balance of \$17,521 will be returned to NASTO. Also, Mr. Baker reported that NASTO disbursed \$7,408.94 to host the Oversize/Overweight Truck Permitting Conference in Newport, RI.

President Redeker solicited for a motion to approve. Motion received, seconded and the Treasurers' report was so approved.

Mr. Glenn Rowe (PA) provided an update for the Oversize/Overweight Truck Permits Meeting held in Newport, RI on October 2nd - 4th, 2012. Mr. Rowe first thanked the Board of Directors for providing the funds to host this very valuable meeting. Mr. Rowe stated the meeting served two primary purposes. Firstly, it established operating guidelines or "bylaws" for how the committee is organized, how it votes, and when they meet, etc... These bylaws are currently in draft form to date. Secondly, and more importantly, the meeting focused on the harmonization of oversize/overweight hauling, particularly with regard to signing, lighting, flags, escorts, and time of day. Mr. Rowe acknowledged that the ultimate goal is to have one document/policy for all states. He also noted that AASHTO's Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH) would be voting on a proposed policy resolution to initiate actions to reduce impediments to interstate commerce by harmonizing requirements for truck permits.

Mr. Rowe added that it is important to continue the work of his NASTO sub-committee and make it sustainable. He identified a need for states to continue to put resources towards this issue and identified several potential funding sources as options. In particular, he was seeking funding (\$100K) from FHWA to continue the effort, along with working with the I-95 Corridor Coalition, and partnering with the industry (specialized carriers) to assist with the logistics of future meetings in order to work collectively to solve common problems/issues.

In conclusion, Mr. Rowe identified three areas of focus for the future work of this sub-committee as follows:

- Completion of a Harmonization Document
- Recommendations from the after actions review of Hurricane Sandy
- Working with the industry to develop a webpage that encompasses all necessary information with regard to oversize/overweight movement of goods in the Northeast ("one-stop shopping for information")

President Redeker followed up with two questions:

1. How much emphasis/focus was placed on developing a disaster declaration as opposed to your work with developing standard oversize/overweight policies?
2. Was your request or search for funding predicated on a work plan developed by your sub-committee or was it just a rough estimate (or “SWAG”) of your needs? And, has the industry been approached to partner on this given that anything produced as an output could potentially benefit them allot?

With regard to question one, Mr. Rowe stated that many of the states are still on the “learning page” because of MAP-21 and the many new provisions for emergencies, particularly for municipal loads. “As a result, when Hurricane Sandy struck many states were not familiar with the MAP-21 requirements and therefore were not ahead of the curve”. Mr. Rowe acknowledged that the lessons of Hurricane Sandy are important and will hopefully provide a valuable opportunity to develop uniform standards for weight/axel limits for all States.

With regard to question 2, Mr. Rowe confirmed that limited resources are hindering the ability to develop and complete the harmonization guide in a timely fashion. He estimated a one year time frame for completion contingent on a getting a consultant on board to assist with the project. Mike Lewis suggested bringing forth a motion to get the necessary resources behind this important project, and also, to seek matching dollars from the industry as they will benefit directly from this guide as well.

President Redeker solicited for a motion to move the Oversize/Overweight Harmonization initiative forward and seek funding to support this effort with consultant resources. Motion received, seconded and was so approved.

President Redeker asked Mr. Rowe to prepare a list of “bullet points” of what the actual needs are of the committee. Once completed, President Redeker will ask each state to review the needs, with their staff and private industry, in order to solicit feedback with regard to available resources. Finally, President Redeker noted that due to the recent storms, this initiative is at the top of the NASTO agenda and is no longer a “sleeper item”. He thanked the committee for all of their efforts and timely work.

2013 Annual Meeting in Portland, Maine

Update – Commissioner David Bernhardt (ME) provided a brief update as to the planning of the 2013 meeting in Portland, Maine. The meeting will be held June 9th-11th. Mr. Bernhardt noted that the planning was going well and that the Marriot Portland at Sable Oaks is a great facility.

He also indicated that the Sunday reception will be held at the Ocean Gateway Pier in Portland which is recognized as a “mega berth” for cruise ships. Similarly, for the host state dinner (Monday evening) delegates will possibly enjoy a cruise via the Casco Bay Ferry to a nearby island for a lobster bake.

Mr. Bernhardt also reported that the Marriott has a fine golf course and suggested the possibility of a golf tournament before the meeting. He asked for any advice and solicited for someone other than Maine to possibly set that up. Philip Scarrozzo (NASTO Secretary, CT) advised that NASTO’s meeting consultant did all the planning for the golf tournament that was held at the Mystic Connecticut meeting in 2011 and noted it was very successful (sold out). He offered to take the lead and contact Delaney Meeting and Event Management for the purpose of setting that up.

Agenda – President Redeker started the discussion by providing some background to the approach for formulating next year’s agenda. Having had earlier discussions with Commissioner Bernhardt (host commissioner) and Commissioner Clement (next NASTO President), it was decided to take a 2-year approach and build “continuity of content” that could be carried over to the 2014 meeting as well. In addition, President Redeker stated that the goal of today’s meeting was to start lining up presenters (from the NASTO states) that can showcase our “good work” and “accomplishments” with respect to the various topics introduced below.

President Redeker presented 3 topics of focus for the upcoming meetings:

- Working for the Customer
- Communication
- Innovation & Efficiency

Commissioner Bernhardt offered a “first cut” for possible sessions in Portland:

Session I – Customer Service and Transportation

- Identifying Customer Needs: Urban/Rural, Younger/Older
- Look at Regional Angles
- How to Build & Maintain Assets
- Training, Recruiting, and Empowering a Work Force
- Strategic Planning

Secretary Bhatt (DE) recommended the Director of the Delaware Department of Motor Vehicles (Ms. Jennifer Cohan) as a potential presenter. He stated that she has done some great things in the area of customer service and described her as an “innovator”.

Session II – Meeting Customer Expectations

- Performance Measures in the Transportation System
- Performance Measurement at the State & Federal Level
- How to Measure Customer Service – “What do they really want”

Secretary Bhatt stated that his agency is relatively new to performance measures and said they had a gentleman [*unsure of name*] from Maryland MTA come up and talk about performance measures in the area of transit and the impacts on customers. He said the presentation was “fantastic” and thought it could be very useful.

Secretary Bernhardt cited the tri-state (ME, VT, NH) partnership report that provides progress and performance data for their legislators and the public. He stated that this report is valuable in that it provides comparative type information on neighboring states which is in high demand.

President Redeker recognized New Hampshire’s “Balance Scorecard Application” as a DOT model for measuring performance. Commissioner Clement commented that the model came from his manufacturing background and proved very useful as it had many parallels to transportation.

Secretary Barry Schoch (PA) noted that his agency is doing a lot of work with metrics in order to evaluate investment strategies. Due to overriding financial constraints, Secretary Schoch noted that prioritizing projects and determining where to spend limited resources is a major issue for his agency. As a result, PennDOT has started using “Decision Lens” for capital planning and asset management decisions across the state as it ensures that the limited budgets available are directed to the highest value projects. Projects include interstates, bridges and IT investments, among others. [***Decision Lens is collaborative prioritization and resource allocation software tool***]

Mr. Tom Harley (Chief Engineer, CT) inquired as to which states are currently using Decision Lens and asked, if they found it “somewhat cumbersome to work with”? Pennsylvania confirmed that they are using this tool along with two thirds of their MPO’s and RPO’s. Secretary Bhatt acknowledged that Delaware was about to start using it. Commissioner Clement remarked that Amtrak is currently using Decision Lens as well, and noted that the initial set up of this software could be “painful”, but in the end, a very useful tool in setting priorities.

Secretary Lewis acknowledged the differences between the regions (NASTO, WASHTO, SASHTO, MAASTO), but at the same time recognized the similarities among the Northeastern states. In particular, he noted the similar winter issues among the NASTO states. With that in mind,

Secretary Lewis advocated for our region to share all this information and work towards standardization as it would be of great benefit to all the Northeast states.

Session III – Communicating with the Customer

- Shaping our Transportation Message; Defining the Mission
- How to Effectively Communicate our Needs to the Public
- “Making the Case” to the Customer/Decision Makers
- Developing Tools for Delivering the Message

Anne Stubbs (CONEG) commented that TRB has developed a program based on “information and data needs for decision makers”. She added that one component of this program dealt with “how to use new information and techniques for communicating your message to the customer and how to better understand what the customer perceives”. She mentioned Deb Miller (KA) and the state of Minnesota as having done presentations on this topic.

Secretary Bhatt suggested that NASTO try to get presenters from other states that have had success in educating the customer with regard to transportation needs. He mentioned the LA sales tax (Measure J) as an example and reiterated that “we should focus on who’s done it effectively, how they’ve done it, and why it has or has not worked”.

Session IV – Working Together for the Customer

- Public Private Partnerships (PPP)
- State/Municipal/Regional Partnerships

Commissioner Bernhardt acknowledged that because of lack of resources, MaineDOT has pursued partnership initiatives to leverage projects and get things done. He cited his agencies Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) which allows Municipalities to team up with MaineDOT in order to share funding of particular projects that create economic opportunity while improving mobility.

Secretary Schoch offered to provide an update on the progress of their finance package for infrastructure improvements utilizing their new “P3” legislation. He briefly noted “Act 88 of 2012” which authorizes public private transportation projects in Pennsylvania. This Act is designed to allow PennDOT and other transportation authorities to enter into agreements with the private sector to participate in the delivery, maintenance and financing of transportation related projects.

Secretary Darrell Mobley (MD) offered his assistance with regard to Public, Private Partnerships. He stated that his state is in the process of implementing PPP’s in their travel plazas and could share some of the lessons learned at the meeting in Portland.

Session V – Working Smart for the Customer Benefit

- Talking about Technologies
- EDC Program
- Lean Management

Commissioner Bernhardt emphasized that it is imperative that we “get our message out to the customer” and explain “that the public funds being given to us, via your tax dollars, are being put to good use utilizing many new technologies”. He mentioned the Every Day Counts Initiative, lean government, and alternative methods as programs that are creating numerous efficiencies that our customers should be aware of.

President Redeker recognized the work that Connecticut has done with the “Lean Government” approach. He indicated that his state has utilized lean principles and methods which have resulted in improved efficiencies in several areas within ConnDOT. He volunteered Connecticut to do a presentation and share a success story.

Secretary Schoch informed the Board of a new initiative at his agency entitled “PennDOT Next Generation”. The goal of this project is “to engage PennDOT management and staff to undertake a proactive approach in examining and advancing their current business practices and technologies in order to improve efficiencies”. In the future, this program will expand to work jointly with other Pennsylvania state agencies with that same goal in mind. Secretary Schoch indicated that an executive summary/report is due to be released soon and he will make it available to the group in the near future. Also, he offered a staff person from the PennDOT Next generation team to do a presentation in Portland.

Anne Stubbs asked the Board to consider including Congress and the Administration as part of NASTO’s customer base. She said they should be included when you tell your story and suggested that the message focus on: “3 tiers; your own needs, your general public customer needs, and your federal official’s needs”. Commissioner Bernhardt commented that he considered the federal and congressional officials to be “partners, as opposed to customers” and “that the discussion is different with them because they have a different focus”. Secretary Bhatt remarked that this component would perhaps fit better in Session III under the category of Communicating and Defining your Customer.

With regard to technology, Commissioner Bhatt recommended the topic of driverless cars (Google cars). He has received many inquires as to this developing technology and thought a presentation would be informative as well as interesting.

Session VI – The Business Connection

- Supporting Long-term Economic Growth
- Supporting Employment
- Looking at Transportation & Livability
- Supporting Tourism in the Northeast
- Looking beyond Roads & Transit: Port, Freight Rail, & Aviation Issues

Commissioner Bernhardt stated that his agency is revisiting all of their strategic plans with multiple goals and narrowing them down to a few. He stated: “Going forward, our primary focus will be to maintain current systems and to support economic opportunity by developing relationships with the business community”. Commissioner Bernhardt identified the “Business Community” as a great resource because of their “customer centric” focus and added that: “DOT’s can learn much from their success and we, as transportation agencies, should strive to support long-term economic growth”.

President Redeker opened the floor to any topics that may have been missed and asked for any final thoughts before moving on to the business agenda.

Commissioner Barry Schoch (PA) suggested that part of the agenda should include storm preparedness which is a significant issue due to the fact that we are all “winter states”. He stressed that “storm communication, coordination among neighboring states, pre-planning activities, and consistent storm procedures/protocols are of vital importance, not only to us, but our customers as well”.

Anne Stubbs added that after Hurricane Irene, CONEG convened two regional workshops to discuss some of the issues associated with storm preparedness. All of the New England states participated (including NY & PA) and the group found it very helpful. Much information was shared with regard to: what did you do, how did you do it, information technology, what worked, what didn’t, etc. As well, the group decided to focus on a very important issue; the lack of consistency and compatibility between FEMA and FHWA surrounding reimbursement guidelines. She stated that there was a lot of uncertainty with regard to meeting various federal agency requirements. She also noted in a second session (held this past summer); federal agencies met to discuss those same issues and are currently continuing to meet and discuss streamlining disaster procedures.

President Redeker suggested that storm preparedness can be a “focal point” as long as it has a “customer piece” in mind. He recognized this as a huge issue, “one that we as a region should take the lead on”. President Redeker added that: “after the storms of last year, Connecticut spent a lot of time developing protocols with-in the state (and some across borders) and it made a huge difference for us”. “As a region we can broaden this approach and investigate selected topics such as emergency response, decision making, customer communication, and automatic permitting”.

Secretary Lewis inserted that this topic is of “great value” and asked what NASTO can do as a region that AASHTO can’t do [AASHTO primarily deals with national, operational issues]. He suggested putting together an action plan that is focused on improving communication across boarders which will result in better preparedness.

Pertaining to Session III, Secretary Brian Searles (VT) added that his agencies response to Hurricane Irene got high marks with regard to customer communication because they utilized various forms of media via today’s technology. He stated that “when talking about satisfying customers, DOT’s need resources and must possess a level of understanding of what needs to be translated across several levels”.

With time running short, President Redeker urged the group to step forward with more details related to the ideas, topics, themes, and presentations discussed today so that Maine can start “framing a specific agenda with people next to them”. He stated: “we are not looking for the same material we’ve heard before” and encouraged the group to submit “new, fresh ideas” in order to foster a meaningful discussion in Portland.

To finish, Commissioner Bernhardt solicited the group for any suggestions with regard to a “keynote speaker” for the Portland meeting. He was open to any recommendations from the Board and asked anyone with ideas to contact him.

Business Items

President Redeker raised two issues for discussion; (1) the subsidy provided to each state for travel and (2) member dues. As the result of legal advice from AASHTO, it has been recommended that NASTO (being a 501(C) (6) non-profit) no longer subsidize travel in excess of the amount of dues that each state pays annually. Mr. Baker added that it was a “transparency issue” and not necessarily a legal one and therefore recommended some corrective action. Also, President Redeker acknowledged that we have too much money in the bank for a non-profit organization and should develop a strategy for utilization of these funds (i.e. scholarships, working conferences, and/or training) ***[Due to lack of time, this last topic will be discussed at a future Board meeting]***

President Redeker asked Michael Baker and Philip Scarrozzo to lead the discussion for a possible dues increase and subsidy adjustment. A handout (NASTO Travel Subsidy/Increase in Dues) was distributed to the Board prior to the start of the meeting.

Mr. Baker provided the following background information:

- Maryland initially investigated the member subsidy vs. the dues issue
- Dues have been \$1500 for member departments for the last 7 years

- Member travel subsidy has been \$48K for the last 5 years (\$3429 per member state)
- Purpose of subsidy to assist states with travel costs associated with attending the annual meeting
- Normal attendance for the conference is approximately 200-250 delegates

Mr. Scarrozzo presented the following options as per the handout:

- No change in dues (\$1500), just reduce travel subsidy to \$1400 per member
- Proposal 1: increase dues to \$2000, set travel subsidy at \$1900 per member
- Proposal 2: increase dues to \$2500, set travel subsidy at \$2400 per member

Also, Mr. Scarrozzo noted that NASTO could fund travel expenses for the following individuals (in addition to the subsidy) due to their direct involvement in the meeting:

- CEO of each member state
- All NASTO Officers (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer)
- Any staff involved in the planning and/or hosting of the annual meeting
- Any staff invited to make a presentation

Dues Increase – President Redeker recommended that NASTO members consider a modest increase in dues. Secretary Bhatt (DE) recommended proposal 1 for adoption (increase annual dues from \$1500 to \$2000). President Redeker solicited for a motion to approve. Motion received, seconded and Proposal 1 was so approved.

2013 Travel Subsidy – As a result of the adoption of proposal 1, the member subsidy for travel to next year’s annual meeting will be set at \$1900 per member department (\$26,600 total). It was also noted that travel expenses for state CEO’s, NASTO officers, presenters, and any staff involved in the planning of future NASTO meetings will be funded in addition to the per member subsidy.

Location for the 2014 NASTO Meeting – Prior to the BOD meeting, President Redeker and Vice-President Clement (NH) discussed and came to agreement on the next location for the Annual NASTO meeting. Vice-President Clement has graciously agreed to host the 2014 NASTO meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Other Business

Due time running short and U. S. Representative Bill Shuster’s (R-Pa.) impromptu speech to AASHTO delegates, all other business items identified on the agenda were not addressed. President Redeker agreed to take them up at the next Board meeting at a time & place to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 A. M.