



## MINUTES BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING August 10, 2022

### Members Present:

Brian Connolly	Jason Ponciano
Tom Hoffman	Sam Richert
Dave Hunstad, Chair	Mark Sellin
Phil Lesnar	Ray Starr
Dan Munthe	Ben Wallace
Keith Novy	Patrick Warden
	Ward Westphal

### 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  
Kyle Sowder, IT Operations, OCC  
Vincent Lacey, Director of IT, OCC  
Dan Florenzo, President, OCC  
Philippe Barzin, Senior Consultant, CoEnterprise Consulting  
Mike Mendiola, Engineer Principal, MnOps  
Chris Fry, Lumen  
Barbara Cederberg, Chief Operations Officer, GSOC  
Olivia Phillips, Marketing Specialist, GSOC

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On August 10, 2022 at 9:00 a.m., in person and by Zoom videoconference, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Chair, Dave Hunstad. 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**

David Hunstad welcomed everyone and thanked Barb and Olivia for arranging a Board social event at a St. Paul Saints game. He advised there would be a full set of operational reports but that there would be plenty of time for Board discussion. He also reminded the Board that GSOC encourages national engagement by its Board members. OCC Users Group Conference will be held September 27-29 and he encouraged interested Board members to attend.



Upon motion made and duly seconded, the minutes for the April 13, 2022 meeting were approved. There was no legislative report. Dan Munthe advised the Board that the Vetting Committee would convene soon to consider a recent Board application.

## **COO Report**

Barbara Cederberg advised the Board that ticket volume for the year remains down about 9.3% from 2021 even though the last 3 months have all been busier than the prior year. The slow start was likely due to weather. Web submission continued to be strong with over 83% of tickets submitted online.

Barb summarized a number of 2022 projects that are in process. GSOC continues to work on a meet ticket initiative by developing an education program starting in October. GSOC has already received some valuable feedback through its stakeholder engagement and has been asked to insert expiration dates on the meet tickets. GSOC is also working with the industry on a meet calendar for metro area tickets which could make scheduling meets easier.

GSOC continues to investigate excavator damage prevention videos. GSOC is also engaged in a landscaper education and public awareness effort to have marking area requests more accurately defined. Design engineer educational efforts continue. GSOC will use professional groups and conferences this year to spread the damage prevention outreach effort. GSOC has been advised of a need for separate phone numbers for requesting maps so that more appropriate phone numbers would be placed on an engineering/preconstruction ticket. So far, GSOC has not had much success in obtaining separate, specialized phone numbers for this purpose.

Finally, the previous online user interface for the web ticketing system, NexGen, will be retired in October. The few parties not currently utilizing the current user interface called next will be asked to switch over.

GSOC is also engaged in a project to try to make sure that the excavator contact provided on the ticket is the best phone number to reach the field contact. Barb advises that the notification center is receiving many responses that the existing number is still the best phone number for the most part.

Barb also indicated that GSOC would assist OCC in longer term user visioning and Barb wanted a small group from the Board to assist by discussing what new capabilities do they want to see the notification center provide.

GSOC continues to participate in a development of a prototype system allowing for electronic sharing of multiple facility operator maps in a single view. The City of Glencoe Minnesota has volunteered to provide its data as have several other facility operators. GSOC is developing a relationship with the engineering firm WSE to help gain feedback for the proposed mapping system and to assist in developing interest with key stakeholders. This effort at map



sharing is garnering some attention nationally. Barb has proposed to present at both the September OCC Users Group Conference as well as the April 2023 CGA Conference.

## **Automated Marking Instructions Project**

Barb Cederberg and Adam Franco discussed the status of OCC's continued development of automated marking instructions. Barb reminded the Board that an earlier version of the instructions was introduced with the changeover to OCC software in 2016 and was quickly withdrawn due to confusion created by the style of automated instructions that were in use at that time.

In the past 5 years, OCC has spent a great deal of time simplifying the automated instructions that are created by use of the popular circle, parcel and route tools. Further, GSOC has continued to experience a substantial number of callbacks for defective matters noted on tickets during notification center review. A large number of these callbacks relate to defective manually created marking instructions which are not consistent with the excavation area drawn by the ticket submitter. An example of the type of situation that is now leading to manual handling is that an excavator may use the partial dropdown menu for marking a portion of a parcel and map for example the northeast quadrant of that parcel. However, when it comes to marking instructions the ticket submitter may simply indicate "mark entire lot" manually and this results in a callback as the 2 sets of instructions are not consistent.

Issues have continued despite significant efforts by the notification center to educate those submitting tickets. Adoption of automated marking instructions for certain drawing tools for excavation entities should make tickets more accurate without the need for a callback.

Automated marking instructions should also increase the consistency of written instructions. This should make it easier for locators to follow the instructions. Adam Franco noted that OCC has worked to make more "humanized" marking instructions so they are more easily understandable by a locator. Adam Franco advises that every other state utilizing the NXT software, is currently using at least some form of auto generated marking instructions (about 11 other states).

Ben Wallace stated that some imprecise use of tools was creating a lot of additional locator work. for example, using a circle tool that but having it overlap on an intersection where there was no real desire by the excavator to have the locator mark the intersection. Adam Franco responded that OCC has now limited the radius to force the use of another tool in an intersection.

Adam Franco will furnish specific examples of these automated marking instructions for Board review. Barb will obtain feedback from locators in other states utilizing automated marking instructions. Dan Munthe voiced concern but sees all the work that has been done to refine these instructions and will be interested to see the refinements and hear from other locators. Jason Ponciano indicated that if these instructions work they could be a huge help if used properly. This could be one of the best features he has seen in the last 8-10 years to help locators.



After substantial discussion, the consensus was for several tasks to be undertaken: (1) OCC will obtain feedback from other States on their experiences including discussions with locators; (2) a small committee from the Board will help review the data and marking instruction examples consisting of: Ben Wallace, Jason Ponciano, Sam Richert and Brian Connolly.

Adam Franco indicated that one of the additional steps in connection with the implementation of automated marking instructions is to review the existing business rules of the notification center to see if any additional rules need to be adopted or revised.

## **PR/Awareness Report**

Olivia Phillips announced the 811 5K run being held August 13 in conjunction with the Minneapolis Fire Department. All proceeds are donated to Operation WARM, a non-profit organization helping provide new warm winter coats for children in need.

GSOC will staff a booth at the State Fair again this year. More volunteers are needed and Olivia indicated that help from Board members' companies would be welcome.

GSOC is looking at new excavator damage prevention videos produced by the National Excavator Initiative. Additional awareness/PR efforts with the Star Tribune, IHeart Radio and All Over Media are continuing this year. Olivia is also looking at different media offerings. Olivia also indicated that GSOC is doing some advertising with the Minnesota Vikings.

About 25 in-person damage prevention meetings were held this year, which was less than previous years. Olivia sees the need for more consistent meetings next year and is establishing a framework for locally organized meetings to make sure the programming is more consistent across the State.

Finally, a blog post was recently created regarding the topic of meet tickets in conjunction with GSOC's overall meet initiative.

## **Board Discussion: Delayed Locates**

Barb Cederberg and Mike Mendiola of MnOPS both noted that GSOC and MnOPS have been hearing more anecdotally about delayed locates this year. Barb invited comments from Board members as to what their experience is this year and asked whether they may have any ideas to help reduce the delays.

Phil Lesnar indicated that, system wide, things have been worse this year than in the past. Even typically good performers are not always showing up at meets. He described difficulty in using phone numbers. It may take hours to get a response when there is a concern in the field. The field locators cannot be reached and that frequently the 1-800 numbers lead an excavator to deal with someone out of state where there is typically not a relationship. Multiple bridge projects in the Metro area exacerbated the situation. He understands the protocol is to call MnOPS if there is



no response, but reminded everyone that excavators are reluctant to do that and it should only be a last resort. Dave Hunstad indicated communications facility operators were an issue in the Hutchinson area. Mark Sellin confirmed that communication companies delays were significant. He was experiencing problems both for engineering/preconstruction tickets as well as excavation tickets. The issue of excavators having no legal recourse for downtime was also discussed.

The possibility of further discussions was raised along with the possibility of GSOC retaining a facilitator.

## **MnOPS Update**

Mike Mendiola discussed damage reporting which continues to be down voluntary basis. Information MnOPS does receive shows approximately 1.36 damages per 1,000 locates which is a slight reduction in the rate of damage. Top MS216D violations so far this year: (1) delayed locates (this is higher than 2021), (2) no ticket, (3) failure to pothole, (4) failure to maintain clearance (but items 2, 3 and 4 are all at a lower rate than in 2021).

In general, the issues that MnOPS is dealing with MS216D are delayed locates, meet tickets, where MnOPS is continuing its education and trying to get reluctant facility operators and locators to come to an agreement and the practicality of white marks. MnOPS is engaged in a pilot program with volunteer organizations furnishing maps to determine parties experience with this alternative.

## **OCC Report**

Barbara Cederberg introduced Philippe Barzin a software consultant retained by OCC to provide technical support in developing Phase 2 of the data analytics project on the Tableau software. Mr. Barzin recapped that Phase 1 has been developed and is available on the website now and provides industry-wide analytics. Phase 2 is intended to provide analytics to an excavator or facility operator with regard to its own information. It is significantly more complex to develop than Phase 1 but is at the pilot stage now and will shortly be released to 4 pilot testers for feedback. He then gave a brief demonstration of the Phase 2 tableau software.

Tammy Gardner advised the Board that there were about 483,000 tickets as of the end of July, down about 9.3% from 2021 year-to-date. She reminded the board that CSRs were still fulfilling a critical function even with most tickets online. OCC is continuing to promote a sound work-life balance as a key benefit and the work from home model is continuing to be used by the majority of CSRs. This has required some changes to the typical customer service appreciation week since many CSRs are not in the office.

Average speed of answer and ITIC review times have been higher than last year but this is predominantly due to 2 days, May 16 and June 6, where substantial numbers of CSRs were unexpectedly absent. The notification center is taking measures to smooth out the incidents of



absenteeism. The notification center also did some additional hiring in May and an additional 10 CSRs has helped speed response.

Home owner ticket volumes are down by approximately 8,000 from 2021 and the proportion of tickets submitted online is down as well but remains well over 50%.

Many projects remain pending at the notification center including attempting to reduce callbacks, obtaining design phone numbers from facility operators, retiring the NexGen software, developing a meet calendar and working on autogenerated marking instructions and Phase 2 of the data analytics project.

Map updates continue and over 6,700 map updates have been processed so far in 2022. Almost all of the State has now provided GIS parcel data.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business coming before the Board, upon motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean E. Parker  
Recording Secretary

### Next Meeting Dates:

November 9, 2022  
January 11, 2023  
April 5, 2023 [date to be confirmed]  
August 9, 2023  
November 8, 2023  
*Shorter interim meetings may be set*