



**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**January 7, 2026**

Members Present:

Keith Novy, Chair	Jeff Murray
Ward Westphal, Vice Chair	Jason Ponciano
Kris Anderson	Sam Richert
Brian Connolly	Joe Thill
Tom Hoffman	Ben Wallace
Dave Hunstad	Patrick Warden
Phil Lesnar	

Counsel present (Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP):

Dean E. Parker  
Kevin J. Moore  
Peter J. Kaiser

Guests of the Board:

Kelly Connolly, Chief Operations Officer, GSOC  
Olivia Phillips, Marketing Specialist, GSOC  
Adam Franco, Vice President, OCC  
Jim Holzer, Director of Marketing, OCC  
Kimberly Boyd, Customer Relations Manager, OCC  
Ryan Schmaltz, Director of Education and Public Relations for North Dakota, OCC  
Tammy Gardner, Minnesota General Manager, OCC  
Mike Mendiola, Engineer Principal, Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety  
Thomas Coffman, Chief Engineer, Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety

Iowa Ticket Talk Presenters:

Dave Sherlock, Board Chair, Iowa One Call  
Connie Schmidt, General Manager of Iowa One Call, OCC

---

On Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., in person and by videoconference, a meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order by GSOC President, Keith Novy. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined to be present. Peter Kaiser was asked to act as recording secretary.

**OPEN SESSION**

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

*Introductions*

Mr. Novy welcomed the Board and guests to the meeting and commenced the meeting in open session. He thanked the participants for attending and invited guests to introduce themselves.

Mr. Novy welcomed Connie Schmidt and Dave Sherlock to the meeting: Ms. Schmidt and Mr. Sherlock attended remotely to present on Iowa's launch of the Ticket Talk program. The Board also welcomed Tom Coffman from the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety, and congratulated him on his recent appointment as Chief Engineer.

#### *Approval of Minutes*

Upon motion made and duly seconded, meeting minutes for the public meeting held on November 12, 2025, were approved. Upon motion made and duly seconded, meeting minutes for a special closed meeting of the Board, held on December 17, 2025, were approved. The minutes, as approved, will be placed on the GSOC website.

#### *Upcoming Meetings*

Mr. Novy reminded the Board of dates for the upcoming meetings. The April meeting has been tentatively set for April 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Novy noted that the Board has traditionally held a meeting in April to coincide with the annual MnOPS conference. However, it appears the MnOPS conference will be held in October. The Board therefore considered whether to change any of the meeting dates for 2026, but ultimately decided to continue the normal schedule of meetings in April and August.

#### **Summary of 2025 Accomplishments; Board Recognition**

Peter Kaiser provided a summary of key accomplishments by the GSOC Board during 2025. In particular, Mr. Kaiser highlighted the Board's successful development and launch of Automated Marking Instructions and Electronic White Lining, its continued efforts to develop new tools and technologies (including Ticket Talk and the Site X-Ray program), and its dedication to thought leadership in the damage prevention industry. Mr. Kaiser thanked the Board members for their dedication and donation of time to GSOC's work in Minnesota.

#### **COO Report**

Kelly Connolly, Chief Operations Officer, presented the COO Report. Ms. Connolly focused on feedback from the recent launch of Automated Marking Instructions (AMI) in November, and Electronic White Lining (EWL) on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Board members provided positive feedback from their organizations: users report that AMI is having the intended effect of increasing efficiency and saving time for users who submit tickets. The Board stressed the need to continue encouraging users to adopt AMI as a standard practice, when possible.

EWL is only a week old as of this meeting, and limited feedback has been received. Reception appears to be positive.

Ms. Connolly summarized GSOC's outreach and education efforts related to AMI and EWL and shared her conclusions on which efforts were the most successful. Mobile-centric advertising appeared to be very effective at generating impressions, and could be a focus of future marketing efforts. Additionally, the bi-weekly webinar series saw significant turnout. Several organizations also accepted GSOC's offer to provide in-person seminars and targeted trainings: this effort continues to receive positive feedback.

A brief overview of the education efforts for Ticket Talk was provided.

Ms. Connolly also gave an update on the status of the Site X-Ray project. This project is complete and in the final stages of implementation. GSOC continues a “slow and steady” strategy that focuses on obtaining feedback from a small group of pioneer partners with respect to live projects. A summary of the status and future of the open source version of this technology (Fuzion View) was also provided.

### **Iowa Ticket Talk Presentation**

Keith Novy introduced Connie Schmidt (OCC) and Dave Sherlock (Iowa One Call Board Chair), who joined the meeting to provide some history and lessons learned around Iowa One Call’s launch of Ticket Talk. This program, originally developed for use in Minnesota, was finalized and brought online by Iowa One Call in response to legislative changes in that jurisdiction. This has allowed GSOC to watch the Iowa One Call rollout and learn from their efforts.

Ms. Schmidt and Mr. Sherlock provided a detailed and insightful summary of the history and operation of their Ticket Talk program, including awareness campaigns, user feedback/concerns, and examples of how the program is being used in practice. Information was also provided on the practicality of integrating Ticket Talk into existing ticket management systems used by locators and facility operators.

A robust question and answer session ensued, along with Board discussion.

Mr. Novy thanked the participants again for their willingness to attend the meeting and to share their experiences. Both groups agreed to meet in the future and share best practices around encouraging use of this tool across the industry. The participants were invited to attend the remainder of the open session.

### **Legislative Update**

Kelly Connolly and Peter Kaiser have been monitoring discussions around upcoming legislative initiatives, and asked to provide an update to the Board. A report on potential upcoming legislation was discussed, and the Board considered its potential impact on the notification system.

### **Call Center Update**

Tammy Gardner presented the call center update on behalf of OCC.

OCC has acquired new office space in Mendota Heights, and plans to move in May 2026. Under the terms of its agreement with OCC, GSOC staff will be provided dedicated offices and conference room access in the new office. GSOC’s April meeting will be held at the current office as planned, but future meetings will move to the new OCC location. More information will be provided.

Ms. Gardner presented a call center staffing update and its 2026 plans for employee resource allocation.

2025 saw an overall 0.1% decrease in ticket volume, as compared to 2024. ITIC (electronic ticket) utilization for 2025 was at 86.3%, with one month breaking 89%. There will be a continued focus on attempting to break 90% ITIC utilization.

Ms. Gardner provided further feedback on the launch of Automated Marking Instructions. No material issues have been reported. Ms. Gardner attributed the success of the AMI rollout to the Board's collaboration and significant discussions throughout 2025. Focused work groups (coordinated by and through MN CGA) also helped provide feedback and tailor messaging.

Ms. Gardner reported that more tickets than expected are going into manual review (as opposed to being directly released). Some users seem to be adding unnecessary information to the "optional description" box, triggering manual review. A focus of call center staff this year will be to educate users on suggested practices for efficient use of AMI.

The Electronic White Lining launch also appears successful, although the launch is less than a week old. GSOC and OCC provided multiple training sessions, both for the public and for specific organizations.

### **MnOPS Update**

Mike Mendiola from the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MnOPS) gave an update on the latest news and trends at MnOPS.

Mr. Mendiola highlighted upcoming hiring initiatives at MnOPS and the reasoning behind staff expansion. He also provided a summary of key focus areas for the upcoming 2026 damage prevention meetings: these will focus on the use of meet tickets, service lateral locations, and geospatial law updates.

The MnOPS conference is now scheduled for the week of October 19<sup>th</sup>, with the location to be finalized. Attendees were asked to pencil this into their calendars pending official invites.

Mr. Mendiola presented on recent complaint numbers and general types, along with trends they are observing.

Overall locate on-time performance data was presented. Discussion ensued around the implications of data presented, and possible responses to what has been learned. The Board considered whether increased use of electronic positive response could help create additional data sets.

Discussion was held around what GSOC might learn from these numbers, and what changes might help to improve the system as a whole.

### **Other Public Business**

- The Board held a question and answer session around GSOC's plans for additional Spanish language materials. The plans include a Spanish language version of the 2026 GSOC Handbook, and targeted Spanish language advertising (particularly related to Spanish language radio and mobile phones). The Board also asked GSOC staff to explore potential translation of training videos and ways to manage associated cost. Discussion was held around whether any other languages should be explored, based upon demographic trends.
- Last November, the Board had a presentation from municipal/city engineers on their approach to the permitting process, and other responses to fiber install issues. Dean Parker presented on next steps from this presentation, including convening a working group to consider suggested practices around construction / utility permitting conditions and

model ordinances. Board Member Brian Connolly has volunteered some time to help coordinate. The end goal would be to convene a small group to gather and consider ideas, and then present the outcome to city engineers and other interested stakeholders.

**CLOSED SESSION**

At 11:15 a.m., the Board thanked and excused all guests, and entered Closed Session. Kelly Connolly was invited to stay for a portion of the annual personnel discussion.

**Annual Personnel Matters**

Job title and compensation matters were discussed with respect to GSOC internal staff.

Upon motion made and duly seconded, job titles and compensation plans for GSOC internal staff were unanimously approved. The Board Chair was directed communicate to this information.

**Board Composition Update**

Jason Ponciano, Chair of the Vetting Committee, provided an update on pending Board applications and upcoming priorities for the Vetting Committee. The Board discussed what the Board’s ideal size and subject matter coverage would be, in order to maintain member engagement while ensuring diversity of perspective.

**Board Elections**

After some additional discussion, and upon motion made and duly seconded, the following persons were elected to the GSOC Board for 2026:

Kris Anderson	Brian Connolly
Tom Hoffman	Dave Hunstad
Phil Lesnar	Jeff Murray
Keith Novy	Jason Ponciano
Sam Richert	Mark Sellin
Joe Thill	Ben Wallace
Patrick Warden	Ward Westphal
Jon Wolfgram	

**Election of Officers**

There was additional discussion concerning possible officer rotations for 2026. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the following persons were elected as GSOC officers for 2026:

1. **Chair/President** – Keith Novy
2. **Vice-Chair** – Ward Westphal
3. **Treasurer** – Brian Connolly
4. **Assistant Treasurer** – Patrick Warden
5. **Secretary** – Joe Thill
6. **Chair Emeritus** – Dave Hunstad

## **Appointment of Committees**

Further discussion was held regarding committee membership. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the following persons were appointed to the committees as set forth below:

### *Executive Committee*

1. Keith Novy -- Chair
2. Ward Westphal – Vice Chair
3. Tom Hoffman
4. Patrick Warden
5. Ben Wallace
6. Joe Thill
7. Dave Hunstad – Chair Emeritus

### *Finance Committee*

1. Brian Connolly – Chair/Treasurer
2. Pat Warden – Vice Chair/Assistant Treasurer
3. Tom Hoffman
4. Dave Hunstad
5. Kevin Moore
6. Sam Richert

### *Vetting Committee*

1. Jason Ponciano – Chair
2. Pat Warden – Vice Chair
3. Phil Lesnar
4. Ward Westphal
5. Kris Anderson
6. Mark Sellin

## **Other Business**

Additional Finance Committee matters were discussed.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business coming before the Board, upon motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m.

Peter Kaiser  
Recording Secretary

### *Next Meeting Dates:*

April 15, 2026  
August 12, 2026  
December Meeting to be Set

*Shorter interim meetings may be set*