



## MINUTES BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING September 1, 2021

### Members Present:

Chris Fry	Jim Smith
Tom Hoffman	Ray Starr
Dave Hunstad, Chair	Joe Thill
Dan Munthe	Ben Wallace
Jason Ponciano	Patrick Warden
Sam Richert	Ward Westphal
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  
Barbara Cederberg, Chief Operations Officer, GSOC  
Mike Mendiola, Engineer Principal, Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety

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On September 1, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. 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**

Dave Hunstad welcomed the Board. He noted there was no Legislative Report as the legislature has not been in session over most of the summer. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the minutes for the June 2, 2021 meeting were approved. Dave Hunstad requested they be deemed final and displayed on the GSOC website.

### **COO Report**

Barb Cederberg noted that GSOC has continued to explore the use of excavator educational videos. The use of videos should allow the damage prevention message to reach additional audiences both during and after the pandemic. Multiple vendors and samples have been reviewed. GSOC has produced its own "Learn from the Unexpected" video dealing with the topic of private utilities. This video is targeted towards home owners. Assistance was provided by Chris Koch of ZoneOne Locating.



Ticket volumes year-to-date are down approximately 1½% from 2020 levels despite an increase early in the year due to the mild Spring. The reduction is fully accounted for by the reduction in home owner tickets. There were 16,000 less home owner tickets as of the end of July compared to the year 2020. Web submissions of tickets continue at a high rate. Over 83% of routine tickets were submitted online as of the end of July.

GSOC has initiated a number of pilot projects to provide more information to stakeholders. In response to inquiries from the Board, a review was conducted to determine whether there was a significant adjustment to ticket work start times as a result of the change in procedure to provide that the start time will commence once the ticket has been reviewed and accepted by the notification center. Virtually all online submitted tickets are reviewed other than a modest number of direct release tickets. The review for the months of May, June and July indicated less than 10% of total tickets are affected. Most of those tickets that were affected had a start time adjustment of 60 minutes or less. Very few tickets had work start times delayed more than 1 hour as a result of the new procedure.

The notification center help desk has started to keep track of more information on cut line calls received. The vast majority of those calls deal with notice of cut communications lines with only modest numbers of calls related to electrical, gas or water and sewer. Both professional contractors and home owners are providing notice. This data does not track all damages because providing notice to the call center is not mandatory.

The call center is also beginning to collect information on locator related calls received by the help desk. A substantial portion of the calls received in July were due to not marking or suspected inaccurate marking of utilities. The call center will continue to track this data to determine whether there are any trends in the calls received.

Finally, GSOC reviewed tickets submitted in June in the expanded 11 county Metro area to examine extra time voluntarily afforded locators to mark by excavators when the excavation notice is submitted. Approximately 10,000 tickets granted extra time over this period, with the majority of the extra time being between 8 hours and 7 days extra. The percentages of tickets granting extra time were slightly increased from June 2020. This information was viewed with interest by the locators on the Board, who appreciated the cooperation of the excavators.

Barb provided an update on the metrics project which provided information to large volume excavators and large volume facility operators. Data for the first 6 months of 2021 has now been furnished dealing with tickets and ticket volume by type and other information. This information is also available to small volume facility operators and excavators upon request. GSOC seeks input from facility operators and excavators as to how these metrics report might be refined to make them more useful.



GSOC has developed a crisis communication plan and selected personnel have completed media training. GSOC was able to conduct a practice walk through executing the plan in conjunction with the recent Princeton, Minnesota explosion incident.

Barb provided an update of the Minnesota Underground Utilities Mapping Project team which has been asked to present at the upcoming Common Ground Alliance (CGA) national meeting. She also indicated that GSOC is pleased to respond to the request of Ellingson Companies to export the ITIC excavation entity and link to positive response so the Ellingson Companies' may overlay that information on its project GIS map and make that information available to certain field personnel. Barb expects more of these types of requests as more and more stakeholders develop sophisticated GIS systems and look for ways to enhance their damage prevention efforts by making additional information available to field personnel.

GSOC is working with its vendor to develop and display additional data analytics on the GSOC website. The goal is to have dynamic ticket analytics which are frequently updated. A subsequent goal is for stakeholders to be able to query and view certain aspects of their own data through either a web feature service (WFS) or through an application programming interface (API). GSOC is currently working with OCC to determine what information will be available but the expectation is that it would include 7 day rolling averages of ticket and other information.

## **MnOPS Update**

Mike Mendiola noted that the MnOPS complaint system has been revised to encourage stakeholders to attempt to work issues out among themselves prior to contacting MnOPS with a complaint. If the stakeholders are unable to resolve issues, one may contact MnOPS and initiate a complaint. Generally, MnOPS sees stakeholders are making more initial efforts to resolve matters and that is leading to a lower number of complaints. MnOPS is currently working to fill an inspector vacancy. More information is available on the Minnesota State Jobs website.

MnOPS Safety Conferences for the years 2022-2024 are in the planning stages. MnOPS also plans MS216D review meetings late this year and is working with its legislative liaison to determine how they will proceed and what legislative initiatives might be pursued.

Excavation damage rates are also available on the MnOPS website. Overall, damages per 1000 locates was up in 2020. However, damage rates in 2021 through mid-year are down. The overall damage rate longer term continues to trend downward.

A summary of MnOPS enforcement activities are on its website. So far, as of the end of July, there were a total of 42 MS216D cases closed involving excavators and facility operators. This is a lower number of violations than was processed during a similar period in 2020.

MnOPS continues to receive a substantial number of complaints from excavators concerning refresh marks. Certain facility operators and contractor locators are telling excavators



they will not refresh marks on a meet ticket but require a new ticket. Mike reminded the Board that refresh marks may be agreed to for up to 6 months on a single meet ticket. A new ticket should not be required. MnOPS is working to clarify with the locate company and the communications company involved. Chris Fry volunteered that he was willing to help in communicating this issue to the industry as he also serves on the Board of the Minnesota Telecom Alliance. Barb Cederberg also confirmed she is aware this has been an issue for several months.

## **PR/Awareness Update**

Barb Cederberg reminded the Board that GSOC is not participating actively in the State Fair this year. However, GSOC is continuing with substantial media outreach. She is also presenting to the Minnesota REA next week and will be conducting a presentation in Spicer, Minnesota.

## **OCC Report**

Tammy Gardner provided an operations overview. There are currently 84 total agents serving the notification center and 8 are working from the call center. Others remain on OCC's work from home program. They are conducting 1 new small training class.

The update, refresh marks/extend life tickets are a smaller percentage of the total tickets than was the case in 2020. This is likely because of the change in procedure providing that new information be entered and a new ticket number assigned after one update. The total number of online submitted tickets fell during the summer months along with the total number of tickets. However, the proportion of tickets submitted online remains strong. Virtually all online submitted tickets are reviewed by the notification center for accuracy. Excavators are called back with request to correct information on defective tickets. The call back rate has been approximately 7½%. The notification center audits some of the call back tickets to determine trends and during the winter months will be contacting customers that comprise the bulk of the call backs to provide further education so they may create more accurate tickets in the future. She also noted that approximately 12% of users are still utilizing the NextGen software as opposed to the latest *nxt* version software so the contacts are also useful to have ticket submitters try the latest software which has a more user friendly interface.

The notification center has had a very high compliance rate for its key performance indicators (KPIs) and significantly decreased ITIC ticket review times as a result of an enhanced KPI this year for review times. The notification center achieved approximately 98.75% compliance of the interval testing of these KPIs during July. Nine additional employees have been added to help with the review process.



## **Adjournment**

There being no further business coming before the Board, upon motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean E. Parker  
Recording Secretary

## Next Meeting Dates:

### One Hour Sessions:

October 6, 2021

*Additional one hour sessions may be set*

## Tentative traditional Sessions (subject to cancellation):

November 10, 2021

January 12, 2022

April 4, 2022 [may be changed to coincide with MnOPS Safety Conference]

August 10, 2022

*Shorter interim meetings may be set*