

OUDDPC Utility Coordination Subcommittee Meeting

Minutes

10/5/2023

Call to Order/Opening Statements: Jim Wooten

Roll Call: Dominick Belser, Jim Wooten, Zach Thayer, Jason Broyles, Jim Collins, Liz Pyles, Lori Wade, Scott Mergler, Clayton Heitz, Marcia Lindamood, Will Cramlett, Jim Mandera, Chris Russ, Deron Large, Chris Elliott, Chuck Green, Les Schell, Scott Tustin, Greg First, Jaime Gillen, Dave Coniglia

Review/Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve past meeting minutes made by Jim Wooten and seconded by Marcia Lindamood. Motion carried without opposition.

Proposed language surrounding the change to 16 calendar days was discussed due to the conversation around merging that proposal with the language proposed by the subcommittee working on “Two working days not including the day of notification”. The group overall agreed with this to assist in alleviating any confusion being created.

Conversation was had around the proposal of putting a 30 calendar day expiration on locate requests. Jim Wooten referenced the Common Ground Alliance best practice surrounding having an expiration date (Chapter 5-23: Locate Request Updates).

Jim Mandera stated that in the last meeting, some organizations had stated that they would look at the potential impact that this could have. Dominion stated that over the past 3 (three) years, 40% of the damages showed the locate request being past 30 (thirty) days. Out of 106 (one hundred six) damages, 41 (forty-one) of them had passed the 30-day period since locates were requested. Jim attributed that this could possibly be due to marks fading or being destroyed during that period of time and often times you don't know what you don't know. Dave Coniglio questioned as to whether the damages were from a multitude of different contractors or if it was from just a few. This was asked for clarification so the group could determine whether it was a training issue with an organization or not. Jim Mandera reported that of the 41 damages, they were caused by 33 different organizations leading to it probably not being a training issue.

Scott Tustin stated that if a ticket has no life, why would people call in for remarks if the marks hadn't been destroyed. Stated that by having a ticket life, it would assist the utilities in being able to mark newly installed facilities that might otherwise be missed if they were installed after the locator had marked the original request.

Jim Wooten reported that looking at numbers thus far from 2023, Centerpoint shows there to be 19 (nineteen) damages where there were no marks on the ground.

Dave Coniglio stated that the Ohio Contractors Association cannot, at this time, support both 16 calendar days and a 30-day expiration date. By putting both of these into effect, it is shortening the window in which contractors can actively excavate on a locate request.

Scott Tustin responded by stating that the 16 calendar days is realistically giving contractors more time to actively excavate by extending out the number of days they would have to start excavation without the ticket expiring. Scott continued by stating that the hope and goal is to cut back on unnecessary locate requests by putting a life span on tickets.

Dave Coniglio continued by stating that smaller contractors feel that it could create a difficulty for them when it comes to coordination of having to call in locates every 28 days. He posed the question “why are we looking to change the law when there is a process already in place?” (reference ORC 3781.28 and 3781.30)

Scott Tustin state that he does not see it as a burden, but as a way to be safer while excavating especially considering newly installed facilities.

Jim Wooten state that utilities are some of the largest contractors across the state and this change would affect their processes as well, not just from a locating perspective but also from an excavation perspective.

Scott Tustin asked Dave Coniglio if there was a time frame that OCA could support? Dave indicated that he would speak with their members and report back to the group. They are willing to work on finding a common ground but needs to do more research and he is willing to meet with utilities to discuss further.

Lori Wade began conversation around having to locate newly installed utilities and how to handle them. Conversation ensued with Clayton Heitz, Jim Wooten, Jim Mander and Scott Tustin around this topic. Conversation included remarks about when to locate, which some utilities require them to be located upon installation to ensure tone ability. This also brings up the conversation around the length of time for a utility to report the newly installed facilities to the notification center.

Jason Broyles reported that there has been conversation around this topic and would go back through meeting minutes from OUDPC and other subcommittees to find and report back to the group.

Les Schell asked to be put on record as supporting having a ticket life added to the ORC. He stated that they operate nationally and do see “expired tickets” as being a leading cause in damages.

Future Meetings: It was decided that this subcommittee would start to hold meetings every other week on Thursday’s starting on October 19th from 10:00 am – 11:00 am. Meetings will be held virtually through Microsoft teams.

Next Steps: Committee will research and compile data from other states that have a life of a ticket and look at those pieces of legislation as this conversation continues. It is also projected that at the October 19th meeting, the group will also be discussing parameters around a locate request.

Meeting Adjourned.