OUDPC Abandoned Lines Subcommittee

Minutes

1/14/25

Call to Order/Opening Statements: Seamus Mulligan called meeting to order.

Roll Call: Jason Broyles, Chuck Muller, Bryon Bedel, Jason Ward, Dave Coniglio, Les Schell, Paul Briggs, Frank Riegler, Bill Hocevar, Seamus Mulligan, Scott Mergler, Blake Ross, Don Huck, Jimmy Stewart, Johnny Henson, Debbie Harris, Jim Collins, Dominick Belsar, Brian Hickman, Patrick Murphy, Rod Troxall, Brent St. Clair, Lori Wade, James Mandera, Greg First

Review/Approval of Minutes: Seamus Mulligan motioned for approval and was seconded by Johnny Henson. Motion passed with no opposition.

Abandoned Lines Discussion: Seamus Mulligan began conversation by discussing some of the conversation points around this topic by the Gas Utilities. Seamus stated that there is a common understanding and support of having a repository for abandoned lines records to be tracked. Stated that majority are willing to provide on a Best Efforts basis so that the information can be transmitted to the excavators who are working on/near the abandonments. Seamus continued by stating two points of caution:

1) Could create false sense of security
2) Creates some liability concerns for the utilities

Seamus continued that throughout the conversations, the gas industry would request that the tolerance zone be looked at and made larger (focused on 30" in place of 18") if they agree to provide the mapping. Seamus also spoke to the difficulties this could create for small utilities who do not currently have an effective and efficient mapping system or process in place. Lori Wade added that it needs to be understood that this should be done as best effort and agrees with the possibility of this creating a false sense of security in the field.

Dave Coniglio stated that he understands the liability issues this language could potentially create and agrees with there being a statement included with the language relieving liability

from the utility throughout the abandoned lines process as currently being discussed. Dave reiterated for the group that this is all being looked at from a "point forward" perspective and there are no thoughts of making utilities do anything with lines that are abandoned prior to language getting approved and put into law. On the topic of the tolerance zone, Dave added that Mary Logan So would be a good reference to speak to about companies who have an internal policy making the tolerance zone greater than the 18" required by current legislation. Dave also spoke to the group about language that ODOT has put together and is planning to present at the State House. OCA is currently attempting to get ODOT to reengage with the OUDPC with language suggestions and working together as an industry. The language being looked at by ODOT also has some points dealing with Utilities being financially responsible for job delays due to utility lines not being relocated in a timely manner for the work to proceed as scheduled. We do not currently have the exact language and was being brought up as an information point only.

Don Huck added to the conversation that contractor's behavior will not change based off of this language and the liability should not be able to fall back onto the utility. Don added that this needs to be a Best Practice and not a mandate. Jim Mandera agreed with Don's comments and restated how important it would be for there to be language releasing the utility from liability dealing with an abandoned line. Jim also asked exactly what information would be requested to be tracked and who specifically would hold the responsibility of being the data collection/dissemination point would be? Seamus Mulligan responded that these are ongoing conversation points that have not been solidified as of yet. Seamus added that he envisions it just being another layer on the maps being submitted to OHIO811 along with the mapping for their active lines.

Jim Mandera and Don Huck spoke to the possible confusion this could cause in the field for contractors and stated that the information could come across as misleading to the contractors, thus adding to the confusion. Lori Wade stated that there would have to be a lot of education surrounding the topic and that there should be a requirement included making contractors report back to utilities if they unearth a possible abandoned line and also have a process to follow to ensure whether line is active or abandoned before anything can be done with the line. Bryon Bedel stated that a lot of this should be getting disclosed and discussed during the design process before any excavation is actually taking place.

Dave Coniglio stated that the intent is not for contractors to get permission to remove or alter any lines but they are just looking for a process to be followed moving forward to assist with dealing with abandoned lines.

Jim Mandera brought up the questions again of what data is going to be required, who is going to be the repository and what mapping formats would be deemed acceptable? Seamus repeated that those points have not been decided or discussed at any great length by the group yet. Don Huck added that some information is better than no information. Seamus agreed and stated that this is a good starting point and can always continue to be worked in coming years as it would need to be.

Brent St. Clair asked how would the information be transmitted to the requesting excavator? Would it be a copy of the map, a disclaimer on the ticket, through positive response? Seamus stated that he could possibly see it being sent out via email. Jason Ward commented that Arizona simply puts a statement on the positive response giving the excavator the knowledge that there is possibly an abandoned line in the area they are working but does not give any specifics on the data.

Seamus Mulligan rounded out the conversation by asking exactly what the contractor basis is wanting out of this? Dave Coniglio will take to OCA Safety Committee as well as speaking with other contractors to provide a more specific list of goals that the contractors are hoping to achieve through this language.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned with no opposition.