Minutes of the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH)
Business Meeting in Hartford, Connecticut
Saturday, October 18, 2008

Call to Order & Opening Remarks
Chairman Amadeo Saenz called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Roll Call & Minutes from May 6, 2008
New members were introduced: Floyd Roehrich (AK), Tom Cole (ID), Brian Blanchard (FL), Mike Hancock (KY), Khani Sahebjam (MN), and Melinda McGrath (MS). Kevin Chesnik (WI) was recognized as the new chairman of the Technology Implementation Group (TIG).

Minutes of the May 6, 2008 meeting in Branson, Missouri were approved.
[Motion-WY / Second-MD – Approved]

Call for Agenda Amendments
Motion was made and passed to accept agenda item IV. Summary of SCOH Ballots, and items V.A. through V.E. as a Consent Agenda.
[Motion-VA / Second-CA – Passed]

Resolutions/Motions
Proposed Policy Resolution: Concerns Regarding Raising Truck Weight and Size Limits
[Motion as Amended-UT / Second-VA – Approved]

[Motion-VA / Second-WV – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Endorsement of the AASHTO Bridge Preservation Strategic Plan
[Motion Amended to remove the Subcommittee on Structures-UT / Second – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Endorsing the Concept of the U.S. Bicycle Routes System
[Motion as Amended-WY / Second-MD – Approved] (MT specified “No” be recorded)

Proposed Policy Resolution: Recruitment and Retention
[Motion as Amended-CA / Second-WV – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Use of 700 MHz Radio Frequencies
[Motion-MD / Second-NV – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Long-Term Maintenance of LRFD Design Specifications
[Motion-VA / Second-UT – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Establish a Technical Service Program to Advance Equipment Technology
[Motion-UT / Second-VA – Approved]

Proposed Policy Resolution: Technical Service Program to Support Safe, Reliable and Secure Transportation Operations
[Motion-NV / Second-NC – Approved]

Presentations
Transportation System Preservation Technical Services Program (TSP2) - Steve Varnedoe, NC
An update presentation was provided on the TSP2 after a couple of years of experience.

Resolutions/Motions (continued)
Proposed Policy Resolution: Endorsement and Expansion of the Transportation System Preservation Technical Services Program
[Motion-ND / Second-VA – Approved] (NC specified “Abstain” be recorded)
Presentations (continued)

FHWA Activities - King W. Gee, FHWA

Tom Madison, former NYS DOT Commissioner was confirmed as Administrator just in time to deal with the bridge bill hearing by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Oberstar, and the shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). FHWA is creating a new Director of Technical Services which represents a consolidation of the resource center, the National Highway Institute and the LTAP in order to focus and integrate FHWA’s technical assistance & technology deployment activities. The Office of Innovative Program Delivery was recently created directly under the Administrator’s Office to sharpen the focus on the development and implementation of innovative delivery mechanisms. The new office combines the following functions: major projects, SEP-15, TIFIA, GARVEE Bonds, and innovative finance for a one stop shop for assistance and guidance.

Spending down the HTF balance was intentional in SAFETEA-LU and had been projected to reach a zero balance in FY’09. However, a steep drop in VMT and an increased draw-down rate accelerated the depletion of the HTF balance over the summer. Congress did augment the HTF with an $8 billion transfer from the General Fund. This should leave a $1-2 billion balance on 9/30/09, but there is uncertainty. FHWA is monitoring the HTF on a monthly basis with triggers for an action plan. The HTF will definitely reach a zero balance in FY’10 and Congress cannot merely extend matters with a continuing resolution on September 30, 2009.

Secretary Peters has issued a Reform-Refocus-Renew proposal for reauthorization of the highway program. It concentrates programs and focuses Federal Interest. It removes barriers to leveraging of traditional funding and would include benefit-cost requirements for projects and performance standards for the program. FHWA staff is drafting legislative language based on the proposal. FHWA staff will be tasked to develop the new administration’s proposal.

Two reviews of note will require follow-up actions. The first is an OIG audit on executive compensation and overhead costs of design and engineering firms where findings include significant unallowable costs in indirect cost rates and inconsistent CPA audits relied on by firms and accepted by states. Responses will likely include changes to regulations, clarification of audit responsibilities, guidance on CPA services, and recovery of unallowable costs identified. FHWA will work with AASHTO and Industry to address the audit report recommendations. The second deals with construction and materials quality assurance (QA). A confluence of factors has led to a number of shortcomings which has prompted FHWA to develop and roll out National Advanced Quality Assurance Systems. The aim is to establish a baseline for improving QA and assessment of the QA program effectiveness for ensuring high quality materials and projects and for minimizing the potential for abuse.

The FHWA 2008 Excellence in Highway Design awards were announced with winning projects by New York (2), Minnesota, Pennsylvania (2), Wyoming, Florida North Carolina, Oregon, Mississippi and FHWA’s Central Federal Lands Highway Division.

The Highways for LIFE program established under SAFETEA-LU to build projects better, faster, and safer proceeded aggressively throughout 2008 even though FY’08 funding was rescinded. A video was presented on the pilot program’s progress. There has been good synergy and collaboration with TIG. Appreciation was expressed for the states that have been active with the program and other states are invited to participate and benefit from the program.

Executive Director’s Report on AASHTO Activities - John Horsley, AASHTO

The technical staff under Tony Kane is doing good work. There are two new engineering fellows – Priscilla Benavidez (NM) and Joel McCarroll (OR). Additional staff news includes Steve Lenker as the new AMRL director and the addition of Damian Fordham for Climate Change under the Center for Environmental Excellence (CEE). All member departments were encouraged to participate in CEE because of adaptation needs from global climate change.

With the economic downturn, there is strong sentiment in the House and the Senate for a second economic stimulus bill. AASHTO documented $18 billion in projects ready to go. The economic stimulus
bill is expected to pass. AASHTO was successful in getting $8 billion added to the HTF. Jack Basso will brief the Board tomorrow on funding for FY’09 and AASHTO will look at options to sustain the Federal-aid Highway Program (FAHP) through FY’09. Reauthorization of the FAHP is not expected by 9/30/09 and thus a bridging authorization will be needed. The Wall Street crisis has had an effect on municipal bonds and GARVEEs.

Two of the ten reauthorization proposals have already been passed by the Board. The other eight proposals will be presented to the Board at this meeting. The main theme of the proposals would restrict the FAHP to meet Federal requirements on preservation and operation of the highway system with a performance basis. The challenge is gaining Congressional consensus amidst this financial crisis. AASHTO needs every state to educate their members of Congress.

**SCOR Long Term Strategic Effort** - Susan Martinovich, NV

SCOR is made up of representatives from the four AASHTO regions, the RAC and FHWA; and works jointly with TRB to allocate state funded NCHRP for transportation research needs. The NCHRP program has $26 million annually. Most of the research is reactive. SCOR wants to be proactive and has set aside $5 million for future research – long term and strategic research. SCOR had a workshop on strategic transportation issues and identified the following five key topic areas: Demographics & Societal Factors, Environment and Energy, Technology, Economics, and Government & Politics.

Within these broad topic areas, a framework for focusing transportation research includes: Travel demand & driver behavior; Operations & performance; Sustainable transportation; Transportation finance; and Delivery of transportation services. SCOR will make research allocations within this framework at its meeting in November. Solicited proposals from member departments will be reviewed for funding in March 2009.

VA thanked SCOR for funding flexibility to support work needed on gusset plates in the aftermath of the I-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis.

CO expressed encouragement that SCOR is being proactive and raised the issue of recruitment and retention of staff. There are ongoing studies on workforce and generational differences, but this will be further considered under Demographics.

The Chair thanked Susan Martinovich for her leadership of SCOR.

**Reports**

**NCHRP 20-7** - Neil Pedersen, MD

Chris Jencks reported on the recommendations from the panel: eight of 23 proposals were recommended for funding for a total of $605,000. All $1.2 million has now been allocated. The eight proposals and funding levels are:

1. SCOM Strategic Planning Workshop - $60,000
2. Feasibility of Using Incentives to Facilitate Utility Relocations - $75,000
3. Application of AASHTO LRFD Specifications to Design of Sound Barriers - $50,000
4. Graphical Traffic Signal Design Aid based on the MUTCD – $75,000
5. Rheological Characterization of Flow Table Reference Material - $90,000
6. Update of the AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book) - $80,000
7. Development of a Synthesis on the Practices of and Warrants for Price Indexing Commodities by State Agencies - $100,000
8. SCOH Strategic Plan Support - $75,000

[Motion-MD / Second-CA – Approved]

The Chair acknowledged two of the funded proposals as being of particular interest: support for the SCOH strategic plan and a synthesis on price indexing practices.
Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering - Don Vaughn, AL

Twenty-one applications were received from nine states. Sixteen were approved with three conditionally approved (NC) and two denied. There is good progress on setting up a web-based application process. A paper report was provided.

[Motion-AL / Second-WY – Approved]

SHRP-2 Implementation and Program Status - Neil F. Hawks, TRB

The Technical Corrections Bill provided an additional $14 million in funding. Overall, 50 projects have been committed, of which 38 contracts have been signed. (See paper report.) VA & MN are active participants via VHTRC and MNRoad. The implementation committee is reviewing its draft final report – to be delivered to Congress in February. Jerry DiMaggio has been hired as SHRP-2 implementation manager from FHWA.

Special note on “Driver Behavior” – 4000 drivers are to be instrumented and their driving movements captured – these will be concentrated at 6-8 sites. The driver behavior field study solicitation is going through a second effort to get some southern tier states – some departments may be approached by their universities to partner for this effort.

Updates on Engineering and Technical Services - Tony Kane, AASHTO

1. AASHTO Materials Reference Laboratory (AMRL) - Steve Lenker reviewed recent activities. Information is available at www.amrl.net AMRL is striving to increase its efficiency and effect. New service include: NTPEP Manufacturer Audit Program: HDPE Thermoplastic Pipe and Steel Reinforcing Bar onsite plant review AMRL is also conducting ISO certification reviews – about 10 have been done.

2. Technical Service Programs - Ken Kobetsky provided quick briefs on the other technical programs - TSP2; TIG; Snow & Ice; and LRFD deployment.

3. NTPEP Program - Ken Kobetsky reviewed the NTPEP objectives and gave an update on activities and management changes to bolster responsiveness.

Home for National Partnership for Highway Quality - Tony Kane, AASHTO

Tony Kane presented the resolution to return oversight of NPHQ to SCOH.

[Motion-MD / Second-DE – Approved]
The Vice Chair thanked Doug Rose (MD) for serving as AASHTO’s co-chair of NPHQ.

Lessons Learned from Recent 2008 Hurricane Events - John Barton, TX and Richard Savoie, LA

John Barton reported on lessons learned in Texas which involve: preparation, fuel, communications, business continuity for response, practice, pre-staging, and documentation.

Richard Lavoie reported that Hurricane Gustav was the wind and Hurricane Ike was the water – these devastated trees and although highways were cleared in three days, debris removal is still ongoing with continued traffic signal outages. LADOTD hired buses for evacuation, which was a daunting challenge – moving 26,000 citizens - 11,000 in-state and 15,000 to AL & TX.

Status of Special Committee on International Activity Coordination - Ken Kobetsky/Keith Platte, AASHTO

AASHTO staff will be exploring the future status of this committee and discuss with FHWA. A recommendation is expected at the spring meeting.

Center for Environmental Excellence - Neil Pedersen, MD

The CEE has an excellent website. The CEE will be adding sections on climate change and case law. There will be practitioner handbooks on different topics; e.g., storm water management; construction materials. Four new experts have been hired to augment center staff. Carlos Braceros (UT) chairs the center’s advisory board which includes a number of SCOH members.
Project Management and Delivery Task Force - Grant Levi, ND

The task force was charged with addressing cross-cutting issues and context sensitive solutions (CSS) to see how best to handle these within the AASHTO committee structure. Tom Warne completed an NCHRP 20-7 report that was provided previously to SCOH members. Six cross-cutting issues were identified: environmental delays, funding uncertainty, utilities, organizational efficiency issues, public involvement, and design criteria. Four recommendations are being discussed: (1) the role of CSS in AASHTO’s committee structure – no new committee, incorporate CSS principles into existing committees, and the task force is to oversee remaining work; (2) SCOH councils are not working - more discussion is needed within the task force; (3) sharing of promising practices - implement; and (4) an effective means needs to be developed to coordinate cross-cutting issues.

Continuing Education Units - Marty Vitale, AASHTO
Information was provided previously for CEU credit for this meeting.

New Business
AASHTO Staff – Ken Kobetsky, AASHTO
Claire Sun Kim is a new AASHTO employee.

ACEC-AASHTO Committee - Ken Kobetsky, AASHTO
The main discussion points from the recent joint ACEC-AASHTO meeting were presented.

Note – all PowerPoint presentations used during the meeting will be available online at the SCOH website

Adjournment
The Chair thanked Connecticut for hosting the meeting and Doug Rose (MD) for many years of service.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.
[Motion-MD / Second-VA – Approved]

Respectfully Submitted,
King W. Gee
SCOH Secretary
FHWA, USDOT