

Minutes

REGIONAL COUNCILLORS COMMITTEE of PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ONTARIO was held at Professional Engineers Ontario, 101-40 Sheppard Ave. W, with hybrid option, on November 5, 2022 from 9am-4pm.

Present:

Christopher Chahine, P.Eng.	East Central Junior Regional Councillor (Chair)
Randy Walker, P.Eng.	Eastern Senior Regional Councillor (Vice-Chair)
David Kiguel, P.Eng.	East Central Junior Regional Councillor
Luc Roberge, P.Eng.	Northern Senior Regional Councillor
Dana Montgomery, P.Eng.	Northern Junior Regional Councillor
Susan MacFarlane, P.Eng.	Western Senior Regional Councillor
Vicki Hilborn, P.Eng.	Western Junior Regional Councillor
Tim Kirkby, P.Eng.	Eastern Junior Regional Councillor
Jim Chisholm, P.Eng.	West Central Junior Regional Councillor
Pappur Shankar, P.Eng.	West Central Junior Regional Councillor

Staff:

Julie Hamilton	Coordinator, Chapters
Sharon Gillam	Administrator, Chapters

Guests:

Vaj Bandy, P.Eng.	Councillor-at-Large
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1.0 Call to Order

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:00 am. He welcomed everyone online and in-person and welcomed guest, Vaj Bandy, P.Eng., Councillor at Large and Joe Podrebarac, P.Eng., Ottawa Chapter.

Committee members were given an opportunity to declare any conflicts of interest.

2.0 Routine Business

2.1 Approval of Agenda

P. Shankar requested to add an item on Scholarship for Indigenous students, under item 6.0.

Motion: RCC moves to approve the meeting agenda as amended.

Moved by: R. Walker. Seconded by: D. Kiguel. **CARRIED**

2.2 Previous Minutes

Motion: RCC moves to approve the Minutes from July 23, 2022

Moved by: Randy Seconded by: Luc **CARRIED**

Motion: RCC moves to approve the in-camera minutes.

Moved by: R. Walker. Seconded by: L. Roberge. **CARRIED**

2.3 Business arising from previous Minutes

J. Hamilton reviewed the actions from the last meeting(s) and provided updates.

Action: Chapter Office to send RCC members the link for the new PEO meeting attendance policy.

3.0 Chapter Forum

3.1 Open Issues

East Central

No open issues from this region

Eastern

Open Issue #135 – ERC moves that whereas PEO HQ has adopted a centralized banking system in 2019 that is fully administered under the PEO CFO such that Chapters no longer manage accounts, process payments or issue payments; whereas financial reporting to Chapters is in the form of a summary that contains deductions from Chapter accounts outside Chapter Business Plan activity; whereas PEO HQ receives claims, processes claims, makes payment directly to individuals/companies/providers, records payments, and provides monthly statements; that the position and past by-law role of Treasurer should be removed from Chapter constitutions/by-laws as it is redundant and causes double tabulation and reporting with inherent errors; that this issue will be deferred until such time that Council has confirmed the role of chapters with regard to the future of PEO.

RCC Update: Remain Open. This is a deferred issue however the centralized banking presentation will address the concerns.

Northern

Open Issue # 51 – NRC moves that in light of Council removing the chapters' section of the PEO Reimbursement Policy, and the fact that this has led to a reduction in volunteer expense coverage; the region requests RCC's support and that they discuss this matter at the next RCC meeting and vote to bring this issue to Council.

RCC Update: Remain Open. The RCC brought a motion to the table at the 549th meeting of Council (Sept 23, 2022) to address the concern from Open Issue #51. Council carried the motion and referred the issue to the Audit and Finance Committee (AFC). RCC Chair confirmed that AFC Chair Lorne Cutler acknowledged receipt and support, and will add to the agenda of the next AFC meeting.

West Central

No issues for this region

Western

Open Issue #81 - The Western Region moves to request RCC investigate the future direction of the Education Committee and on the Region's behalf, request that it be reinstated.

RCC Update: Recommend to Close. Western Councillors are in support of this recommendation. EDU falls into the "neither" category and staff are presenting a report to GNC in support of standing-down EDU.

Action: Chapter Office to provide a final update at the next Western Congress to confirm issue will be closed.

Open Issue #83 - WRC moves that RCC investigate the licensing process of closing applications 90 days after the NPPE pass letter, specifically with regard to applications belonging to those who have paid for EIT status and are in good standing order, such that that these applications and EIT statuses should remain active and not closed; and also to ensure communications are improved such that EITs are contacted about their application prior to closure.

RCC Update: Remain Open. The committee discussed this issue and decided to support it with a motion:

Motion: RCC moves to request that the FARPACTA-influenced PEng application system maintains a record of all communications to the applicant; accessible by both applicant and PEO staff.

Moved by: S. MacFarlane. Seconded by: V. Hilborn

CARRIED

Action: Chapter Office will provide this request to the Licensing office.

Open Issue #84 - WRC moves that RCC pursue the Registrar for investigating and reinstating the EIT Member status (and funds), where appropriate, for those whose applications were cancelled despite having active (paid) EIT status.

RCC Update: Remain Open. Did not discuss further.

Open Issue #85 - WRC moves that RCC address concerns regarding PEO communications and failures due to existing issues with some servers identifying PEO's emails as SPAM, and not providing receiver notification for failed email communications.

RCC Update: Remain Open. RCC believes their motion for #83 will resolve these concerns, as the issue is connected to email servers. If transparent two-way communication is available in the application portal, email delivery will not be an issue.

3.2 Guest Presentation; Chapter Treasurers & Centralized Banking: Eastern Region

The Chair introduced guest, Joe Podrebarac of Ottawa Chapter.

J. Podrebarac reviewed the motion on behalf of the Eastern Region. He summarized the role of the treasurer as well as the current situation for chapter finances under centralized banking. J. Podrebarac stated that the transition to centralized banking has not been entirely successful, and highlighted examples of where it is problematic:

- Certify use to reimburse volunteers is not user-friendly; payments are delayed; even sometimes incorrectly deposited
- \$500 threshold is not large enough
- Vendors often do not accept direct deposit
- Approval process is cumbersome and adds extra work for the volunteer
- Treasurers are unable to answer simple financial questions from members at AGM
- Treasurers are cut off from systems that would allow them to properly maintain an accounting of their business plan

The presentation also included recommendations for improved financial access and protocol:

- Treasures should have Certify access: to keep track of all chapter expenses and also to approve directly in Certify
- Cheque books issued to each chapter to correspond with their GL code
- New treasurer training
- Some kind of provision for petty cash requirements
- Threshold should correspond to each chapter's business plan

T. Kirkby confirmed that this presentation has the support of all Eastern chapters.

The Chair thanked J. Podrebarac and T. Kirkby for the presentation. The former departed the meeting and committee members discussed the issues.

Councillors added concerns on methods of payment, Eventbrite, monthly financial statements and Certify. Committee members agree that they support centralized banking, but would like to see system improvements. They also discussed creating a comprehensive list of complaints and difficulties, to bring to AFC and the Director of Finance, for counsel. Finally, the following 'wins' were celebrated:

- The updated monthly financial statement is much improved and appreciated
- Eventbrite functionality is greater than first understood

The following motions were presented:

Motion: RCC moves that chapters require a method of issuing payment in the form of a purchase card (“credit card”), to be held by the assigned chapter designate.

Moved by: P. Shankar. Seconded by: T. Kirkby

CARRIED

Motion: RCC moves that chapters are provided approver access to Certify to approve their chapter volunteer expenses.

Moved by: P. Shankar. Seconded by: T. Kirkby.

CARRIED

Action: RCC requests that Council direct these motions to CEO/Registrar for further analysis.

Motion: RCC requests for Council to direct the creation of a new pathway for RCC to provide chapter related operational recommendations to PEO staff. This pathway should have a report back method to allow RCC to track progress.

Moved by: V. Hilborn. Seconded by L. Roberge.

CARRIED

4.0 Chapter and RCC Finances

4.1 Chapter Allotment Review

J. Hamilton updated the RCC on the summary of chapter allotments. The highlight is that RCC budgeted for a 7.7% increase and chapters have asked for 5%. All councillors have been sent their region's business plans for comments and approvals, by Friday November 11th.

4.2 Thousand Islands Chapter Special Project: Update

R. Walker updated the RCC on the progress of the special project. Private funding requests have been made within the region and he has also sent a request to all PEO chapters. J. Hamilton clarified that the chapter logo can be used but not the official PEO logo.

Committee members discussed the ability of chapters to allocate funds for something not included in their business plan.

Motion: RCC moves that chapter spending outside the chapter business plan must be approved by the Senior Regional Councillor.

Moved by: S. MacFarlane. Seconded by: P. Shankar

CARRIED

5.0 RCC Subcommittees/Task Forces/Working Group Updates

5.1 Chapter Leaders Conference (CLC) Organizing Committee Update from Chair

The Chair provided an update on the CLC. He noted there was excellent feedback from the attendees. The feedback was included in the RCC package for all to read.

Comments:

- To consider additional delegates to attend from each chapter
- RCC was impressed with turnout/support from rest of Council

5.2 Risk Assessment Working Group: Update from Chair

L. Roberge updated the RCC on the risk assessment working group. He noted that the workflow is on target for the next GNC meeting scheduled in January. He acknowledged the work the RCC group did and noted that the risks are manageable with appropriate mitigation.

5.3 Dormant Chapter working group: Update from group

RCC Chair asked for a formal discussion on inactive chapters and for an official output for the working group. The group believes it will eventually be more operational in nature, however it has identified 4 chapters with dormant activities. The suggestion is to have chapters amalgamate to help revise engagement. The working group should focus on the parameters and protocol of amalgamation.

Councillors agree that Regional Councillors are a source of guidance for chapters, but that formal processes are required to return dormant chapters to acceptable levels of activity, or when a chapter does not submit a business plan.

Action: L. Roberge and P. Shankar (lead) will continue with the working group. They will define a criteria for *dormant chapter* status. The goal is a policy and recommendations to the RCC, that also consider a risk lens. They have also been advised not to work directly with the dormant chapters at this time.

5.4 Regional Election and Search Committee: Update from group

The Chair asked the Junior Councillor for each region to provide an update on the search for election candidates.

East Central: Two chapters have put forth a candidate for election. A number of groups have been addressed, to provide information on positions and time commitments.

West Central: No confirmed candidates at this time, but there have been a few expressions of interest

Western: There will be at least 2 candidates. The information on the PEO website is complicated and needs to be simplified to encourage candidates, rather than dissuade them with complicated details.

Northern: There have been two virtual meetings to encourage people to run. The procedures should be reviewed and updated.

Eastern: There may be candidates for other areas of Councillor aside from Regional. The procedures might be a barrier to nomination.

6.0 Other Business

6.1 Climate Change survey: Update from Councillor Chisholm

As a follow-up to the July 2022 RCC meeting, the Chair presented the results from the survey sent out to chapter members. J. Hamilton also presented comments from chapter volunteers she had received directly.

Are you concerned with the lack of climate change guidelines set out by PEO?

Yes: 205

No: 147

The Chair asked Councillor J. Chisholm to provide further background. Councillor Chisholm reported that his recent motion at Council called on PEO to do a study on whether climate change is a relevant regulatory issue for PEO, but that the motion had not received support around the Council table.

The presented survey results indicate that chapter members might feel differently.

Motion: RCC moves that the concerns of chapter volunteer stakeholders be brought to Council; and therefore recommends to Council to adopt the Engineers Canada guideline 'Principles of Climate Adaptation and Mitigations for Engineers' as a posted PEO practice guideline applicable to professional engineers in Ontario.

Moved by: J. Chisholm. Seconded by: T. Kirkby

DEFEATED

6.2 Indigenous Scholarship

P. Shankar proposed a \$500 scholarship per chapter to encourage indigenous students to pursue engineering programs. This is in addition to the RCC Scholarship of \$1,500 per chapter. Discussion followed.

Concerns:

- Responsible use of PEO money? Do all chapters award scholarships?
- Narrow criteria makes it more difficult to award
- Award cannot be created without indigenous consultation
- All scholarships should exist within the RCC scholarship program

The item is tabled to the next meeting in order to provide further details.

7.0 Adjournment/Next RCC Meeting Schedule

Next meeting will be held virtually on March 23, 2023 from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 pm.