

## Council approves 2000 operating budget, gives advocacy plans green light

DECEMBER 9-10, 1999 MEETING

by Alison Piper

**A**t its December 9-10 meeting, Council approved the 2000 operating budget for PEO involving about \$11.1 million in revenues, \$11.7 in expenditures and no annual fee increase to support PEO's regulatory activities (a fee increase of \$30 phased in over two years is proposed to support creation of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers). Staff will work to reduce the projected deficit of \$590,000 through cost savings over the course of the year. Council review of the proposed 2000 capital budget was postponed until its February meeting, to enable the Finance Committee to study it and make recommendations to Council.

The preliminary operating budget presented to Council at its September 1999 meeting involved a projected deficit of \$1,569,000 and a \$20 annual licence fee increase. At Council's request, the Finance Committee reviewed the budget further in consultation with the Executive Committee, with a view to reducing the deficit substantially and eliminating the

fee increase. The projected deficit was reduced by about \$1 million through expenditure reductions throughout PEO business units and eliminating programs not yet approved by Council. The budgets of committees and task forces were also reduced based on 1998 and 1999 expenditures, and the Education Committee's budget was eliminated.

At the December meeting, however, Council revised the operating budget by reintroducing a line item for the Education Committee to enable continuation of the Engineer-in-Residence program. The committee's budget will be determined through

negotiation between the Finance and Education committees. The motion to approve the operating budget with the amendment involving the Education Committee's budget was brought by Councillors Ken McMartin, P.Eng., and Max Perera, P.Eng.

Speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Tony Cecutti, P.Eng., said: "Part of PEO's duty to the public is to ensure that the brightest young minds consider engineering. That starts in elementary schools." President-elect Peter DeVita, P.Eng., said he believes the Engineer-in-Residence program is "well worth the money," since it exposes school students and parents to engineering and science.

### Advocacy update

Council passed several recommendations made by the Joint Advocacy Implementation Committee (JAIC), including:

- ◆ approving two proposed amendments to PEO's By-law No.1. The first would authorize PEO's participation in the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), or other organizations whose functions are consistent with PEO's. The second would provide for PEO's continued financial support to such organizations, through annual, non-recurring or other specific grants for interim assistance; and
- ◆ approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by the JAIC, and authorizing PEO's President and Registrar/CEO to negotiate details of a final agreement between PEO and OSPE.

The motions to approve the proposed bylaw changes and MOU were moved by Councillor Robert Goodings, P.Eng., chair of the JAIC, and Max Perera.

The MOU covers the creation of OSPE as a non-profit Ontario corporation and its objects, membership, governance structure and funding. It also covers negotiation of implementation agreements between PEO, the Canadian Society for Professional Engineers (CSPE) and OSPE. Under the MOU, PEO and CSPE would each finalize arrangements between themselves and OSPE for the transfer of non-regulatory programs and associated funding, and provision of support services.

Council also passed motions to:

- ◆ approve a referendum to be held in conjunction with the February 2000 Council elections, which will involve a question dealing with OSPE funding and the proposed bylaw amendments; and
- ◆ authorize the Executive Committee to approve, if it chooses, financial support to the JAIC for OSPE readi-



President Patrick Quinn, P.Eng., takes the mike at Council's December meeting. At left is CEO and Registrar, Roger Barker, P.Eng.

ness activities of up to \$150,000, until the referendum results are known and OSPE funding is in place.

During discussion, several Councillors voiced enthusiastic support for the advocacy initiative and congratulated the JAIC on its work. Some Councillors expressed concerns that PEO may be trying to accomplish too much through the referendum by including the proposed bylaw amendments. Others pointed out that the bylaw changes are needed to enable PEO to provide funding support to OSPE, making it necessary to include them in the referendum package.

### Addressing software engineering

Produced by the Engineering Disciplines Task Group, two software engineering statements approved by Council are meant to help answer the question: "What is the role of a P.Eng. in software?" By defining what PEO believes to be the practice of professional engineering in the software area, they require licensed professional engineers to:

- ◆ approve any software components of products or systems whose development is the practice of professional engineering, as defined by the Professional Engineers Act; and

- ◆ verify that all software they use to design devices or structures produces acceptable results, when this design work constitutes professional engineering.

Council also approved a software engineering communications plan prepared by staff, with the goal of increasing the value of professional engineering in the software and high-tech industries.

### Reshaping the Professional Excellence Program

Council received the Professional Excellence Program Task Force's final report and approved its recommendations that PEO:

- ◆ not proceed with implementation of the Professional Excellence Program approved by Council in February 1998; and

- ◆ staff consider the feasibility, costs and time of possible start-up of a voluntary program involving data gathering of members' professional development activities, and report back to Council at its February meeting. The program's purpose would be to provide benchmarks and real data on members' professional development activities, in order to inform the public,



Councillors brief themselves on the issues. In the foreground is Councillor Nick Monsour, P.Eng.

government and educators on what professional engineers are doing to remain current in their fields.

The task force's report concludes that the program approved in 1998 was a "professional competence program" rather than a professional excellence program, and that measuring competence in the wide range of engineering fields is impractical and unfeasible.

### Certificate of Authorization to be reviewed

Council received a report from the Professional Practice Committee (PPC) on the Certificate of Authorization (C of A) program and appointed a task force to do the extensive review the report suggests. The PPC subgroup explored the scope of a review of PEO's C of A program and deter-

mined that the in-depth study that was needed was beyond its mandate. It also determined that the review should deal with fundamental issues that go to the core of self-regulation, including whether an additional licence offers any more public protection, and whether the current C of A licensing process properly addresses the impact of business entities on engineering practice.

### Limited licence to get overhaul

PEO's limited licence is to get an overhaul aimed at making it easier for qualified individuals to obtain and retain it. Currently, the licence allows holders, who are usually engineering technologists, to assume professional responsibility for a specific engineering act performed for the employer named in the licence. If they change employers, they must apply for a new limited licence.

Council passed motions to permit limited licence holders to retain their licences when their responsibilities evolve beyond hands-on engineering work to include managing and to amend Regulation 941 to eliminate the employer-specific restriction for limited licences. The changes were recommended by the Experience Requirements Committee and the Joint Management Board of PEO and the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists. ◆