

## COUNCIL SENDS GOVERNANCE PROPOSALS OUT FOR REVIEW

463rd MEETING, JUNE 3, 4, 2010

By Jennifer Coombes

THE 463RD MEETING of PEO council, held at the Region of Waterloo Council Chambers at the request of new President Diane Freeman, P.Eng., FEC, opened with a plenary session to clarify a range of governance proposals initially discussed at the February and April council meetings, and to develop a consultation process for these ideas (see *Engineering Dimensions*, March/April 2010, p. 47, and May/June 2010, p. 27).

One of the ideas presented at the earlier meetings, and endorsed for further consultation, was the concept of all councillors electing PEO's president and council chair from among the member-elected councillors. Currently, PEO is the only regulatory body of the six reporting to Ontario's attorney general whose president is elected directly by and from among the body's members rather than by and from among the members of council. Council has identified a number of advantages for moving to this process, among them the assurance that the president would have the confidence of council and enter office with a clear mandate. Council also recognized there are advantages of the current process, and directed that the issue be presented in a balanced way when stakeholders are consulted.

Council also considered whether there should be changes to the number of elected positions on council, and concluded that there should continue to be 17; however, council would like to see the length of the terms of all councillors be harmonized at three years. Council concluded there should be no limit on the number of consecutive terms councillors could serve in the same position, seeing consecutive terms as a way to maintain continuity on council so long as incumbents are able to convince the voters they should serve again.

Council directed the Human Resources and Compensation Committee to consult with identified stakeholders before moving ahead with governance changes. The stakeholders include all licence holders, chapter chairs and executives, regional congresses, PEO committees and task forces, the Executive Committee, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) and Consulting Engineers of Ontario.

### OSPE ACT

Council defeated a motion that asked PEO to support a proposed *Ontario Society of Professional Engineers Act* as a private member's bill in the Ontario legislature.

The objects of the proposed act are:

- (a) to represent the interests of licensed engineering practitioners in Ontario;
- (b) to encourage the application of engineering and science in Ontario;
- (c) to provide a representative voice for licensed engineering practitioners in Ontario;
- (d) to strive to make registration as a licensed engineering practitioner more meaningful in Ontario;
- (e) to propagate and promote, through its members, the use of professional engineering services by licensed engineering practitioners;
- (f) to assist licensed engineering practitioners in Ontario to achieve and maintain the highest possible standards in the practice of professional engineering;
- (g) to provide or engage such risk management assistance to Ontario's licensed engineering practitioners as may benefit both their practice and the safety of the public;
- (h) to provide affinity and other related services to members including the sponsoring of professional indemnity and other insurances and recommendations concerning same, as well as services that meet business and private needs of members;
- (i) to sponsor programs, awards and services that promote excellence in the study and application of professional engineering in Ontario and elsewhere;
- (j) to recognize and honour significant achievements by Ontario licensed engineering practitioners; and
- (k) to do any other thing that the board reasonably considers will further its objects."

PEO was notified of OSPE's plans for the act at a PEO-OSPE Joint Relations Committee (JRC) meeting in November 2009. At the request of OSPE members on the JRC, PEO staff then conducted an initial policy review and legal analysis and offered feedback to OSPE by letter in late December. In the letter, CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng., pointed out PEO's areas of concern with the proposed act.

In particular, he said, some objects as then drafted could potentially cause regulatory conflict or conflict with PEO policies, or cause confusion between the two acts for practitioners and the public.

Although OSPE did make some changes to their draft as a result of the PEO analysis, PEO councillors, by and large, agreed the language of the proposed act still lacked clarity and had the potential not only to conflict with PEO's regulatory duties and policies, but also to cause confusion with the differentiation of PEO's and OSPE's activities.

Accordingly, council defeated the motion to support the current draft OSPE act, and directed that the attorney general's ministry be advised of PEO's position.

## GOVERNMENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

Council has approved the creation of a Government Liaison Committee (GLC), a new committee to oversee and provide guidance to PEO's Government Liaison Program (GLP).

At its November 2009 meeting, council had directed the CEO/ registrar to investigate the requirements to establish a standing committee to coordinate PEO's GLP activities and develop strategic initiatives for the program (see *Engineering Dimensions*, January/ February 2010, p. 61). The GLP was created in 2005 to forge a grassroots government relations movement to improve awareness by the government of PEO's role and jurisdiction.

Due to the program's expansion since then, it was felt that having a body to coordinate the activities of the chapter GLP subcommittees would result in a more focused campaign. Following consultation with stakeholders on a committee terms of reference and work plan, council approved establishing the committee.

The GLC will monitor and evaluate regulatory issues requiring liaison with the government, coordinate the activities of the GLP and other government relations within the engineering profession, and consider other matters related to the GLP delegated to the committee by council. Specifically, the committee will provide advice and feedback to the president and CEO/registrar on specific projects and initiatives for PEO's government relations, and consult with stakeholders, including council, chapters, members and staff, and groups such as OSPE and the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP), to enhance government outreach.

The committee will comprise a member of the Regional Councillors Committee, a council lieutenant governor appointee, two chapter GLP chairs, a P.Eng. active in a riding association, a P.Eng. member of OSPE's Political Action Network, a P.Eng. member of Engineers Canada's Bridging Engineers and Government Program, and the executive director of OCEPP.

Council will approve appointments to the committee at its September meeting.

## 2011 BUDGET

Council approved the assumptions to underlie PEO's 2011 budget, as recommended by the Finance Committee. It will be assumed that PEO's 2011 operating budget must be balanced. Assumed capital expenditures will include IT for expanding the new building infrastructure and existing software systems, and tenant improvements at 40 Sheppard Avenue West.

Special projects undertaken on the direction of council will be funded from the discretionary fund in the operating reserve and will be reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Staff will now create a draft budget to be presented to the Finance Committee in early August for input and recommendations. The draft budget will be provided to council for its information and feedback at the September meeting. A final budget is scheduled for council debate and approval in November.  $\Sigma$



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