

COUNCIL APPROVES CPD GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS

503RD MEETING, NOVEMBER 19, 20, 2015

By Jennifer Coombes

AT ITS NOVEMBER meeting, council approved the guiding principles and basic program elements of the Continuing Professional Development, Competence and Quality Assurance (CPDCQA) Task Force's final report (www.peo.on.ca/index.php?ci_id=29313&la_id=1). The report is the culmination of 18 months of work by the task force to develop a proposed program of continuing professional development (CPD) that it believes would be effective, pragmatic, improve the regulation of professional engineering and recognize the diversity of practitioners' needs and resources. The plan also incorporates feedback from six town hall meetings held in the fall of 2015.

In formulating the plan, the task force developed a framework that it believes:

- recognizes the licence of both practising and non-practising engineers;
- focuses on maintaining provision of competent engineering services rather than introducing a bureaucratic hurdle;
- ensures CPD requirements are based on the risk the work of each licence holder presents to the public and the profession;
- encourages licence holders and employers to adopt risk-mitigation measures; and
- improves on programs implemented by regulators elsewhere in Canada.

With the CPDCQA's work now complete, council stood down the task force and has approved creating a new task force that will be responsible for finalizing a risk review form, the continuing professional development requirement algorithm, and criteria for acceptable technical activities. A terms of reference for the task force will be presented to council for approval at its February meeting. The task force is to comprise eight PEO members (a majority of whom are sitting councillors). Council decided at its September 2015 meeting that PEO members will have to ratify any mandatory elements of a PEO

CPD program through referendum (*Engineering Dimensions*, November/December 2015, p. 37).

More information about PEO's CPD plans, including a back-grounder and other reference materials, is available on the Continuing Professional Development webpage, www.peo.on.ca/index.php?ci_id=29312&la_id=1.

BUDGETS APPROVED

Council has approved the 2016 operating and capital budgets, as recommended by the Finance Committee. Both budgets are balanced and meet council's reserve requirements.

In the draft operating budget, total revenues are budgeted at \$25.5 million and total expenses at \$25.3 million, leaving a surplus of \$216,000 for the year. The forecasted revenue represents an increase of \$1.1 million or 4.5 per cent over the 2015 forecasted revenue, which is mainly due to:

- an increase in application, registration, exam and other licence fees of \$647,000 due to an anticipated increase in number of examinations written and Certificate of Authorization applications and registrations;
- an increase in P.Eng. licence fees of \$219,000 due to growth in the number of P.Eng. licences issued, based on the historical trend; and
- an increase in PEO headquarters revenues of \$216,000 due to vacant space being leased.

PEO engineering licence fees, which are the lowest of any province in Canada, will be frozen again for the eighth consecutive year. For the sixth consecutive year, all other fees will also remain unchanged.

Budgeted expenses for 2016 are expected to increase by \$973,000. The forecasted increase in expenses is due largely to:

- an approved 3 per cent increase in merit increases for staff and CPI adjustments;
- an increase of \$469,000 in amortization due mostly to the completion of phase one of Aptify, PEO's new membership database application;
- an increase of \$118,000 in postage and courier fees due to a postal rate increase in January and increases in postage for *Engineering Dimensions*, as a result of a council decision to send the paper version to all members who don't request the digital edition;

- an increase of \$87,000 in PEO occupancy costs as building common area maintenance costs and storage and other office maintenance costs have increased; and
- an increase of \$56,000 for chapters, largely due to a Regional Councillors Committee decision to increase chapter allotments by 10 per cent.

The increased expenses will be partially offset by reductions of:

- \$167,000 in costs of computers and telephones due to savings from employing a new supplier to host and manage PEO's IT infrastructure;
- \$133,000 in contract staff costs due to a reduction in IT support;
- \$63,000 in costs for legal services due largely to a lower legal reserve for corporate matters and an increase in in-house legal work; and
- \$61,000 in consultants costs due to consultants not being required for the Continuing Professional Development, Competence and Quality Assurance Task Force, PEO communications audit and policy development research, which used the services of consultants in 2015.

The capital budget for 2016 is \$1.4 million, which comprises information technology (IT) (\$927,000), capital improvements to PEO headquarters (\$477,000) and office furniture (\$20,000). Major IT expenditures for the year include replacing the audio-visual provider and equipment to enable a reliable recording of academic and experience requirements interviews, updating local area network hardware, updating the internal facing intranet and replacing an older budgeting computer program. Capital improvements scheduled for 40 Sheppard include updating elevator hydraulics, painting the underground garage walls, replacing the insulated glazing of some exterior windows, replacing exterior doors, paving the entrance to the underground parking lot and restoring the building's exterior walls.

BORROWING RESOLUTION

Council carried a motion to renew PEO's borrowing policy, which includes an operating line of credit and corporate credit cards with Scotiabank, until January 31, 2017. Council approved an operating overdraft for an amount not to exceed \$250,000 and use of corporate credit cards with an aggregate limit not to exceed \$120,000. Council was told PEO has never been in an operating overdraft position.

OCEPP DISCONTINUED

Based on an extensive analysis of PEO's Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP), council has decided to discontinue the program. Its proposed 2016 \$145,000 labour and program budget will now be returned to PEO reserves.

OCEPP has operated since October 2008 with a mission to engage engineers in the development of public policy; ensure public policy development takes into account appropriate technical requirements;

develop innovative solutions to public policy problems based on technology; and help engineering professionals translate complex technical issues into publicly accessible information.

The focus of the centre has changed over the past few years, according to *OCEPP Future: Appraisal of Options*, a report issued last May, which states: "no one has been clear about the purpose of the centre's activities." The report was discussed in depth at the September 2015 council plenary session.

Several options for OCEPP's future were offered to council. The first option would have provided opportunities for P.Engs to voice positions on public policy issues. The second would have required a strategic alignment of the centre with PEO's core regulatory function. The third would have seen OCEPP function as an independent think tank—the purpose originally envisioned when the centre was first launched.

According to the report, the first option "has a high demand on PEO resources yet produces nothing of value for PEO as there is no correlation between the PEO regulatory mandate and the work of external authors presented by OCEPP." The second "is also unviable. Retaining a separate entity with its own board within a PEO department is structurally unworkable." The third option would require PEO to provide substantial funding as the sponsoring body over a significant period of time to create a self-sustaining think tank.

Based on this analysis, the report recommends discontinuing OCEPP and refocusing PEO on other avenues to include engineers in public policy debate. Council agreed with the report's findings and stood down the OCEPP Advisory Board with thanks.

NEW GUIDELINE FOR FORENSIC ENGINEERS

Council has approved a practice guideline for professional engineers who practise forensic engineering, offer professional forensic engineering services, or conduct forensic engineering investigations. The *Guideline for Professional Engineers Providing Forensic Engineering Investigations*, developed by PEO's Professional Standards Committee, "addresses forensic engineering practice and provides information on how practitioners should carry out forensic engineering activities in an ethical and legal manner." The guideline is available at www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/1834/la_id/1.htm. 