

Public Works Directors Association Minutes
October 14, 2009 Meeting
9:00 a.m. at GPCOG

Present: Erik Street, Yarmouth, Chair; Tom Eldridge, Westbrook; Doug Fortier, Windham; John Foster, Brunswick; Roger Mosley, Standish; Kevin Noyes, Portland; Rob Pontau, Topsham; Mike Shaw, Scarborough

Staff and Guests: Maddy Adams, GPCOG; Jason Archambault, Eastern Salt; Eben Marsh, GPCOG; Kim McCabe, McCabe Trucking

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Erik Street opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.
2. **Minutes from June 10, 2009 meeting.** *Mike Shaw made a motion to approve the June 10th minutes. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.*

Performance Questionnaire. Eben would like to get some feedback from the Public Works Directors and has put together a performance questionnaire that he will be sending out by e-mail to the Directors. He would like to hear how things are going, areas for improvement, etc. Eben also brought an article about the excise tax to their attention, and provided some background information on excise tax. It is good to have watchdogs out there but ulterior motives also need to be looked at. Erik noted that people still think there is so much fluff in government. How do we impress that that isn't the case? Mike Shaw mentioned that Scarborough Public Works did an open house on a Saturday. They had about 100 people turn out and those attending were surprised to learn how much the Public Works Department does. The Public Works employees talked to the public and it was a good exchange. It helped the public understand what Public Works does and it turned out to be a morale booster.

3. **Discussion of Rock Salt Transition.** Eben introduced Jason Archambault from Eastern Salt. Eben distributed the memo that was sent to the road salt participants and provided some background about the transition. He explained that, following the timing of their contracting with GPCOG for this season, ISCO became engaged in a corporate merger with Morton Salt. The Federal Trade Commission and the Maine Attorney General were concerned that the merger could affect the future competitive market base in Maine. Consequently, COG entered into negotiations between all parties in order to ensure the best possible outcome. As result of these negotiations, it was agreed that ISCO would transfer some of its Maine assets to Eastern Salt, a Massachusetts based provider and that ISCO would continue as the primary contract service provider of record for GPCOG for 2009-2010. ISCO will subcontract its stockpile and delivery to Eastern Salt and Eastern will maintain the stockpile in South Portland at its current site.

Jason Archambault provided a handout on Eastern Salt. Eastern has a rock salt mine in Chile. They charter vessels to the east coast and have seven terminals on the east coast. They are very comparable to ISCO. They have about 25% of the east coast market. Right now they have salt in Boston and they have two ships that are headed to Boston with 10,000 tons. There will be deliveries to South Portland on November 6 and November 8th of 27,000 tons each. McCabe Trucking will do the hauling and dispatching just like last year. Eastern is trying to make it the transition as seamless as possible. Eastern's mine is about three miles from ISCO's mine in Chile. The quality of the product should be the same; salt will be covered immediately. The ordering will be done through Karen Girard – 1-978-251-8553 (or anyone else in the office can take the order). If you have any problems, please call Jason right away. It was asked if each town should have a designated person to place the order and Jason responded that they could do that if they prefer.

Right now the salt is coming out of Boston. Eastern started delivery last week. Part of the deal that was negotiated is that the salt price would be reduced by \$1.00 per ton. So if anybody ordered salt through ISCO, please let COG know if the price hasn't been adjusted. Eastern is now bringing salt into Portland and that is why they can meet the lower price.

It was asked why ISCO is still involved and Eben explained that we have a contract with them and we didn't have any experience with Eastern so we wanted to keep ISCO's feet to the fire in case there was any fallback. Technically, it is a subcontract to Eastern. This will give Eastern a chance to establish their infrastructure and provide them with an opportunity to compete with Morton/ISCO. ISCO is backing Eastern up. The new ISCO/Morton company will be called Morton International. The whole idea is to maintain competition. It was asked if there was a contingency plan if we run out of salt in Portland. Jason responded that they can get salt in Boston. Eastern has 700,000 tons on the ground now and 700,000 coming. They are doing everything they can to make sure they don't run out of salt. If they do, there is a provision to go to another vendor at the same price. However, Eastern doesn't anticipate that happening because they have piles in Portland and Boston. There was a question about moisture content but Jason responded that the salt is covered. S.W. Cole does the testing for moisture and gradation; the testing will be done in Portland.

Eben suggested a field trip to Eastern's Portland site to see the process. Many of the Public Works Directors were interested in doing this. The salt will be in Portland on November 6th. Jason will talk to Sprague to see if this can be arranged (Eastern rents space from Sprague).

Regarding delivery, Kim McCabe will be doing the dispatching. She explained that everything would be done the same as in the past. Right now they are working out of Chelsea. They will have about the same amount of salt so there shouldn't be a problem. There are ten trucks on the road right now. When they get busy, they usually have about 12 trucks; it can be up to as many as 30 trucks. They use a lot of independent contractors. When working with ISCO, Kim usually received orders by fax. With Eastern she believes it will be the same. Most people call in their orders (1-978-251-8553); you can e-mail your order also. Jason's e-mail address is: jarchambault@easternsalt.com. Jason's mobile phone number is 978-375-6979; McCabe's number is 332-0032.

4. Roundtable discussion/Future Topics/Chair Position

Erik will be stepping down as Chairman in December and is looking for a volunteer to take his place. It doesn't require much time and COG staff provide support.

Regarding future topics, COG will be supportive in any way we can. If you need help with getting speakers, etc., please let Eben know. Some of the suggested topics for upcoming meetings included: safety training; regional facilities; shared services; alternative vehicles; educating public on pesticides; new alternative landscaping techniques; Dig Safe; public works policies on a regional level; regional waste collection sites; traffic calming policies; public relations; collector road issues; eco-friendly products; public outreach programs; what is the plan of attack for cycling out signs regarding the signs standards for 2012 and 2015. It was suggested that a CMP utilities person and/or a cable person be invited to meet with the PWD's on an annual basis. Mike Shaw offered Amy Dubois of his office to do a GIS presentation to the group. It was asked if COG would be doing an aerial flight and Eben responded that COG is investigating how much interest there is with the towns.

The subject of public outreach came up again. Erik mentioned that they have done a program with second grade classes. They talk about catch basins and bring in three pieces of equipment. It has been very successful.

There was discussion of perhaps putting together a bid on trucks. There was concern that it wouldn't work because each town has their own specifications. If they were standard trucks, that would work. The towns would all have to get on the same page as far as ordering. We should determine what else we should be bidding on that we currently aren't.

5. **Announcements.** The World Public Works Congress will be held in Quebec in February. The American Public Works Association Congress will be held in Boston in December; it's a four-day event. It was suggested that perhaps the Public Works Directors could take a couple of buses down.
6. **Other Business.** None
7. **Next Meeting.** The next meeting was scheduled for November 18th because Veterans Day falls on the second Wednesday of the month.
8. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.