

CSCE Board of Director's Meeting – November 7, 2018 –Room B at University of Hartford

In attendance: David Chapman, Ben Cote, Roy Merritt, George Gerard, Brianna Maljanian

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm. The following items were discussed.

1. Upcoming Dinner Meetings

- a. January Meeting – David Chapman noted that Rahbi Barakat has coordinated with the commissioner, and he will be able to present at the January Meeting.
- b. It was decided that CSCE Board members will receive a free dinner for the ACE Awards in 2019.
- c. After looking at this year's calendar, it was determined that there were not any available slots for the renovation and restoration of the Hartford Armory. George Gerard said he would discuss with Jodi Greene to determine if it was an event that the Younger Member's Committee would be interested in planning.

2. Legislative Affairs:

- a. The legislative committee consists of Roy Merritt, Jen Buchanon, and Katie Hedberg
- b. Roy Merritt and David Chapman wrote an article for the Waterbury republican released on November 1<sup>st</sup> regarding the lockbox amendment. A copy of the article is attached.
- c. Jen Buchanon attended State Advocacy Captains Training on October 15 at ASCE Headquarters. Attached are notes from the training.
- d. The Legislative Fly in is scheduled for March 2019. Roy Merritt will discuss with the legislative committee to determine if there is interest in attending.
- e. The possibility of organizing a State Capitol Legislative Day was discussed. Roy Merritt will reach out to Don Schubert to determine best timing for the event.
- f. Another legislative committee meeting is to be held before the end of the month.

3. Structures Technical Group:

- a. David Chapman stated that Ranjit Bhave has expressed interest in being the Chair of the Structure's Technical Group.
- b. David Chapman mentioned that Kevin McMullen is looking for four to five structural engineers to join him at a panel at UConn to discuss the industry with the students. An email will be sent out looking for volunteers.

4. Secretary's Report:

- a. Brianna Maljanian receives a list that is updated monthly of all CSCE members
- b. Discussed advertising a free dinner for new members as an incentive for them to sign up for CSCE. The Board agreed that this may be a better approach than emailing the members individually.
- c. Kassim Tarhini's review of the Operating Manual will be distributed so that it can be discussed during the January 2019 Board Meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report:
  - Approximately \$30,000 raised from monthly dinners was recently moved from the Paypal account into the Operating Account. The new balance for the Operating account is \$48,000, and the holding account balance is \$64,000.
6. ERYMC:
  - a. There will be six members attending: Jodi Greene, George Gerard, Matt Stoutz, Alex Klose, Katie Hedberg, Bojan Bojic
  - b. Ben Cote can no longer attend, so George Gerard will attend as board member representative
7. CSCE Banners
  - a. George Gerard researched ordering banners from TRT Banners. Per follow up email 11/8/18
    - i. 24"x80" Retractable Banner with Stand: Self-standing retractable banner with base and tote bag. \$166.00 each
    - ii. 96"x96" Large Adjustable Banner Display: Self-standing banner, which breaks down to small transportable size, \$576.00 each
  - b. Two 24"x80" and one 96"x96" banners will be ordered.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

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## Highway fund needs protection

By Roy Merritt Jr. and David Chapman  
October 31, 2018

Campaign advertisements often feature candidates for office, or issues such as health care, education or foreign policy. Rarely do we see transportation and infrastructure front and center in these ads, but as the need for investment has grown, transportation and infrastructure have inched their way up the list of priorities for Americans.

In Connecticut, we can feel the effects of deteriorating infrastructure each day as we sit in traffic congestion, face more frequent and longer delays, and drive across bridges with weight restrictions posted on them. Our state has the third-busiest road network in the United States, and drivers are more than familiar with bottlenecked areas like Stamford, Bridgeport, Hartford and Waterbury. Areas like these cost drivers more than \$2,300 per year in wasted fuel, lost time and car repairs.

Nov. 6, Connecticut voters will have the opportunity to protect critical funds for transportation by voting "yes" on Ballot Question No. 1. This question proposes to create an amendment to the state constitution that would ensure money in the Special Transportation Fund (STF) is used solely on projects that will improve our transportation networks, and prohibit transportation money from being diverted and used for other purposes. The amendment, if passed by the voters, will secure funding collected through the state's motor-fuels taxes and other related fees in a "transportation lockbox," protecting these funds for roads, bridges and rail – systems that are in need of attention.

This week, the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers released the "2018 Report Card for Connecticut's Infrastructure," identifying Connecticut's infrastructure shortfalls and successes, and revealing to us just how much our infrastructure needs attention. The Report Card assessed five infrastructure categories and assigned Connecticut an overall grade of C-minus. Included in the Report Card are grades for the state's network of roads, which received a D-plus, and bridges, which received a C-minus. The report card may be found online at [infrastructurereportcard.org/Connecticut](http://infrastructurereportcard.org/Connecticut).

CSCE also offered some solutions. The report noted that overall, Connecticut's infrastructure finished higher on the scale than the national infrastructure grade of a D-plus. However, Connecticut's grades for bridges and roads continue to show that our aging transportation systems are in mediocre to poor condition, and not fulfilling the needs of our residents. Recent investments have not kept pace.

It is crucial that we increase our investments as necessary to bring our transportation systems up to an acceptable grade, boost the competitiveness of our state's economy, and improve the quality of life for our residents. To make this possible, we need to ensure money in the STF solely is allocated toward transportation projects and transportation-related debt relief, instead of being diverted periodically for non-transportation purposes during difficult budget cycles.

The future of Connecticut's infrastructure investments is now up to voters. We urge them to check "yes" on Ballot Question No. 1 to establish a "transportation lockbox" protecting money in the STF. Let's make sure our transportation funds are spent on what they were intended for.

Roy Merritt Jr. of Burlington is chairman of the Legislative Affairs Committee of the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. David Chapman of Madison is president of the Connecticut section of the ASCE.

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## State Advocacy Captains Training – ASCE DC Headquarters, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018

In summary, thanks to Roy CSCE is doing a great job following and staying active in legislation that affects the engineering community. Many of the discussions and topics covered at the training I was already aware of from our kick-off meeting with Roy.

What I considered the biggest news (aside of legislation) is that huge changes are coming to the Raise the Bar campaign/initiative with ASCE. A new document with an updated plan will likely be released in 2019 along with a new/revised ASCE Body of Knowledge (BOK) manual.

Goals of the Advocacy Program (green ✓ indicates CSCE does this already)

### Primary:

- Make Government Relations Part of Section Meetings ✓
- Communicate with ASCE Government Relations Team ✓
- Attend State Capital Legislative Day
- Track State Legislation ✓
- Monitor the State Licensing Board ✓
- Create a Report Card Program ✓

### Secondary:

- Set up and/or Identify Coalitions to team with that advocate legislation of interest to ASCE/CSCE
- Testify at Legislation (as needed) ✓
- Submit / Co-author with ASCE Op-Eds ✓
- Identify CSCE members to serve on the State Licensing Board
- Invite Public Officials to Dinner Meetings

### Duties of Advocacy Captains:

- Be a Key Contact ✓
- Attend Captains Training ✓
- Understand the schedule for the State Legislative Session
- Sign up and monitor current state legislative action ✓
- Be active and aware of current legislative action discussions on social media ✓
- Be familiar with the key/top ASCE policies and ASCE's position
- Attend the March Legislative Fly-In

### Action Items for CSCE & the Legislative Affairs Committee:

- Develop a strategic plan identifying the top issues we want to support (we are already on the right track here with the lock-box support and the Report Card) – this website lists ASCE's Federal & State priority issues ( <https://www.asce.org/advocacy/> )
- Nominate the Report Card Committee for the "Outstanding Civil Engineer Advocate of the Year" – deadline Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>
- Encourage Section members to be a Key Contact with ASCE

- Link to the "State Track" on our website ( <http://cqrcengage.com/asce/state/connecticut> or <https://www.asce.org/state-legislative-tracking/> )

Action Items for me:

- Attend Quarterly Conference calls with other Advocacy Captains
- Find 5 people to be Key Contacts by Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>
- Report to the Section about the training by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>
- Assure Section has linked to the StateTrack on website (link above)
- Complete the RAP Index Survey
- Apply to/attend 2019 Legislative Fly-in