



ASCE Texas Section advances our communities through the development of civil engineers as leaders who create a legacy of **Service** through: **Technical proficiency**, **Educational opportunities**, and **Professional advocacy**.

MINUTES – FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL

ASCE TEXAS SECTION

FALL 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTION ORIENTATION & MEETING

October 2, 2020 | 1:00 – 4:45 PM CST | Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1.0 Convene

1.1 Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by President Sean P. Merrell PE at 1:02 PM Central Time.

1.2 Housekeeping & Zoom “How-to” provided by Executive Director Lindsay A. O’Leary PE, CAE.

1.3 Roll Call, Determination of Quorum. Operations Specialist Mike Sosa called role and a quorum was present.

Position	Name	Present/Absent
President	Sean Merrell PE	P
Past President	Susan Roth PE	P
President Elect	Patrick Beecher PE	P
VP Educational	Natalie Weiershausen PE (p. Wires-hausen)	P
VP Educational Elect	Russell Gibson PE	P
VP Professional	Griselda Gonzales PE	P
VP Professional Elect	Patricia Frayre (p. Friday) PE	P
VP Technical	Robert “Bob” Stevens PhD, PE	P
VP Technical Elect	Ron Reichert	P
Senior Director at Large	Alik McCoy PE	P
2 nd Year Director at Large	LJ Francis PE	P
1 st Year Director at Large	Michael Schneider PE	A
1 st Year Director at Large	Yan Linwood PE	P
Treasurer	Christopher Nance PE	P
Asst. treasurer	Glenn Goldstein PE	P
Executive Director	Lindsay O’Leary PE	P
Board Secretary	Mike Sosa	P
Section Directors		
Austin	Kat Lauer EIT	P
Brazos	Robert Lys Jr. PE sub Eleanor Rivera PE	P
Caprock	Russell Carter PE	P
Central Texas	Trey Simpson EIT	P
Corpus Christi	Joe Alvarez (<i>did not vote</i>)	P
Dallas	Phillip Alcorn PE	P
El Paso	Chris Nance PE	P
Fort Worth	Kimberly Cornett PE	P
High Plains	Rodolfo Mireles PE	A
Houston	Luis Gonzalez PE	P
Northeast Texas	David Stanley PE & sub Rachel Gaddis PE	P
Rio Grande Valley	Aldo Garcia	P
San Antonio	No delegate	A
Southeast Texas	Liv Haselbach PhD, PE	A
West Texas	No delegate	A

Guest List

1. Jean Louis Briaud PhD, PE (2021 ASCE President)
2. Jerry Paz PE (Chair, Region 6 Board of Governors)
3. Jenni Peters (TexASCE Communications Specialist)

1.4 President Elect Patrick Beecher PE led attendees through the Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation.

1.5 Zoom Screen Capture by Jenni Peters, in lieu of photograph.

1.6 ASCE President Jean-Louis Briaud PhD, PE Provided Society Comments & Installed Section Officers

Discussion: Briaud noted that he is very excited for CECON 2020 Virtual and then proceeded with the Officer Installation Ceremony. President Merrell finished by noting that he is overcome with emotion and is excited to have a successful year with the support of the Section Board.

1.7 Region 6 Chair Jerry Paz PE Provided Region 6 Comments

Discussion: Paz congratulated both Merrell and Roth for their efforts over the past year noting that he is especially proud of how the Section handled its communications during the last six months. He also asked that everyone in attendance please save the date for ASCE's Annual Convention which will be held virtually from October 28-30. He spoke about ASCE's Future World Vision and summed up the current budgetary issues ASCE is facing and the potential impacts that may be felt at the Section and Branch levels. Lastly, he noted that ASCE's proposed changes to the Code of Ethics are being pushed forward despite concerns from a portion of the membership. In addition, the Board is considering charging dues to Life Members moving forward to help with ASCE's budgetary issues and will discuss this item further in October.

ACTION – Save the date for the virtual ASCE Annual Convention on October 28-30

2.0 Abbreviated Board Orientation

2.1 Review of Primary Programs

Discussion: President Merrell reviewed the Section's primary programs and projects, including: [Texas Civil Engineering Conference \(CECON\)](#) Overview & CECON 2020 Invitation, [ASCE Texas Student Symposium](#), [Infrastructure Report Card](#), [Leadership Development Weekend](#), [Legislative Drive-In](#), [Texas Civil Engineer](#)

2.2 Governing Documents & Strategic Plan

Discussion: O'Leary reviewed the Section's Governing Documents. *My STEP* defines our Mission & Vision, Strategic Goals & Initiatives, Rules of Operation: Constitution, Bylaws, & Leadership Handbook, Code of Ethics. All items can be found on the footer of the [Texas Section website](#).

2.3 Operational Overview

Discussion: O'Leary reviewed Governance: Roles & Responsibilities, Meetings: Preparation, Attendance, & Engaging Dialogue, and Financial Reports & Tax Return.

2.4 Legal & Fiduciary Responsibilities

Discussion: O'Leary presented the three fundamental duties of Board members which include: Duty of Care, Duty of Obedience, Duty of Loyalty

ACTION – Send signed Conflict of Interest (COI) forms to Section Office by October 31.

ACTION – Send commitment statements to President Merrell by October 31.

Break from 2:15 to 2:25 pm (Paz and Briaud left the meeting)

3.0 Administrative Items for Board of Direction Action

3.1 Approve Substitute Section Directors. See attendance list.

Discussion: Sosa noted the two substitutes, Eleanor Rivera PE from Brazos and Rachel Gaddis PE from Northeast Texas.

Motion to approve substitute Section Directors. Move to approve. Seconded and passed without dissent.

3.2 The Board is asked for any changes to the agenda.

Discussion: None

Motion to accept agenda. Move to accept. Seconded and passed without dissent.

3.3 The Board is asked to review the COI Acknowledgement form and disclose any potential conflicts.

Discussion: O'Leary reminded everyone to review, sign and return their respective COI forms to the Section Office. No potential conflicts were disclosed so no vote was needed.

4.0 Items for Discussion

4.1 2020-2021 Kickoff

Discussion: Merrell noted that his goals for his upcoming year as Section President are adapt, achieve, and advance. In addition, he plans to strongly emphasize the opportunity for members to take advantage of the wide array of opportunities that ASCE has to offer.

ACTION – Merrell to provide submitted 2020 ASCE Outstanding Section Award nomination form to Board.

ACTION – Vice Presidents to schedule a monthly call with their Committee Chairs.

ACTION – Merrell to host regular calls with Branch Presidents & Section Directors.

ACTION – Section staff to provide monthly update to Section Directors for Branch Newsletters. Will include pre-written articles so they are easy to share.

4.2 Review [Org. Chart](#) & Discuss Recruiting

Discussion: O'Leary and President Merrell reviewed the organizational chart with attendees and call for their help to recruit volunteers for committee activities.

ACTION – All Board members to recommend committee members.

4.3 Review 2020-2021 Operating Budget

Discussion: Nance reminded Board members that dues comprise a large portion of the Section's revenue and any projected drop in this revenue category is worrisome. He also noted the two largest budget items the Board has direct control over are CECON and the Student Symposium. The line item for the Section's savings withdrawal is currently set at \$53,000 (11% increase) for fiscal year 2020-2021 due to the projected drop in membership dues. He also noted that the Section is evaluating options for increasing non-dues revenue to help reduce the need for the budgeted investment draw.

President Merrell noted the Section should strongly consider increasing membership dues because of the increases to the cost of doing business, and noted ASCE's Board of Direction considers a membership dues increase whenever the cost of living index increases by a specific percentage. Beecher seconded that sentiment. Francis noted the Section should conduct due diligence and explore ways to increase revenue and cut expenses before we unilaterally decide to increase dues. Gibson noted that he recalls a prior Board discussion and action that resulted in the Section creating a policy to raise dues on an incremental basis every two years. Cornett seconded Gibson's statement.

ACTION – Section Staff to review previous Board Meeting minutes to verify whether the Board took action to create a policy to increase dues on an incremental basis.

ACTION – All board members should review and understand the budget in terms of how they can help reach revenue goals through projects and committee activities. Increasing non-dues revenue is a primary goal for 2020-2021.

Break from 3:05 to 3:10 pm

4.4 2021 ASCE Texas Student Symposium

Discussion: Weiershausen noted the Symposium will be hosted virtually for 2021 and that UT Austin may decide to host 2022 in-person. The Student Activities Committee is also discussing which competitions will be held and how they will be hosted virtually. She also noted that the committee has thought about the proposed conference realignment and are going to offer to take on additional schools from New Mexico and Oklahoma rather than splitting the Texas-Mexico Student Conference in half. Carter noted that he is now on ASCE's Committee for Student Conferences as a corresponding member and that ASCE plans to move forward with the regionalization of student conferences but plans to leave it up to each region to figure out how they'd prefer to accomplish the goal.

4.5 [Texas Civil Engineer \(TCE\) & Excellence in Journalism \(EIJ\) Award](#)

Discussion: McCoy reported that the TCE has officially moved to bi-monthly content collection while maintain monthly email releases. The Editorial Committee has a good list of contacts for articles at the Branch-level and are always open to receiving submissions for any articles related to the civil engineering industry. They are hoping to increase the quantity of articles they receive from the institute chapters in 2021. Next, McCoy reported that soliciting nominations for the EIJ Award has been difficult in recent years and certain nominees are not allowed to receive the award since ASCE isn't a journalism organization. No action is being requested at this time, but Directors at Large would like to discuss this item with the Board. President Merrell suggested that the EIJ Award be modified to include non-traditional media formats and asked for a show of hands to help with the process for 2020-21. **Lauer, McCoy, Linwood and Beecher all offered to help.**

Discussion on returning to a printed TCE: Gibson suggested distributing 1-print magazine a year at CECON to avoid mailing costs and/or asking for more sponsors to support an annual special edition issue.

ACTION – Submit ideas for article topics and/or your favorite technical/industry writers to share@TexASCE.org. Specifically seeking ideas for FEATURED TECHNICAL articles.

ACTION – Editorial Committee to review costs of print magazine special issue (top 10 or 12 articles). Perhaps members can donate \$5 to receive it via mail, and create PDF for others to print? Note, the FY2020-2020 Operating Budget may be amended if needed. The goal is to balance expense with revenue and consider member benefit.

4.6 Governmental Affairs

Discussion: Gonzales noted that the Government Affairs Committee met to discuss their goals for 2020-2021 and discuss the possibility of hosting the 2021 ASCE Texas Legislative Drive In in-person or remotely. They expect the 2021 Texas Infrastructure Report Card (IRC) will be released in January. This is the first

report to include detailed chapters for each infrastructure category – a total of 12 chapters. O’Leary noted the 55-member committee will be recognized at the CECON 2020 Gala.

4.7 Institute Chapter Development

Discussion: Stevens noted that the institute leaders from the section and branch level have also continued their monthly discussions to promote collaboration between chapters, those discussions are being facilitated by Past VP for Technical Affairs Rich Patrick PE although he is seeking a new leader to train on the role. The Section has recently discussed the possibility of starting a Texas Coasts, Oceans, Ports, and Rivers Institute (COPRI) chapter with the volunteers of the branch-level COPRI chapters in Texas. The San Antonio Branch is currently exploring the opportunity to start a Transportation and Development Institute (T&DI) Chapter and the Dallas Branch is considering the viability of an Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI) Chapter. President Merrell believes collaboration between Branch-level and Section-level institutes is a great way to increase engagement. He explained the Dallas Branch often host a one-hour technical presentation from a local institute chapter after their monthly membership meeting.

ACTION – Section Directors to encourage their Branch Chapter Leaders to engage with Institute Calls.

ACTION – Send suggestions for Texas Section Technical Webinars (topics/speakers) to [Bob Stevens](#).

4.8 Upcoming CECON Site Selection Activities

Discussion: Beecher noted that CECON 2021 will be held in San Marcos. CECON 2022-2025 it will be held at partner hotels across the state with two years being held at San Marcos. Board feedback will be requested when it comes time to decide on locations aside from San Marcos.

4.9 Strategic Planning

Discussion: Beecher reported on behalf of Strategic Planning Committee Chair Kacey Paul PE and noted the current Strategic Plan is very well done and the 2022 update should build upon our current plan rather than completely rework it.

President Merrell reminded members we need to be a strategic board and discuss the future, not always report out at meetings (except for sharing lessons learned).

4.10 Review Draft Diversity & Inclusion Policies

- *Policy for Rules of Operation:* ASCE Texas Section respects and values the diversity of all its members, volunteers, staff, and Board members. The Board of Direction defines diversity as individuality. This individuality includes a wide spectrum of attributes, such as personal style, age, race, ethnic heritage, sexual orientation, language, physical ability, religious affiliation, family, citizenship status, socio-economic circumstances, education, political affiliation, and life experience. As the decision-making body at the highest level of organizational leadership, the Board of Direction plays a critical role in creating an organization that prioritizes, supports, and invests in diversity, inclusion, and equity. A diverse Board of Direction creates an inclusive environment in which a full range of ideas and information can be exchanged, leading to more comprehensive and thoughtful decisions that will best serve the Texas Section and its members. A diverse Board of Direction makes good business sense and will help ensure the ongoing and future growth and success of ASCE Texas Section. Whether in the hiring of the executive director, the determination of strategy, the allocation of resources, or the goal of serving the community with authenticity, the Board’s leadership on diversity, inclusion, and equity matters. To reach our potential, ASCE Texas Section must fully integrate diversity into our culture and standard practices and processes and this will be facilitated by a diverse Board of Direction.

Discussion: President Merrell noted a new statement regarding Diversity & Inclusion has been added to the Section's website. Thank you to the Dallas Branch for developing this statement which the Section has slightly modified and reposted.

ACTION – Please share any comments to the draft policy for Rules of Operation with Merrell and Sosa.

4.11 2021-2022 Section Officer Nominations due Oct. 31

Discussion: Roth encouraged all branches to submit a nomination. The deadline is October 31.

ACTION – Section Directors to conference with current Branch Boards to identify any Nominees.

4.12 ASCE Section & Branch Annual Reports due November 30

Discussion: Sosa noted that all Branch Presidents should have received an email from Nancy Berson at ASCE on September 29, 2020.

ACTION – Section Directors to remind respective Branch Presidents to ensure the timely submittal of all reports as it impacts the Section's annual dues allotment from ASCE.

Break from 4:08 to 4:15

4.13 Identify Items to be reported to Branches by Section Directors

Discussion:

- Register to attend and help promote CECON 2020 within your network.
- Submit Section Officer Nominations by October 31, 2020.
- Submit ideas for article topics and/or your favorite technical/industry writers to share@TexASCE.org. Specifically seeking FEATURED TECHNICAL articles.
- Section Directors to encourage their Branch Chapter Leaders to engage with Institute Calls.
- Send suggestions for Texas Section Technical Webinars (topics/speakers) to [Bob Stevens](#).
- Branch Annual Reports are due November 30, 2020 to ASCE.

5.0 Additional Items for Board of Direction Action

5.1 The Board is asked to adopt the consent agenda*.

Discussion: NONE

Motion to adopt the consent agenda. Move to adopt. Seconded and passed without dissent.

*The consent agenda included the following items:

- Receive all Reports marked [I] on the Agenda,
- Approve Appointments of Committee Chairs, including Task Committee Chairs,
- Adopt Final 2020-2021 Operating Budget.
- Approve Resolution Appointing Trustees of the Texas Civil Engineering Foundation (**see attached**).

6.0 Closing Remarks

Discussion: **President Merrell asked if everyone enjoyed the meeting format today and requested any feedback be sent to himself and O'Leary. He also noted he will need help forming Task Committees: Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and CECON Review/Evaluation Task Committees.** The CECON Review/Evaluation Task Committee is slated to review the Planning Manual, interview stakeholders for feedback, etc. and provide the board with recommendations to continue growing the Section's flagship annual conference.

President Merrell closed with "Adapt, Achieve, Advance and have fun!!!!"

7.0 President Merrell adjourned the meeting at 4:35 PM Central Time.