

**AGENDA**  
**NETC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Minutes**

**DATE:** February 29, 2016  
**TIME:** 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM  
**LOCATION:** NH DOT - Room 205 of Materials & Research building at 5 Hazen Drive, Concord (building to the left of main building)

**ATTENDEES:**

Michael Connors – CT (X)	Beth Klemann – NH (A)	Joe Segale – VT (A)
Brad Overturf – CT (A)	Ann Scholz – NH (A)	Nate Kane, Facilitator (A)
Curtis Bradley – MA (A)	Colin Franco – RI (A)	Jacob Leopold – NETC (A)
Steve Woelfel – MA (A)	Michael Sock – RI (X)	Glenn McRae – NETC (A)
Dale Peabody – ME (A)	Bill Ahearn – VT (A)	

**A- Attended**

**X- Absent**

**ITEM**

- 1. Arrival & Continental Breakfast Provided.....8:15 AM**
- 2. Call to Order/Introductions – N.Kane.....8:40 AM**
- 3. Desired Outcomes of the NETC - N. Kane.....8:50 AM**

**Objectives shared by the group included:**

- Role of Chairman
- Role of Lead State
- Knowing the financial stability
- How difficult are individual pooled fund projects (is there an economy to the NETC practice)?
- Mechanics of how the Advisory Committee operates (Why is the Advisory Committee here)?
- Mission and Structure
- Rethinking the NETC (Mission and Mechanics) – How is it going to work?
- Is the NETC a better option than individual pooled fund projects?

- 4. Discussion of NETC Mission, Structure, and History – J. Leopold.....9:10 AM**  
NETC Coordination Team will present on the structure and mission of the NETC outlining the Policy, Advisory and Technical Committees, NETC history, and performance metrics. The discussion will include an overview of past procedural changes, their structure and the associated performance metrics.

**During the presentation discussion topics which arose were:**

- **NETC Metrics and Project and PI Evaluation Tools** – Do we have them? How can they be incorporated?
- **Research Project Deliverables and NETC Success** – We developed a right of rejection, has that ever been exercised by the Advisory Committee?

- **Technology Transfer plans** – What are they, are they too passive, and how does the Advisory Committee advanced them, could further modelling after SHRP2 facilitate more technology transfer and implementation projects.
- **How can the NETC promote regionalism** – Was the previous challenge grant a success for the NETC? Should the NETC promote national level research or it should focus on regional issues? Has the NETC promoted NCHRP projects in the past?
- **NETC Project Selection and Management** – Will there be implications from the super-circular? Are No-Cost Extensions causing issues in managing the NETC and should milestone based invoicing be pursued to ensure timely and satisfactory project delivery. Is there any risk assessment conducted by the NETC in project selection and whose responsibility (Advisory Committee, Technical Committee, Lead state) is it?

**5. Current Status of NETC [Research Projects, RFPs, and the Coordination Contract – J. Leopold.....10:05 AM**

**Discussion included:**

- Staffing at the UVM TRC, possible options for Coordination going forward. It was presented that the current budget in the Coordinator Contract will provide for administrative services until 9/30/2016.
- Beyond 10/1/2016 additional funds would need to be issued to oversee the projects awarded to UVM TRC as the Coordinator.
- In regards to current Projects are the 2015 Research Projects still relevant:
  - 15-1: Yes, other states are only beginning to look at this.
  - 15-2: Yes, there is strong support from DOT and FHWA
  - 15-3: Yes, there is strong interest on the part of the Technical Committee
  - 15-4: Yes, it is important as the Advisory Committee needs QA for everyone, there is no reason to not have fixed specifications across the region, and it should be unified on this front.

**6. Furtherance of the NETC – N. Kane.....10:50 AM**

**Discussion topics during this time period can be summarized as:**

- NETC as a vehicle to advance research for the Region
- Should the NETC continue? Does it have enough value to the region? To the states
- What does the NETC cost in not only funds, but in time commitment and effort?
- What benefit is there is discontinuing? Would the result in additional research funds? The loss of research funds?
- Can the states meet those costs?
- What are the results of value that the NETC has produced?
- How can the NETC evolve?
- Who will be the lead state?

**7. Refinement of the afternoon agenda – N. Kane .....11:35 AM**

Discussion topics from the morning were regrouped and were shifted into the following categories:

**Discontinue the NETC:**

- Project Closeout
- Final Administration
- Research Funding (will this affect research funding in future years)
- What would be the replacement forum for sharing & developing common research needs & applications across the NE Region
- Contract issues, extending the Coordinator contract to close out the project, what additional dollars are needed to manage the closeout of the current projects.

**Continue NETC:**

- Is there a definitive decision that VTrans will discontinue as the lead state?
  - No, that is not a definite decisions. VTrans may continue as the lead state for the NETC.
- Is there a need to refine the mission?
- Can the NETC be sustained in some form/manner without hiring a university administrator as the Coordinator?
  - Yes, a number of duties would need to return to the lead state role.
- Would there be any issue with VTrans issuing the RFP?
  - Yes, there might be an unlawful advantage to UVM which can immediately comply with all of VT’s required laws. However if another Land-grant university can state they can comply with VT state law, they can propose.
- Has UVM considered the potential outcomes (go/no-go) and have they developed budgets?
  - Yes, only for the no-go or the option to continue at a low-level, not in the case of the RFP.

**Other Problem statements for the afternoon which were developed during this discussion period:**

- Taking an NETC Hiatus – How do we restart the NETC efforts? At what level do we continue in the interim?
- Does New England share enough research interests to have the NETC be of value to its states?
- Does NETC have enough value to continue? What does it cost in regards to funding and other resources?
- Who will be the lead state?
  - Is having a lead state and the resources to manage NETC different capacities?

**8. Lunch Provided.....12:00 PM**

**9. Options for the future of the NETC – N. Kane.....12:15 PM**

The group made the decision to conduct a working lunch. When the group had continued after a brief break the discussion continued with the following topics:

- What can the Advisory Committee do to make NETC better?
- What are the issues within DOTs in regards to NETC?
  - Issues with messaging regarding NETC and what it can do for the state.
- Can other states individual changes benefit the NETC, such as changes to their research departments and strategies?

- How does the NETC deal with the ongoing staffing issues at DOTs? How can it get quality participants, not just participants, in Technical Committees?
- What other services can NETC provide?
  - Distribution of single-state research project and findings that have value to the NE states
  - Fostering relationships among similarly focused bureaus and department staff, identifying relationships across state lines
  - Host other research areas at a conference similar to NESMEA
  - Have NETC research problem statements reworked as NCHRP proposal
  - Host/coordinate showcase of New England Research (NETC, States, Universities)
  - Attend and present NETC research at other research conferences (move this up in the priority list)
  - Monitoring research project implementation and advancing tech transfer to and by the DOTs
  - Once there is an implementation plan, marketing to other programs which fund implementation projects on behalf of the state DOTs, bringing associates to implement NETC Research (AASHTO-AII), etc....
- What does the NETC cost?
  - Time, effort, budget, good will among DOT staff
  - There are uncaptured costs and benefits not only in the research time but also the professional development afforded to more junior members of the TCs
  - Should we quantify the time commitment of participating in a TC similar to participating in a panel for NCHRP
  - It might help to redirect back to the parties which expressed interest in the research problem to begin with
- Can the group come to a motion to continue the NETC?
  - **Yes.** *The Advisory Committee moves to continue NETC consistent with the existing system, without new problem statements; while developing an improved successor NETC Program.*  
**Motion:** Colin Franco, RI  
**Seconded:** Ann Scholz, NH  
**In-favor:** All  
**Opposed:** None
- Who will be the lead state?
  - VT will continue to serve as lead state through the existing contract with UVM TRC and oversee whatever modification may be awarded to UVM TRC for the Coordination Contract
  - Whatever state is interested in assuming lead role for NETC Successor, that position is still open, and another decision will be made at the beginning of the NETC Successor regarding the Coordinator Contract and the RFP
  - The lead state for the NETC and new RFP should be identified prior to issuing the Coordinator RFP
- **Action Item:** VTrans to send current RFP to Advisory Committee members to review and determine if they could serve as the lead state and contract with their own, or other land-grant universities, as well as provide opportunity for the next lead state to revise the RFP
- **Action Item:** Advisory Committee members to provide the needed revisions (if any) for them to issue an RFP and serve as lead state
- Can NETC be sustained without a University Administrator/Coordinator?

- Yes potentially. Numerous options for revisions to the Coordinator contract.
- To be discussed later are the potential impacts to the lead state workloads and the Advisory Committee's workload.
- Should the Advisory Committee continue the current RFPs?
  - Yes.
  - **Action item:** UVM TRC to provide draft budget for NETC Coordinator Contract for management at a reduced level through 4/2/2018 including the 2015 Research Program
  - **Action Item:** Move forward with the NETC 2015 Research Program.

**10. Other Business – J. Leopold.....2:30 PM**

- a. NCE for NETC 07-1. *The Advisory Committee approves the NCE to 6/30/2016 for NETC 07-1.*  
**Motion:** Colin Franco, RI  
**Seconded:** Curtis Bradley, MA  
**In-favor:** All  
**Opposed:** None
- b. NCEs for 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, 14-1 under TC review, will be forwarded to the Advisory Committee for electronic ballot as they are available.
- c. RFP for 15-1, *The Advisory Committee moves to reissue the 15-1 RFP to the land grant universities including the two teams who have expressed interest and at least two additional universities participating in 'bat-roosting behavior near transportation corridors' research currently.*  
**Motion:** Ann Scholz, NH  
**Seconded:** Curtis Bradely, MA  
**In-favor:** All  
**Opposed:** None
- d. *The Advisory Committee moves to set a deadline of May 15th for the 15-4 TC to prepare a scope of work or the work is suspended until the restoration of the improved NETC program.*  
**Motion:** Bill Ahearn, VT  
**Seconded:** Brad Overturf, CT  
**In-favor:** All  
**Opposed:** None

**11. Return to Options for the future of the NETC – N.Kane.....3:00 PM**

**The group briefly circled back to the discussion regarding the future of the NETC to establish two additional action items:**

- **Action Item:** There should be the regularly scheduled Annual Meeting for the NETC Advisory Committee (including the University partners in the morning). This will be scheduled in May by the Coordinator. The focus of this meeting will to begin the development of the new NETC Successor. Recommendation that this be sooner than May, as quickly as possible. End of March, early April, Coordinator to follow up.

- **Action Item:** Forward multi-state MOU for the NETC to the Advisory Committee for their reference.  
*The Advisory committee moves to include revised mission and vision statement from 2013 Retreat in the NETC Policies and Procedures.*  
**Motion:** Dale Peabody, ME  
**Seconded:** Curtis Bradley, MA  
**In-Favor:** All  
**Opposed:** None

**12. Adjourn**.....3:10 PM  
a. Next Meeting – March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00AM-12:00PM