

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Oversight Working Group (NHALOWG)

Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Funding Subcommittee

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

8:30 A.M. via Zoom

Rep. Steinberg convened the meeting and welcomed Jeff Palmer and Catie McMEnamin of C.E. Floyd Company. He announced the presentation is intended to give the subcommittee some insights about their operations and their understanding of infrastructure opportunities.

Members Present: Rep. Steinberg, OPM Deputy Secretary Diamantis, DSS Deputy Commissioner Mike Gilbert, Anthony Bruno, Charles DU, Mag Morelli, Christopher Carter, Sue Eccleston, Sen. Formica, Matt Barrett & Rep. Hughes.

Other Attendees: Jeff Palmer, Director of Connecticut Operations and Catie McMEnamin, Director of Marketing, C.E. Floyd Company; and Anthony Bruno, Building Construction & Fire Safety Unit Supervisor, Department of Public Health

Presentation:

Jeff Palmer provided an overview of C.E. Floyd Company's 31 years operations in Connecticut. He pointed out that approximately 65-70% of their business comes from senior living sector including nursing homes and assisted living. Over the last 16 years, we have completed 42 senior living projects on 30 different campuses throughout Connecticut.

Jeff Palmer stated he will focus on the following three areas:

1) *Construction during COVID, Especially in Occupied Environments*

The question is, how can we operate safely in an occupied environment during COVID. Although there are many obstacles, C.E. Floyd have found a way with an increased focus on the importance of separating construction from ongoing activities. We found STARC Panels (aluminum modular wall systems) to be beneficial in separating construction and other particles from entering the occupied spaces. They also help with negative air pressure.

C.E. Floyd has increased PPE for employees and handwash stations at all jobsites. Steps are taken to track employees by company to minimize the rate of infection at a jobsite. We are only allowing essential workers on jobsites and testing is playing a huge part.

The downside to these practices are cost increase in the range of ½-2% range of the overall costs of construction and an impact on material lead times.

2) Trends and designs that we are seeing and the directions some facilities want to go

C.E. Floyd Company have been working to stay ahead of the situation. Architects such as Myles Brown at Amenta Emma Architects said they are sticking to good infection control practices such as, creating private rooms and private bathrooms, converting waiting rooms into visitor space, technology enhancement, utilizing sensors to check vitals and observe movements in the rooms, using touchless sinks and toilets, enhancing lightings for sleep patterns, and minimizing direct contact with doors.

3) HVAC Systems

A lot of the HVAC systems are starting to use UB lighting or Bipolar Ionization to deactivate some harmful viruses or germs in the air and to enlarge breath droplets to make it easier for filtration systems to capture it. These technologies have been around for a while but have only come to the forefront because of the Pandemic.

Utilization of pre-fab modular walls has been big, as well as individual or modulated HVAC systems that can control the amount of outside air or create negative pressure spaces.

Some things to consider during renovations are, new technologies, logistics and phase-in process. The later two are key elements for occupied facilities. When working with certain bed counts the phase-in process is very critical, since you have to get the work done without moving residents around too much.

Understanding your necessary cost before you look at what you would like to spend for renovation is important. Some areas are:

- knowing if there are hazardous material in the facility. When renovation is underway, you will have to remove them at extra cost.
- infrastructure shortcomings. With aged facilities you have aged infrastructure and with this push towards technology, you need to understand what you need not only for today but for the future.
- HVAC improvements and the controllability per room requires looking at some infrastructure to identify the unknown costs.

Minor cosmetic renovation such as flooring, new paint on the wall, new ceiling, replacing light fixtures can be in the \$65 -\$90 per square foot range. Complete overall such as, revising layouts, upgrading mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) infrastructure, custom millwork, roof, a small addition, structural upgrades you could be looking at \$175 - \$225 per square foot.

It is very important to nail down what needs to be with infrastructure first, and then what you can do for cosmetic.

Discussion

Rep. Steinberg references today's 30 degrees weather and asked Jeff Palmer how his workers would get in and out of a building without introducing cold air or other contagions into the facility.

Jeff Palmer explained the importance of the phase-in process and logistics during renovating an occupied facility. During the preplanning stage, one of the first decisions is how to separate workers from residents and to keep it close to zero.

Rep. Steinberg informed the group that a provider of a new product might be presenting at next week's meeting.

Jeff Palmer expressed some caution with regards to newer technologies. He stated people in the industry is sticking to the norm.

Sen. Formica spoke about air filtration systems and added there are manufacturers of the products in Connecticut. He offered to contact them to ask them to participate at a meeting.

OPM Deputy Secretary Diamantis informed the meeting that based on Governor Lamont instructions, constructions have been an essential element since the start of COVID. We have completed work at schools where there are students in some buildings, and we have been successful at keeping students and workers safe with minimum people contracting COVID. All of the factors mentioned by Jeff Palmer plays into reducing the time and exposure we have not just for the workers but also the people that are near the jobsite or in the same building. It is extremely important for architects to be precise on their documents

Rep. Steinberg mentioned Connecticut's high infection rate and added it is going to be more problematic to get work done in facilities without creating greater risks for residents and workers. He stated some proposed solutions will be part of the long-term problem solving for a lot of homes. We are going to have to find more stop-gap interim solutions that is not as costly.

Mag Morelli asked Jeff Palmer to provide estimated cost for IT and other new technology, air filters, new roof and new boiler for a 120- bed facility.

She also asked if the subcommittee would like to hear from someone about how people finance these projects from the private, non-profit sectors.

Jeff Palmer responded it is hard to tell. He explained that a generator for 120 units would depend on the capacity it is carrying. The question will be, what is it going to carry?

He informed the group of a nursing home that is proposing to install a new generator which will be pretty comprehensive and will cover most of their facility and that it will cost approximately \$350,000 - \$375,00 range but that includes some related infrastructures throughout the building. If you were just swapping out a generator, depending on size it could cost \$150,000 - \$175,000.

Christopher Carter reminded the group of some information he had shared electrostatic misting technology as well as UV light and air purification system. He offered to invite them to make a presentation at the next meeting.

Rep. Steinberg reminded that the group that they have not yet heard from an ITS expert and he asked OPM Deputy Secretary if he had a recommendation.

Anthony Bruno agreed with Jeff Palmer's presentation and the estimated costs he shared. He recommended the subcommittee invite the CEO of a facilities that is in the process of carrying out a full renovation to retrofit an existing nursing home. Rep. Steinberg asked for the group's opinion.

Anne Hughes asked that the subcommittee invite an expert to make a presentation on how nursing homes secure financing.

Mag Morelli offered to work with Matt Barrett to secure presenters for private financing and IT bandwidth.

Deputy Commissioner Gilbert agreed with Mag's statement that financing is critical to the discussion. He offered to send subcommittee members a two-page summary around fair rent, which works in terms of reimbursing for property changes. He added that Mag's recommendation would be a positive supplement to the discussion.

Rep. Steinberg suggested that the December 23rd meeting should focus on HVAC and the next week for all things financial.

Christopher Carter suggested inviting an engineer who had approached him to one of the meetings. Someone like him can help us better understand the technical aspect of how indoor air is cleaned to a certain standard. He suggested Andrew Banoff would be a great source to speak on the issue of financing since he recently went through a massive rebuild.

Rep. Steinberg provided a schedule of potential presenters for the next two subcommittee meetings. The recommendations by Christopher Carter, Senator Formica, Anthony Bruno, and myself will be on 12/16/20. Andrew Banoff, DSS Deputy Commissioner Mike Gilbert, and Mag and d Matt's recommendation will be on 12/23/20.

Rep. Hughes was asked to check and confirm Andrew Banoff for the 12/23 meeting.

Rep. Steinberg adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 8:30 A.M. via Zoom or You Tube Live