

# Land Improvement Contractors of America

## 2026 Spring Virtual Committee Sessions

### May | June

#### **By-Laws Committee - June 11, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve at approximately 7:00 PM Central.

In attendance: Steve Gerten, OH; Mike Cook, MI; Chris Wagner, NJ; Pat McConnell, OH; Dave Gallahan, VA; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Dennis Mikula, NJ; Maura Dibble, NY; Jenny Breberg, MN; and Allison Hack, IL.

A motion was made by Chris Wagner to approve the open agenda. David Gallahan seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made by David Gallahan to approve the March 1, 2026 minutes. Chris Wagner seconded. Motion carried.

The committee discussed the potential need for a national dues increase. It was noted that the last dues increase was approved in 2019, when dues were increased by \$25, from \$125 to \$150. Steve stated that members had been asked at the Las Vegas meeting to contact him or Nordis with any concerns, suggestions, or comments regarding dues. To date, no feedback had been received.

The committee discussed whether a dues increase should be recommended by the By-Laws Committee for consideration by the delegates at the Winter Meeting. No decision was made, and the discussion will continue at the July meeting.

Several members expressed support for at least a \$25 increase. Discussion also included whether a \$50 increase should be considered, or whether dues should be raised in smaller amounts over time.

Concerns were raised about the impact of a dues increase on state chapters, especially if states need to reprint brochures or other materials as part of rebranding or due to a change in dues structure.

It was noted that some states automatically pass national dues increases through to their members, while others may choose to absorb part or all of the increase.

The committee discussed the importance of supporting National LICA while also being mindful of state chapter membership costs and recruitment efforts.

David Gallahan suggested that the By-Laws Committee consider whether the by-laws should include language requiring a dues review every certain number of years. The committee discussed that a required review may be more appropriate than an automatic increase.

Executive Directors were encouraged to take the dues discussion back to their state boards and gather feedback before the

July committee meeting. Nanci Gutwein offered to share the request with the Executive Director group so states not represented on the call could also provide input.

The committee discussed setting the next meeting for July 14, 2026, pending final scheduling by Allison Hack. The time will be confirmed once the full committee schedule is finalized.

A motion was made by Chris Wagner to adjourn. David Gallahan seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

#### **Conservation, Excavating & Earthmoving Committee June 2, 2026**

Chair Ted Lashley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

In attendance: Ted Lashley, NE; Keith Miller, IN; Chris Wagner, NJ; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Jeff Schell, KS; Dallas Loken, MN; Jenny Breberg, MN; Allison Hack, IL; Amy Gerten, OH; Pat McConnell, OH; Maura Dibble, NY; Dave Gallahan, VA; Caroline Krug, IL; Dennis Mikula, NJ.

Committee members discussed current industry conditions, including project delays related to government funding, NRCS and FSA staffing shortages, and ongoing challenges with archaeological reviews required for conservation projects.

Members shared experiences with One Call systems and utility locating. Discussion included virtual locating tools now being used in Minnesota, concerns about locator accuracy, and the challenges contractors face when working around underground utilities.

The committee discussed technology opportunities within the industry, including the use of QR codes for equipment maintenance information, service manuals, and operator training resources. Keith Miller shared information on a technology provider he encountered at CONEXPO that may offer equipment maintenance and training solutions.

Additional discussion focused on DEF requirements, emissions regulations, and workforce challenges associated with the H-2B visa program. Members expressed concerns about labor shortages and the increasing difficulty of obtaining seasonal workers through the current visa process. The possibility of supporting broader industry advocacy efforts through organizations such as AGC was discussed.

Keith Miller provided an update on Indiana LICA's upcoming Field Day scheduled for July 21-22, which will include drainage demonstrations and trench rescue training. Members also discussed trench safety education and agreed that many of these training opportunities may be most effective at the state chapter level.

Chris Wagner provided an update on National LICA's virtual

committee initiative and the role these meetings may play in creating additional educational opportunities at future national conventions.

The committee scheduled its next meeting for July 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Central Time.

Meeting adjourned.

### **Convention Committee – May 14, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Chris Wagner.

In attendance: Sarah Cook, MI; Ron Garofalo, NJ; Ted Lashley, NE; Renee Lashley, NE; Adam Cook, MI; Amy Gerten, OH; David Gallahan, VA; Maura Dibble, NY; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Pat McConnell, OH; Dallas Loken, MN; Steve Gerten, OH; Chris Wagner, NJ; Jenny Breberg, MN; Joe Stull, IN; Veronica Seevers, IL; Millie Gallahan, VA; Dennis Mikula, NJ; Caroline Krug, IL and Allison Hack, IL.

Motion to approve the agenda by David Gallahan. Motion approved.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Ted Lashley, second by David Gallahan. Motion approved.

Dennis Mikula welcomed attendees and discussed the purpose of the virtual committee meetings, emphasizing increased engagement between Winter and Summer Meetings and creating stronger member involvement throughout the year. He stated the goal was to gather ideas on how to improve National LICA conventions, increase attendance, and create more valuable convention experiences focused on education, engagement, and industry involvement.

Sarah Cook presented updated information regarding Frankenmuth, Michigan as a possible future convention location for 2028. Discussion included updated room rates, the Bavarian Inn Lodge and indoor waterpark amenities, family attractions, nearby airports, local tourism opportunities, and potential industry-related tours including milling, sugar processing, dry bean facilities, ethanol production, and other agricultural operations.

Members discussed the importance of convention locations that provide both family activities and industry-related experiences. Committee discussion focused heavily on convention structure, scheduling, and increasing convention value for members. Chris Wagner and several members discussed using virtual committee meetings throughout the year to reduce the amount of time spent in committee meetings during in-person conventions. The committee discussed freeing additional time at conventions for educational sessions, speakers, contractor-focused discussions, and networking opportunities.

Ron Garofalo shared ideas regarding interactive roundtable discussion sessions featuring associate members, speakers, and contractor-focused topics. Members discussed the potential for rotating discussion tables to increase engagement, networking, and educational opportunities. The committee agreed the format

could help create more energy and participation at conventions. Dallas Loken suggested consolidating committee meetings into larger combined sessions rather than numerous separate breakout meetings. Ted Lashley shared that Nebraska had successfully implemented a similar format which increased participation and reduced time spent in meetings. Members discussed combining smaller committees while still allowing larger committees such as Convention and Membership to meet separately.

Amy Gerten emphasized the importance of shifting conventions toward contractor-focused educational content rather than primarily committee meetings. Discussion included providing more informative business sessions, equipment-related topics, operational topics, and contractor education designed to help members improve and grow their businesses. Members agreed informative content would serve as a stronger draw for convention attendance.

Members discussed the importance of gathering topic suggestions directly from contractors and state chapters. Amy Gerten suggested developing a list of potential educational topics for members to review and provide feedback on. Ron Garofalo recommended each committee participant submit a list of approximately ten educational topics or discussion ideas to help identify common areas of interest across the organization.

The committee discussed the role of conventions as both educational and family-oriented events. Pat McConnell emphasized the importance of selecting convention locations and activities that appeal to families while still maintaining industry relevance and business value for members.

It was agreed that committee members would submit educational topic suggestions to Chris Wagner by May 28, 2026. Chris Wagner agreed to compile and organize the submissions for future committee discussion and planning.

Dennis Mikula thanked the committee members for their participation and reiterated National LICA's commitment to increasing member engagement and improving convention experiences.

Motion to adjourn by Ronald Garofalo, second by Adam Cook. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

### **Education & Technology Committee - June 10, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chris Wagner at 7:02 PM Eastern.

In attendance: Chris Wagner, NJ; Amy Gerten, OH; Paul Demuth, OH; Maura Dibble, NY; Hugo Castillo, NJ; Ted Lashley, NE; Dallas Loken, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Allison Hack, IL; Pat McConnell, OH; Dennis Mikula, NJ; Caroline Krug, IL.

A motion was made by Ted Lashley to approve the open agenda. Dallas Loken seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Dallas Loken to approve the March 1, 2026 minutes. Ted Lashley seconded. Motion carried.

Chris Wagner reviewed items from the March meeting.

Mary Beth from Origin had been looking into online 10-hour and 30-hour OSHA courses as a possible LICA member benefit. No update was available.

Hugo Castillo reported he has been researching podcast options and recently made a connection with a company that builds podcasts around an organization's needs. He is continuing to work on the idea. The podcast concept would include contractor testimonials, associate member involvement, and the possibility of turning longer podcast or webinar content into shorter promotional pieces.

The committee also discussed prior ideas for onboarding materials for new members and new committee chairs, including Roberts Rules guidance. Wagner noted that related conversations are also taking place with the Executive Directors.

The committee discussed the need for a clear "What is LICA?" message or video that members can use when explaining the association. Wagner noted this had previously been discussed with Dennis and the Executive Directors.

Allison Hack informed the committee that National is setting the July virtual committee schedule and that the schedule will be released the following week.

Wagner again noted his willingness to step aside as chair if someone more tech-savvy is willing to lead the committee. He said the committee is discussing items such as podcasts, webinars, onboarding videos, and AI, and would benefit from leadership with stronger technology experience.

Hugo Castillo offered to help as a co-chair and continue assisting with podcast and AI-related ideas.

Maura Dibble asked about the request for seminar topic suggestions. Wagner explained that discussion was primarily from the Convention Committee, but several responses had been received from Executive Directors and members. Some topics may be better suited for state meetings, while others may be useful for national convention planning.

Ted Lashley discussed the need for LICA to help members better understand artificial intelligence. He suggested AI should be considered as a seminar topic for an upcoming national convention, with enough time for a meaningful discussion rather than a short presentation.

Hugo Castillo agreed there is a need for AI training and said he has also made connections related to possible training and seminars. He will continue working on that with Dennis.

The committee discussed how moving some committee meetings to a virtual format could free up more time at in-person national meetings for education, seminars, roundtables, and longer training sessions. Members agreed this could allow more people to participate in important discussions without having to choose between overlapping committee meetings.

Wagner noted that the committee should continue discussion in July on several ideas from the March meeting, including online OSHA training, podcasts, AI training, onboarding, and LICA promotional/educational messaging.

A motion was made by Ted Lashley to adjourn. Dallas Loken seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

### **Insurance & Safety Committee – May 19, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Chairman Keith Miller.

In attendance: Nordis Estrem, MN; Chris Wagner, NJ; Bruce Mosier, IA; Amy Gerten, OH; Keith Miller, IN; Tony Cain, IN; Maura Dibble, NY; Ed Lubowicki, NJ, Charlie Page, IL; Joe Stull, IN; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Vince Basciano, NJ; Rachel Maassen, Mary Beth Schram, IL; Caroline Krug, IL; Allison Hack, IL; Dennis Mikula, NJ

Motion to approve an open agenda by Chris Wagner, second by Nordis Estrem. Passed.

Motion to approve the previous minutes by Chris Wagner, second by Vince Basciano. Passed.

Bruce Mosier provided an update on the LICA Safety Portal and ongoing efforts to simplify access to safety resources for contractor members. The committee discussed a new process utilizing Zywave email links that would allow safety documents and resources to be sent directly to contractor members through email with a one-click access format. Bruce explained that a June test rollout is planned to evaluate file size limitations and determine an appropriate communication frequency. Discussion followed regarding contractor engagement with the portal, frequency of communications, and the value of the available safety resources and documents.

Ed Lubowicki discussed additional Zywave capabilities, including the ability to distribute timely and topical safety and risk management information to contractors.

Bruce Mosier also provided an update regarding the Grenell insurance program and ongoing product development. He explained that the program is progressing and is expected to open later this summer for qualifying contractors in participating states.

MaryBeth Schram shared information regarding insurance programs currently available through Origin, including general liability and pollution coverage options available to LICA members in most states.

The committee discussed pollution and environmental insurance exposures affecting contractors, including underground utility strikes, silica dust, air quality concerns, and other environmental risks associated with construction operations.

Keith Miller announced the Indiana LICA Field Day scheduled for July 21–22, 2026, which will include a trench rescue demonstration by the Lafayette/West Lafayette and Purdue University

Fire Departments along with additional educational activities. Members were invited to attend.

The committee discussed scheduling the next committee meeting. The next Insurance & Safety Committee meeting was scheduled for July 6, 2026 at 6:30 PM CST.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Wagner, second by Nordis Estrem. Passed. Meeting adjourned.

### **Legislative Committee - June 3, 2026**

Chair Bruce Barnhart called the meeting to order.

In attendance: Chris Wagner, NJ; Bruce Barnhart, IA; Brian Deery, IA; Ted Lashley, NE; Pat McConnell, OH; Maura Dibble, NY; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Dallas Loken, MN; Nordis Estrem, MN; Allison Hack, IL; Amy Gerten, OH; David Gallahan, VA; Jenny Breberg, MN, Ray Cooney, NE.

The committee approved the previous minutes and an open agenda.

Brian Deery provided a legislative update on current activity in Congress. Discussion focused on the limited number of legislative days remaining before the midterm elections and how that may affect progress on several bills important to LICA members. The committee discussed the federal highway bill reauthorization. Brian reported that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has begun work on a five-year bill and that the proposal would generally maintain current funding levels with modest increases. Members also discussed proposed electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid registration fees as a possible revenue source for the Highway Trust Fund, along with concerns about any potential gas tax holiday.

Discussion continued on possible permitting and environmental review reforms that could be added to the highway bill. Members noted that streamlining project review and permitting remains an important issue for the construction industry.

Brian provided an update on the farm bill. Discussion included conservation program authorizations, the difference between authorization and appropriations, SNAP-related negotiations, year-round E15 fuel, and the possibility of additional farmer assistance. Members expressed support for continued conservation funding and interest in year-round E15 being included.

The committee discussed the federal budget and appropriations process. Brian noted concerns regarding proposed cuts to the Department of Agriculture, NRCS staffing, and the EQIP program. Members discussed the potential impact these cuts could have on conservation work and contractor markets.

Members discussed concerns with the H-2A and H-2B visa programs. Ted Lashley shared the challenges contractors are facing with seasonal workforce delays and limited worker availability. The committee discussed whether National LICA could support broader industry efforts to increase legal worker availability, possibly through coordination with other organizations.

Brian provided an update on efforts to organize a White House Conference on Small Business. He explained that LICA has been included in coalition discussions and that the effort could provide an opportunity for LICA members to participate at the state, regional, and national levels.

Members were encouraged to communicate with their members of Congress during campaign season regarding issues important to LICA, including the highway bill, conservation funding, E15, and workforce concerns.

Action items included Brian researching the status of congressional pay during government shutdowns and exploring possible ways LICA could support efforts related to H-2A and H-2B workforce issues.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Chris Wagner and seconded by Ted Lashley.

Meeting adjourned.

### **Long-Term Planning & Past Presidents Committee June 9, 2026**

In Attendance: Nordis Estrem, MN; Steve Gerten, OH, Amy Gerten, OH; David Rule, NY; Jeff Schell, KS; Mike Cook, MI; Jenny Breberg, MN; Chris Wagner, NJ; Dallas Loken, MN; David Gallahan, VA; Maura Dibble, NY; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Pat McConnell, OH, Tony Cain, IN; Ray Cooney, NE; Ted Lashley, NE; Scott Bohle, IA, Dennis Mikula, NJ; and Allison Hack, IL.

The committee approved the agenda and the minutes from the March 1, 2026 meeting in Las Vegas.

Dennis Mikula and Allison Hack provided an update on member benefits, including ConEquip, the Caterpillar Association Program, and the GM Fleet Program. Discussion focused on increasing member awareness and utilization of available benefits. Members noted the value these programs provide to both contractor and associate members.

The committee reviewed proposed updates to the LICA Strategic Plan for 2027-2032. Steve Gerten and Amy Gerten presented draft goals and recommendations developed following the Winter Convention. Discussion centered on increasing industry visibility through press releases and media outreach, strengthening LICA's financial sustainability, expanding educational opportunities, and incorporating emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence into future programming and member resources.

Members agreed the draft strategic plan should be distributed to Past Presidents, Regional Vice Presidents, Executive Directors, National Staff, and other leadership groups for review and input prior to further discussion at the Summer Virtual Board Meeting. Discussion also included the success of the virtual committee meeting format, member engagement, leadership development opportunities, and the importance of implementing the strategic plan as a unified effort across the entire association.

The next committee meeting will be scheduled in conjunction

with the Summer Virtual Board Meeting.

The meeting adjourned following a motion by Chris Wagner and a second by Tony Cain.

#### **Membership Committee - June 8, 2026**

Chairman Bruce Barnhart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. CT.

In Attendance: Bruce Barnhart, IA; Paul Demuth, OH; Maura Dibble, NY; Dallas Loken, MN; Amy Gerten, OH; Pat McConnell, OH; Kira Cooney, NE; Ray Cooney, NE; Chris Wagner, NJ; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Nordis Estrem, MN; Ted Lashley, NE; Jon SeEVERS, IL; Steve Anderson, IL; Allison Hack, Dennis Mikula.

Dennis Mikula opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and gave an update on the recent Executive Director workgroups. He explained that the EDs have been focused on three main areas: branding/marketing, membership benefits, and retention. Dennis stressed that retention starts when someone joins, not after they leave, and that National and the state chapters need to continue working together as one LICA.

Allison Hack reviewed three newer member benefits: ConEquip Parts, the Caterpillar Association Discount Program, and the GM Fleet Program. She explained how members can access the benefits and emphasized the importance of members using the programs so LICA can continue building stronger benefit opportunities.

Discussion followed on how to better communicate benefits to members. Suggestions included calling trees, text messages, emails, social media sharing, state newsletters, field days, picnics, safety meetings, and annual conventions. Several members noted that different communication methods are needed because members respond differently.

The committee discussed the challenge of “benefit fatigue” and the need to clearly show that newer benefits are more widely usable and valuable to members across the country. Dennis noted that LICA is also working on additional benefits with other manufacturers and companies.

Chris Wagner asked how these benefits help bring in new members. Dennis explained that strong benefits can be used for recruitment, but LICA must first strengthen its foundation by retaining current members and making sure they understand the value of membership. Kira Cooney added that current members and states need to see and feel the value first before they can effectively recruit others.

Bruce Barnhart noted that the increased virtual meetings and collaboration between meetings have been helpful and may allow LICA to move faster than only discussing issues at Winter and Summer meetings.

The next Membership Committee meeting date will be set by Allison after reviewing open dates on the committee schedule. Meeting adjourned.

#### **On-Site Waste Committee - May 5, 2026**

In Attendance: Joe Stull, IN; Dallas Loken, MN; Stu Frazier, MN; Dan Micsky, PA; Chris Wagner, NJ; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Keith Miller, IN; Ashley Donley, ADS; Barry Mutzabaugh, PA; Maura Dibble, NY, Dennis Hallahan, ADS; Allison Hack, IL; Dennis Mikula, NJ and Caroline Krug, IL.

The committee hosted Ashley Donley and Dennis Halahan from Infiltrator Water Technologies for an educational presentation on on-site wastewater products and industry trends.

Topics included chamber systems, septic tanks, advanced treatment units, commercial wastewater applications, installation best practices, groundwater considerations, buoyancy control, and safety devices. Presenters also discussed increasing regulatory requirements for advanced treatment systems and nitrogen reduction.

Committee members shared experiences from their respective states regarding plastic and concrete tanks, high water table installations, gopher intrusion, chamber system performance, insulation methods, and maintenance requirements.

Discussion also focused on common causes of system failures, with presenters noting that improper maintenance, excessive water use, and homeowner practices are often greater contributors than product failures.

The presenters highlighted educational opportunities available through the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) and encouraged members to utilize available training resources.

Dan thanked the presenters for their time and encouraged members to suggest topics for future committee meetings. Meeting adjourned.

#### **Water Management & Quality Committee - May 26, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Adam Cook. In attendance: Adam Cook, MI; Chris Wagner, NJ; Cory Stuchal, PA; Dallas Loken, MN; James Ramsey, IN; Joe Stull, IN; Keegan Kult, ADMC; Keith Miller, IN; LaVerne Weber, IL; Mike Cook, MI; Jenny Breberg, MN; Nanci Gutwein, IN; Joanie Micsky, PA; Sarah Cook, MI; Steve Gerten, OH; Jon SeEVERS, IL, John Freeman, MI, Nate Cook, MI, Amy Gerten, OH.

A motion was made by Chris Wagner to approve an open agenda. The motion was seconded by Keith Miller. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Keith Miller to approve the previous minutes. The motion was seconded by Chris Wagner. Motion carried.

The committee discussed upcoming state events and field days. Indiana reported plans for its July 21–22 field day, which will include installation of a control structure, water gates, tile installation, a trench rescue demonstration, rainfall simulator, and educational sessions. Indiana also noted that state chapters are

welcome to have booth space at no cost.

Discussion followed on drainage work related to solar farm projects. Members shared contractor experiences with maintaining and redesigning drainage infrastructure around solar installations, union and labor requirements, insurance requirements, project complexity, and the long-term maintenance opportunities these projects may create for drainage contractors.

Ohio reported that its field day will be held during the Farm Science Review, September 22–24, with tile installation demonstrations planned during scheduled morning and afternoon time blocks.

Illinois reported plans for conservation drainage workshops in North, Central, and Southern Illinois. The workshops will focus on conservation and nutrient loss practices, available funding, and outreach to landowners and farm managers.

Minnesota reported no current summer field activities. The committee briefly discussed ongoing legislative and regulatory concerns, including Waters of the United States activity and related state-level developments.

Keegan Kult provided an update from ADMC, including upcoming conservation drainage task force work, drainage education and training efforts, webinar planning, possible solar farm and contractor design discussions, drainage water recycling, and growing public and policy attention around drainage and water quality issues.

John Freeman provided an update on the agriculture market and pipe pricing. He noted continued concern around the agricultural market, resin costs, and elevated pipe pricing over the next several months. Members were encouraged to review quotes, secure contracts and deposits, and understand material pricing before locking in future work.

Mike Cook raised concerns regarding LICA's communication and relationship with National NRCS following past contact changes. James Ramsey offered to help connect with NRCS contacts and discuss possible liaison support.

The committee selected Monday, July 13, 2026, at 7:30 PM Eastern Time for its next virtual meeting leading up to the National LICA Virtual Board Meeting.

Additional discussion was held regarding unlocatable fiber conduit, utility marking issues, and contractor liability concerns when conduit is installed without tracer wire or before fiber is pulled.

A motion was made by Mike Cook to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Chris Wagner. Motion carried.  
Meeting adjourned.

