

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
STATE BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF  
WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS OPERATORS  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2025  
Room 105 / Teams Call**

**Board Members Present**

Mary Roland, Board Chairperson, Certified Water Operator (via Teams)  
Mike Kyle, Certified Wastewater Operator (via Teams)  
Mark Smith, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc., General Public (via Teams)  
Jeff Bickel, Aqua PA, Inc., Official of Private System (via Teams)  
Heath Edelman, Thaddeus Stevens College, Teaching Staff (via Teams)  
Bill McNamara, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW), DEP Secretary Designee (via Teams)

**Non-Board Members Present**

Laura Chambers, Board Secretary (via Teams)  
Shalini Moola, BSDW  
Mahendra Patel, BSDW  
Jeff Schultz, BSDW  
John Cantwell, Legal Counsel to the Board  
Derik Dressler, BSDW  
Lori Weaver, BSDW  
Jill Anderson, BSDW  
Andy Zadzilko, BSDW  
Avery Bischoff, BSDW  
Kevin Buss, BCW  
Victor Landis, BCW  
Jen DiGilarmo, BCW  
Brian Chalfant, Policy Office (via Teams)

**Public Present**

Joseph R Groome, Upper Southampton Municipal Authority  
Jennie Shade, PMAA  
Wendy Malehorn, PRWA  
Jane Flohr

Meeting was called to order at 10:02am.

**Approval of February 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Kyle motioned to approve the February 12, 2025, meeting minutes. Chairperson Roland seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Approval of New and Upgrade Applications**

Ms. Chambers presented the following new and upgraded licenses for Board consideration:

- 60 new water licenses
- 25 upgraded water licenses
- 30 new wastewater licenses
- 20 upgraded wastewater licenses
- 8 Operator in Training (OIT) upgrades

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve all the new and upgraded license applications. Mr. Edelman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Reciprocity Requests**

### *Water*

**Chase Main** – Holds a Florida Level C drinking water license that was issued on September 7, 2022, and expires on April 30, 2025. His application documents a total of 3 years of experience working at Manatee County Water Treatment Plant, which DEP determined is a Class A system using subclasses 1,4,6,7,8,10,12.

Mr. Main's experience was obtained at a Class A system and an operator is required to have 3 years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class B license. Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed the Level C drinking water exams developed and administered by the state of Florida. The Class C drinking water exam includes questions relative to subclasses 1,6,7,8,10,12 and distribution.

The Department's determination for Board consideration is that Mr. Main has documented the adequate experience and exams relative to a WB-1,6,7,8,10,12.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Mr. Main for WB-1,6,7,8,10,12 certification. Mr. Bickel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Jayaprakash Srinivasan** – Holds the Water Professionals International (WPI) Water Treatment Class II and Water Distribution Operator Class I certifications. Both certifications are valid until March 2026. The applicant passed the Class II drinking water exam developed by WPI, which include questions relative to subclasses 1 through 12. The applicant also passed the WPI Water Distribution Operator Class I exam.

The applicant documents the following experience:

- Chester Water Authority - Class A system using subclasses 1, 8, 10, 11 and distribution (7 months).
- Clutha District Council Three Water - New Zealand, a Class A system using subclasses 1, 8, 10, 11, 13 and distribution (11 months).
- US Embassy PAE Water Treatment Plant - Baghdad, Iraq, a Class B system using subclasses 5, 6, 8, 10, 12 and distribution (2 years 4 months)
- Kandahar Airfield Water Treatment Plant, Afghanistan - a Class B system using subclasses 5, 6, 8, 10, and 12 (3 years 1 month)

An operator is required to have 3 years of experience to obtain a Class B license and 4 years to obtain a Class A. The applicant documents a total of 5 years and 5 months at Class B systems and 1.5 years at Class A systems. The Department's determination for Board consideration is that the applicant has documented the adequate experience and exams relative to a WA,E-1,5,6,8,10,11,12.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Mr. Srinivasan for WA,E-1,5,6,8,10,11,12 certification. Mr. Edelman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### *Wastewater*

**Spike Upchurch** – Holds a North Carolina Physical/Chemical 1 (PC-1) license that was issued on December 10, 2020, and expires on January 1, 2026. His application documents a total of 8 years and 7 months as an Area Manager at Unilever Manufacturing (IUP 421). The Unilever plant is an industrial waste system (Industrial Users Permit: IUP421) that discharges to the City of Raeford wastewater system. Industrial waste facilities are not regulated under Pennsylvania Chapter 302, Operators' Certification Program.

Mr. Upchurch passed the Physical/Chemical grade I exam developed by the state of North Carolina. The PC-1 exam does not include any biological treatment questions related to the PA subclasses of activated sludge, fixed film, or treatment ponds and lagoons.

Since Mr. Upchurch's experience is from an industrial waste facility, in addition to the lack of Pennsylvania equivalent exams, the Department's determination for Board consideration is the denial of Mr. Upchurch's reciprocity application for a wastewater license.

Mr. Kyle motioned to deny Mr. Upchurch's reciprocity application. Chairperson Roland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Board Secretary Report**

Ms. Chambers provided the following summary regarding operator certification exams (as of 4/3):

- Number of exam **sessions held** thus far in 2025: **9**
- Number of exam **seats offered** thus far in 2025: **223**
- Number of exam **seats filled** thus far in 2025: **217**
- Number of additional exam sessions tentatively scheduled for remainder of 2025: **48**
- Number of additional exam seats tentatively offered for remainder of 2025: **2,022**
  - Total number of computer exams for 2025: **30**
  - Total number of paper exams for 2025: **27**
  - Total number of exams for 2025: **57**

Ms. Chambers shared that there are currently three open wage payroll proctor positions to fill and asked the Board members for suggestions as to how to get the word out to potential interested parties. Ms. Chambers will provide via email the position description and areas of the state where we could use additional proctors.

## **Old and New Business**

A standing agenda item for every PA State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators (Board) meeting includes two key topics of discussion:

### **1. Cyber Security**

- You can visit the updated Operator Certification webpage to review the Cyber Security Preparedness Message, which is located here:  
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/water/bureau-of-safe-drinking-water/operator-certification.html>.
- Bill McNamara provided an update on upcoming training courses for operators, including a collaboration with EPA in June.
- Jill Anderson provided a progress update on modifications to the required security course to include a significant portion on cybersecurity.

### **2. Water and Wastewater Operator Recruitment** – The water and wastewater industry is essential for public health and environmental sustainability; however, it continues to face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled operators. The Board is committed to addressing these challenges and believes that meaningful progress can be achieved through collaboration with other key boards and organizations.

- Mary Roland and Jeff Bickel outlined their brief discussion with the PWS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Board.
- Bill McNamara reviewed operator age statistics and trends.
- The Board discussed a survey for operators seeking initial certification to help us gather information on why the individual is seeking certification and how they learned about the field.

## **Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

The Board went into Executive Session at 11:23am to review 6 criminal history applications.

The Board reconvened for public session at 11:42am.

## **Extension Request**

No extension requests were received for this Board meeting.

## **Criminal History Report**

Criminal History Review Evaluations were conducted for the below applicants. It has been confirmed that charges were not related to the operation of a drinking water or wastewater treatment system. Therefore, the preliminary review committee recommended the below applicants for presentation and approval at the April 9, 2025, Board Meeting:

1. Operator 386605: WC,E-1,6,7,8,11,12 certification
2. Operator 380290: WE certification
3. Operator 377273: WE certification

4. Operator 358510: WWA-1 certification
5. Operator 380425: WE certification
6. Operator 386032: WE-12 certification

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 386605 WC,E – 1,6,7,8,11,12 certification. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 380290 WE certification. Mr. Bickel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 377273 WE certification. Mr. Bickel seconded. Motion passed with one opposition.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 358510 WWA-1 certification. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 380425 WE certification. Mr. Bickel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Operator 386032 WE-12 certification. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed with one opposition.

Additional application for Operator 386576 was presented. The Department's recommendation for Board approval is WD,E–1 certification. Chairperson Roland motioned to approve. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to adjourn. Mr. Edelman seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:43am.