

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
STATE BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF
WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS OPERATORS
Board Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2025
Room 105 / Teams Call**

Board Members Present

Mark Smith, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc., General Public
Jeff Bickel, Aqua PA, Inc., Official of Private System
Heath Edelman, Thaddeus Stevens College, Teaching Staff
Autumn Crawford, Western Butler County Authority, Employee of a Political Subdivision (via Teams)
Bill McNamara, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW), DEP Secretary Designee

Non-Board Members Present

Laura Chambers, Board Secretary
Shalini Moola, BSDW
Heather Maurer, BSDW
John Cantwell, Legal Counsel to the Board
Jill Anderson, BSDW
Jeff Allgyer, BSDW
Bill King, BSDW
Lori Weaver, BSDW
Ed Chescattie, BSDW
Derik Dressler, BSDW
Kevin Buss, BCW
Victor Landis, BCW
Theia Hofstetter, BCW
Jen DiGilarmo, BCW
Trish Attardo, BSDW
Laura Campbell, Policy Office

Public Present

Ryan Orgitano, PA Rural Water Association
Todd Spangler, South Middleton Township Municipal Authority
Matthew Buck, Pennsylvania Municipal Authority Association

Meeting was called to order at 10:05am.

Approval of June 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Smith motioned to approve the June 18, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Edelman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Approval of New and Upgrade Applications

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

- 60 new water licenses
- 38 upgraded water licenses
- 65 new wastewater licenses
- 35 upgraded wastewater licenses
- 8 Operator in Training (OIT) upgrades

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

Mr. McNamara presented an upgrade application for William Orr, Operator 201109. Mr. McNamara motioned to approve Mr. Orr's upgrade to WD,E-1,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14. Ms. Crawford seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Reciprocity Requests

Wastewater

Christian Strother – Holds a New York Grade 3A Wastewater Treatment license that was issued on March 12, 2024, and expires on February 1, 2029. His application documents four years and four months working at Target Hill WWTP, which is a Class B system using subclass 1.

Mr. Strother's experience was obtained at a Class B system, and an operator is required to have three years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class B license. Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed the Grade 3A Wastewater Treatment exam developed by WPI and administered by the state of New York. The Grade 3A Wastewater Treatment exam includes questions relative to subclasses 1,2,3 and 4.

The Department's determination for Board consideration is that Mr. Strother has documented the adequate experience and exams relative to a WWB-1.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Mr. Strother for WWB-1 certification. Mr. Edelman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Keith Beckmann – Holds a New York Grade 4A Wastewater Treatment license that was issued on June 18, 2014, and expires on July 1, 2030. His application documents four years working at NYC Coney Island WRRF, which is a Class A system using subclass 1.

Mr. Beckmann's experience was obtained at a Class A system, and an operator is required to have four years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class A license. Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed the Wastewater Treatment Operator Class IV exam developed by WPI and administered by the state of New York. The Class IV Wastewater Treatment exam includes questions relative to subclasses 1,2,3 and 4.

The Department's determination for Board consideration is that Mr. Beckmann has documented the adequate experience and exams relative to a WWA-1.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Mr. Beckmann for WWA-1 certification. Mr. Edelman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tyler Pelfrey – Holds an Ohio Class I Wastewater license that was issued on May 9, 2024 and expires on December 31, 2026. His application documents 7 years and 1 month of experience working at Tri-cities North Regional WWTP, which is a Class A system using subclass 2.

Mr. Pelfrey's experience was obtained at a Class A system, and an operator is required to have four years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class A license. Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed the Wastewater Class II exam developed by WPI and administered by the state of Ohio. The Class II Wastewater Treatment exam includes questions relative to subclasses 1 and 2.

The Department's determination for Board consideration is that Mr. Pelfrey has documented the adequate experience and exams relative to a WWA-2.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Mr. Pelfrey for WWA-2 certification. Ms. Crawford seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Secretary Report

Ms. Chambers provided the following summary regarding operator certification exams (as of 8/5):

- Number of exam **sessions held** thus far in 2025: **33**
- Number of exam **seats offered** thus far in 2025: **1238**
- Number of exam **seats filled** thus far in 2025: **949**
- Number of additional exam sessions tentatively scheduled for remainder of 2025: **26**
- Number of additional exam seats tentatively offered for remainder of 2025: **1,107**
 - Total number of computer exams for 2025: **30**
 - Total number of paper exams for 2025: **27**
 - Total number of exams for 2025: **57**

Old and New Business

Water and Wastewater Operator Recruitment – Mr. Chescattie proposed for Board consideration that Ms. Chambers will email Board members the excel spreadsheet with list of names of people from the industry who could be beneficial to include in this conversation. And provide 2-3 weeks to respond with additional names of people to add. Ms. Chambers will also send out potential meeting dates for a 2-hour virtual meeting in October to discuss this topic.

1. Jill Anderson provided an update on the Great Lakes Conference that she and Jen DiGilarmo attended and shared three key themes:
 - Increasing visibility of the industry in order to get young people interested in the field.
 - Reaching younger kids via community events that include interactive activities.
 - More competitive wages to match the importance of public health industry.

Mr. Bickel motioned that the Board requested the Department look at dates in October for a 2-hour virtual meeting to discuss operator recruitment and retention. Mr. Edelman moved. Ms. Crawford seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McNamara presented Mr. Chescattie with a certificate of appreciation from the Board to recognize his service as the DEP representative to the Board from 2016-2025.

Cyber Security – Ms. Anderson provided an update regarding our current efforts to modifying the mandatory security training course to include cybersecurity. In addition, staff in the training section provided training to the DEP regional trainers in June on a classroom course on cybersecurity, which the regional trainers will be delivering in their respective regions this fall.

Three-Year Report – Mr. McNamara presented the Chapter 302 Three-Year Regulatory Fee and Program Cost Analysis Report for Board review and comment, which will be presented at the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) meeting. Mr. Bickel made a motion for DEP to retain the current fee schedule with no regulatory amendments to modify the program fees. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Petition to Suspend License

Mr. Cantwell referenced a petition to the Board to suspend certificate W22183. Mr. Cantwell requested that the Board vote to have the Board Secretary send a copy of the petition to the operator in question. Mr. Bickel motioned to have the Board Secretary send a copy of the DEP petition to suspend certificate W22183 via certified mail. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 11:21am to review 6 criminal history applications.

The Board reconvened for public session at 11:46am.

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 August 13, 2025, Board Meeting:

1. Operator 385355: WE certification
2. Operator 391023: WWD,E – 1,2,4 certification
3. Operator 388416: WWE4 certification
4. Operator 376535: WC – 3,7,8,12 certification
5. Operator 380062: WWA – 1 certification
6. Operator 392317: WWD,E – 1,4

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 385355 WE certification. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 391023 WWD,E – 1,2,4 certification. Mr. McNamara seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 388416 WWE4 certification. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed with two oppositions.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 376535 WC – 3,7,8,12 certification. Mr. McNamara seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 380062 WWA – 1 certification. Ms. Crawford seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bickel motioned to approve Operator 392317 WWD,E – 1,4 certification. Mr. McNamara seconded. Motion passed with one opposition.

Extension Requests

Operator 358336 – Has a water distribution license (WE) that expired on June 30, 2025. The applicant was required to obtain 15 hours of continuing education training for his drinking water certification and, while he completed the 15 hours prior to his expiration date, he failed to complete the mandatory security training (Securing Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities) by June 30. He completed the training on July 1, 2025 (one day after his expiration date). The applicant is claiming extenuating circumstances, which are specified within the extension request that his supervisor completed. The applicant is requesting a 1-day extension to complete the additional training hours.

Mr. Bickel motioned to deny Operator 358336 extension. Mr. Edelman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Operator 238665 – Has a water distribution (WE) license that expired on March 31, 2025. The applicant was required to complete 8 hours of continuing education training for his drinking water certification but only completed 3 hours and did not complete the mandatory security training prior to his expiration date. The applicant previously had a WA,E-1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 license, which they could not renew in 2006 due to a lack of continuing education and had to retest and reapply, which he did in 2020.

The applicant also has a wastewater collections system certification that expired on March 31, 2025. The applicant was required to complete 8 hours of continuing education training for his wastewater certification but completed 0 hours and did not complete the mandatory security training prior to his expiration date. The applicant previously had his WWA-1,2,3,4 license, which they could not renew in 2008 due to a lack of continuing education and had to retest and reapply, which he did in 2020. The applicant is claiming extenuating circumstances, which are specified within the extension request.

Mr. Bickel motioned to deny Operator 238665 extension. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bickel motioned to adjourn. Mr. Edelman seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:50am.