

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
STATE BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF
WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS OPERATORS**

Board Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2020

Skype Call

Board Members Present (via phone)

Ed Chescattie, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW), DEP Secretary Designee
Joseph Swanderski, Chairman, Penn State University, Wastewater Operator
Mary Roland, Certified Water Operator
Mike Kyle, Lancaster Area Sewer Authority, Employee of a Political Subdivision
Mark Smith, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc., General Public
Jeff Bickel, Aqua PA, Inc.
John Cantwell, Legal Counsel
Laura Chambers, Board Secretary

Non-Board Members Present (via phone)

Bill McNamara, BSDW
Leslie Ferguson, BSDW
Jeff Allgyer, BSDW
Lori Wise, BSDW
Shalini Moola, BSDW
Mahendra Patel, BSDW
Anita Stabile, Bureau of Clean Water
Theia Hofstetter, Bureau of Clean Water

Public Present (via phone)

Joel Jordan, PRWA
Jim DeWolf, PA Section AWWA – Veteran’s Hiring Initiative
Nick Troutman, Sen Gene Yaw, Communications and Executive Director of Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Mr. Chescattie took roll call to confirm all individuals participating in this Board meeting via conference call and asked for everyone’s consent to record audio from today’s call. He reminded members of the public that they would be given an opportunity for input prior to the conclusion of the public portion of the Board meeting. After all attendees consented to the call being recorded, Chairman Swanderski called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

Approval of June 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kyle motioned to approve the June 10th meeting minutes. Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New and Upgrade Applications

Ms. Chambers presented the following new and upgrade license for Board consideration:

- 7 new water licenses
- 8 upgraded water licenses
- 2 new wastewater licenses
- 10 upgraded wastewater licenses

Mr. Smith motioned to approve all the new and upgraded license applications. Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Reciprocity Requests

Water

Elizabeth L. Kinderman – Holds a Massachusetts T1 Water Treatment License that was issued to her on January 14, 2019 from Massachusetts that expires on December 31, 2020. Ms. Kinderman holds a Massachusetts VS Water Treatment License that was issued to her on December 14, 2017 from Massachusetts that expires on December 31, 2020. Her application documents 1 year, 3 months' experience working at Emerson Hospital, MA, which is a Class D facility using subclasses 8 and 12. She has 1 year, 6 months' experience working at VA Boston Healthcare, Brockton, MA, which is a Class D facility using subclasses 8 and 12. An operator is required to have a minimum of 1 year experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class D license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Ms. Kinderman has documented the adequate experience relative to a WD – 8, 12.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the Water Treatment T1 and VS ABC exam in Massachusetts.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided by Massachusetts Operator Certification program staff and vote on whether Ms. Kinderman has passed a comparable examination in the State of Massachusetts.

William J. Wallace – Holds an Ohio Class IV Water Supply Operator treatment license that expires on December 31, 2021. His application documents 6 years, 7 months' experience working at Dublin Rd. Water Treatment Plant, Ohio, which is a Class A facility using subclasses 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12. An operator is required to have a minimum of 4 years' experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class A license. Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Wallace has documented the adequate experience relative to a WA 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12.

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the Class IV Water exam in Ohio, with a passing score in all the subclasses. Please see the attachment which follows page 2 of Mr. Wallace's application for details on the associated Ohio test content area. For a comparison of applicable Pennsylvania exams, please see the final attachment to this packet.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided and vote on whether Mr. Wallace has documented that he has passed a comparable examination in the State of Ohio.

Wastewater

Daniel D. Denbow – Holds a West Virginia Class 1 Wastewater Treatment Operator License that was issued to him on September 27, 2016 and expires on September 30, 2021. His application documents 5 years' experience working at Brooke County P.S.D, West Virginia, which is a Class C facility using subclass 1. An operator is required to have a minimum of 2 years' experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class C license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Denbow has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWC – 1.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed the Class 1 Wastewater and Activated Sludge exam in West Virginia. Please see the attachment which follows page 2 of Mr. Denbow wastewater reciprocity application for details on the associated West Virginia test content area. For a comparison of applicable Pennsylvania exams, please see the final attachment to this packet.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided by West Virginia Operator Certification program staff and vote on whether Mr. Denbow has passed a comparable examination in the State of West Virginia.

Corey L. Smith – Holds an Ohio Class II Wastewater Treatment Operator License that was issued to him on April 30, 2020 and expires on December 31, 2022. His application documents 3 years' experience working at City of Struthers, Ohio, which is a Class A facility using subclass 1, 2. An operator is required to have a minimum of 3 years' experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class B license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Smith has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWB – 1, 2.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the Wastewater Treatment Class II ABC exam in Ohio.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided by Ohio Operator Certification program staff and vote on whether Mr. Smith has passed a comparable examination in the State of Ohio.

Mr. Kyle motioned to approve the Department's recommendations for all reciprocities. Chairman Swanderski seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

3-Year Review of Operator Certification Program Fees

Mr. Chescattie provided an overview of the 3-year Operator Certification Program Fee Report and then provided an opportunity for questions/comments from the Board members. Board members – Mr. Swanderski, Mr. Kyle, and Mr. Bickel - had several questions, which Mr. Chescattie addressed. A few resultant edits were suggested, primarily to provide a more complete timeline and accurate statistics relating to year end compliance determinations for systems which failed to submit annual fees. Mr. Chescattie agreed to incorporate the suggested edits to said statistics. After discussion, the Board members considered the report content complete and agreed with the Department's recommendation to keep the fee structure the same as the previous three years. Mr. Kyle motioned to approve the Department's recommendation. Ms. Roland seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Secretary Report

- In response to Ms. Roland's question from the June 10, 2020 Board meeting regarding September 30, 2020 expirations, the number of licenses due to expire on September 30th are:
 - 299 wastewater
 - 890 water
 - 1189 total
- To date, under the Board-approved COVID-19-specific expedited extension approval process for licenses expiring June 30, 2020, the Department has received 19 water extension requests and granted 16 (two were not needed, and one will be discussed during Executive Session). The Department has received 24 wastewater extension requests and granted 22 (two were not needed). In summary, the Department received a total of 43 extension requests and have approved 38 altogether.

Old and New Business

Mr. Chescattie announced that Mr. DeWolfe has an important presentation regarding veterans transitioning from military service careers into the water/wastewater industry that he has requested time to present under the Public Comment portion of the agenda.

Mr. Chescattie provided a detailed update relative to reopening exams for water and wastewater certification. Board members commented that they recognized the complexity of the process and supported the Department's efforts to adapt and determine feasible ways to offer exam sessions with proper precautionary measures in place.

Mr. Chescattie explained that his staff are in the process to transitioning to the use of a new printer for operator licenses; therefore, licenses will look a little different in the future once this transition is complete. The paper the licenses will be printed on is better quality; an example will be provided in the future.

Comments from the Public

Mr. Jordan provided an update on PRWA's in-person training classes they have recently held and plan to hold in the near future. They began these classes in June, worked through some initial challenges regarding safety precautions, and were really running smoothly in July. Mr. Chescattie commented that the PRWA website listed five different in-person training courses to be held throughout the state today (the day of the Board meeting). Board members thanked PRWA for their efforts to work to adapt and provide safe training.

Mr. McNamara provided an update on the virtual trainings DEP has been working with exam providers to offer, which are video feeds of instructors that allow interactive question and answer. He reported that over the past few months, many exam providers have added even more online training opportunities which his staff have reviewed and approved.

Mr. DeWolfe, representing PA-AWWA, provided some background on the Veterans' Hiring Initiative and explained that the goal is to work together to identify opportunities to help military service men and women transition into the private sector as licensed water or wastewater operators by applying their experience operating treatment plants during their military career.

Board members offered support to the concept overall. Chairman Swanderski asked what the Board's role would be in this initiative. Mr. Chescattie will refer to the Chapter 302 regulations to see how the Board might be able to help and believes the first step would be for the Board to look at different avenues it would be able to potentially offer under the existing regulations. Mr. Chescattie will discuss in greater detail with Jeff Allgyer and other DEP staff to look into our options and asked that Mr. DeWolfe provide additional information regarding what other states have done. Chairman Swanderski motioned for Department staff to work with Mr. DeWolfe and prepare an update for this initiative for the October 14, 2020 Board meeting. Ms. Roland seconded motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 11:36 a.m. to review confidential information including Extension Requests. The Board came out of Executive Session at 12:29 p.m.

Extension Requests

The Board discussed that there are multiple in-person trainings now available, in addition to hundreds of online training courses approved for DEP continuing education; therefore, any operator experiencing extreme extenuating circumstances delaying the ability to obtain continuing education are required as per chapter 302 regulations to submit a complete extension request to the Department using the existing three-page extension request form. Requests will be presented to the Board at their regularly scheduled meetings for consideration and formal vote in executive session.

Operator ID 196958 – Has a water license which expired on March 31, 2020. The individual submitted an extension, which was approved until June 30, 2020 by the Board during the April 8, 2020 Board meeting. Within the additional 90-day extension granted, this operator needed to

obtain 1 more hour of continuing education and also complete his mandatory security training. To date, the operator has still not completed the additional hour or the mandatory security training. After discussion and review of the information provided, the Board voted to deny this request for an extension to a previously approved extension.

Operator ID 199267 – Has a water license which expired June 30, 2020. The operator had 27 hours of continuing education and needed 3 more hours, prior to his license expiring, the operator had taken a 3-hour course, but did not realize that it was not a DEP-approved course and, therefore, did not count towards the required training hours. The individual did obtain the necessary hours via approved training course on July 26, 2020. The individual documented extreme extenuating circumstances within their application.

The Board agreed to grant an extension to August 31, 2020.

Operator ID 331357 – Has a water license expired March 31, 2020. The operator documented extreme extenuating circumstances within their extension request application.

The Board agreed to grant an extension to July 31, 2020.

Operator ID 194283 – Has a wastewater license which expired June 30, 2020. This operator had 29 out of 30 required training hours. The individual obtained the additional credit August 11th (yesterday) and emailed the Department the certificate last evening. The individual documented extreme extenuating circumstances within their application.

The Board agreed to grant an extension to August 13, 2020.

Mary motioned to approve or deny all extension requests as noted above. Mr. Swanderski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Criminal History Report

The Department did not receive any Criminal History Reports for this meeting.

Ms. Roland motioned to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Swanderski seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:33p.m.