

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

Board Meeting Minutes

June 10, 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
Rachel Brennan, Teacher/Professor
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
Brian Chalfant, Policy Office

Public Present (via phone)

Joel Jordan, PA Rural Water

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. After all attendees consented to the call being recorded, Chairman Swanderski called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

Approval of April 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kyle recommended reflecting "pm" after 12:43 for the time the meeting was adjourned. He also recommended that the minutes show an accurate time line regarding that the Board went into executive session before the extension requests were presented, and motions which occurred after executive session. Chairman Swanderski motioned to approve the minutes with recommended edits, Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of New and Upgrade Applications

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

- 7 new water licenses
- 8 upgraded water licenses
- 8 new wastewater licenses
- 0 upgraded wastewater licenses

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

Reciprocity Requests

Water

Mark A Lavenberg – Holds an New Jersey W4 Water Distribution Operator License which expires on December 30, 2020. He also holds T4 Water Treatment Operator License which expires September 30, 2020. His application documents 1 month experience working at Trenton Water Works Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class A facility using subclass 1,7,8,10,12. He has 6 months' experience working at City of Newark WTP Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class A, E facility using subclasses 2,7,8,11. He has 3 years' experience working at New Brunswick WTP Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class A,E facility using subclasses 1,6,7,8,10,12. He has 4 years 9 months' experience working at City of Bridgeton WTP Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class A,E facility using subclasses 1,5,7,8,9,12. He has 4 years' experience working at Moorestown Township WTP Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class B,E facility using subclasses 1,7,8,9,12. He has 4 years' experience working at Bayside State Prison WTP Facility, New Jersey, which is a Class C,E facility using subclasses 8,12. 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. Lavenberg has documented the adequate experience relative to a WA, E - 1,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the W4 and T4 Water ABC exam in New Jersey. **Based on information provided by New Jersey Operator Certification program staff, Mr. Lavenberg has passed a comparable examination in the State of New Jersey.**

Ms. Roland motioned to approve for WA, E - 1,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12. Chairman Swanderski seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Wastewater

Adam Federau – Holds a Class 1,2,3,4 Wastewater Treatment Operator License that was issued to him on July 11, 2017 and expires July 1, 2023. His application documents 8 years, 3 months' experience working at West Chicago/Winfield Regional WWTP, Illinois, which is a Class A facility using subclass 1. 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. Federau has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWA – 1.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the Class 1,2,3,4 Wastewater and Activated Sludge exam in Illinois, which had a total of 100 multiple choice questions. Mr. Federau passed the examination on July 11, 2017 with a score of 72%. In comparison, Pennsylvania exams contain 82 questions on the Wastewater General exam, which has a minimum passing score of 65%. There are 43 questions on the Activated Sludge exam, which has a minimum passing score of 56%.

Mr. Chescattie summarized that Pennsylvania's minimum passing score is lower when compared with Illinois' minimum passing score. Illinois' exams taken by Mr. Federau has slightly less content than Pennsylvania's. Mr. Smith motioned to issue WWA-1. Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Roland commented that the associated summary page Department staff provided was helpful.

Board Secretary Report

To date since the last Board meeting during which the Board approved a COVID-19 specific expedited extension approval process for licenses expiring June 30, 2020, the Department has received 8 water extension requests and granted 7 (one not granted had already achieved required amount of con ed hours). The Department has received 16 wastewater extension requests and granted 13 (one not granted had already achieved required amount of con ed hours; the other two applications will be discussed during Executive Session today). In summary, the Department received a total of 24 extension requests and have processed 20 altogether. Mr. Chescattie offered that this is approximately two percent of the licenses that expire on June 30, 2020. Therefore, the vast majority of operators are relying on the large universe of online continuing education course options. Mr. Kyle asked for clarification of when the Board approved this specific extension request process. Mr. Chescattie explained that it was in the posting that the Board voted on and approved at the April Board meeting. Mr. Kyle did not understand that this meant that the Board was not specifically voting on each of these requests, but he is ok with the process as discussed. Mr. Chescattie confirmed that this only applies to license cycle ending June 30, 2020.

Ms. Chambers thanked her staff, Shalini Moola and Mahendra Patel, for the hard work they have done over the past three months. Since we started teleworking on March 16th, our team has processed 221 Water Renewals, 243 Wastewater Renewals, 35 New Water Licenses, 30 New Wastewater Licenses, 14 Water Upgrades, 15 Wastewater Upgrades, and 4 Reciprocities.

Ms. Chambers informed the Board that she received Jeff Bickel's approval letter from the Governor's Office this morning appointing him an official member of the Board. It appears there was a delay because the Governor's Office had reached out to him for additional information, which they recently received. Ms. Chambers will contact Mr. Bickel this afternoon to share the news and make sure he has the August Board Meeting on his calendar.

Old and New Business

There was nothing new to report.

Comments from the Public

Joel Jordan stated that PRWA did restart in-person training classes this week and that they are taking necessary precautions (social distancing, sanitizer, etc.). They have four more in-person training classes scheduled for June and a full schedule in July. They are currently only able to hold classes in green counties and, therefore, are focusing on western side of the state. Hotels and facilities in yellow status will not be considered for in-person training by PRWA yet due to complexity of how to properly handle in-person training in yellow counties. Mr. Jordan is hoping that by July the whole state will be in green and PRWA can start holding classes across the state again. It has been challenging to find rooms that are big enough to accommodate everyone. Chairman Swanderski thanked Mr. Jordan / PRWA for their ongoing efforts to provide training opportunities to the industry.

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:45am to review confidential information including Extension Requests. The Board came out of Executive Session at 11:36am.

Extension Requests

Operator IDs 286008 and 252396 submitted complete extension request forms requesting 3-6 months additional time to complete their required continuing education training hours due to a series of extreme circumstances. Ms. Chambers spoke with Operator ID 286008 on the phone when he called to check the status of their extension requests, which were submitted together via scanned PDF to the Operator Certification resource account on June 1, 2020.

Ms. Roland motioned to approve the extension requests for Operators 252396 and 286008 to September 30, 2020. Chairman Swanderski seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board discussed this extension request, and Chairman Swanderski provided some additional background information.

Operator ID 240796 requested an extension of his WA, E – 1,4 and WWA, E – 1, 7, 8, 12, which expired on March 31, 2020, due to COVID-19 related and other extenuating circumstances.

Ms. Roland motioned to approve the extension request for Operator 240796 to April 5, 2020. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on training opportunities for operators whose cycle ends in September 2020, and the large volume of online training courses available. The consensus was to wait until the August Board meeting to discuss this issue further and determine what, if any, extension requests may be granted.

Ms. Roland asked if staff could provide the Board with a specific number for the August meeting of operators whose licenses expire September 30, 2020. Mr. Chescattie agreed this is valuable information and Ms. Chambers explained that her staff will have access to this information in eFACTS on July 1st when the renewal report is run for the applicable license cycle.

Criminal History Report

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

Mr. Cantwell provided suggestions for Board consideration regarding meeting format to obtain uninterrupted meeting audio.

Mr. Kyle motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Roland seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:43am.