

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
STATE BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF
WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS OPERATORS
Board Meeting Minutes
October 14, 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 (joined at 10:35a.m.)
Jeff Bickel, Aqua PA, Inc.
John Cantwell, Legal Counsel
Laura Chambers, Board Secretary

Non-Board Members Present (via phone)

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

Public Present (via phone)

Tom Goehring, representing PA Rural Water Association
Aaron (no last name given), Pine Grove Treatment Authority
Timothy Sonney, license applicant

Chairman Swanderski took roll call to confirm all individuals participating in this Board meeting via conference call and called the meeting to order at 10:00a.m.

Approval of August 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kyle asked Ms. Chambers to clarify under “Public Present” on the first page that Nick Troutman from Senator Yaw’s office attended via phone, and that Senator Yaw himself did not participate in the call. Mr. Kyle suggested clarifying on the third page to reflect that the motion was to issue licenses consistent with the Department’s determination regarding experience and notate that the Board has determined that an equivalent exam has been passed by these applicants in the accrediting state. Ms. Roland pointed out that her motion on the last page above the Criminal History Report should reflect “Ms. Roland” instead of “Mary.”

Mr. Kyle motioned to approve the August 12th meeting minutes with the inclusion of the above edits. Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New and Upgrade Applications

Ms. Chambers presented a total of 171 license applications which were considered complete and ready for Board review and consideration. Specifically, the following breakdown of new and upgrade licenses was provided for Board consideration:

- 61 new water licenses
- 45 upgraded water licenses
- 47 new wastewater licenses
- 18 upgraded wastewater licenses
- Total – 171

Ms. Chambers noted that there is one additional initial application that was not included on the new and upgrade report because the Department was waiting for clarification, which was just received this morning. This application is for Andrew E. Scott – Client ID 308347 – and was evaluated for WE (Distribution).

Mr. Chescattie clarified how experience and OIT information is reflected as notes on the new and upgrade .pdf report. Ms. Moola mentioned that three applications we received without notarization but were otherwise complete. Mr. Chescattie suggested the Board consider approving these applications today contingent upon Department receipt of the original notarized applications. If the Board is not comfortable with that path, then the applications would need to wait until the December Board meeting. Board members were not comfortable with contingent approvals as a matter of routine; but, thought it was acceptable only for these three applications due to the extenuating circumstances of mail delays due to COVID.

Chairman Swanderski motioned to approve all the new and upgraded license applications, plus the additional three, contingent upon receiving the original notarized applications via U.S. mail. Ms. Roland seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Reciprocity Requests

Water

Abigail L Jacobs – Holds a Massachusetts VSS Water Treatment License that was issued to her on November 8, 2019 from Massachusetts that expires on December 31, 2021. Ms. Jacobs also holds a WB-12 license which was issued to her on April 9, 2020 from Pennsylvania that expires on March 31, 2020. Her application documents 1 year, 3 months' experience working at Emerson Hospital, Massachusetts, which is a Class D facility using subclasses 8 and 12. She has 1 year, 3 months' experience working at VA Boston Healthcare, Brockton, Massachusetts, 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. Jacobs has documented the adequate experience relative to a WD – 8.**

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. Jacobs has passed a comparable examination in the State of Massachusetts.

Wastewater

John Gromen – Holds a Maryland 5A Wastewater Treatment Operator License that was issued to him on March 1, 2019 and expires on March 1, 2022. His application documents 6 years' 6 months experience working at La Plata WWTP, Maryland, which is a Class B facility using subclass 1. His application documents 8 months experience working at DC Water, Blue Plains Advance WWTP, Maryland, which is a Class A facility using subclass 1. 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. Gromen has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWB – 1.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the 5A wastewater ABC exam in Maryland.

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

Ms. Chambers reported that the Department has received two additional reciprocity requests. One for **Robert E. Lovenduski and one for **Scott W. Gibson** – both received on October 6, 2020. She has reached out to the accrediting state (New Jersey) on October 9, 2020 requesting information but have not yet heard back so the Department is unfortunately unable to present these reciprocities at today's meeting. The goal is to work to obtain additional information necessary to present these applications at the December Board meeting.

Ms. Roland motioned to issue the licenses for Ms. Jacobs and Mr. Gromen, consistent with the Department's determination regarding experience, and Board determination that an equivalent exam has been passed by these applicants in the accrediting state. Mr. Kyle seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Secretary Report

Ms. Chambers provided the following information regarding licenses, exams, renewals and extension requests:

- The number of licenses due to expire on December 31, 2020 (if renewal applications are not submitted in a timely manner) are:
 - o Water – 208
 - o Wastewater – 562
 - o Total – 770

- Update on paper exams
 - o Number of paper exam seats offered thus far in 2020 – 808
 - o Number of paper exam seats filled thus far in 2020 – 616
 - o Number of additional paper exam seats tentatively scheduled for 2020 – 265

Bill McNamara provided an update on computer-based exams:

- Thus far in 2020, 6 sessions with a total of 40 examinee seats have been offered.
- 14 more sessions with a total of 120 additional examinee seats are tentatively scheduled for the remainder of 2020.

Ms. Chambers provided the following update on renewals: For the renewal cycle ending September 30, 2020, her staff have processed 610 Water and 290 Wastewater renewals, for a total of 900 renewals. One extension request was received for cycle ending September 30, 2020.

Old and New Business

Chairman Swanderski asked whether any progress has been made on the veteran’s hiring initiative that Jim DeWolfe initially presented to the Board during the August meeting. Mr. Chescattie provided an update on the status of the initiative by providing a summary of recent conference call discussion with Mr. Allgyer, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Chescattie and Mr. DeWolfe. Overall, these individuals will continue to discuss this initiative using actual applications received from veterans. To date, that specific universe of applications has been very small. If AWWA national and/or local PA Section AWWA conducts outreach and recruitment, the numbers of veteran applications may increase. Department staff (currently Bill McNamara has the lead) would work closely with each applicant to evaluate their specific options regarding a potential path forward to licensing. Some experience from some military positions do provide some applicable operating experience. Necessary details would be documented in complete applications received. Another conference call with Mr. DeWolfe is tentatively planned for the first quarter of 2021.

Comments from the Public

Mr. Swanderski asked the public participating on the call if they had comments. No comments were received from the public. Mr. Chescattie mentioned that the 3-year internal review is tentatively on track for presentation to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) in November. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has verbally granted the Department a deadline extension through 2021 for the 5-year external review, which is not a requirement but a recommendation from EPA.

The Board went into executive session at 11:00a.m. to discuss Extension Requests and Criminal History Report.

Board came out of Executive Session at 11:28a.m.

Criminal History Report

Water Applicant 331906 requested certification for WE. This Client was arrested 08/04/2005 for one count of Criminal Conspiracy Aggravated Assault (F1); Disposition 02/21/2006 – Plead Guilty/County Prison/9 months – 1 years 11 months/County Probation/3 years/Fines and Costs/Restitution. Arrested 08/04/2005 for one count of Recklessly Endangering Another Person (M2); Disposition 02/21/2006–Plead Guilty/County Probation/1 year.

Recommendation: Based on the nature of the offenses (not related to water or wastewater), the length of time since the offenses, and letter of recommendations provided it is recommended that the certificate be approved for this applicant.

Extension Requests

Operator ID 264437 – Has a water license which expired on September 30, 2020. The operator was required to obtain 15 hours of training, which he obtained as of October 5, 2020. (He had obtained 10 hours prior to September 30th, and the remaining 5 hours as of October 5th.) His extension request documents that he was on active military duty for the Air Force and copies of his deployment paperwork were provided.

Operator ID 173882 – Has a water and wastewater license, both of which expired June 30, 2020. The operator was required to obtain 30 hours of training for each his water and wastewater license, so far has provided documentation of having obtained 4 hours of approved continuing education towards his wastewater license. The applicant had told Ms. Chambers via email that he had additional continuing education certificates to provide but has not provided them yet.

Ms. Roland motioned to approve the WE application for Applicant 331906. Chairman Swanderski seconded the motion. Motion was unanimous.

Ms. Roland motioned to approve the extension request for Operator ID 264437 until October 6, 2020. Chairman Swanderski seconded the motion. Motion was unanimous.

Ms. Roland motioned to approve the extension request for Operator ID 173882 until August 31, 2020. Mr. Bickel seconded the motion. Motions carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30a.m.