

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

Board Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2021

Room 105 / Teams Call

Board Members Present

Ed Chescattie, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW), DEP Secretary Designee

Mary Roland, Board Chairperson, 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., Official of Private System

Laura Chambers, Board Secretary

Rachel Brennan, Penn State University, Teacher/Professor of Engineering (via phone)

Non-Board Members Present

Lisa Daniels, BSDW

John Cantwell, Board Counsel

Bill McNamara, BSDW

Jeff Allgyer, BSDW

Lori Wise, BSDW

Bill King, BSDW

Shalini Moola, BSDW

Mahendra Patel, BSDW

Vesna Nelson, BSDW

Manyi Liu, BCW

Anita Stabile, BCW

Bob Kachonic, BCW

Michele Moses, BRC

Leda Lacomba, BRC

Bo Reiley, BRC

Adam Duh, BRC

Jeremy Miller, BRC, NERO

Rachel Colyer, BCW (via phone)

Public Present

Curt Steffy

Michael Bostic

Joel Jordan, PRWA (via phone)

Chairperson Roland took roll call to confirm all individuals participating in this Board meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. Mr. Chescattie announced that the public participants would be provided an opportunity for input towards the end of the meeting.

Approval of August 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve the August 4, 2021 meeting minutes with a few minor suggested edits provided primarily by Mr. Kyle. Mr. Chescattie seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New and Upgrade Applications

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

- 81 new water licenses
- 37 upgraded water licenses
- 70 new wastewater licenses
- 27 upgraded wastewater licenses

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

Reciprocity Requests

Wastewater

George Dunning – Holds a Massachusetts 7-C Full Wastewater Operator License, that was issued on January 1, 2020 and expires on December 31, 2021. His application documents the following: 7 years, 9 months' experience working at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, which is a Class D facility using subclasses 2 and 4; 5 years, 6 months' experience working at Upper Blackstone Clean Water, which is a Class A facility using subclass 1.

Mr. Dunning's experience was obtained at Class D and Class A facilities and an operator is required to have a minimum of 4 years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class A license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Dunning has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWA-1,2,4.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed wastewater exams containing questions developed by ABC and administered in Massachusetts. The exam passing score is 70%.

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

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Mr. Dunning's WWA-1,2,4. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motioned passed unanimously.

Carolynn Choinski – Holds a Colorado Class D Wastewater Operator License, that was issued on August 30, 2018 and expires on August 29, 2024. Her application documents the following: 1 year experience working at City of Longmont (CO), which is a Class A facility using subclass 1.

Ms. Choinski's experience was obtained at a Class A facility and an operator is required to have a minimum of 1 year of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class D license.

Therefore, the Department's determination is that Ms. Choinski has documented the adequate experience relative to a WWD-1.

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed wastewater exams developed by ABC and administered in Colorado.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided and vote on whether Ms. Choinski has documented that she has passed comparable examinations in the State of Colorado.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Ms. Choinski's WWD-1. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Water

Carolynn Choinski – Holds a Colorado Class D Water Treatment license that was issued August 30, 2018 and expires August 29, 2024. The applicant also holds a North Dakota Water Distribution license that was issued September 29, 2020 and expires June 30, 2022. Her application documents the following: one year part-time (approximately 5 hours/week for a total of 1.2 months) experience working at City of Longmont (CO), which is a Class A facility using subclasses 1,8,10,12,13; 5 months' experience working at PA American Water, which is a Class A facility using subclasses 1,7,8,10,11,12; 1 year, 4 months' experience working at McKenzie County Water Resource District (ND), which is a Class A distribution facility.

Ms. Choinski's experience was obtained at Class A facilities and an operator is required to have a minimum of 1 year of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class D license.

Therefore, the Department's determination is that Ms. Choinski has documented the adequate experience relative to a WE.

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed water exams developed by ABC and administered in Colorado. Ms. Choinski passed water exams in the state of North Dakota for gaseous chlorine disinfection and distribution. Passing score is 70%.

The Department's recommendation: The Board should please review the examination information provided and vote on whether Ms. Choinski has documented that she has passed comparable examinations in the States of Colorado and North Dakota.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Ms. Choinski's WE license. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

William Cole – Holds a Texas Class A Water Operator License, that was issued January 8, 2016 and expires January 8, 2022. His application documents the following: 10 years, 2 months' experience working at Dallas Water Utilities, which is a Class A facility using subclasses 1,6,7,8,10,11,12,14 and distribution.

Mr. Cole's experience was obtained at a Class A facility and an operator is required to have a minimum of 4 years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class A license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Cole has documented the adequate experience relative to a WA,E - 1,6,7,8,10,11,12,14.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant passed water exams in the state of Texas. Please see the Water Operator Exam Checklist on page 2, as well as page 3 of the verification form, for details.

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

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Mr. Cole's WA,E - 1,6,7,8,10,11,12,14 license. Mr. Bickel seconded. Motioned passed unanimously.

Timothy Steiner – Holds a New York Grade IIA SW/GUI Filtration Plant Water System license that was issued January 31, 2020 and expires February 28, 2023. His application documents the following: 6 years, 4 months' experience working at Carthage/West Carthage Joint Water System in New York, which is a Class B facility using subclasses 4,7,8,12.

Mr. Steiner's experience was obtained at a Class B facility and an operator is required to have a minimum of 3 years of experience in order to obtain a Pennsylvania Class B license. **Therefore, the Department's determination is that Mr. Steiner has documented the adequate experience relative to a WB – 4,7,8,12.**

Regarding the comparison of examination questions, the applicant took the Grade A and Grade A Lab exams in New York. Please see the PDF attachments entitled "2011 Grade A" and "2011 Grade A Lab" for details on the associated New York test content.

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

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve Mr. Steiner's WB – 4,7,8,12 license. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Braeden Luciano – Was approved for a water operator license (WA - 1,6,7,8,9,11,12,13) via reciprocity from West Virginia at the April 14, 2021 Board meeting. Mr. Luciano called Ms. Chambers on August 23, 2021, to inquire as to why he was not granted subclass 10. After reaching out to West Virginia certification staff on August 26, 2021 in response to Mr. Luciano's inquiry, West Virginia responded to Ms. Chambers via email on August 31, 2021 to verify that they failed to reflect on the verification form that the applicant did in fact take the Organic Removal/Activated Carbon Adsorption Exam and his license does allow him to operate subclass 10. Ms. Chambers reviewed his April 14 application again, and verified that he did document process control experience for subclass 10 at a Class A facility. In light of this information, the Department recommends that the Board approve subclass 10 be added to Mr. Luciano's license via reciprocity.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve the addition of subclass 10 to Mr. Luciano's license. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Secretary Report

Ms. Chambers provided an update to the exams for 2021 and reminded Board members that our goal this year was to offer 2000 exam seats for operators statewide. Ms. Chambers provided the following summary of the hard work completed thus far by Operator Certification staff, the DEP proctors, and the Approved Exam Providers (AEPs), which is:

- Number of exam **sessions held** thus far in 2021 (through 10/5/21): 46
- Number of exam **seats offered** thus far in 2021: 1420
- Number of exam **seats filled** thus far in 2021: 1114
- Number of additional exam sessions tentatively scheduled for remainder of 2021: 16
- Number of additional exam seats tentatively offered for remainder of 2021: 578

Ms. Chambers notified the Board members that she would be sending out Board meeting dates for 2022 for them to vote on within the next few weeks. The Board agreed that the official vote would take place at the December 8, 2021 Board meeting.

Old and New Business

No significant old or new business items were discussed.

Criminal History Report Discussion

A preliminary review of Applicant 240970's (Applicant) application for certification as an operator of wastewater systems determined that Applicant may have a criminal conviction related to the operation of a wastewater treatment system. Per the Board's regulations, the Board provided Applicant with the opportunity to appear and discuss Applicant's criminal conviction at the Board's regularly scheduled meeting. Applicant accepted the Board's invitation and attended the Board's regularly scheduled meeting on October 6, 2021.

Prior to the discussion, the Board's Legal Counsel (Board Counsel), John Cantwell, informed the meeting participants concerning the procedure that the Board would use to discuss Applicant's Criminal History Report. Following Board Counsel's explanation, Applicant addressed the Board concerning Applicant's prior criminal conviction. Board Counsel then asked Applicant questions on the Board's behalf. Board members asked questions to Applicant based on Applicant's responses to Board Counsel's questions. The Department's representative, Jeremy Miller, then addressed the Board concerning Applicant's prior criminal conviction. No questions were asked to the Department's representative by Board Counsel or any Board member.

Public meeting adjourned at 11:21 am.

The Board went into Executive Session at 11:37 am.

Criminal History Report

Wastewater Applicant 240970 requested certification for WWA-1,2,3.

Water/Wastewater Applicant 364159 requested certification for WWE4 and WE.

Extension Requests

Operator ID 305977 – Has a wastewater license that expired on September 30, 2021. The operator was required to obtain 15 hours of training and has currently obtained 0 hours. The extension request claims extreme health-related circumstances.

Operator ID 342549 – Has a water license that expired on June 30, 2021. The operator was required to obtain 8 hours of training and has currently obtained 36.5, but did not take the mandatory security training.

The Board reconvened for public session at 12:48 pm. Ms. Brennan was not able to participate in the remainder of the meeting.

Chairperson Roland motioned to grant Operator 364159 a WWE4 and WE license. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve the extension for Operator 305977 through December 31, 2021. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to approve the extension for Operator 342549 through October 31, 2021. Mr. Bickel seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Roland motioned to deny Client 240970 application for wastewater system operator's certification. Mr. Kyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Board members recognized Curt Steffy's 11 years of service and contributions to the Board via a resolution which stated in part the he participated in efforts to establish and implement and effective operator certification program, helped draft associated guidelines and regulations, was instrumental in reviewing and approving licenses for thousands of new Pennsylvania water and wastewater operators, and was focused on efficient decision making which provided full consideration of all viewpoints on all critical operator certification issues brought before him.

Mr. Chescattie motioned to adjourn. Multiple Board members seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 1:12 pm.