



STATE BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF SEWAGE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

**DRAFT
MINUTES
November 18, 2021**

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Samuel D’Alessandro (telephone)..... Board Chair
Gordon Sheetz (telephone)..... Board Vice-Chair
John Seamans (telephone)..... Board Member
John Wagman (telephone)..... Board Member
Luke Helsel (telephone) Board Member

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP) STAFF PRESENT

John Cantwell (telephone)..... Board Legal Counsel, DEP
Amy Forney..... Board Secretary, DEP
Leda Lacomba (telephone)..... DEP, Program Counsel
Brian Chalfant DEP, Policy Office
Brian Schlauderaff..... DEP, BCW
Janice Vollero..... DEP, BCW
Rachael White DEP, BCW

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chair Samuel D’Alessandro at 10:02 a.m. The meeting was held through Microsoft® Teams online, as well as in-person, in the 12th floor conference room of the Rachel Carson State Office Building, at 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA.

A quorum was present.

Motion: Chair D’Alessandro called for a motion to accept the October 13, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

Luke Helsel motioned to approve the minutes as presented. John Wagman seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Board. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Certification of new Sewage Enforcement Officers (SEOs)

Board Secretary Amy Forney reported that 15 candidates took the exam; 12 passed and 3 failed. Mr. Helsel asked about the specifics on the scoring, as some candidates with passing scores had only half of the correct answers in some of the categories. Ms. Forney explained the scoring requirement: to pass the exam, at least 50% of the answers must be correct in each category, as well as a final overall score of 70%; if any of the categories are less than 50% correct, even with a score of 70% or higher, it would be considered a failed exam. Gordon Sheetz noted that this last exam had a good outcome with an 80% pass rate, an improvement from some earlier exam results following the SEO Academy.

Motion: Chair D'Alessandro called for a motion to certify the 12 individuals who passed the exam. John Seamans made a motion to certify those 12 individuals who passed the exam. Mr. Wagman seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Board. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

Precertification Soils Course results.

Brian Schlauderaff stated that two (2) or three (3) candidates fail the course out of each class. The course is continuously getting better. DEP's biggest concern is finding enough soil pits for each class that depict the different limiting zones. DEP Central Office's soil scientist, Charles Klinger, attends every one of the classes. Charles assists with finding appropriate soil pits for the class and audits and critiques the presentations, focusing on the objectives that DEP wants to see met throughout the instruction. Charles works with SoilHub and the instructors to ensure these objectives are being accurately portrayed so that candidates understand the specific areas of importance in the soil calls.

Chair D'Alessandro asked if anybody works with the candidates that failed to explain what they got wrong and assist them in improving their skills. Mr. Schlauderaff explained that DEP asked SoilHub, who complied, to invite candidates to stay after the exam so that instructors could explain the soil profiles and limiting zone calls in the test pits. The candidates do not get their score at that time, but they are encouraged to ask questions about the soil profiles.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ms. Forney stated that she had received final confirmation of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) 2022 Precertification Academies. They are scheduled for March 28 – April 1, 2022; August 22 – 28, 2022; and November 14 – 18, 2022.

Ms. Forney set tentative SEO Certification Exam dates for the close of those academies onsite at the PSATS facility for the Friday afternoons of April 1, August 26, and November 18, 2022

with a make-up exam added on Monday, September 19, 2022 to fulfill the requirement of a minimum of four (4) annual exam opportunities.

Ms. Forney stated that the exam dates and the proposed 2022 SEO Board meeting dates were sent via e-mail yesterday to the Board. The Board meeting dates are tentatively set for the following Wednesdays: April 20, September 7, October 12, and November 30, 2022. Chair D'Alessandro asked if any Board member had any issues with the dates as stated. No issues were presented.

Motion: Chair D'Alessandro called for a motion to accept the dates for the 2022 SEO Board meetings. Mr. Seamans motioned to accept the proposed dates as final for the SEO Board meetings in 2022. Mr. Sheetz seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Board. Motion carried.

2. Ms. Forney reported that the approval package for the reappointment of Board member Luke Helsel for the Local Government Representative was moving through the executive approval process and was currently with the Policy Office. Mr. Helsel will continue in his position until approval (or disapproval) of his confirmation is received.

Ms. Forney stated that 2022 presents the need to obtain nominations for Chair D'Alessandro's Board position, Sewage Advisory Committee (SAC) Representative and for Board member John Seamans' position, Engineering Profession representative. Chair D'Alessandro's position expires March 11, 2022 and Mr. Seamans' position expires September 23, 2022. Chair D'Alessandro noted that he would bring his expiration to the attention of SAC for action. DEP will review records and reach out through appropriate channels to obtain nominations for consideration and prepare and process the executive approval folders for the DEP Secretary's signature. An update will be made to the Board at the next meeting.

3. Mr. Sheetz inquired if DEP was making any effort to make changes to the Academy or the exams. It has been a long time since the Academy was updated and there have been revisions to the Act and new policies enacted.

Mr. Schlauderaff stated DEP was in the process of looking at the current Academy and updating it as necessary, but that it was going to take some time because staff are also in the process of updating the regulations, which is the priority at the moment. DEP recently audited the Academy and for the most part it appears to be up to date. Any changes to the Act or policy is brought to the attention of the SEOs through All SEO Letters.

Mr. Schlauderaff explained there are currently four (4) certification exams that are rotated. The program would like to add more exam questions, so questions can be rotated in and out. The planning section has enlisted the assistance of the Bureau of Clean Water's professional training staff to format a new method for providing the SEO Certification Exam. It is possible to provide a more expansive question bank in addition to a more individualized exam approach affording an SEO candidate a greater opportunity for quicker, more easily accessible exams. Unfortunately, this project is in the beginning stages and not much more detail can be provided at this time. The program is looking at mid- to end-of-year 2022 meetings to see what

proposals the training team has. DEP will certainly keep the Board apprised of any substantial finds or proposed changes in connection with the SEO program.

4. Chair D'Alessandro asked if we heard anything from Mr. Singer after our letter went out to him and Ms. Forney replied no.

NEXT MEETING

The next SEO Board meeting is Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Chair D'Alessandro called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Wagman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sheetz seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Board. Motion carried. The November 18, 2021, SEO Board meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.