



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, May 21, 2020 At 10:00 A.M
Virtual Video Conference Meeting via Google Hangouts

MISSION OF THE MARYLAND BOARD OF WATERWORKS & WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS

The Treatment Systems that provide drinking water for our citizens and handle wastes generated by our daily activities play an important role in protecting Public Health and the Environment of Maryland. Through the Certification Program established by State Law, the “Board of Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators” sets the education, experience and examination standards for Operators and Superintendents working at these vital systems.

As of March 5, 2020, the Board has been operating under a State of emergency and catastrophic health emergency proclaimed by Governor Hogan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the May 21, 2020 Board meeting was held by videoconference (with the conference video link and telephone number made available to the public).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

William Shreve	Bruce Darner
Jay Price	Nancy Hausrath
Scott Harmon	Hiram Tanner

LIASONS, GUEST & STAFF PRESENT

Dee Settar	Acting Board Secretary, Recused Board Member
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Pam Franks	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
Partha Tallapragada	Board Member Nominee
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Andrea Ryon	MCET Liaison

NOT PRESENT

Joseph Johnson	Board Member
Dominic Deludos	Board Member
Karen Brandt	MCET Liaison
Sue Houghton	MRWA Liaison

01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

A motion was made to adopt the proposed meeting agenda as written by Nancy Hausrath and seconded by Scott Harmon. Motion approved unanimously.

03. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Board Members reviewed the April 16, 2020 draft meeting minutes. After review, a motion was made to table approval of the minutes as amended pending further review at the next Board meeting by Nancy Hausrath and seconded by Scott Harmon. Motion approved unanimously.

04. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Board Chairman thanked Board Members, Liaisons and staff for attending today's meeting and expressed well wishes and continued safety through the recent global pandemic. Chairman Shreve suggested some of the future Board meetings be held remotely as this forum is working well for the Board and minimizes alleviates the commuting burden for Board members.

05. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Board Members and Staff

Dee Settar informed the Board that due to her acting capacity status as Board Secretary she would recuse herself from voting. Dee congratulated Hiram Tanner on his recent confirmation as one of the Board Members representing the Public At Large. Dee also introduced Board Members to a new Board staff member, Victoria Arbaugh.

B. Report on Board's Administrative Activities

Dee Settar provided a partial breakdown of revenue and expenses history from November 30, 2019 thru April 30, 2020. Appropriations for fiscal year 2020 are \$290,891.00. As of April 30, 2020, expenses are \$130,066.89 and the encumbrance is \$44,953.00. The most recent available revenue, as of March 31, 2020, was \$138,210.70; available revenue data is limited due to MDE teleworking conditions and staff vacancies.

C. Report on Examination Results

No exams were administered in April 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; Board staff presented the six-month summary of exams results through March 2020 showing a running average pass rate of 33%. Board staff noted a total of 68 exams have been taken calendar YTD and that PSI online (AMP) began opening exam scheduling on a limited basis.

06. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

There were no applications to review

07. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Training Review and Evaluation (TRE) Committee

Board Staff suggested several changes to the TRE policy, including removal of courses older than (6) six years, a 30-day deadline for training approval applications, and improved communication methods to training sponsors regarding approved courses. Board Members agreed all classifications should be required to take process-related training. Chairman Shreve requested the current TRE policy be distributed for review to Board Members and TRE Committee members and recommended implementing a sub-committee to review and make recommended changes to the current TRE policy. The next TRE meeting will be held remotely on June 10, 2020.

08. ON-GOING BUSINESS

A. Board Appointments

Partha Tallapragada was recently confirmed and will take his oath to represent MES as soon as the County Circuit Court re-opens. The position to represent County Government remains vacant; Board Members discussed a potential candidate and the required steps to apply for the vacancy

B. Certified Operator Training and Renewal Process

Board Members and staff discussed drafting a communication model to inform Operators of certification requirements posted on MDE's website. Board Members discussed the use of a video clip "How to Deal with the Certification Process" on MDE's website.

09. NEW BUSINESS

A. COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Board Activities

Dee Settar relayed to the Board that MDE would communicate directly with water and wastewater systems regarding the renewal administrative extension and the impacts on training and exams; a public letter is posted on MDE's website and an updated press release has been drafted. In addition, Board Counsel will evaluate the waiving late fees associated with impacted renewals.

Board staff discussed the implementation of "virtual training" classes, in place of classroom training due to the pandemic, based upon the Board's requirements. Board Members and Liaisons discussed the use of the terms "virtual training" and "distance learning".

Board staff the pandemic-related impacts on examinations; exams for more than 380 participants have been cancelled, including approximately 100 scheduled operators. Almost 300 Operators-In-Training will need to renew by August 1, 2020; most are expected to need exams. Board staff will proctor exams at MDE in Baltimore on June 29 and July 24, 2020.

10. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS

- A. **Bruce Darner** – WWOA Tele-Conference Meeting and fall 2-day training with exam TBD in 2020.
- B. **Jay Price** – CSWWA-CWEA Tri-Con cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic. Training budget is cut for the next 2 years
- C. **Andrea Ryon** –MCET- New Virtual Environment training courses will allow training course exams online for the additional 1.5 credit hours.
- D. **Scott Harmon**- CWEA- the new representative will be Clark Howell. MRW is holding weekly water sampler certification classes to address the training backlog due to the pandemic.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Bill Shreve moved to adjourn virtual conference meeting at 11:40 PM. The next meeting will be held on **June 18, 2020 via Video Conference Meeting using Google Hangouts.**