



**STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

1

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

**January 21, 2021 – 10 AM
Video Conference via Google Hangouts Meet
Link: meet.google.com/ofj-cdhz-xwr
Phone: +1 617-675-4444 / PIN 628 974 262 0325#**

MISSION OF THE MARYLAND BOARD OF WATERWORKS & WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS

The Treatment Systems that provide drinking water for our citizens and handle the 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 who work in these vital systems.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

William Shreve	Wastewater Superintendents; Board Chair
Bruce Darner	Agriculture
Jay Price	Sanitary Districts
Partha Tallapragada	Maryland Environmental Service
Hiram Tanner	Public At-Large

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dominic Deludos	Industrial Superintendents
Joe Johnson	Water Superintendents; Board Vice-Chair

STAFF, LIAISONS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Dee Settar	Board Secretary (Acting); Recused Board Member- MDE
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Pam Franks	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
Ben Thompson	Board Member Appointee- County Governments
Tara Jones	MCET Liaison
Sue Houghton	MRWA Liaison
Scott Harmon	MRWA Liaison
Clark Howells	CWEA Liaison
Eric Dutrow	Guest (Maryland Rural Water Association)

01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Bill Shreve called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. Roll Call was performed by Dee Settar. The Board meeting was conducted virtually via Video conference in lieu of the State of emergency proclaimed by Governor Larry Hogan due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

As the topics planned for the Closed Session discussion were not finalized, Jay Price moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda as amended with corrections, including striking the Closed Session; Partha Tallapragada seconded. The motion passed unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained.

03. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Board Members reviewed the December 17, 2020 draft meeting minutes. Jay Price made a motion to adopt the minutes as amended with corrections; Partha Tallapragada seconded. The motion carried unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained.

04. BOARD CHAIR’S COMMENTS

Board Chairman Bill Shreve welcomed and thanked Board Members, Liaisons and Guests for attending today’s meeting. Bill reiterated, for those who had not yet heard, he will retire as of July 30, 2021 and expressed hope that someone would step into the Board Chair role. He commented on the infrequent additional workload and the job satisfaction.

05. SECRETARY’S REPORT

A. Acting Secretary’s Comments

Acting Secretary Dee Settar noted that Joe Johnson will also retire in August 2021 and vacate the Board’s Vice Chair role. Dee introduced the Board’s Guest, Eric Dutrow, who offered that he is a career operator who currently works with Maryland Rural Water Association and previously worked with the New Design surface water plant in Frederick, MD. Eric expressed hope that he will see everyone soon, after COVID restrictions are lifted, at WWOA, CSAWWA and other events. Bruce Darner inquired about WSA’s database for water sample results. Dee Settar advised the Board the Drinking Water Watch portion of SDWIS should go live for public use in the very near future. She also noted that Water Supply has 26 open positions and that 3 of the 4 Divisions Chiefs retired in the past year, which has impacted the efforts multiple Program efforts. Dee provided a legislative update regarding HB0072, Open Meetings Act, that will impact the Board’s meetings in late 2022; if passed, the Bill will required Board meetings be recorded by video, or by audio with transcript, and the feed must be posted online for at least one year.

B. Revenue & Expenditures Update

Dee Settar presented an updated Revenue and Expenditures Report for November 2020 and an unconfirmed Revenue Report for December 2020. As of November 30, 2020, the adjusted Monthly Revenue was \$10,045.00, the adjusted Cumulative Revenue was \$54,520.00, and the unaltered Cumulative Expenditure was \$60,343.33. As of December 31, 2020, the tentative Monthly Revenue

92 was \$13,550.00, the tentative Cumulative Revenue was \$68,070.00, and Expenditures data had not yet
93 been received from MDE. Bill Shreve noted a potential increase in revenue in December 2020 and
94 January 2021 due the three year renewal cycle and the origination of the Operator Certification Program
95 many years ago. Dee confirmed Board staff received an increased number of applications in December
96 2020.

97
98 Dee also mentioned the Board and Water Supply Program are looking into accepting online payments
99 with credit cards and e-Checks. The Department currently has infrastructure for online invoicing and
100 additional details will be forthcoming.

101 102 **C. Exam Updates**

103
104 Board Staff discussed the examination statistics for the month of December, 2020. There were eight
105 total exams taken in December, with an overall pass rate of 12.50%. Three operators sat for the paper
106 water exams, scoring a pass rate of 0%; and one operator sat for the online (AMP) water exam, scoring
107 a pass rate of 100%; In December, four operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater
108 exams, scoring a pass rate of 0%; and no one sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial
109 wastewater exams. Martin Fuhr noted that exam attendance was limited to only (10) attendees due to
110 Baltimore City health restrictions. Clark Howells asked if an exam could be scheduled in the
111 Montgomery Park Auditorium immediately after the Short Course. Board Staff advised that MDE had
112 not provided any details for their previous inquiry regarding availability, capacity and cost. Martin Fuhr
113 suggested additional and / or alternative sites be considered on both the Eastern Shore and Western
114 Maryland so address any potential issue regarding capacity limit. He also advised an additional proctor
115 would be required for larger examinations.

116 117 118 **D. Other Board Initiatives**

119 Dee Settar advised the Board's database update is expected to be complete in a few weeks. Board staff
120 hopes the software update and resulting printing modifications for renewal forms and certificates will
121 decrease returned mail. In addition, the Water Supply Program is working towards data integration to
122 allow future online applications and payments.

123 124 **E. Update of Board Appointments**

125 Dee Settar advised Rosann Ndebumado and Ben Thompson are expected to be confirmed by the Senate
126 in the next few month for Municipal Government and County Government representation, respectively.
127 Ben noted that while he had taken his oath at the County Circuit Court office, he had not received
128 notification for confirmation. Board Members discussed their confirmation processes; Dee will request
129 an update from MDE's Legislative and Policy Analyst and notify Rosann and Ben with the response.

130
131 Dee also noted that an application was received for the vacant Public-At-Large representation. As the
132 At-Large representation(s) are approved by the Department's Secretary and not the Governor's Office,
133 Dee expressed hope the seat would filled in the near future.

137 **06. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

138
139 Pam Franks asked Partha Tallapragada about Maryland Environmental Services’s recent change for
140 submitting applications and fees submitted separately and discussed the associated challenges,
141 including additional Board staff workload and delays in processing applications. Partha was not
142 familiar with the procedural changes; he will investigate and respond.

143
144 Martin Fuhr presented the applications below. Dee Settar forwarded the Board’s Experience and
145 Reciprocity Log to Board Members.

146
147 **Daniel Jacober** - The Board reviewed the Application for Experience Credit from Daniel Jacober. Mr.
148 Jacober has held his Water Treatment Operator 3 certification for 8 years, and was seeking credit toward
149 his Water Treatment 4 Operator Certification Board staff considered his previous experience as an
150 operator, ensured he passed the Water Treatment 4 examination, and consulted the Experience Credit
151 Matrix to determine precedent. Board staff recommended Mr. Jacober be awarded two years’
152 experience, throughout May 1, 2021; at that time, he will have one years’ experience in the Water
153 Treatment 4 plant and will be eligible for full certification. Jay Price made a motion to accept the
154 recommendation of Board Staff, and Bruce Darner seconded. The Motion carried unanimously; Bill
155 Shreve abstained. Mr. Jacober will be notified his request was approved pending the Department’s
156 Board Oversight review.

157 **Jaclyn Earle**- The Board reviewed the Application for Reciprocity from Jaclyn Earle. Ms. Earl seeks
158 reciprocity from the state of Virginia where she holds a Class 1 Wastewater Operator License. Per
159 Ms. Earle’s out-of-state experience and the Board’s Reciprocity Matrix, Board staff recommended
160 the Board grant reciprocity for Class 5 Industrial Treatment certification. After Board Members
161 discussed Ms. Earle’s experience, Jay Price made a motion to adopt the Board staff recommendation
162 and Bruce Darner seconded. The Motion carried unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained. Ms. Earle is
163 eligible for her Maryland Industrial 5 Wastewater Certification immediately and will be notified her
164 request was approved pending the Department’s Board Oversight review.

165
166 **07. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

167
168 **TRE Policy Update**

169 Acting Secretary Dee Settar forwarded the final draft version of the updated policy to Board Members
170 for final review and requested comments be submitted by January 31st. The Board will vote to adopt
171 the finalized policy in February 2021 and implement the policy pending the Department ’s Oversight
172 review.

173
174
175 **08. ON-GOING BUSINESS**

176
177 **COVID-19 Update**

178 Dee Settar reiterated the number of certification renewals which are past the expiration date but still
179 considered as Active status per the Governor’s Executive Order for administrative extension for permit
180 and certification renewals due to the state of emergency. Dee also discussed inquires from utilities and

181 the Department that pertained to several COVID-related staffing shortages at water and wastewater
182 plants; operators who responded to the Operator Assistance Survey in late March 2020 were asked to
183 update availability in order to provide emergency assistance to other utilities. The updated results,
184 including contact information, will be posted on MDE’s website.

185
186 Board members discussed the recent inclusion of water and wastewater operators as essential workforce
187 and the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine. Board Members also noted a surprisingly large number
188 of operators seem to be unwilling to be vaccinated at this time.

189
190

191 **09. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS**

192
193 Eric Dutrow (Guest) thanked the Board again for welcoming him to the Board meeting. He noted that he
194 had learned a lot from the meeting and was excited to attend future meetings and learn more.

195
196 Hiram Tanner (Board Member) noted that it was his birthday and the Board responded by wishing him a
197 happy birthday.

198
199 Jay Price (Chesapeake Section American Water Works Association) advised that the CWAWWA would
200 hold a virtual career fair on February 12, 2021. Chairman Bill Shreve noted that he has seen a record year
201 for turnover and hoped the career fair would prove productive.

202
203 Bruce Darner (Water and Wastewater Operators Association) advised the WWOA initiated a scholarship
204 for Tri-Con and expressed hope that it would not be cut due to budget constraints. He also advised the
205 Board that his wife had been ill and recovering for an extended period. The Board Chair and staff all sent
206 prayers and well wishes to Mrs. Darner.

207
208 Scott Harmon (Maryland Rural Water Association) advises that MRWA continues provide support to small
209 water systems and to offer water sampler courses and the vacant Circuit Rider position has been filled.

210
211 Tara Jones (Maryland Center for Environmental Training; Water and Wastewater Operators Association)
212 advised that she was hired as the Executive Director of MCET, the position previously held by Karen
213 Brandt. Tara advised that MCET will offer virtual classes for the College of Southern Maryland’s fall
214 schedule and that MCET will offer in person classes as soon as it is practical and safe to do so. She noted
215 that MCET is providing e-mail certificates to those who complete on-line courses in lieu of the blue cards
216 provided during in person training. MCET will also provide a signed transcript to applicants upon request.

217
218 Clark Howells (Chesapeake Water Environment Association; Short Course Chair) advised he had no
219 updates at this time.

220
221 Ben Thompson (CSAWWA; Board Nominee) advised he had no updates at this time.

222
223 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

224
225 Partha Tallapragada moved to adjourn the virtual conference meeting at 11:47 AM. The next meeting
226 will be held on February 18, 2021 Video Conference Meeting held via Virtual Google Hangouts.