



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, July 15, 2021 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 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 Supervision; Board Chair
Hiram Tanner (present until 11:29 am)	Public-At-Large; Board Vice-Chair
Doug Abbot	Water Supervision
Rosann Ndebumado	Municipal Government
James Price	Sanitary Commission
Benjamin Thompson	County Government
Eric Dutrow	Public-At-Large

LIASONS, GUEST & STAFF PRESENT

Dee Settar	Board Secretary
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
John Smith	Board Staff
Ron Wicks	MDE – Compliance Division
Tara Jones	MCET Liaison
Sue Houghton	MRWA Liaison
Clark Howells	CWEA Liaison
Tom McGrath	Guest

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Bruce Darner	Agriculture
Partha Tallapragada	Maryland Environmental Service
Dominic Deludos	Industrial Superintendent

01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairman Bill Shreve called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM. Roll Call was done by Victoria Arbaugh. The Board meeting was conducted virtually via Video conference.

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

Jay Price moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda with amendments. Ben Thompson seconded the motion; Bill Shreve, Board Chair, abstained. The motion carried unanimously.

03. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DRAFT FOR PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Board Members reviewed the June 24, 2021 draft meeting minutes. Doug Abbott moved to adopt the minutes as amended with corrections. Jay Price seconded the motion; Bill Shreve, Board Chair, abstained. The motion carried unanimously.

04. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Board Chairman Bill Shreve welcomed and thanked Board Members, Liaisons and Guests for attending and participating in today's meeting. Bill invited everyone to his "Retirement / Thank You to the Industry" Party at Gilbert Run Park on July 28, 2021. Everyone thanked the Board Chair for his service to the Board, his contributions to the Industry and for selflessly sharing his wealth of knowledge with anyone who expressed an interest. Board Secretary Dee Settar expressed her deep and abiding gratitude for all of Bill's many contributions, consistent professionalism and kindness. Everyone concurred.

05. BOARD STAFF'S REPORTS

A. Revenue & Expenditures Update

Board Secretary Dee Settar presented both the May and the draft June Revenue Reports and explained the expenses. She advised Board Members of several invoices owed to the Association of Board Certifications for numerous exams and opened the floor to questions at that time. No questions were posed by Board Members regarding the Revenue Reports.

B. Exam Updates

Martin Fuhr presented the Second Quarter Examination Statistics to the Board. Eighty exams were taken in April 2021 with an overall pass rate of 31%. Twenty-six operators sat for paper water exams and scored a 38% pass rate, while four operators sat for the online (AMP) water exams and scored a 50% pass rate. Forty-five operators sat for paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams and scored a 24% pass rate, while five operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams and scored a 40% pass rate.

In May 2021, forty-three total exams taken with an overall pass rate of 37%. Twelve operators sat for the paper water exams and scored a 50% pass rate, while two operators sat for the online (AMP) water exams and scored a 100% pass rate. Twenty-six operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater

exams and scored a 35% pass rate, while three operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams and scored a 67% pass rate.

In June 2021, 153 total exams taken with an overall pass rate of 31%. Fifty-eight operators sat for the paper water exams and scored a 34% pass rate, while two operators sat for the online (AMP) water exams and scored a 100% pass rate. Eighty-five operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams and scored a 28% pass rate, while eight operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams scored a 25% pass rate.

Jay Price commented that he believed exams held immediately after the “in person” Short Course yielded better results. He added that, in his experience, that most folks preferred “in person” Short Course preparation. Martin agreed that in-class comradery and a shared sense of purpose seemed to improve test results. No questions were posed by the Board regarding examination statistics.

06. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

A. Education Substitution

Martin Fuhr presented Ava Worrell’s application requesting 1 year education for experience credit towards her water treatment 4 certification, which included college transcripts. After a brief discussion, Jay Price moved to award 1 year education credit. Ben Thompson seconded the motion and Board Chair Bill Shreve abstained. The motion carried unanimously, making Ms. Worrell eligible for water treatment 4 certification February 1, 2022.

B. Experience Credit

Jamison Durrance submitted a request for experience credit toward his water 4 treatment certification. Martin Fuhr presented Mr. Durrance’s request and recommended he be awarded 3 months experience credit. After considering Mr. Durrance’s application, Eric Dutrow moved to award 6 months experience credit. Jay Price seconded the motion and Board Chair Bill Shreve abstained. The motion carried unanimously, making Mr. Durrance eligible for water treatment 4 certification on October 1, 2021.

C. Reciprocity

Martin Fuhr presented Deron Bauer’s application for reciprocity from Pennsylvania. Board Members questioned the Maryland plant classifications and determined Mr. Bauer would be eligible for reciprocity if the Maryland plants were W3 package plants. Jay Price moved to award reciprocity pending confirmation from Board staff. Doug Abbott seconded the motion and Board Chair Bill Shreve abstained. The motion carried unanimously and, upon Martin Fuhr’s confirmation the Maryland plants were classified as W3 plants, Mr. Bauer was granted reciprocity.

08. SPECIAL ORDER

A. Vote for Board Chair and Vice Chair

Dee Settar opened the discussion with a suggestion the vote be conducted via email, and all Board Members concurred. Board Chairman Bill Shreve then opened the floor to nominations. Doug Abbott nominated Jay Price for Board Chair. Ben Thompson volunteered to serve in any capacity and expressed a specific interest in the Vice Chair position. Hiram Tanner stated he was open to remaining in the Vice Chair position. At this time Dee asked Board Counsel Jenn Bowman if Hiram could run the election if it were to be held during the September, 2021 Board Meeting. Jen Bowman responded that would be fine but there was nothing preventing an election today. The Board Members concurred the election should be held immediately. Ben Thompson moved to vote during today's meeting. Jay Price seconded; Bill Shreve abstained. The motion passed unanimously. Voting opened at 11:14 am. Dee accepted emailed votes until the Board Chair closed voting at 11:19 am. The Board Chair called a five (5) minute break and at 11:25 am Dee Settar announced the election results. Jay Price was elected as the new Board Chairman and Ben Thompson was elected as the Vice-Chairman. Chair responsibilities will take place at the next Board meeting.

09. TRE COMMITTEE

A. Review of TRE Committee Recommendations: July 7, 2021

Martin Fuhr presented the recommendations from the Training, Review and Evaluation (TRE) Committee Meeting held on July 7, 2021. Eric Dutrow inquired about the course submitted by Scott Harmon of Maryland Rural Water Association. Dee Settar responded that the Committee recommended it for approval without any changes. Board Members discussed the MCET-submitted course entitled "Working Across Generations" for appropriate audience and agreed the content should be approved for both Superintendents and Operators. Ben Thompson made a motion to approve the course for Operators and Superintendents; Jay Price seconded the motion. Bill Shreve abstained and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed the course "Train the Trainer" submitted by Baltimore, which the TRE Committee felt did not apply to operators or plant processes. Dee Settar inquired if the Board has ever chosen to approve a course with fewer credits than requested. Bill Shreve responded that it had been done but was not commonplace. He suggested that the course be rejected as recommended by the Committee. Jay Price moved to disprove the course in accordance with the Committee recommendation. Doug Abbott seconded the motion. Bill Shreve abstained and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed the remainder of the courses and recommendations without further comment. Doug Abbott moved to adopt the recommendations of the Committee. Jay Price seconded the motion. Bill Shreve abstained and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Review of Additional Application for Tri-Con

Martin Fuhr presented an application submitted for the Tri-Association Conference and suggested a maximum of 16.5 non-process credits be granted pursuant to the Conference Rule. Jay Price moved to accept the recommendations of the Committee; Rosann Ndebumado seconded. Bill Shreve abstained and the motion was passed unanimously.

C. Discussion of Sub - Committees

Dee Settar requested the Board postpone the discussion of the Exam Subcommittee due to time constraints. Board Chair Bill Shreve concurred.

10. ON-GOING BUSINESS

A. Update on (COVID-19) Administrative Extension for Renewals*

Dee Settar updated the Board on the numbers of outstanding renewals from the extension period and the resultant backlog. She advised Board Members about the increased number of status requests by email and phone, as well as other inquiries regarding refunds and credits, and the correct extension termination date of June 30, 2021 or August 15, 2021. Bill Shreve emphasized the benefits of using email as opposed to the USPS due to its problems and delays. Dee responded that FoxPro limited the use and capture of email addresses due to short text fields and emphasized that the new database has the capacity to capture lengthy email addresses. Dee advised the Board that her primary concern is to not be punitive and to reduce the backlog.

*The discussion continued during the Closed Session.

B. Board Statement of on Use of Medical Marijuana (from June 2021 Closed Session)

Dee presented Board Members with a proposed statement regarding prohibition of impairment, including use of medical marijuana, for operators, based upon a previous discussion during Closed Session. Board Members did not have any questions Doug Abbott moved to approve the statement without edit. Jay Price seconded the motion. Bill Shreve abstained and the motion passed unanimously.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss Concerns with T3 Examination / ABC Mastery Sheet (Doug Abbott)

Dee Settar invited Doug Abott to share his concerns that some of the T3 exam content was not suitable for T3 operators. Doug asked if a mastery sheet could be included with an exam confirmation for use as a study aid; he also believed provision of mastery sheets could improve exam passing rates. Dee advised that it could be mailed, emailed and posted on the Board's web page. Doug agreed posting on the website would be a very beneficial. Dee expressed her dissatisfaction with the low passage rate. Board Chair Bill Shreve explained, while Maryland meets the national average on passing, it would be helpful to operators to have updated study information, and that providing mastery sheets could

potentially improve the passage rate. Doug volunteered to assist with development of study guides. Dee and Tara Jones agreed updated mastery sheets and a published study guide would be beneficial.

Doug requested that the mastery sheets be published on the website and Board Members agreed this was a good idea. Bill asked if staff could include a disclaimer that this was recommended for study only and not a guide for a specific test. Dee advised that she would obtain Need To Know Criteria to use for study guide development. Bill and Dee agreed that a committee should be formed to explore how to both present and provide testing and study information to operators. Examination Committee participants will include Doug Abbott, Tara Jones, Jay Price, Dee Settar and Eric Dutrow.

Doug expressed his concerns about potential problem questions on the T3 Examination. Specifically, Doug wants to confirm whether the questions posed are necessary knowledge and information a la “need to know” or superfluous and potentially irrelevant questions that should be removed from the examination. Dee responded that five (5) years ago the Board reviewed the questions for all of the examinations and had ABC remove the superfluous and unnecessary questions. Doug Abbott advised he believed irrelevant questions remained specifically on the T3 examinations. Dee advised that the Board previously considered switching to ABC exams, but that these exams are challenge based, and not process based; as such, Dee noted surface water questions appear on all of ABC water exams, which is the reason Board Members preferred prescriptive exams that meet the Maryland classification structure. Doug added that the Examination Committee needs to review the examination questions for relevancy due to the low passage rate. Dee agreed that it would be addressed by the Exam Review Committee.

B. Update of Training MOU for SFY2022 & RFP for 2023

Dee Settar advised the Board that the MCET MOU for operator training was extended until June 30, 2022. She explained that future training must be obtained through a Request for Proposal to allow competitive bids; MCET is able to bid on any future contract. No questions were posed by Board members.

12. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS

Clark Howells (CWEA) – Advised that attendance for Tri-Con is on track for 1200 attendees. He is excited about the YH2O Program and they will be having a job fair in August.

Jay Price (CSAWWA) – Reminded everyone that Operator of the Year nominations are due by July 23, 2021 and the Association’s Annual Meeting will be held during Tri-Con. In addition, please consider attending the Mid-Atlantic Utility Conference on November 9th and 10th in Ellicott City at Turf Valley Country Club. They have booked great speakers and the sessions are short, so attendees do not lose focus / interest.

Tara Jones (MCET) – Advised everyone that the EARN Program is back up and running. The next classes start in August.

Eric Dutrow (MRWA) – Offered to get the EARN Program information out to the rural systems. He also was excited for Tri-Con.

Tom McGrath (Guest) – Offered to volunteer for the Test Preparation Committee. He also offered to serve as back up for the Industrial Board Member.

13. Board Vote to Move into Closed Session

Pursuant to General Provisions Article (“GP”) § 3-305(b), on a motion made by Ben Thompson and seconded by Jay Price, the following Board members voted in favor to move into closed session on February 18, 2021 at 12:48 PM via Google Hangouts video/ teleconference for the purpose of complying with certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act: Joe Johnson, Dominic Deludos, Bruce Darner, Jay Price, Hiram Tanner, and Partha Tallapragada; Chairman Bill Shreve abstained. The motion carried.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The Board Chair moved to adjourn the virtual conference meeting at 12:50 PM. The next meeting will be held on **September 16, 2021 Video Conference Meeting held via Virtual Google Hangouts**.

15. Call to Order and Purpose of Closed Meeting

With a quorum present, Chairman Bill Shreve called the meeting of the closed session to order at 12:57 PM to perform administrative functions, pursuant to the following provisions of GP § 3-305(b):

GP § 3-305(b)(2) To protect the privacy or reputation of certain individuals concerning a matter not related to public business.

GP § 3-305(b)(7) To consult with Board Counsel to obtain legal advice

GP § 3-305(b)(8) To consult with staff, consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation pertaining to certain individuals.

During the closed meeting, the following Board members were present: Chairman Bill Shreve, Vice-Chairman Hiram Tanner, Jay Price, Doug Abbott, Eric Dutrow, Ben Thompson and Rosann Ndebumado. The following MDE staff were also present during the closed meeting: Jenn Bowman, Dee Settar (self-recused Board Member), Martin Fuhr, Pam Franks, and Victoria Arbaugh. The following Board Members were not present: Dominic Deludos, Partha Tallapragada and Bruce Darner.

Topics Discussed in the Closed Session Meeting

Board Members reviewed minutes from the Board’s June 17, 2021 Closed Meeting and received an update from Board Counsel regarding the Governor’s Executive Order to administratively extend certification renewals until June 30, 2021