



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, July 16, 2020 At 10:00 A.M
Virtual Video Conference Meeting via Google Hangouts

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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.

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 July 16, 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	Scott Harmon	Jay Price
Partha Tallapragada	Nancy Hausrath	Bruce Darner
Joe Johnson		

LIASONS, GUEST & STAFF PRESENT

Dee Settar	Acting Board Secretary (Recused Board Member)
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Pam Franks	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Duane Johnson	MDE Staff
Karen Brandt	MCET Liaison
Sue Houghton	MRWA Liaison
Clark Howells	CWEA Liaison
Bradley A. Luhn	Guest

Not Present

Dominic Deludos	Board Member
Hiram Tanner	Board Member

01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Roll Call was done by Victoria Arbaugh.

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

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It was moved by Joseph Johnson and seconded by Scott Harmon to adopt the proposed meeting agenda with an amendment to indicate that the meeting was via video call. Motion unanimously carried.

03. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Board Members reviewed the April 16, 2020 draft meeting minutes. After review, it was moved by Joseph Johnson and seconded by Scott Harmon to adopt the minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Members reviewed the May 19, 2020 draft meeting minutes. After review, it was moved by Scott Harmon and seconded by Jay Price to adopt the amended minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Members reviewed the June 18, 2020 draft meeting minutes. After review, it was moved by Nancy Hausrath and seconded by Scott Harmon to adopt the minutes with a formatting correction to include line numbers on the document. Motion carried unanimously.

04. BOARD CHAIR’S COMMENTS

Board Chairman Bill Shreve thanked Board Members and Liaisons for attending today’s meeting. The Board Chairman confirmed that there would be no meeting in August and the Board would next convene in September.

05. SECRETARY’S REPORT

A. Report on Board Administrative Activities (Revenue & Expenditures)

Acting Secretary Dee Settar introduced the new Executive Director of the Well Drillers Board, Duane Johnson, as a guest to the meeting and provided an update to the Board for the end of the fiscal year. Appropriations for fiscal year 2020 were \$290,891.00. As of June 30, 2020, expenses were \$16,845.42, the encumbrance is \$53,454.00 and the revenue was \$157,050.70. Board Members asked what constituted expenses and encumbrances. The Acting Secretary will solicit details from the Water and Science Administration Budget Program and update the Board. At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Acting Secretary will continue to provide a running detail of revenue and expenditures to the Board at future meetings.

The Acting Secretary noted Board staff processed a total of 2454 certificates in CY2019. Board Members and staff discussed the need to create and implement an on-line renewal submission process for both applications and payments.

B. Exam Updates

Martin Fuhr presented the examination statistics for June 2020, which resulted in an overall pass rate of 36%. See attachment for additional details. Martin conveyed limitations on testing availability and that MDE could currently only accommodate twelve (12) people at a time.

93 C. **Other Board Actions**

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95 Dee Settar summarized an ongoing discussion with Board Counsel, Jenn Bowman, regarding late
96 fees per the Governor’s Executive Order to administratively extend certification renewals. Accord-
97 ing to Board that MDE’s Attorney General was coordinating within the department and other State
98 agencies to ensure consistency. Nancy Hausrath asked that the Board be given specifics on how the
99 agency was interpreting Governor Hogan’s Emergency Order and requested communication regard-
100 ing renewal deadlines, expirations and late fee waivers be provided to water facilities and not only
101 operators.

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104 **06. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

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106 Michael Brewington – Requested Reciprocity from the State of Virginia for a Maryland Class 2 Water
107 Treatment Operator Certification. Board Staff recommended that Mr. Brewington pass the exam before
108 being granted full certification. Jay Price moved to approve the Board Staff recommendation and was se-
109 conded by Nancy Hausrath. Motion was unanimously carried.

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111 Bradley A. Luhn – Requested Experience Credit for his Maryland Waste Water Class 5A Operator Certi-
112 fication based upon his experience at the City of Hagerstown Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) la-
113 boratory and the City of Hagerstown Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Luhn received his Temporary 5A on
114 February 1, 2019. Board Staff recommended that Mr. Luhn be granted two (2) years of Experience Credit.
115 Nancy Hausrath abstained from voting. Joseph Johnson moved to approve the Board Staff recommendation
116 and was seconded by Scott Harmon. Motion carried.

117
118 Devin Kenny – Requested Education Substitution for his Operator Class T4 Water Treatment Certification.
119 Board Staff recommended that Mr. Kenny be granted seven (7) months of experience credit making him
120 eligible for full certification on December 1, 2020. Joe Johnson moved to approve the Board Staff recom-
121 mendation and was seconded by Scott Harmon. Motion unanimously carried.

122
123 After presenting applications, Board staff requested Board Member guidance concerning two situations:

- 124
- 125 1) Martin Fuhr explained that the Hampton Plant REO is requesting assistance in getting its employees
126 certified. They are specifically concerned about obtaining both Temporary 5 and 5A certificates in the
127 absence of fully certified operators. A robust discussion ensued. The Board Chair suggested a standard
128 be set whereby employees could apply for a temporary license and then take the exam and use experi-
129 ence as earned. He also suggested that it may be necessary to propose a regulation change to address
130 specific situations where plants are upgraded. Nancy Hausrath concurred with the Board Chair’s pro-
131 posal / assessment and further specified that experience should be granted as of the date that the plant
132 “goes on-line.” She echoed the concern about current regulations explaining that since the entire staff
133 will be in possession of a Temporary 5A certification there is no way for new hire to be sponsored
134 without a fully accredited employee.
 - 135
136 2) Martin Fuhr asked the Board to consider concerns about “double dipping” to use education credit as a
137 substitute for actual on the job experience and asked if it is appropriate to give credit for only colleges
138 courses related to the position at hand. Martin posited a current scenario whereby an applicant who was
139 granted 7.6 months credit for “any other management experience” towards his Operator’s Certificate
140 now wants to use the same education to count as experience for his Superintendent’s Certificate. The
141 application will have two (2) years of experience on December 1, 2020 but needs three (3) full years

142 of experience. It was determined by the Board Chairman that this matter would be tabled until the
143 September Board Meeting.

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146 **07. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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148 **A. Training Review and Evaluation (TRE) Policy Update**

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150 The Board discussed the proposed policy change draft dated July 10, 2020. The Board Chairman de-
151 termined that the proposed policy changes should be reviewed and addressed at the September Meeting.
152 Dee Settar will take the lead in incorporating changes to the TRE policy; Karen Brandt, Jay Price and
153 Scott Harmon will complete the Sub-Committee. Martin recommended that all courses provide docu-
154 mentation for course completion that includes the TRE number, so Board Staff could look up courses
155 for renewals. Karen Brandt suggested courses provided a certificate of completion to participants after
156 completion of the course of study. Nancy Hausrath expressed concern that the current honor system
157 method for online training was inadequate to ensure that the course registrants are actually attending
158 and participating in on-line courses. She requested the TRE Committee to consider methods to verify
159 the registrant participates in the on-line course, such use of web camera with proof of legal identifica-
160 tion.

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162 **B. Training Review and Evaluation (TRE) Recommendations Update**

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164 The Board discussed the TRE Committee recommendations for training with updates to designate
165 courses as “process” or “non process.” Martin Fuhr clarified all courses needing additional information
166 would not be approved until applications were determined to be complete. It was moved by Nancy
167 Hausrath and seconded by Joe Johnson to approve the recommendations of the TRE Committee. Mo-
168 tion was unanimously carried.

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170 **08. ON-GOING BUSINESS- COVID19 Update (Training & Exams)**

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172 The Board staff reported more than 100 operators had certification examinations cancelled due to the pan-
173 demic and all had been re-scheduled for an exam event at MDE on June 29, 2020. However, MDE only
174 allowed 24 people to take the exam due to social distancing requirements in Baltimore City. Additional
175 exams are scheduled.

176
177 The Board Chair asked Dee Settar if the Water Supply Program would agree to give MCET authorization
178 to communicate with Community Colleges to see if they are able and willing to administer examinations.
179 The Board Chair directed Board Staff to draft a memorandum to explore alternative options to test remotely
180 using surrogates. The Board Chair also discussed the ongoing urgency of filling the remaining vacant Board
181 member position.

182
183 Board Members requested that Board Staff investigate the status of several pending applications. As most
184 facilities, including MDE, continue to enact social distancing limitations, Board Members agreed to con-
185 tinue having remote meetings.

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188 **9. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS**

190 **MCET** – Karen Brandt discussed the difficulties and benefits of expanding remote and testing. She dis-
191 cussed the benefits of virtual, live classes provided they meet adequate safety and security measures.

192
193 **CSAWWA**- Jay Price mentioned several national conferences were cancelled due to the pandemic and
194 discussed an initiative for free training to distribution and collection operators to replace the cancelled
195 “AWWA Short Course”.

196
197 **WVOA**- Bruce Darner discussed that WVOA posted 2020 service awards. The Association will offer a
198 summary of online training.

199
200 **MRWA**- Scott Harmon concurred with Karen Brandt’s comments and supported efforts to expand both
201 remote training and testing. He also mentioned that while the Association’s field staff operations resumed,
202 office staff remained limited.

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204 **CWEA**- Clark Howells offered the CWEA July and August meetings were cancelled and he had no update.

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207 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

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209 Joseph Johnson moved to adjourn virtual conference meeting at 12:04 PM. The next meeting will be held
210 on September 17, 2020 by video conference via Virtual Google Hangouts.