



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, January 19, 2023 At 10:00 A.M
Virtual Video Conference Meeting via Google Hangouts

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2 MISSION OF THE MARYLAND BOARD OF WATERWORKS & WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
3 The Treatment Systems that provide drinking water for our citizens and handle the wastes generated by
4 our daily activities play an important role in protecting Public Health and the Environment of Maryland.
5 Through the Certification Program established by State Law, the “Board of Waterworks and Waste
6 Systems Operators” sets the education, experience and examination standards for Operators and
7 Superintendents who work in these vital systems.
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10 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

11	Jay Price	Sanitary Districts; Board Chair; CSAWWA Liaison
12	Doug Abbott	Water Supervision: Board Vice-Chair
13	Clark Howells	Municipal Governments; CWEA Liaison
14	Ed Hogan	Industrial Superintendents
15	Bruce Darner	Agriculture; WWOA Liaison
16	Joseph Wright	Maryland Environmental Service
17	Eric Dutrow	Public-At-Large
18	Connie Luffman	Wastewater Supervision
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22 **LIASONS, GUEST & STAFF PRESENT**

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24	Dee Settar	Deputy Program Manager Water Supply
25	Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
26	Martin Fuhr	Board Secretary
27	Pamela Franks	Board Staff
28	Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
29	Diana Kremer	Water Supply / Natural Resource Planner V
30	Tara Jones	Liaison - MCET
31	Bill Shreve	TRE Committee Liaison
32	Neil Winner	Retired WWSO Board Secretary
33	Clifton Weller	Baltimore County Operator
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36 **BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

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38	Hiram Tanner	Public-At-Large
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01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Jay Price called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Roll Call was done by Victoria Arbaugh, Board Staff. The Board meeting was conducted online using Google Meet.

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

Board Members reviewed the January, 19, 2023 Draft Agenda. Ed Hogan moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda with amendments. Bruce Darner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Board Chair Jay Price abstaining.

03. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF DRAFT DECEMBER 15, 2022 OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Board members reviewed the draft December 15, 2022 minutes and made several changes. Ed Hogan made a motion to adopt the minutes with changes. Joe Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Board Chair Jay Price abstaining.

04. BOARD CHAIR’S COMMENT & GUEST INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chair Jay Price opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and contributing to the work of the Board. He congratulated Martin Fuhr on his promotion to Board Secretary. He also introduced all of the guests and asked them to introduce themselves. Neil Winner greeted the Board and thanked them for their work. He also congratulated both Martin Fuhr and Diana Kremer on their promotions. Dee Settar introduced MDE’s new PFAS Czar Diana Kremer to the Board. Victoria Arbaugh introduced Mr. Cliff Weller from Baltimore County and Jay Price welcome guest Cliff Weller and encouraged his input and submission of an application if he was interested in serving on the Board. Cliff responded he was happy to attend and is interested in observing via chat since he had microphone connectivity issues.

05. BOARD STAFF’S REPORTS

A. Board Member Updates

Dee Settar advised that MDE’s Tony Sierra had resigned for a new employment opportunity. As a result, she noted, we now have two Board vacancies. Specifically, we are missing the MDE Board Appointee a County Board Appointee. She encouraged Mr. Weller to apply if he was interested. Dee also advised that the open county position could be filled by either water or wastewater operators or by elected officials.

B. Revenue & Expenditure Report

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Board Secretary Martin Fuhr presented the Revenue & Expenditure Report. He specifically provided the Board with the reconciled October and November of 2022 figures and the unreconciled figures for December of 2022. Dee Settar added that the encumbrance covered cumulative revenue for 10/31/2022 and 11/30/2022. In addition, Dee noted that the encumbrance includes both ABC Exams and MCET Training expenses. She also advised the Board that she had questioned the low appropriations figure and was advised that the original appropriation was incorrect due to MDE Fiscal’s error in assigning federally designated funds to the WWSO Board. That error has since been corrected to reflect an appropriation of \$376,189 and not \$250,711 as previously reported. She further stated that the encumbrance was on hold due to an MCET invoice that is still in process. The Board had no questions or comments.

FY2023 Appropriations	\$376,189.00
FY2022 Appropriations	\$390,093.00
FY2021 Appropriations	\$286,702.00
Unreconciled Cumulative Revenue as of October 31, 2022	\$60,875.00
Unreconciled Cumulative Revenue as of November 30, 2022	\$71,775.00
Unreconciled Cumulative Revenue as of December 31, 2022	Pending
Encumbrance as of December 31, 2022	Pending

C. Exam Statistics

Martin Fuhr presented the examination statistics. He highlighted the average passage rates for the previous three months. He noted that there is a low passage rate for the Wastewater 5A Exam. Jay Price expressed his concerns over the passage rate and Bill Shreve concurred stating that we need to review the questions with the highest percent of wrong answers. Eric Dutrow suggested that it would help to identify areas where the Operators in Training (OIT) appear to need assistance and focus on those areas. Jay Price expressed concern over the OITs who had no desire to pass only to renew OITs impacting the pass / fail rate. Victoria Arbaugh concurred and noted that many OITs had to be cajoled into sitting for the exam after submitting renewal applications but not wholeheartedly attempting the required exam attempt. Bill Shreve responded that when it comes to career OITs, many are good workers but poor test takers.

As former Board Chair, Bill Shreve recalled that former Program Manager Saied Kasraei had a very good recommendation that after an OIT fails the exam three (3) times, then he or she be required to take a mandatory remedial course to ensure some base level of core competency for career OITS. Dee Settar noted that the new examination database will track examination attempts going forward. Doug Abbott expressed concern over the exam set up and particularly the need for updated study guides. Bill Shreve advised that WWOA wanted to tackle the task of updating MCETS Examination Guides.

131 Board Chair Jay Price explained that while the Wastewater 5A Exam was often considered too difficult,
132 there were also concerns that the Industrial 2 Exam was too easy. Doug Abbott returned Board members
133 to his concerns over the need to review the exams and prioritize the ones with the lowest passage rates.
134 Clifton Weller suggested that the Board look at the examinations with the highest number of near misses.
135 He thought it would be helpful to look at those with the highest percentile of operators scoring 65%-69%
136 since eliminating a few confusing / extremely difficult questions could potentially push them over the line
137 to pass. Eric Dutrow agreed noting many operators told him of their difficulty in passing and how close
138 they seemed to come at each attempt.
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140 Jay Price summarized the consensus that the Board needs to update the study guides and to eliminate
141 irrelevant / unnecessary / overcomplicated questions. Doug Abbott noted that he believed some tests were
142 overly broad and should be narrowly tailored to the actual practices that are most common throughout the
143 industry. Bill Shreve advised the Board that since the early 1990s the overall passage rate has hovered
144 in the mid-30th percentile. Martin agreed that had been the case since he had started with the WWSO
145 Board, and it was comparable to nationwide pass / fail statistics.
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147 Dee Settar expressed her concern that the ABC Test Formulas should be included in any updated study
148 guide. She directed Martin Fuhr to verify with ABC whether they would permit MDE, as a professional
149 courtesy, to provide that information in study guides. Clifton Weller noted that he has seen many YouTube
150 Videos with tutorials for different processes that are published by industry members across the globe. He
151 believes they can be of great assistance to OITs. Dee and Bill concurred.
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153 **D. Inquiries & Updates**

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157 Dee Settar advised that Serena McIlwain was appointed by Gov. Wes Moore to be Secretary of the
158 Maryland Department of the Environment. She comes to MDE with a wealth of knowledge and expertise
159 after just leaving her appointment by Gov. Gavin Newsome as the Under Secretary - Chief Operations
160 Officer of the California Environmental Protections Agency.
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162 **6. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

163 **1.) Nicholas Pietrefesa**

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167 Mr. Pietrefesa is employed by M&B Environmental in Harleysville, PA as a project manager. and is
168 requesting Maryland Wastewater 3 Certification. He wishes to operate the Wawa store on Churchville
169 Road in Bel Air, Maryland. Board Staff originally recommended granting his request. His petition was
170 postponed pending review of the permit. Victoria Arbaugh was able to obtain the expired permit from
171 coworkers at MDE. After some discussion, it was determined that this application would be “on hold”
172 pending his employer obtaining an active and valid permit. The motion to place the application on hold
173 pending an active permit was made by Joe Wright and seconded by Bruce Darner. The motion passed
174 unanimously with the Board Chair abstaining.
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177 **2.) Frank Stokes, Jr.**
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179 Mr. Stokes requested reciprocity from Virginia to work at the Maryland Food Center Authority's
180 wastewater treatment plant in Jessup, a class 5A facility. Mr. Stokes had previously worked at the Norman
181 M. Cole, Jr. Pollution Control Plant in Lorton, VA. Martin presented his credentials, and taking into
182 consideration thirty years of wastewater experience and experience with anaerobic digestion,
183 recommended granting the request. Ed Hogan made a motion to adopt the Board's recommendation. The
184 motion was seconded by Doug Abbott. The motion passed unanimously with the Board Chair abstaining.
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187 **07. EXAMINATION COMMITTEE UPDATE**
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189 The Board Chair, Jay Price decided to postpone further discussion until the next Board Meeting in the
190 interest of time and efficiency.
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193 **08. TRE COMMITTEE UPDATE**
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195 Martin presented the applications and the TRE Committee recommendations to the Board. After a brief
196 discussion Bruce Darner moved to adopt the Committee's recommendations. The Motion was second by
197 Doug Abbott. The motion passed with the Board Chair abstaining.
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200 **09. NEW BUSINESS**
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202 **Minimum Experience (Time) Requirements for Multiple Certifications**
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204 Doug Abbott presented a concern of an OIT Water Treatment 4 (T4) who moved to a Water Treatment 3
205 Plant who obtained his OIT Water Treatment 3 (T3) who wants to know if he can use his experience under
206 the T4 toward his T3 Certification. A discussion was held and there was no definitive resolution. However,
207 all agreed he would need at least one year of experience at his current plant prior to submitting a petition
208 for experience credit under the T4.
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211 **10. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS**
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213 **Bruce Darner (WWOA)** – Advised that WWOA held a Main Body Meeting at MCET and they had
214 budget discussions and advised that they sent out scholarship applications for the Short Course. In
215 addition, it was determined that the main body meeting will be held on May 17, 2023 in Baltimore. He
216 advised that they are holding training sessions on 2/8/2023 on the Eastern Shore and on 4/19/2023 in
217 Annapolis. He closed by advising all in attendance, to spread the word.
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219 **Eric Dutrow (MRWA)** – Advised that MRWA has started an Energy Efficiency Program. Mr. Dennis
220 Bartholomew will be assisting small systems and saving money and becoming more eco-friendly. He will

221 be able to assist any system serving 10,000 or fewer customers. Please spread the news and encourage
222 people to use this great resource.

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224 **Bill Shreve (TRE Committee / WWOA)** – Advised that Tri-Con turned a large profit and wanted to
225 donate to assist MCET in updating the Examination Study Guides. WWOA voted to donate 10,000 for
226 funding and they will be meeting with MDE Quarterly for assistance.

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228 **Clark Howells (CWEA)** – Advised that Tri-Con was a great success, including fiscally. They are working
229 on a MOU for the Utility Management Conference and will be splitting excess resources with CSAWWA.
230 He noted that they had participated in the very successful career fair held in Baltimore on 1/12/2023.

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232 **Tara Jones (MCET)** – Advised that MCET started the Earn Grant on 1/1/2023 and they hope to get
233 registration started on a new software system shortly. She apologized for the technological growing pains.
234 She advised an email will be sent to EARN Registrants advising of changes to math and process courses.

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237 **11. BOARD VOTE TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION**

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239 Pursuant to General Provisions Article (“GP”) § 3-305(b), on a motion made by Doug Abbott seconded
240 by Bruce Darner, the following Board members voted in favor to move into closed session on January 19,
241 2023 at 12:11 AM via Google Meet video/ teleconference for the purpose of complying with certain
242 provisions of the Open Meetings Act: Doug Abbott, Clark Howells, Ed Hogan, Bruce Darner, Joseph
243 Wright, Eric Dutrow, and Connie Luffman. The Board Chair, Jay Price, abstained. The motion carried.

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246 **12. ADJOURNMENT**

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248 Bruce Darner moved to adjourn the open meeting at 12:12 PM. The next meeting will be held on **February**
249 **16, 2023 Video Conference Meeting held via Google Meet.**

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252 **CALL TO ORDER AND PURPOSE OF CLOSED MEETING**

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254 With a quorum present, Chairman Jay Price called the meeting of the closed session to order at 12:14 PM
255 to perform administrative functions, pursuant to the following provisions of GP § 3-305(b):

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

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

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262 During the closed meeting, the following Board members were present: Chairman Jay Price, Doug Abbott,
263 Clark Howells, Ed Hogan, Bruce Darner, Eric Dutrow, and Connie Luffman. The following MDE staff
264 were also present during the closed meeting: Jenn Bowman, Dee Settar, Pam Franks, Martin Fuhr,
265 Virgiline Ogingko and Victoria Arbaugh. The following Board Members were not present: Hiram Tanner.

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TOPIC DISCUSSED DURING CLOSED MEETING: Discussion of ongoing boil water advisory.