



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, July 18, 2024, 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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11 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

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| 13 Doug Abbott | Water Supervision; Board Chair |
| 14 Bill Shreve | Public at Large; Board Vice-Chair |
| 15 Ed Hogan | Industrial Superintendents |
| 16 Bruce Darner | Agriculture; WWOA Liaison |
| 17 Connie Luffman | Wastewater Supervision |
| 18 Davina Yutzy | County Government |
| 19 Ben Thompson | Sanitary Commission |
| 20 Eric Dutrow | Public-At-Large |
| 21 Joe Wright | Maryland Environmental Service |
| 22 Sophia Oberton | Municipal Government |
| 23 Anthony Nwagwe | Maryland Department of Environment / Water Supply Division |

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25 **LIAISONS, GUESTS & MDE STAFF PRESENT**

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| 27 Jennifer Bowman | Board Counsel |
| 28 Martin Fuhr | Board Secretary |
| 29 Pamela Franks | Board Staff |
| 30 Victoria Arbaugh | Board Staff |
| 31 Dee Settar | Deputy Director Water Supply Program |
| 32 Taj Goodlow | Division Chief Certification Boards |
| 33 Melissa Coker | Director MCET |
| 34 Donna Dunlap | Maryland Rural Water Liaison |
| 35 Tony Rivera-Silva | Reciprocity Applicant from Virginia |

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37 **01. CALL TO ORDER**

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39 Board Chair Doug Abbott called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Roll Call was conducted by Victoria
40 Arbaugh.
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43 **02. BOARD CHAIR’S COMMENT & GUEST INTRODUCTIONS**

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45 Doug Abbott welcomed everyone in attendance. Reciprocity Applicant Tony Rivera-Silva introduced
46 himself and gave a brief synopsis of his history as a Wastewater Operator, Superintendent and Plant
47 Manager in Virginia.

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49 **03. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA**

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51 Board Members reviewed the July 18, 2024 Draft Agenda. Bill Shreve moved to reorder the agenda Tony
52 River-Silva’s application to be reviewed first, and Ben Thompson seconded the motion. The motion
53 carried with one abstention by Doug Abbott.

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55 **04. REVIEW OF RECIPROCTY APPLICATION**

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57 **A. Phillip A. (Tony) Rivera-Silva**

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59 Mr. Rivera-Silva is seeking reciprocity from the State of Virginia where he operated the Williamsburg
60 and James River Treatment Plants. He currently holds a Virginia Wastewater Works Operator License
61 Class 1, and he has over a decade of experience. He is applying for a Maryland Wastewater 3A or 5A
62 certificate based upon the operations at Webster Field WWTP at the Patuxent Naval Air Station where he
63 is employed. Given Mr. Rivera-Silva’s experience Board Staff recommends that he be granted his
64 Maryland Wastewater 3A with consideration for a 5A.

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66 A motion was made by Bill Shreve to grant the Maryland Wastewater 3A with consideration for a 5A if
67 the certification is required. The motion was seconded by Bruce Darner and passed with one abstention
68 of Doug Abott.

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70 **05. REVIEW & ADOPTION OF DRAFT JUNE 20, 2024 OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

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72 Martin Fuhr presented the proposed minutes for review. Bill Shreve made a motion to approve the
73 amended minutes and was seconded by Bruce Darner. The motion passed with the Board Chair abstaining.

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75 **06. BOARD INITIATIVES**

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77 **A. Exam Review Subcommittee**

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79 Bill Shreve briefed the members on the work of the Exam Review Subcommittee. He explained that they
80 were stuck on question #41 which needs to be corrected. He raised concerns that they don’t have the
81 answer key to the exam, which is necessary to confirm the information is correct. Martin Fuhr advised
82 that he had already ordered exams as is.

83
84 However, Martin will request the answer key and inquire whether measurements can be adjusted from
85 Metric to the English Standard System. Bill Shreve advised that the committee had determined that the
86 full Board would vote on approving the updated exams as amended by the subcommittee.

88 **B. Application Process / Communications Subcommittee**

89
90 Martin Fuhr presented the application processing statistics to the Board. This reporting included the
91 number of incomplete application letters that had been mailed out and resolved outstanding application.
92 He reported that the WWSO Board Staff has now reviewed half of the outstanding backlogged
93 applications.

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95 **07. NEW BUSINESS:**

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97 **A. COMAR Review of Reporting Bill**

98
99 Ed Hogan advised that he had previously created an outline of all certifications issued by the WWSO
100 Board. The only portion not yet completed is the timeline for all application processing. Ed suggested that
101 the “pathway to certification” also be included with the spreadsheet.

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103 **B. Board Chair Elections**

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105 Doug Abbott stated he is willing to serve for another year but after that he felt that the Board would need
106 a fresh approach. Bill Shreve also agreed to serve as Vice Board Chair another year and to serve the Board
107 in any way that he may be needed. Everyone agreed that there should be a rotation of Board duties, so no
108 member was overburdened. Ben Thompson volunteered to draft a Term Limit Policy for the Board to
109 prevent any members from being overwhelmed by duties and to give everyone a chance to serve in a
110 leadership position. Ben Thompson made a motion to re-elect Doug and Bill. The motion was seconded
111 by Bruce Darner. The motion passed with two abstentions by Doug Abbott and Bill Shreve.

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113 **C. Electronic Portal Update**

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115 Martin Fuhr advised that MDE’s IT Department is currently working on developing the automated
116 payment and certification system. He explained outside stakeholders have been recruited to assist in the
117 testing process and provide feedback. Martin also advised that the 7/17/2024 Database Development
118 Meeting with IT had been cancelled and he would advise the Board once the next meeting was set. Taj
119 Goodlow further explained that IT had not met with him in over 6 weeks for unknown reasons. Taj will
120 emphasize the urgency of the matter to both Water Supply Management and MDE IT.

121
122 **D. PFAS Required Certification**

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124 Martin Fuhr advised that originally Virgiline Ongkingco, a former Engineer with MDE, had come to the
125 Board and requested that a new category be created for reverse osmosis to remove PFAS. Anthony
126 Nwagwe countered that in his experience there are several other processes and mechanism to treat and
127 remove PFAS. Anthony specifically recommended that the Board consider using the Water Treatment 5
128 or create a specific Endorsement for PFAS treatments. Ben Thompson expressed his concerns that under
129 current schematics he believed that the Water Treatment 4 was appropriate, but he is open to other options.
130 Eric Dutrow noted that several T1 Plants are adding PFAS Treatment and believes an Endorsement to the
131 primary classification is the way to go. Ben Thompson noted that GAC is tied to filtration under the current
132 regulatory scheme. Eric Dutrow and Bill Shreve both noted that while the Treatment 4 and 5 are both

133 appropriate for PFAS there may be a need to create a specific Endorsement especially as technology
134 evolves. Doug Abbot agreed explaining that while the T4 is all encompassing, the mere addition of GAC
135 to a T1 Plant should not require a new T4 Certification. He noted that an Endorsement may be the way to
136 go. Doug asked that a committee be created to investigate and address this matter. He advised anyone
137 interested to email him for appointment to the new Committee. Jen reminded Board Members that no
138 more than 5 members can sit on any committee, or the gathering would constitute a Board Meeting since
139 there would be a Quorum. Doug advised that the first 5 applicants would be member of the new
140 Committee. Ed Hogan noted that there should also be a committee for PFAS treatment for wastewater.
141 The Board Chair agreed and advised that he would sit on both committees, and he would update the Board
142 on the volunteers at the next meeting.

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144 **E. August WWSO Board Meeting**

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146 The Board Chair decided that an August Meeting will be on the schedule in the event it is needed and can
147 be cancelled if permissible.

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149 **F. Mailing v Emailing of Certifications**

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151 Ben Thompson opened the discussion by formally requesting any determination made by the Board
152 regarding this matter be formally recorded in the minutes. Ben specifically wanted to know why the Board
153 Staff is only mailing versus emailing certificates and why requests for emailed copies are being denied.

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155 Victoria Arbaugh advised that she emailed and / or mailed copies of certificates upon request. Martin Fuhr
156 notes that Board Staff is encouraged to email certificates when requested either on the application or by
157 the Water Systems. Anthony Nwagwe and Bill Shreve advised that they believe emailing should be the
158 default mechanism of delivery. Jen approved this option in cases where it is requested on the application
159 form. Bill Shreve made a motion to make email the default mechanism of delivery when possible. Ben
160 Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed with Board Chair abstaining. Ben also asked if
161 administrative staff were allowed to request copies of certificates via email. Both Martin and Taj stated
162 that was permissible and Bill Shreve advised the matter had been previously addressed by the Board. Ben
163 Thompson asked that this declaration be recorded for posterity and all Board Staff comply with responding
164 accordingly to such requests. Jenn Bowman confirmed the ability to email operator licenses directly to
165 the utility and employers.

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167 **08. BOARD STAFF'S REPORTS:**

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169 **A. Revenue & Expenditures Update**

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171 Martin Fuhr provided the revenue, expenditure and cumulative expenses figures from May of 2024. He
172 advised that the accounting position for Water Supply was not being filled and that he would do his best
173 to obtain current numbers for the next Board Meeting. The Board did not have any questions regarding
174 the matter. He presented the following figures:

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FY24 Appropriations through June 30, 2024	\$299,634
Cumulative Revenue as of May 31, 2024	\$169,077

178 **Cumulative Expenses as of May 31, 2024** **\$318,567**
179 **Encumbrance as July 1, 2024** **\$8,115**

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181 **B. Examination Statistics**

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183 Martin Fuhr presented the most recent examination statistics to the Board which was the second quarter
184 of 2024. The highlight of the figures was the 57% pass rate for June which draws a direct correlation to
185 the Short Course. Board Members requested that Board Staff provide standalone statistics on the Short
186 Course Exam. They also requested that Staff emphasize both the free EARN Exam Preparation Course
187 and the upcoming WWOA Study Guides. Sophia Oberton shared her personal experience of how
188 difficult it is for Operators to locate exam preparation and / or study guides. Doug Abbott a will provide
189 email copies of his old study guides to Sophia until WWOA publishes new ones.

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191 **C. TRE Subcommittee Report & Recommendations**

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193 Martin Fuhr briefed the members on the work of the TRE Subcommittee. The Board reviewed the
194 recommendations and had no comments. Ed Hogan made a motion to approve the TRE Committee
195 Recommendations. The motion was seconded by Joe Wright. The motion passed with one abstention from
196 Doug Abbott.

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198 **D. EPA Survey**

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200 The Board Chair Doug Abbott recommended that all Board Members review the EPA Report for
201 discussion at the next Board Meeting. There was no further discussion.

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203 **E. Board Applications**

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205 Victoria Arbaugh presented the application for education substitution submitted by Lindsey Glanz.
206 Lindsey Glanz holds an Operator in Training Wastewater 5A that was issued on 6/1/2022. Lindsey is
207 requested Education Substitution for the pending Wastewater 5A Operator Certificate. After
208 consideration, a motion to grant Lindsay Glanz the certification by recommendation was made by Ed
209 Hogan. The motion was seconded by Bruce Darner. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention
210 from Doug Abbott.

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212 **09. COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS & LIASONS**

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214 There were no additional comments from Board Members.

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216 **10. REVIEW / STATUS OF ACTIONS ITEMS**

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218 Anthony Nwagwe presented the following items for action, follow up and resolution:

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220 1.) Martin Fuhr will email the Board Meeting Information at least two (2) days prior to the meeting.
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- 222 2.) Martin Fuhr will update the webpage with application entries and update the incomplete
223 application list on a bi-weekly basis.
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- 225 3.) Anthony Nwagwe will review the Board’s website for needed updates and the possibility of PDF
226 fillable applications and renewal forms.
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- 228 4.) Doug Abbott will draft a prescription for the examination subcommittee.
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- 230 5.) Jen Bowman will review the current regulation of payment structure.
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- 232 6.) Martin Fuhr will provide the backlog metrics to the Board to track improvements.
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- 234 7.) Ben Thompson will update the WWSO Board Action Matrix monthly.
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- 236 8.) Ed Hogan will Chair the SB472 Subcommittee.
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- 238 9.) Martin Fuhr will provide a legal referral regarding the 2-year record retention.
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- 240 10.) Martin Fuhr will provide the Exam Subcommittee with Answer Key and Current Exam
241 Prescription for the 5A Exam.
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- 243 11.) Martin will provide the specific exam results from the 2024 Short Course.
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- 245 12.) Martin Fuhr will attempt to track the number of exam attempts per operator
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- 247 13.) Doug Abbott will provide the names of the participants in the Subcommittees being created
248 for Water PFAS Classifications and for Wastewater PFAS Classifications.
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- 250 14.) Pamela Franks and Victoria Arbaugh will email certificates as requested and designated on
251 applications. Email will be the default delivery mechanism when requested on applications.
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- 253 15.) Ben Thompson will draft an SOP for term limits for Board Officers to ensure rotation of duties
254 and an equal opportunity to act in a leadership role for all members.
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11. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS

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259 **Bruce Darner (WWOA)** – Bruce advised that they would be granting 16 Tri-Con Scholarship, with 4
260 going to each region. On June 25, 2024 over 35 people attended the training put on by Bill Shreve.
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262 **Ben Thompson (CSAWWA)** – It is the 75th Anniversary of the organization.
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12. BOARD VOTE TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION

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Pursuant to General Provisions Article (“GP”) § 3-305(b), on a motion made by Joe Wright and by Ben Thompson, the following Board members voted in favor to move into closed session on July 18, 2024 at 12:26 PM via Google Meet video/ teleconference for the purpose of complying with certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act: Bill Shreve, Ed Hogan, Bruce Darner, Connie Luffman, Ben Thompson, Eric Dutrow, Anthony Nwagwe, Joe Wright, Sophia Oberton and Davina Yutzy. Board Chair Doug Abbott abstained. The motion carried.

13. CALL TO ORDER AND PURPOSE OF CLOSED MEETING.

With a quorum present, Board Vice Chairman Bill Shreve called the meeting of the closed session to order at 12:35 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 individuals concerning a matter not related to public business
- GP § 3-305(b)(7) - To consult with Board Counsel to obtain legal advice

During the closed meeting, the following Board members were present: Vice-Chairman Bill Shreve, Ed Hogan, Bruce Darner, Connie Luffman, Ben Thompson, Eric Dutrow, Anthony Nwagwe, Joe Wright, Sophia Oberton and Davina Yutzy. The following MDE staff were also present during the closed meeting: Dee Settar, Jenn Bowman, Martin Fuhr, Pam Franks and Victoria Arbaugh.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Joe Wright made a motion to adjourn the open and closed meetings at 1:10 PM and the motion was second by Bruce Darner. The next open meeting will be held on August 15, 2024 as a Video Conference Meeting held via Google Meet.