



## BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS

**Open Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, April 16 – 10:00 am**  
**Location: Video Conference via Google Meet**  
**Link: [meet.google.com/oij-fhgy-vcy](https://meet.google.com/oij-fhgy-vcy)**  
**Phone: (US) +1 956-363-6205**  
**PIN: 638 691 509#**

*Meeting attendance via videoconference. Access link and phone number available to the public via the Board's webpage.  
Meetings are subject to recording*

### **Call To Order and Roll Call**

Ben Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:03AM. Martin Fuhr called roll.

#### **Board Members Present**

Anthony Nwagwe– MDE  
Doug Abbott– Waterworks Supervision  
Ed Hogan–Industrial Superintendent  
Eric Dutrow- Public at Large  
Joe Wright - Vice Chair  
Davina Yutzy– County Government  
Bruce Darner - Agriculture  
Ben Thompson– Chairman  
Connie Luffman– Wastewater Supervision at 10:13AM

#### **MDE Staff Present**

Sarah Levy  
Nicole Rush- OAG  
Taj Goodlow - MDE  
Alex Rubin- MDE  
Martin Fuhr- Board Secretary

#### **Guests:**

Ron Ward– MDE  
Charles Speitz Mason– Application in.  
Melissa Coker– MC

### **Board Chair Comments and Guest Introductions**

Charles Speitz is here for an application.

### **Review and Adoption of Proposed Meeting Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda as written by Ed Hogan, seconded by Doug Abbott. Motion carried.

### **Review and Adoption of Draft Previous Open Meeting Minutes**

March Minutes had the following adjustments made: remove Doug Abbott from board members present. A motion to approve as amended by Bruce Darner and seconded by Ed Hogan. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Board Initiatives and Inquiries**

Board Portal – Ron Ward presented updates to the Board on the status of the Portal. Ron was seeking guidance as to whether the Board suggested that superintendents should be able to upload files via email or upload the direct file to the Portal to confirm their classification. It was suggested that there be a disclaimer added as to what the Board is looking for



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in regards to uploaded documentation. Ron will connect with Taj and Martin to decide what documentation should be required for superintendent verification. Most systems require a superintendent from utilities/systems, which means they will have letterhead. A letter on letterhead from a person with the authority to appoint superintendents should be adequate documentation to upload to the Portal for verification.

MDE will still have to check and verify the supers authority. Questions the Board has: Is there a way to reference verifications to see if the person that the applicant wrote for their approving authority? How do we automate this? Go with both, after 6 months review and see what updates need to be made.

*Chris Sp. Left at 10:17.*

- MRWA

Alex and Martin will be presenting about the Portal to operators, explanation of process, question and answer series. Ron will be attending Tricon for the same purpose. Alex will share this presentation with the board as soon as it is finished.

- Short Course

Applications have already come in. Martin encouraged board members to encourage their operators to get their information in sooner rather than later for the short course. The board would like the Subcommittee to start developing their own exams. How do we deliver this electronically? Can test development be put on the agenda next month?

### **Board Staff Report**

- TRE– Motion to approve TRE by Bruce Darner, second by Anthony Nwagwe. Motion carried unanimously.
- First Quarter Exam Statistics– Martin presented the Q1 exam stats. For the months of January, February, and March, the pass rate for state examinations was 28.57%, 38.78%, and 33.70% respectively. Are we able to consider a way that MDE could track exam failures and require OIT's who fail the exam 3x in a row encourage them to take the next step from OIT to Operators within a certain amount of time? How do we encourage utilities to encourage their OITS? (MES has a really good method because after a cycle they get "Frozen in time"-- Same pay/same benefits, no annual raise, no incentives.)  
How could the regulations be addressed to this?

*Ron left at 11AM.*

- Superintendent Training– We had superintendent training last week.

### **Applications**



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- Todd Vazquez– Motion to approve by Doug Abbott, seconded by Bruce Darner. Motion carried to follow the Board staff Recommendations. 1 year edu sub. Motion carried unanimously.
- Ahmed Farid– Board recommends 5 months education credit, eligible immediately. Motion by Doug Abbott and Bruce Darner second to approve Ahmed as recommended by board staff. Motion carried.
- Charles Speitz will be addressed next month.

### **Comments by Board Members**

Doug– The board would like to request that the appropriate class certification be included in the language of the discharge permits when either written or renewed. Ben will connect with Taj in order to find a way to best support Operators. Anthony will review this in action items. Specifically about trying to engage compliance.

Ben will draft a letter to be reviewed by a subcommittee to review then present to the board in the next open meeting.

### **Review of Action Items**

Anthony will distribute the action items to the board.

Update webpage. –get the PDF to Ben Thompson.

### **Discussion with Board Liaisons and guests**

Nothing to report.

### **Adjournment – Vote for closed session**

The Board decided not to go into closed session. They will review previous minutes in the next session.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bill Shreve, seconded by Joe Wright. The motion carried unanimously.