



**STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

**January 21, 2021 – 10 AM
Video Conference via Google Hangouts Meet
Link: meet.google.com/ofj-cdhz-xwr
Phone: +1 617-675-4444 / PIN 628 974 262 0325#**

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 Superintendents; Board Chair
Bruce Darner	Agriculture
Jay Price	Sanitary Districts
Partha Tallapragada	Maryland Environmental Service
Hiram Tanner	Public At-Large

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dominic Deludos	Industrial Superintendents
Joe Johnson	Water Superintendents; Board Vice-Chair

STAFF, LIAISONS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Dee Settar	Board Secretary (Acting); Recused Board Member- MDE
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Pam Franks	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
Ben Thompson	Board Member Appointee- County Governments
Tara Jones	MCET Liaison
Sue Houghton	MRWA Liaison
Scott Harmon	MRWA Liaison
Clark Howells	CWEA Liaison
Eric Dutrow	Guest (Maryland Rural Water Association)

01. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Bill Shreve called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. Roll Call was performed by Dee Settar. The Board meeting was conducted virtually via Video conference in lieu of the State of emergency proclaimed by Governor Larry Hogan due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

As the topics planned for the Closed Session discussion were not finalized, Jay Price moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda as amended with corrections, including striking the Closed Session; Partha Tallapragada seconded. The motion passed unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained.

03. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Board Members reviewed the December 17, 2020 draft meeting minutes. Jay Price made a motion to adopt the minutes as amended with corrections; Partha Tallapragada seconded. The motion carried unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained.

04. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Board Chairman Bill Shreve welcomed and thanked Board Members, Liaisons and Guests for attending today's meeting. Bill reiterated, for those who had not yet heard, he will retire as of July 30, 2021 and expressed hope that someone would step into the Board Chair role. He commented on the infrequent additional workload and the job satisfaction.

05. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Acting Secretary's Comments

Acting Secretary Dee Settara noted that Joe Johnson will also retire in August 2021 and vacate the Board's Vice Chair role. Dee introduced the Board's Guest, Eric Dutrow, who offered that he is a career operator who currently works with Maryland Rural Water Association and previously worked with the New Design surface water plant in Frederick, MD. Eric expressed hope that he will see everyone soon, after COVID restrictions are lifted, at WWOA, CSAWWA and other events. Bruce Darner inquired about WSA's database for water sample results. Dee Settara advised the Board the Drinking Water Watch portion of SDWIS should go live for public use in the very near future. She also noted that Water Supply has 26 open positions and that 3 of the 4 Divisions Chiefs retired in the past year, which has impacted the efforts multiple Program efforts. Dee provided a legislative update regarding HB0072, Open Meetings Act, that will impact the Board's meetings in late 2022; if passed, the Bill will required Board meetings be recorded by video, or by audio with transcript, and the feed must be posted online for at least one year.

B. Revenue & Expenditures Update

Dee Settara presented an updated Revenue and Expenditures Report for November 2020 and an unconfirmed Revenue Report for December 2020. As of November 30, 2020, the adjusted Monthly Revenue was \$10,045.00, the adjusted Cumulative Revenue was \$54,520.00, and the unaltered Cumulative Expenditure was \$60,343.33. As of December 31, 2020, the tentative Monthly Revenue

was \$13,550.00, the tentative Cumulative Revenue was \$68,070.00, and Expenditures data had not yet been received from MDE. Bill Shreve noted a potential increase in revenue in December 2020 and January 2021 due the three year renewal cycle and the origination of the Operator Certification Program many years ago. Dee confirmed Board staff received an increased number of applications in December 2020.

Dee also mentioned the Board and Water Supply Program are looking into accepting online payments with credit cards and e-Checks. The Department currently has infrastructure for online invoicing and additional details will be forthcoming.

C. Exam Updates

Board Staff discussed the examination statistics for the month of December, 2020. There were eight total exams taken in December, with an overall pass rate of 12.50%. Three operators sat for the paper water exams, scoring a pass rate of 0%; and one operator sat for the online (AMP) water exam, scoring a pass rate of 100%; In December, four operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams, scoring a pass rate of 0%; and no one sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams. Martin Fuhr noted that exam attendance was limited to only (10) attendees due to Baltimore City health restrictions. Clark Howells asked if an exam could be scheduled in the Montgomery Park Auditorium immediately after the Short Course. Board Staff advised that MDE had not provided any details for their previous inquiry regarding availability, capacity and cost. Martin Fuhr suggested additional and / or alternative sites be considered on both the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland so address any potential issue regarding capacity limit. He also advised an additional proctor would be required for larger examinations.

D. Other Board Initiatives

Dee Settar advised the Board's database update is expected to be complete in a few weeks. Board staff hopes the software update and resulting printing modifications for renewal forms and certificates will decrease returned mail. In addition, the Water Supply Program is working towards data integration to allow future online applications and payments.

E. Update of Board Appointments

Dee Settar advised Rosann Ndebumado and Ben Thompson are expected to be confirmed by the Senate in the next few months for Municipal Government and County Government representation, respectively. Ben noted that while he had taken his oath at the County Circuit Court office, he had not received notification for confirmation. Board Members discussed their confirmation processes; Dee will request an update from MDE's Legislative and Policy Analyst and notify Rosann and Ben with the response.

Dee also noted that an application was received for the vacant Public-At-Large representation. As the At-Large representation(s) are approved by the Department's Secretary and not the Governor's Office, Dee expressed hope the seat would filled in the near future.

06. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

Pam Franks asked Partha Tallapragada about Maryland Environmental Services's recent change for submitting applications and fees separately and discussed the associated challenges, including additional Board staff workload and delays in processing applications. Partha was not familiar with the procedural changes; he will investigate and respond.

Martin Fuhr presented the applications below. Dee Settar forwarded the Board's Experience and Reciprocity Log to Board Members.

Daniel Jacober - The Board reviewed the Application for Experience Credit from Daniel Jacober. Mr. Jacober has held his Water Treatment Operator 3 certification for 8 years, and was seeking credit toward his Water Treatment 4 Operator Certification. Board staff considered his previous experience as an operator, ensured he passed the Water Treatment 4 examination, and consulted the Experience Credit Matrix to determine precedent. Board staff recommended Mr. Jacober be awarded two years' experience, throughout May 1, 2021; at that time, he will have one year's experience in the Water Treatment 4 plant and will be eligible for full certification. Jay Price made a motion to accept the recommendation of Board Staff, and Bruce Darner seconded. The Motion carried unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained. Mr. Jacober will be notified his request was approved pending the Department's Board Oversight review.

Jaclyn Earle- The Board reviewed the Application for Reciprocity from Jaclyn Earle. Ms. Earle seeks reciprocity from the state of Virginia where she holds a Class 1 Wastewater Operator License. Per Ms. Earle's out-of-state experience and the Board's Reciprocity Matrix, Board staff recommended the Board grant reciprocity for Class 5 Industrial Treatment certification. After Board Members discussed Ms. Earle's experience, Jay Price made a motion to adopt the Board staff recommendation and Bruce Darner seconded. The Motion carried unanimously; Bill Shreve abstained. Ms. Earle is eligible for her Maryland Industrial 5 Wastewater Certification immediately and will be notified her request was approved pending the Department's Board Oversight review.

07. COMMITTEE REPORTS

TRE Policy Update

Acting Secretary Dee Settar forwarded the final draft version of the updated policy to Board Members for final review and requested comments be submitted by January 31st. The Board will vote to adopt the finalized policy in February 2021 and implement the policy pending the Department's Oversight review.

08. ON-GOING BUSINESS

COVID-19 Update

Dee Settar reiterated the number of certification renewals which are past the expiration date but still considered as Active status per the Governor's Executive Order for administrative extension for permit and certification renewals due to the state of emergency. Dee also discussed inquiries from utilities and

the Department that pertained to several COVID-related staffing shortages at water and wastewater plants; operators who responded to the Operator Assistance Survey in late March 2020 were asked to update availability in order to provide emergency assistance to other utilities. The updated results, including contact information, will be posted on MDE's website.

Board members discussed the recent inclusion of water and wastewater operators as essential workforce and the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine. Board Members also noted a surprisingly large number of operators seem to be unwilling to be vaccinated at this time.

09. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS

Eric Dutrow (Guest) thanked the Board again for welcoming him to the Board meeting. He noted that he had learned a lot from the meeting and was excited to attend future meetings and learn more.

Hiram Tanner (Board Member) noted that it was his birthday and the Board responded by wishing him a happy birthday.

Jay Price (Chesapeake Section American Water Works Association) advised that the CWAWWA would hold a virtual career fair on February 12, 2021. Chairman Bill Shreve noted that he has seen a record year for turnover and hoped the career fair would prove productive.

Bruce Darner (Water and Wastewater Operators Association) advised the WWOA initiated a scholarship for Tri-Con and expressed hope that it would not be cut due to budget constraints. He also advised the Board that his wife had been ill and recovering for an extended period. The Board Chair and staff all sent prayers and well wishes to Mrs. Darner.

Scott Harmon (Maryland Rural Water Association) advises that MRWA continues provide support to small water systems and to offer water sampler courses and the vacant Circuit Rider position has been filled.

Tara Jones (Maryland Center for Environmental Training; Water and Wastewater Operators Association) advised that she was hired as the Executive Director of MCET, the position previously held by Karen Brandt. Tara advised that MCET will offer virtual classes for the College of Southern Maryland's fall schedule and that MCET will offer in person classes as soon as it is practical and safe to do so. She noted that MCET is providing e-mail certificates to those who complete on-line courses in lieu of the blue cards provided during in person training. MCET will also provide a signed transcript to applicants upon request.

Clark Howells (Chesapeake Water Environment Association; Short Course Chair) advised he had no updates at this time.

Ben Thompson (CSAWWA; Board Nominee) advised he had no updates at this time.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Partha Tallapragada moved to adjourn the virtual conference meeting at 11:47 AM. The next meeting will be held on February 18, 2021 Video Conference Meeting held via Virtual Google Hangouts.