



STATE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF WATERWORKS AND WASTE SYSTEMS OPERATORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:
Thursday, April 21, 2022 At 10:00 A.M
Virtual Video Conference Meeting via Google Hangouts

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

Jay Price	Sanitary Commission; Board Chair
Benjamin Thompson	County Government; Board Vice-Chair
Doug Abbot	Water Supervision
Ed Hogan	Industrial Superintendents
Bruce Darner	Agriculture; WWOA Liaison
Joseph Wright	Maryland Environmental Service
Hiram Tanner	Public-At-Large
Eric Dutrow	Public-At-Large
Connie Luffman	Wastewater Supervision
Rosann Ndebumado	Municipal Government (joined @10:58 am)

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

VACANT	Maryland Department of the Environment
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LIASONS, GUEST & STAFF PRESENT

Dee Settar	Board Secretary
Jennifer Bowman	Board Counsel
Pamela Franks	Board Staff
Martin Fuhr	Board Staff
Victoria Arbaugh	Board Staff
Shailaja Pelosi	MDE Liaison, Compliance Program
Tony Sierra	MDE Water Supply Program, Engineer / Board Member Nominee
Tara Jones	MCET Liaison
Jane Pierce	MCET Liaison, Alternate
Scott Harmon	CWEA Liaison
Clark Howells	CWEA Liaison
Bill Shreve	TRE Committee Liaison
Duane Johnson	MDE Board of Well Drillers, Executive Director
Margi Falahee-Cook	MDE Water Supply Program, Accountant

01. CALL TO ORDER

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

02. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

Board Members reviewed the April 21, 2022 proposed Agenda with changes. Dee welcomed Joe Wright to the Board and Mr. Wright moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda with amendments. Ed Hogan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Board Chair Jay Price abstaining.

03. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF DRAFT FEBRUARY 17, 2022 OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Board members reviewed the February 17, 2022 draft minutes and made several changes. Ben Thompson made a motion to adopt the minutes with changes. Ed Hogan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Board Chair Jay Price abstaining.

04. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF DRAFT March 17, 2022 OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Board members reviewed the March 17, 2022 draft minutes and made several changes. Ed Hogan made a motion to adopt the minutes with changes. Bruce Darner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Board Chair Jay Price abstaining.

05. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENT & GUEST INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chair Jay Price opened the meeting by welcoming and introducing a new Board Member representing Maryland Environmental Service (MES) Joe Wright. Mr. Price then asked all guests to introduce themselves. Jane Pierce provided her background and advised that she will act as MCET's alternative liaison. Duane Johnson, Executive Director of the Board of Well Drillers and Margo Falahee-Cook, Accountant for Water Supply Program both introduced themselves and provided their backgrounds. The Board Chair then thanked all the Board Members, Staff, and Guests at the meeting for their time and attendance.

06. BOARD STAFF'S REPORTS

A. Board Appointment Updates

Dee Settara formally welcomed Joe Wright of MES. She asked Mr. Wright to provide his background and for all members present to introduce themselves. She also introduced the liaisons and Board Staff including Board Counsel, Jenn Bowman. Dee explained the MDE Seat on the Board was still vacant but that Tony Sierra of ETAD was under consideration for the appointment. Dee reiterated that the expiring June Board appointments will be renewed since the primary elections have been postponed.

B. Revenue & Expenditures Update

Margo Falahee-Cook presented the figures for October, November and December of 2021 and January, February and March of 2022. Margo advised that she had reviewed all reconciliations going back to January of 2022. She advised that she is still investigating exactly what happens to unspent appropriations. Dee interjected that there had been over a two (2) year period with no accountant for the Water Supply Program and that Margo is very busy working on resolving all outstanding issues for the Program including the Board's issues. Margo explained that expenditures increased as of November 2021 since she was paying outstanding invoices. Margo highlighted portions of the Revenue & Expense Report to the Board and explained that the figures for March had not yet been reconciled with MDE Fiscal. After the presentation, Dee opened the floor to inquiry and comment. The Board had no questions or comments regarding the information that was reported.

FY2022 Appropriations	\$390,093.00
Draft Cumulative Revenue as of March 31, 2022	\$130,887.00
Reconciled Cumulative Revenue as of February 28, 2022	\$112,207.00
Cumulative Expenses as of March 31, 2022	\$158,004.75
Encumbrance as of February 28, 2022	\$52,459.48

C. Quarterly Exam Statistics

Board Staff discussed the examination statistics for the month of January, February and March, 2022. There were thirty-two total exams taken in January, with an overall pass rate of 21.88%. Three operators sat for the paper water exams, scoring a pass rate of 67%; and two operators sat for the online (AMP) water exam, scoring a pass rate of 50%; In January, twenty-one operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams, scoring a pass rate of 14%; and six operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams scoring a pass rate of 17%.

There were forty-three total exams taken in February, with an overall pass rate of 27.91%. Eleven operators sat for the paper water exams, scoring a pass rate of 36%; and two operators sat for the online (AMP) water exam, scoring a pass rate of 0%; In February, twenty-five operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams, scoring a pass rate of 28%; and five operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams scoring a pass rate of 20%.

There were sixty-seven total exams taken in March, with an overall pass rate of 26.87%. Twenty-two operators sat for the paper water exams, scoring a pass rate of 32%; Two operators sat for the online (AMP) water exam, scoring a pass rate of 100%. In March, thirty-seven operators sat for the paper wastewater and industrial wastewater exams, scoring a pass rate of 22%; and six operators sat for the online (AMP) wastewater and industrial wastewater exams scoring a pass rate of 17%.

Martin opened to floor for questions and comments from the Board and attendees. Shailajah Polasi asked about tracking whether exam takers took a prep course or training to determine whether that impacted the pass rates. Ben Thompson noted that tracking the internal training by utilities is beyond the scope or authority of the Board. Doug concurred. Jay noted that it may be possible and helpful to compare the pass rates of those who attend the Short Course against all other exam takers to establish the efficacy of test preparation.

D. Board Initiatives & Inquiries

i. Emailed Certificate Update

Dee Settar briefed the Board on the fact that MDE has developed a technique to encrypt certificates for email purposes. She explained that she had amended the language on the proposed form per Board recommendations. She further expounded that we are still awaiting Ben Grumbles signature.

ii. Online Payment & Applications Update

Dee Settar briefed the Board on the progress toward online payments and applications. She explained that the Board had recently transitioned to SQL Server, allowing for more flexibility for interfaces with other systems and use of electronic payments and applications. She also advised the Board that she, Martin, Victoria, Margo, and Duane attended a demonstration by the MDE Lead Certification Program's on-line portal to explore the possibility of using the technology with both the WWSO and the Well Driller's Boards. Margo added that she believes the use of the technology for our purposes is feasible but it will require a lot of work on the front end by all Board Staff. She noted that ultimately it would improve processes and ease work-flow once it is fully implemented.

iii. Re-Location of Web Page Link on WSA Page

Dee Settar advised the Board that the WWSO Board Web Page now appears on the main page for the Water & Science Administration on MDE's website. She noted it is easier to find and more accessible, especially to wastewater and industrial wastewater operators. Members of the Board concurred.

iv. Pending "Email Blast"

Dee Settar advised she will send out an email blast advising utilities of the improvements to the web page including posted renewal applications for a six (6) month period, lists of active operators and of applications received by the Board, as well as the implementation of electronic certificates, when these initiatives are finalized. Dee noted she will send a copy of the email to MDE's Water Supply and Compliance Programs so they are aware of the updates as well and can provide the information accordingly.

iv. WWSO Training MOU Extension

Dee Settar explained the current MOU with MCET for operator training is extended until June 30, 2023, and expects a solicitation for bids to be announced later this year. Dee went on to express gratitude to MCET for all the work they have done for the MDE, the operators and the entire industry.

iv. COG Meeting / Regional Reciprocity

Dee Settar advised she, Martin and Jay Price met with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) on April 15, 2022. The COG asked about reciprocity between Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Jay noted that sounded great but would take a lot of work since the State of Virginia does not currently have any reciprocity process for operators moving to Virginia from any other jurisdiction. He noted COG expressed interest in Maryland's reciprocity process.

07. OLD BUSINESS

a. Employer Inquiries for Operator's Certification Status Update

Board Counsel Jenn Bowman and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) updated their previous response regarding employer's accessibility of operators' certification status, in that information can be relayed to the utilities without restrictions.

b. Legislative Updates

Board Counsel Jen Bowman advised that HB246 was the only bill to pass that impacts the Board directly. This Bill makes changes to the Open Meetings Act. Specifically, it requires that the Board maintains written records of meeting schedules, minutes and agendas for no less than three years on the internet for public access.

Dee noted that the Board will revisit regulatory changes again since the Legislative Session recently concluded and advised the Board that she is accepting recommendations for additional regulation changes.

08. NEW BUSINESS

a. Board of Well Drillers Open Meetings Act Compliance Board

Dee introduced Well Driller's Board Executive Director Duane Johnson to the Board and gave a summary of a recent event that might be of interest to this Board. Duane described a person who attended several Well Driller Board Meetings and refused to identify him or herself when asked and was subsequently removed from the meeting per the Well Driller Board Chair's direction. The individual filed multiple complaints with the Open Meetings Compliance Board (OMCB) that were related to public attendance and timely posting of meeting minutes and agendas. The OMCB performed an investigation and found the Well Driller Board did not violate the Open Meetings Act. However, the OMBC recommended the Well

Driller Board post rules of attendance for public meetings.

Board Members discussed the possibility of posting attendance rules for public WWSO meetings and agreed to visit the matter at the next meeting. Dee advised that she will email the language to Board Members for their review and comment prior to the next meeting.

b. Certification Pathway Flow Chart (Board Vote)

Dee provided a draft flow chart of the Board's certification processes just prior to the meeting. As Board Members did not have time to review the document, the review was postponed until the next Board meeting.

09. Review of Applications Received

Martin Fuhr presented applications for Education Substitution.

David Suder

Mr. Suder applied for Maryland 5A Wastewater Treatment Certification from the State of Pennsylvania, beginning March 1 he has been employed by the Allegany County Department of Public Works at the George's Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. After reviewing Mr. Suder's work experience, it was determined that his duties at the Pennsylvania plant closely aligned with those at George's Creek. Pennsylvania, however, does not utilize ENR as part of its wastewater treatment processes. Due to that fact, Board Staff recommended Mr. Suder be granted his Wastewater 5 Certification and be awarded a Temporary Wastewater "A" certificate. After he passes the "A" examination, he be granted 1 year of experience credit, as well as any time that may qualify under education credit up to one year. Doug Abbott made a motion to accept Martin's recommendation, and Ed Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Daniel Seymour

Daniel Seymour applied for Maryland Industrial 5 Wastewater Certification, as he has been hired to work at the Valley Proteins Plant in Linkwood, Maryland. He currently operates the Valley Proteins plant at their Terre Hill, Pennsylvania facility. Martin pointed out that while Mr. Seymour currently lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia, he will be moving to either the Eastern Shore or Lower Delaware to be closer to the plant. After reviewing the schematics of both the Terre Hill, PA and Linkwood, MD Valley Proteins plants, it was determined the processes at the Terre Hill plant and Linkwood plant utilized the same processes. Ben Thompson made a motion to grant Mr. Seymour's request, with Joe Wright offering a second. The motion carried.

Benjamin Lukowski

Mr. Lukowski applied to Maryland Industrial Wastewater 6 from Carolina Beach, North Carolina to work at the Linkwood, Maryland Valley Proteins Plant. After initial review, the Board requested more

information on Mr. Lukowski's experience, specifically that pertaining to dissolved air flotation. After further review of the new information provided, it was determined that Mr. Lukowski's experience did not align with that of an Industrial 5 rated facility. Further, his intention was to work remotely from South Carolina was not within regulatory compliance. Ed Hogan made a motion to deny the request, which was then seconded by Ben Thompson. Mr. Lukowski's request was denied.

Dee presented the updated application form to the Board for review. Eric Dutrow noted that it was a great improvement. Doug Abbott added that perhaps additional changes could be made at a later date, if necessary. A motion to adopt the form was made by Doug Abbott. The motion was seconded by Ed Hogan. The motion passed unanimously with the Board Chair abstaining. Dee Settar then explained that the form must still be approved by Water Supply Board Oversight prior to being put into use.

10. Exam Subcommittee Report

a. T3 Exam Update

Dee advised that all replacement questions had already been approved and highlighted the difference between the old and new objectives. She advised that the committee would be moving on to review the Water Treatment 4 Examination next. The Board Chair congratulated Dee and the committee volunteers on their efforts to update the exams and eliminate unnecessary and irrelevant questions.

b. Translation of Exams

Dee advised WWSO Board Members that the Board of Well Drillers is currently translating their exams to Spanish and asked Board Members to let her know if they have any interest in translating Operator examinations. She noted that ABC owned most of the exam content and was unsure if their exams could be translated. She also advised translation of exams would incur additional expense if it were possible and that while legislation was proposed regarding certification of non-resident certification applicants, it did not pass. Board Members had no questions.

11. TRE Subcommittee Report (March 9, 2022 Recommended Applications)

a. TRE Policy Update

Dee advised that MDE's Water and Science Administration reviewed the draft TRE policy and recommended the requirements for online training be updated to remove COVID references. Dee is also finalizing the document to correct formatting issues and will post the policy on the Board's webpage when complete.

Jay asked Martin Fuhr about potential updates to the Short Course in hopes of incorporating process credits. As a result, the TRE Application will be resubmitted and considered at the next Board meeting.

b. Jade Learning/ AYPO Training Sponsor Name Change

Martin Fuhr advised the Board that the training sponsor Jade Learning merged with AYPO and requested the training sponsor's name be changed for all of their courses. The Board had no questions and Board staff will follow up with the training provider.

12. DISCUSSION WITH BOARD LIAISONS AND GUESTS

Tara Jones (MCET) – Advised that MCET is in the process of obtaining a grant from the Department of Labor to create an apprenticeship program from Water & Wastewater Operators. They plan to offer courses online and obtain ACE Accreditation for the program. Credits earned would count towards an associate's degree. It is similar to the EARN Program but will be an official DOL program. She noted that the EARN Grant ends on 9/30/2022.

Bruce Darner (WWOA) – Advised that yesterday, WWOA had a meeting regarding scholarships and in house training. WWOA is looking to move the location of the next class to attract more applicants since they only had 15 applications. Jay Price added that the early bird pricing for the Short Course ends on May 7, 2022 and will be held at Mt. Saint Mary's College next year.

Clark Howells (CWEA) – Advised that Tri-Association Conference is reviewing charitable contributions for expansion. The official conference hotel will be Aloft and over 150 vendors registered to participate. The cost of enrollment has increased by \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. There will be no increase in the cost for students and retirees.

Scott Harmon (MRWA) – MRWA's live training link is now active. He is looking forward to the conference from May 2nd to the 5th in Ocean City, Md. MRWA will offer an operator track and an exam prep course for those attempting the examination on the last day of the conference. He also noted that from September 26 through 29 of this year the National Rural Water Association will be holding its conference at National Harbor.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Ben Thompson moved to adjourn the open meeting at 12:48 PM. The next meeting will be held on **May 19, 2022 Video Conference Meeting held via Google Meet.**

The April 21, 2022 Open Meeting Minutes were approved by the WWSO Board on May 19, 2022.