

Meeting of Maine Board of Licensure of Water System Operators

September 15, 2017

Public Utilities Commission, Second Street, Hallowell, ME

Present:

- Brian Tarbuck – Chair, Professional Engineer Representative, Greater Augusta Utility District
- Greg Kidd - Educator representative
- Mary Ellen Bowers – NTNC Representative, Waterworks Management LLC
- Brian McBride – Class IV Operator Representative, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Wells
- Michael MacDonald, Vice Chair – VSWS Representative, Contract Operator, New England Utility Management Enterprises
- Roger Crouse – Maine DHHS Representative, Maine Drinking Water Program
- James Jacobsen, Licensing Coordinator, Maine DHHS, Drinking Water Program
- Kerry Smart – Class II Representative, Alfred Water District
- Jonathan Ziegra - Management Representative, Boothbay Water District

Absent:

- Jeff Day - Class 3 representative

Guests:

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM by Brian Tarbuck.

- 1. Introductions were made for the record.**
- 2. Agenda Additions**

None.

- 3. Old Business**

July 2017 Minutes

- Brian Tarbuck introduced the July 2017 minutes. Michael MacDonald moved to accept the minutes, Roger Crouse seconded. Motion passed.

- Roger Crouse provided a rulemaking update. He had met with Nick Adolphsen of the Governor's office to discuss the proposed changes to the Water Operator Rules. The Governor's office was concerned about the proposed fee increases. The proposal was delayed, pending revisions. Brian Tarbuck asked if there is any way to expedite the process. Roger stated that he would ask Tera Pare to consider that.

Brian Tarbuck suggested that the Board delay its communication plans for a while.

Mary Bowers asked how the proposed fee increases or lack thereof would affect the Board's budget. Roger stated that the empty Board clerk position had helped by accruing savings in personnel costs, that having based the budget on conservative figures helped, and that the Board is not in a financially bad status. Roger said that the small spreadsheet with the financial report is a summary through the end of August 2017.

- Brian Tarbuck asked about the status of filling the Board clerk position. Roger said that he anticipated receiving a candidate list soon, and explained the selection process.

5. New Business

- Brian Tarbuck asked about the status and practice of holding a written exam in Aroostook County. Roger explained that we usually have one written exam day in Presque Isle annually, and there did not appear to be much interest in it this year.

Mary asked about the resources needed to hold the written exams. Roger said that these are mostly a case of location, 2 staff people, and logistics (notification, scheduling, so forth).

John Ziegra said that the Board's administrative shortcomings should not be a factor in deciding whether to offer the written exams. Mary Bowers agreed.

Gregory Kidd said that he believes the Rules require 1 paper exam per year, and suggested that the Drinking Water Program/Board ask the Maine Department of Environmental Staff in Presque Isle to administer the exam. Brian Tarbuck said

this should be explored, and asked if we could do the written exam in coordination with the MRWA annual conference.

A discussion followed on why the Board holds paper exams in Presque Isle, the potential for the MDEP providing exam proctors, and so forth. Roger explained that the MDEP is responsible for licensing wastewater treatment plant operators whereas the BLWSO is responsible for licensing water treatment and distribution operators. Roger explained that having the MDEP administer our duties would be problematic.

Brian Tarbuck instructed staff to advertise for a written exam in Presque Isle and see what kind of response we get. (In following up earlier discussions, Gregory pointed out that the Rules do not mandate a written exam.)

- Brian Tarbuck said that the ABC annual conference was coming up in January of 2018. Gregory indicated he was willing to go, and Brian Tarbuck confirmed that the Board budget can accommodate this.
- There was a discussion and update on the ABC revised exams webinar. Kerry Smart said that there are still questions about regulations when we understood these were to be eliminated from the baseline exams. Staff will follow up with ABC.
- Brian Tarbuck suggested that the Board continue to set its regular meetings on the third Friday of every other month. Gregory asked if the Board should go back to quarterly meetings. A discussion followed, and it was generally agreed that if the Board went to quarterly meetings, special meetings could be called as needed. Brian Tarbuck will prepare a bi-monthly and quarterly schedule for consideration.
- Mary stated that accommodating examinees is something which the Board should keep in mind. A discussion on what compromises “accommodation” followed.

6. Other

None.

7. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned by Brian Tarbuck at 10:00 AM.