

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

**Board of Certification of Operators
Of Wastewater Treatment Facilities**

MEETING MINUTES FOR

MARCH 3, 2004

Members in Attendance: Rick Dionne, Julia Forgue, Fred Kurdziel, Bill Patenaude, Tom White and Ray Wright

Others in Attendance: Bernie Bishop, South Kingstown WWTF,
Joel Burke, Warwick Sewer Authority
Dennis Colberg, Quonset
John Oatley, NBC – Bucklin Pt.
Greg Schutlz, DEM – Legal Counsel
Traci Lima, DEM

Mr. Patenaude called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

The first order of business to be discussed was part-time Operator Licensure. Mr. Patenaude briefed those present on the matter, and asked the visiting superintendents for their thoughts. Mr. Burke had concerns that “registering” part-time operators might not be in the best interest for the facilities because an operator may not have working knowledge of the facility, although it would give operators exposure for advancement and opportunity. Mr. Oatley stated he would not want to have individuals not familiar with a facility to be running the plants; some sort of procedure to prevent this should be in place. Mr. Bishop also had concerns of firms spreading themselves too thin as they use a limited pool of operators to operate more and more facilities. Ms. Forgue stated that the City of Newport uses a contract company to run the city’s treatment plant and they cannot arbitrarily change managers around. A service contract is executed stating such a policy. Mr. Colberg stated that his concerns were three-fold. First is his concern in maintaining the integrity of certified Rhode Island operators; Second was the issue if facilities were staffed the way they ought to be staffed; and lastly, flexibility. Mr. Bishop questioned if the pool of certified operators was sufficient? Mr. White offered that it was sufficient, and that the mindset of the Board is to make sure there are trained, professionally-licensed operators in management positions. Mr. White also thought perhaps a clear definition should be made between “part-time” and “temporary” and to contact the Division of Labor to find out if such definitions exist. Mr. Colberg said if you want to have facilities staffed, perhaps “bumping up the bar” to make licensure more difficult to attain. Mr. Oatley thought each part-time staffing should be on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Patenaude noted that he would be bringing the issue up at an operator conference in April and the Board would be invited to attend. Mr. Schultz thought the Board had some latitude and it would be a good idea to get some thoughts from neighboring states. With that, the topic was tabled until the next meeting so that the Board could further assess the issue.

The next issue to be discussed was the draft February 4, 2004 open meeting minutes.

After Board review, Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes as given. Mr. Patenaude seconded the motion. All other members present voted in favor and the motion passed.

The next agenda item discussed was the draft February 4, 2004 Closed Meeting Minutes.

After Board review, Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Patenaude seconded the motion. All other members present voted in favor and the motion passed.

The next item the Board discussed was non-operational and mechanic licensure. Mr. Patenaude informed the other members and guest that the issued would be tabled until Mr. Schock (who asked that the topic be on the agenda) is present. Mr. Bishop offered that he was unclear with the requirements for classifications of Grade 1 licensure in the rules and regulations. The requirement for Grade 1, does not state the word "operator". Mr. Patenaude offered that in the title of the section Rule 8, the word "operator" falls in that category, which should cover what is being discussed. Also if mechanics or lab technicians are working at a facility, they can be certified depending on the duties they perform.

Mr. Patenaude offered an update on Fiscal Fitness. Fiscal Fitness has ended the analysis stage. One aspect that affects the Board is the transferring of license functions from DEM to the Department of Business Regulations. The Board will still offer the technical expertise and decisions, but the administrative aspect will be transferred to the Department of Business Regulations. The changes may not take effect until next year.

Mr. Patenaude also informed the Board that an invitation has been extended and accepted by the Association of Boards of Certification. Representatives will address the Board at the May 5, 2004 meeting.

In new business, a facility has contacted Mr. Patenaude notifying him that a number of operators are no longer working at the facility as a result of recent investigations by plant management. More information would be forthcoming. This issue will be on the next meeting's agenda

Also in new business was an application for reciprocity from a Raymond Levesque. Currently he has a Massachusetts 6C license. His application would be on next meeting agenda.

Mr. Patenaude also offered an update on mandatory training requirements. Mr. Patenaude notified DEM's legislative liaison and stated that our position has not changed.

With no further business, Mr. Patenaude voted to adjourn the March 3, 2004 meeting, seconded by Mr. Wright. All other members present voted in favor and the motion passed.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 7, 2004 at 9:30 a.m. in conference room 280C in the Office of Water Resources on the second floor of the Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade St., Providence.