



BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Members in Attendance:

Paul Desrosiers, Fred Kurdziel, Frank McLynch, Bill Patenaude, and Jon Schock

Others in Attendance:

Carmine Goneconte, Superintendent, NBC-BP Instructor – Basic WWTF Course
Christina Hoefsmit, Esq. and Traci Pena, RI DEM

The meeting came to order at 9:35 a.m.

The first order of business was the review of the draft September 2, 2015 meeting minutes.

Though Mr. Schock was not at the September meeting, he questioned why the Board would intervene with what the Commonwealth of Massachusetts would expect for reciprocity, a reference to a question received about the Basic WWTF course. Mr. Patenaude informed Mr. Schock that it would be useful information, should a Rhode Island operator have that question.

After review and discussion of the draft September 2, 2015 meeting minutes, Mr. Desrosiers motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Kurdziel seconded the motion. Mr. Schock abstained. The motion passed with all eligible members voting in favor.

The next item discussed was the review of the scoring policy of the basic wastewater course. Currently, scoring is based on two components: a midterm (50 questions), which counts for 30% of final grade and a final exam (100 questions) and counts for 70% of the final grade. An issue came to light as a result of an exam review from the recent course: an individual could pass the final exam (the Grade 1 exam) with a 70 but still fail the course if they did poorly on the midterm. The opposite could also be the case—someone could fail the final exam but pass the course with a strong grade of the midterm. There was also the question of whether rounding should be employed—which the Board had done in the past.

Mr. Patenaude asked if: 1. Should we round grades or 2. Should the Board abandon the midterm and score the course with just the final exam.

Mr. Desrosiers, who is a former teacher of the course, offered that the guidance from previous instructors was if the student passed the final exam the student should pass the class. Mr. Kurdziel said the mid-term could be used as a measuring tool for both student and teacher but not necessarily be averaged into the final grade. This way the student will know what s/he needs to work on and the teacher could use it to see where the students may need additional help. Mr. Schock said it could not be both ways, but that we need one policy. Mr. Patenaude agreed, noting that the state has an interest in and the need to explain an objective scoring policy.

Mr. Patenaude motioned to change the scoring criteria for the Grade 1 course to include only the final exam, with a 70% grade needed to pass. The mid-term would be used as an evaluation tool only. Mr. Desrosiers seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, as such the motion passed.

Mr. Goneconte said that he would like to talk to Mr. Patenaude at another time about a Grade 2 preparatory training. He then left the meeting.

Per §42-46-4 and §42-46-5(a)(4), Mr. Patenaude motioned to convene into executive session to discuss issues regarding Rhode Island wastewater treatment operators related to possible civil or criminal misconduct. Mr. Schock seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call: Mr. Patenaude, Mr. McLynch, Mr. Kurdziel, Mr. Desrosiers and Mr. Schock voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Patenaude motioned to seal the October 7, 2015 executive session meeting minutes. Mr. Schock seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call: Mr. Patenaude, Mr. McLynch, Mr. Kurdziel, Mr. Desrosiers and Mr. Schock all voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Patenaude motioned to resume the meeting into open session. Mr. Schock seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call: Mr. Patenaude, Mr. McLynch, Mr. Kurdziel, Mr. Desrosiers and Mr. Schock voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Patenaude motioned to send a letter to a Rhode Island wastewater treatment facility to: 1. request a list of all individuals employed by the facility who work as operators and their levels of licensure on record and 2. to request a plan of assurances that the facility will submit notice to the Board regarding the hire of new operators as well as proof that new hires have been notified that they must be licensed within one year of employment. The letter would also serve as a reminder to management that their license is liable if the regulations are not followed regarding properly licensed operations staff. Regarding the matter that brought this motion, Mr. Patenaude noted the applicant's application would be approved and processed. Mr. McLynch seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, as such the motion passed.

The next item discussed were Training Course Approvals.

The NEWEAA 2015 conference, "Implementing Integrated Wet Weather Solutions in a Digital World" was awarded 10 hours for the 2 days attended. The IDEXX webinar: "Bacterial Testing for Fecal Coliforms and E. coli in Wastewater" will be given 1 hour training credits.

In new business, Mr. Desrosiers asked if an operator with shy of 5 years of experience in operation could take the Grade 3 November exam. Mr. Patenaude noted that the regulations required a full Grade 3 license before sitting for the four. Mr. Desrosiers also reported that the Operator's Challenge Team finished in about 20th place in over 50 teams.

Mr. Patenaude motioned to adjourn. Mr. Schock seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members voting in the affirmative.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at the RIDEM – Office of Water Resources Room 280 located at 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI.