

RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
Board of Certification of Operators
Of Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2001

In Attendance: Frederick Kurdziel, Thomas White, Bill Patenaude, Jon Schock, and Raymond Wright

Also in Attendance: Traci Lima, DEM

Mr. Patenaude called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. The first order of business was the review of the May 2001 meeting minutes. Mr. Kurdziel requested a change on the second page; the second to the last paragraph. The last sentence should read "All members voted..."

Mr. Schock motioned to accept the minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Patenaude, all members voted in favor and the motion passed.

The next order of business was the matter of amendments to the Regulations. Mr. Schock wondered if a public hearing is required for all regulation amendments. Mr. Patenaude had not met with DEM's Office of Legal Services and informed the Board that he would meet with Legal and get an answer by the next meeting.

Mr. Schock also wanted to know if prior meeting minutes would have enough detail to see if some regulatory interpretations need to be looked at for clarification. He also wanted to know what were some of the reoccurring problems that were open to interpretation.

Mr. Patenaude raised a concern that the Regulations were not explicit enough that the Board does not certify subsurface water discharge facilities.

Mr. Schock wanted a copy of the Regulations with an underline/strikeout format of the proposed changes mentioned. Mr. Patenaude said one would be provided, Mr. Patenaude also mentioned that the Board may want to clarify the fact that individuals who do not work at a wastewater treatment plant in Rhode Island are not eligible to take the exam. Mr. Patenaude wondered if this should be changed. Also clarification was needed on the matter of OIT dates. Should the date go by the exam or when the application is submitted?

Mr. Schock would like for Mr. Patenaude to write-up items that he felt needed changing. Mr. Schock felt as though most issues would be of a housekeeping nature needing clarification.

The third item on the agenda was program development. Mr. Patenaude thought the issue of "BNR" (Biological Nutrient Removal) needed special attention. Mr. Patenaude wanted to know what the Board's opinion was on certifying these individuals. Mr. Schock suggested that the Operation & Management section of DEM handle these individuals. Mr. Patenaude was concerned that licenses in Rhode Island would be less reciprocal in other states if BNR licensure was not offered. Mr. Patenaude informed the Board that some states have about 10 questions on the test to address BNR. Mr. Patenaude also stated that the BNR projects would realistically be a few years away. Mr. Wright had 2 comments about BNR: 1. What is the opportunity to have the BNR capability and 2. What is the opportunity for reciprocity in other states? Mr. Schock stated he would like a draft policy with regard to BNR, as we would be breaking into new territory. He also wanted to know if this would be a special endorsement. Mr. Kurdziel had a comment about

new technology; everytime new technology is developed, how should it be handled by the Board as far as certification. Mr. White wondered how BNR could be incorporated into the exam. Mr. Patenaude suggested that perhaps there could be a supplemental to the base test where operators must pass a certain number of questions. Mr. White thought the NWPCA would make an endorsement if this was the wave of the future. Mr. White also wondered what to do with the Grade 4 operators who need to be BNR certified. The NWPCA would be concerned on what to do with the Grade 4 operators. Mr. White also suggested that as the program need to be updated and new technology comes along then perhaps the exam should be updated and not the program. Mr. Kurdziel suggested that new operators, who take the exam, issues of BNR needed to be incorporated. Mr. Patenaude suggested that if an operator works in a BNR plant they must get a certain number of questions right on the exam. Mr. White wanted to know how other states were administering such a BNA program. Mr. Schock again discussed the difference between a special endorsement and part of the license. Mr. White said it would have to be a special endorsement because not all plants in Rhode Island are BNR facilities. Mr. Schock wanted to know how many plants are BNR facilities. He felt as though this was important in order to make a determination. Mr. Patenaude guessed that there would be about 80% of Rhode Island plants using some form of nutrient removal in the next few years. Mr. Patenaude said he would provide a draft policy on BNR with the new draft regulations.

Other program development issues included new items posted on the website; such as exam results listed by the last 4 digits of the individuals social security number, study guides, frequently asked questions, meeting minutes, and agendas. Some items come both as an html and an Adobe printable version. Things that will be added will be a tracking of renewal payments and we should be getting an e-mail address for those people who would like to leave comments.

The next item on the agenda was Board Membership Status. Mr. Wright was reappointed by the Governor's office. Mr. Patenaude asked Mr. Wright if Wednesdays would be a good day to continue to meet. Mr. Wright asked if in the Spring, could meetings be moved to Tuesdays or Thursdays. Mr. Patenaude motioned to accept the scheduling change to meet beginning in September. Mr. White thought it would be better to begin meeting in October on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

The Board is still awaiting an appointment from the League of Cities and Towns.

With no further new business, Mr. Schock motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. White seconded the motion. All member voted in favor and the motion passed.

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:30 on Wednesday, July 11, 2001 in conference room 280C in the Office of Water Resources on the 2nd floor of the Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade Street, Providence.