



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
**BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS
OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES**

Meeting Minutes: October 3, 2007

Members in Attendance: Richard Dionne, Fred Kurdziel, Bill Patenaude, Jon Schock and Tom White
Others in Attendance: Traci Pena – RIDEM

The first agenda item to be addressed was the review of the draft open September 2007 meeting minutes.

Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes as drafted. Mr. Kurdziel seconded the motion. Mr. Schock abstained, as he was not present at the September meeting. All other members present voted in favor, and as such, the motion passed.

The next item was the draft Executive Session September 2007 meeting minutes.

Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes with one grammatical change. Mr. Dionne seconded the motion. Mr. Schock abstained, as he was not present at the September meeting. All other members present voted in favor, and as such the motion passed.

The next item on the agenda was WWTF Manager Training “Boot Camp,” which began on September 27, 2007. Mr. Patenaude noted that thirteen nominated individuals possessed obvious energy and a great willingness to learn and be an asset to the wastewater field. The goal of Boot Camp is to train individuals who will be available to continue the necessary work for managing the state’s wastewater treatment infrastructure as others in the field retire. The course takes place the last Thursday of every month. Jon Jewett and Check Conway of NEIWPC, who are very knowledgeable instructors, are assisting the DEM with the opening two courses. The program will include about 100 hours of management courses, technical courses such as engineering basics and process control, media relations, working with regulatory agency and other areas for personal and professional development. One of the goals of the course is to provide individuals a network and skill base of information to assist, but of course not guarantee, advancement in the field. Mr. Patenaude also reported that EPA might use Rhode Island’s program as a model for other states. Mr. Patenaude would also like the Board to consider offering the participants a practice exam for preparation for the Board’s exam, or a certificate of completion. Mr. Dionne asked if it would be more work for the administrative staff at DEM; Mrs. Pena noted that such a practice would only require a small update to the Board’s database. Mr. Patenaude asked the Board to give the matter more thought as to what kind of incentives could be offered to the students for passing/taking the course.

The next order of business to be discussed was Operator Definition/Levels of Certification. An inquiry had been placed with Mr. Schock suggesting that all individuals working at a wastewater treatment plant should be licensed at least at the Grade 1 level. This would include non-operational duties such as pretreatment and collection system staff. Mr. Patenaude responded that the Board does not have the authority to license all such employees, as the statutory definition of operator is specific. Mr. Patenaude did note that mechanics and laboratory staff are allowed to be licensed, as they are often integrated with plant operations. However, pretreatment and collections personnel, for instance, do not meet the definition of operator as defines in statute.

The next item was Legislative Review. Mr. Patenaude disseminated draft language changes to the Board’s enabling legislation. One of the proposed changes would be made to §42-17.4-8, Certification and Revocation. Mr. Patenaude explained that he would like to make changes to reflect the current 2-year renewal period. Also, he would like to proposed allowing operators who successfully complete a board-approved management-training program (such as the Boot Camp, per the above conversation) to take the exam for a grade one level higher than their currently attained full grade. If the individual were to pass the exam, a license would not be issued for the higher grade, but the Board would issue a letter of passing to be kept on file for, perhaps, no more than 2 consecutive years. The other change to the Regulations would be to §42-17.4-7, Applications. The suggested change would raise the cost of exam applications to a non-refundable \$25.00 fee regardless of denial of examination or the applicant failing to meet examination

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requirements. The Board also discussed amending this language to give the Board authority to set the fee schedule as needed.

Mr. Schock motioned to accept the proposed changes put forth by Mr. Patenaude, which would be forwarded to DEM legal counsel and legislative liaisons for review and comment. Mr. White seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, as such the motion passed.

With no new business, Mr. Schock motioned to move to adjournment. Mr. Kurdziel seconded the motion. With all members voted in favor, the motion passed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 7, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. in room 280 of the DEM – Office of Water Resources, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908.