



## **BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES**

**Members in Attendance:** Dr. Janet Baldwin, Paul Desrosiers, Julia Forgue, Frank McLynch and Bill Patenaude and Jon Schock

**Others in Attendance:** Bernie Bishop, Chief Operating Officer; Harrison Songolo, Superintendent; and Mike Bedard, Chief of Operations: West Warwick WWTF  
Peter Eldridge, Town of Narragansett  
Christina Hoefsmit and Traci Pena, RIDEM

### **Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, January 9, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

The minutes were reviewed. Dr. Baldwin noted that there seemed to be a discrepancy between the denial of NBC EMDA individuals and the conversation, also in those regulations, to elevate maintenance individuals to a higher grade. Mr. Patenaude stated that EMDA workers had been denied based on the current Board's regulations. He also noted that the determination of the previous meeting was that the EMDA applicants were administrative in nature and not "field-facing".

**After discussion, Mr. Desrosiers motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. McLynch seconded the motion. All eligible members voted in favor, as such the motion passed. Mr. Schock and Dr. Baldwin abstained as they were not present at the December meeting.**

The next agenda item discussed was the retirement of John "Jack" Martin, Superintendent of the Burrillville WWTF. The town has hired Mike Emond as the new superintendent of the facility. Mr. Emond possess a RI Grade 4 license in good standing, although the town had not confirmed that prior to offering Mr. Emond the position.

The next agenda item was a Grade 1 exam question contestation. Mr. Bernard Harwood took the Grade 1 exam and received a 69. He reviewed his exam with his superintendent and assistant superintendent, as the Board offers all examinees. After discussion and review with Mr. Patenaude and his plant managers, Mr. Harwood provided evidence that he had the knowledge to justify why he answered the question the way he did.

**After discussion, Mr. Patenaude motioned to grant Mr. Harwood the point, bringing his score to 70, as Mr. Harwood did answer the question based on current operational practices of the NBC. Mr. Patenaude noted that he would also remove the question from future exams. Ms. Forgue seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.**

Because there were interested parties attending the meeting, the Board continued to New Business to discuss a matter related to the Town of West Warwick, which provided additional information regarding their Assistant Superintendent candidate, Mr. Michael Bedard. The Board reviewed a January 8th, 2019 letter from Mike Bedard which outlined and provided a synopsis of his duties as a lead operator. The Board will review this information for the next meeting to determine if any of this experience can be used to credit the time remaining for him (18 months) in Direct Responsible Charge, which would allow him to sit for the Grade 4 exam. Mr. Bedard has also signed up to take the Grade 4 equivalent Massachusetts wastewater exam. The matter will be placed on the February agenda.

The next agenda item discussed was a request by Mr. Jeff Chapdelaine for educational credit for licensure. Mr. Chapdelaine now works for the Scarborough facility. With no subsequent information submitted to the Board. Mr. Patenaude will contact Mr. Chapdelaine and the matter will be taken off the agenda should no further information be provided.

At 10:16 a.m. Mr. Eldridge, Mr. Bishop and Mr. Bedard left the meeting.

**Mr. Patenaude motioned to convene into executive session per §42-46-4 and 42-46-5(a)(4). Dr. Baldwin seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call: Mr. Patenaude, Ms. Forgue, Mr. Schock, Dr. Baldwin, Mr. McLynch and Mr. Desrosiers voting in the affirmative.**

**In executive session, Mr. Schock motioned to take no action at this time against a Rhode Island wastewater treatment plant subject to the fulfillment of the requirements set forth in RIDEM's letter dated December 31, 2018. Ms. Forgue seconded. All eligible members voted in favor, as such the motion passed. Messrs. Desrosiers and Patenaude were not present for the vote as they had recused themselves from deliberation.**

**Mr. Schock motioned to seal the January 9th, 2019 executive session meeting minutes. Ms. Forgue seconded the motion. The motion passed with all present voting in the affirmative.**

**Mr. Schock motioned to resume the meeting into open session. Mr. McLynch seconded the motion. The motioned passed with all present voting in the affirmative.**

Messrs. Desrosiers and Patenaude returned to the meeting once the meeting returned to open session.

The next item discussed were potential regulation revisions. Mr. McLynch noted that one issue that he learned of when he informally spoke to operators about their thoughts was why Direct Responsible Charge is defined as overseeing two or more operators on a full-time basis. The argument otherwise is that an individual can oversee an entire facility on second or third shift when only one other staffer is present, or none. Mr. Desrosiers stated that at the time the regulations were promulgated operations

were less automated so there were multiple operators to a shift, although certainly over time duties change and are different for different facilities. Another item reviewed was the allowance of reciprocity of equivalent examinations with no time limit imposed while Rhode Island examinations have such time limits elsewhere in the regulations. Also discussed was the possible elimination of examination reviews for the Grade 3 and 4 exams, or somehow managing that review process differently than the review of Grades 1 and 2. Mr. Patenaude said he would contact the New England counterparts to see if they would participate in a conference call for the next meeting to share their examination process. Mr. Patenaude suggested that the Board have a subcommittee to be led by Dr. Baldwin to discuss the examination process. Mr. Patenaude asked Dr. Baldwin to lead that task.

In other New Business, Mr. Patenaude informed the Board that Mike Spring will again be teaching the Basic WWTF course for NEIWPC. He stated that the NEIWPC was interested in our thoughts of using the new WEF manual. Having reviewed that manual, Mr. Desrosiers determined that it was more geared for Grade 3 and 4 operators. After discussion, Mr. Patenaude stated he would reach out to NEIWPC as the course is under the Board's guidelines.

Mr. Patenaude noted that at the next meeting, the Board should be prepared to discuss the following:

1. Proposals for the definition of Maintenance staff, and examination requirements thereof.
2. Proposals for the definition of Laboratory staff, and examination requirements thereof
3. Proposals for the definition of Direct Responsible Charge
4. Proposals for Exam frequency
5. Exam acceptance timeframes related to those for reciprocity
6. Exam security

Also, in new business, Mr. Patenaude informed the Board of an individual who had been terminated by their facility as he had not attained Grade 1 licensure in a year.

**At 11:35 Mr. Patenaude voted to adjourn. Mr. Schock seconded. All members present voted in favor and as such the motion passed.**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at the RIDEM – Office of Water Resources, Room 280 located at 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908.