



BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Members in Attendance: Janet Baldwin, Paul Desrosiers, Julia Forgue, Frank McLynch, Melissa Orpen-Tuz, Bill Patenaude and Jon Schock

Others in Attendance: Scott Goodinson, Jeff Chapdelaine, Narragansett WWTF
Greg Schultz, RI Attorney General's Office
Traci Pena, RIDEM

Mr. Patenaude called the meeting to order at 9:35 p.m.

The Board reviewed the draft November 6, 2019 executive session meeting minutes.

After review, Mr. Schock motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. McLynch seconded the motion. The motion passed with all eligible members voting in favor. Mr. Desrosiers, Mrs. Forgue, Dr. Baldwin and Mr. Patenaude abstained as they were not eligible to vote for the executive session meeting minutes.

The Board reviewed the draft November 6, 2019 meeting minutes.

After review, Mr. Schock motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Mrs. Orpen-Tuz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all eligible members voting in favor. Mr. Desrosiers and Dr. Baldwin abstained as they were not present at the meeting.

The Board reviewed the draft November 19, 2019 Regulations meeting minutes. Mr. Schock wondered why one of the items, *requirements that communities/facilities contact the Board prior to hiring upper-level managers* would be the responsibility of the community/facility. After discussion, Mr. Patenaude said that such language had been identified earlier for possible inclusion in draft regulations, but that the Board could vote to include such language when draft updates were developed.

After further review, Mr. Patenaude motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Desrosiers seconded the motion. The motion passed with all eligible members voting in favor. Mrs. Forgue, Dr. Baldwin, Mrs. Orpen-Tuz, Mr. McLynch and Mr. Schock abstained as they were not at the meeting.

The Board reviewed the draft December 4, 2019 meeting minutes.

After review, Mr. McLynch motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Dr. Baldwin seconded the motion. The motion passed with all eligible members voting in favor. Mr. Desrosiers, Mrs. Forgue, Mrs. Orpen-Tuz, Mr. Schock abstained as they were not present at the meeting.

The next item discussed was the review of operational/Direct Responsible Charge duties of Jeff Chapdelaine. Scott Goodinson and Jeff Chapdelaine from the Narragansett WWTF were before the Board to discuss Mr. Chapdelaine's Grade 3 OIT status. (Mr. Schock noted that he would recuse himself from discussion as his community is a business partner with the Narragansett facility.) Mr. Chapdelaine recently left the Narragansett Bay Commission, where he had obtained his Grade 3 OIT. After discussion of Mr. Chapdelaine's current duties at the Narragansett facility, Mr. McLynch asked if the town could provide additional information in writing regarding Mr. Chapdelaine's oversight and activity within plant operations, both on a regular basis and during times of absence of the previous superintendent.

Messrs. Goodinson and Chapdelaine then left the meeting.

The next item discussed was an update on Board member status.

Next to be discussed were revisions to the Regulations. Mr. Patenaude noted that at the next special Regulation meeting (January 21, 2020), the board should draft language related to sections that had been discussed. Dr. Baldwin noted that while she would be unable to attend that meeting, she will submit proposals.

A discussion ensued on an earlier identified issue of the use of Board "discretion." After discussion and input from legal counsel, the Board agreed that the current regulatory framework provides adequate degrees of discretionary language and that no additional language would be necessary.

Mr. Patenaude also stated that there were two issues that still need to be discussed: Sunset dates (for the use of previously taken exams for reciprocity, etc.) and the topic of mandatory training. Mr. Patenaude noted that one proposal for the latter issue was to maintain voluntary training for renewals for Grades 1 and 2 operators and mandatory training for Grades 3 and 4s. He also noted that mandatory training had long been a goal of Rhode Island's wastewater operator association—and that "encouraging training" was an element of the Board's enabling legislation.

Discussion on the latter topic followed. Mr. Schock noted his opposition of mandatory training for various reasons, especially related to the cost and impact on communities. Ms. Forgue also stated that training is difficult to manage and is often an unfunded burden on communities—especially related to those staff who work second and third shifts. From a union standpoint, Mr. McLynch noted that mandatory training would be seen as an undue burden on staff and thus would not be supported by organized labor. Mrs. Orpen-Tuz suggested that training offered consistency for ongoing learning. Dr. Baldwin expressed concerns over the

practical effectiveness of such mandatory training. Mr. Schultz proposed if mandatory training elements should in fact be better served through DEM's O&M section. Mr. Desrosiers stated that the Rhode Island Clean Water Association (formerly NWPCA) offers low-cost training and that with emerging issues and new technology, such training is beneficial. While Mr. Patenaude noted that it appeared that the majority of Board members were not in favor of mandatory training, he will draft language for the Board to vote at a subsequent meeting.

The next discussion regarded Grade 3 examination. The Board had received an inquiry from a community about the ability of an operator to take a Grade 3 exam if the individual had been recently reprimanded by the Board. Dr. Baldwin stated if such a prohibition is not in the written reprimand, it should not stand in the way for advancement. Mrs. Orpen-Tuz agreed in general but added that the inquiry was not specific enough to speculate on the exact nature of the request.

There was no operator enforcement at this time before the Board.

Mr. Patenaude provided the monthly update regarding the superintendent of the Quonset facility, which was satisfactory.

In new business, Mr. Patenaude reported an error on his approval for a Grade 3 exam application for Mr. Joshua Hoak, as well as incorrect information supplied for a position start date in one section of the application while the applicant had also supplied the correct information in a subsequent section. Mr. Patenaude wanted to inform the Board of his review error, as well as that of the applicant and the signatory member of management, about which Mr. Patenaude notified both individuals. The Board determined that no action was needed given that the error appeared to be unintentional and given that it resulted only in a credit of several months toward taking the Grade 3 exam. Mr. Patenaude noted that he would also be reviewing Mr. Hoak's college transcripts for possible educational credits toward experience.

Exam results were reviewed as well as the 2020 exam schedule.

Mr. Patenaude also shared that the RICWA Legislative event will be held on March 21, 2010 at the State House in the House of Representatives lounge.

The meeting concluded at 11:00.

The next Regulation meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 2:00 at the RIDEM - Office of Water Resources, Room 280 located at 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5^h, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. at the RIDEM - Office of Water Resources, Room 280 located at 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.