



NEVADA BOARD of CERTIFICATION for WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATORS



Adrian J. Edwards, Chairman • Joe Crim, Jr., Vice Chairman
 Michael Drinkwater • Andrew Joyner • Brian Oswalt • LeAnna Risso • John Solvie

MEETING MINUTES

The Nevada Board of Certification for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators held a public meeting on **Thursday, August 11, 2016** at the Clark County Water Reclamation District Flamingo Water Resource Center located at 5857 East Flamingo Road in Las Vegas, Nevada. In compliance with the contract between the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the Nevada Water Environment Association, the Notice of Public Meeting and Agenda were posted before 09:00 AM at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Edwards called the meeting to order at 09:36 AM.

2. Roll Call and Introduction of Guests

Board Position	Name	Present	Absent
Chairman	Adrian Edwards	X	
Vice Chairman	Joe Crim	X	
Secretary	LeAnna Risso	X	
Member	Michael Drinkwater	X	
Member	Andrew Joyner	X	
Member	Brian Oswalt	X	
Member	John Solvie	X	
Program Administrator	Ashley Jacobson	X	
Program Administrator	Jake Jacobson		X

Guest	Representing
Joe Maez (by phone)	Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Keli Callahan	Nevada Water Environment Association

3. Public Comment (Current Agenda Items)

No public comment was heard.

4. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Member Crim and seconded by Member Drinkwater. Chairman Edwards called for a vote. Motion carried.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 04, 2016

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Solvie and seconded by Member Risso. Chairman Edwards called for a vote. Motion carried.



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

6. Program Administrator's (PA's) Report

6.1. Budget Review

Program Administrator Ashley reviewed the current budget noting that we were \$7,500 under budget last year.

Member Solvie asked that the packets distributed by the Program Administrator be sent out a few days in advance so the Board has more time to review prior to the meeting.

6.2. Certification Examination Update

Program Administrator Ashley shared that there are 24 computerized exams and 8 written exams scheduled so far for the month of September. She noted that the next two weeks are historically when the number of written exam applications increase. PA Ashley reviewed the total number of exams taken and passed as well as the overall passing percentages. Chairman Edwards asked if we are still comparable to the national average for passing rates. PA Ashley and Member Risso confirmed that we are comparable. Member Drinkwater asked if the national rates were based on aggregate testing or only first time test takers. Member Risso noted that it was not clear but she believed from the way it was presented at the conference that it was aggregate. PA Ashley is still working with ABC to implement a mechanism to track the number of times a candidate has attempted an exam.

6.2.1. Industrial Waste Inspector (IWI) Exam Coding

Member Solvie reported that he has the exams from ABC. This has been a lower priority item than the comments and questions document that was recently submitted to NDEP regarding regulation changes. Member Solvie believes that the coding can be completed in a day and will be working with members to schedule some time to meet.

6.3. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) Participation

Program Administrator Ashley noted that 253 courses have been approved to date with the majority of those coming from the Tri-State Seminar. Only one course has not been approved. She has three (3) additional courses that she will send out to the Board for review and approval.

Chairman Edwards noted that there was discussion at the last meeting regarding the time frame in which CEUs are obtained relevant to obtaining or recertifying. Members Solvie and Drinkwater clarified that there are two separate topics: one is the relevant age for CEUs submitted for initial certification and the other is the future policy that would require submission of CEUs earned within the previous certification cycle for recertification. Program Administrator Ashley reminded the Board that polling the other certifying agencies for their policies and practices with regards to CEUs was placed on hold pending the outcome of the meeting with NDEP regarding the Assessment.



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

6.4. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Update

Program Administrator Ashley stated that the SOP is up to date and that any time she makes a change, she updates it right away. She also noted that all electronic documents, spreadsheets and files are backed-up on the computer, an external hard drive and an offsite cloud based storage system (Carbonite).

6.5. Water Spot Update

Program Administrator Ashley noted that there has been no update from Candace Elder who spearheads this publication. Member Drinkwater noted that the publication personnel need to ensure that utilities are aware when articles about their facility will be published, especially if the utility logo will be used as it implies knowledge and endorsement.

6.6. Website Update

Program Administrator Ashley stated they are still working on the Membership Page. She talked about the training videos they are trying to develop with the help of all the utilities and consultants. She said they are investigating if it is cost effective to do everything that is desired with our current website hosting and design service or if transitioning to a completely new company / platform will be necessary. Discussion was had on the potential fee structure to non-WEF/NWEA members. Clarification was made that membership to WEF does not automatically mean that WEF members are NWEA members. The fee structure will not be so costly as to prevent non-members from using the service however it will be designed to encourage people to join WEF and the NWEA Member Association.

Discussion was had on the cost of membership and how prices are or have been increased by WEF and the MA's. Discussion was had on the logistics that would be required to process payments for MA membership separate from WEF.

Discussion was had regarding the upcoming Pump class in Reno being taught by Paul Krauth. Tentative plans to offer the class later this fall/winter in Las Vegas.

7. Policies and Procedures

Chairman Edwards noted that we have had numerous classes submitted for pre-approval of CEUs. He noted that "pre-approval" does not preclude the Board's ability to approve past classes for CEUs if they are submitted for consideration. The pre-approval process benefits the presenter (marketing tool) and the operator (known CEU approval).

With the movement towards mandatory CEUs, the potential for a significant increase in the number of courses being submitted for pre-approval could be overwhelming. Chairman Edwards also noted that the Policies & Procedures differentiate between direct and indirect, and safety related training and how the CEUs are counted towards certification. Member Solvie noted that this could become challenging for an "all-volunteer" Board to review the increasing number of raw submissions via email.



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

Member Crim noted that many of the classes at Tri-State are the same class year after year and if it has been approved, it could simply be re-approved. Member Drinkwater cautioned that if classes, especially technical classes, do not evolve, then we are back to approving CEUs for non-current material. Member Risso noted that some programs assign expiration dates to approved classes (2 to 5 year cycles) so that the material does not have to be reviewed every time it is given but is reviewed with enough frequency to ensure that the material is current and relevant.

Chairman Edwards mentioned that there may be a way to minimize the number of people (ie not the whole Board) who have to review applications for CEU approval. Member Solvie noted that in years past the practice was to have just the Chairman and Vice-Chairman review the applications and approve CEUs. While that practice was abandoned a long time ago, Member Solvie agreed that there should be a way for an initial review for CEUs be conducted and the review sent out for Board comment. Chairman Edwards noted that he and Program Administrator Ashley discussed the option of having the applicant make the initial assessment.

Members Solvie and Risso discussed how the incident with the City of Henderson course approval heightened their awareness of the need to update review practices and policies. Member Solvie noted that Boards are created for the very purpose of making subjective decisions as a collaborative group when “black and white” definitions cannot be made. Member Crim noted that if approvals are extended, he would like to see cycles of no more than 3 years. Member Drinkwater asked if CEUs from other states are accepted or vetted by the Board before approving. Member Risso noted that we have accepted them in the past but now we are getting applications from vendors in other states and for on-line classes (ie Indigo Water).

Program Administrator Ashley noted that the Policies and Procedures will need to be clearer about how we are handling and granting CEUs because she gets numerous calls from operators who argue the vague language in the current policy, especially with regards to reciprocity. Discussion was had on the differences between Professional Operator certification versus ABC Certification versus ABC certification exams. Member Solvie noted that since there are potentially numerous Policy and Procedure changes that will result from the recent letter to NDEP regarding potential regulation and policy changes, we should make notes and do the changes all at once.

Chairman Edwards appointed a volunteer committee to review CEU approval policies. The committee consists of Member Risso (Chair), Member Drinkwater, Member Oswalt, Keli Callahan and Program Administrator Ashley.

8. **Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) Update**

Member Solvie noted that on Monday, September 19th, the Tri-State Seminar will be hosting an ABC POWER Event. Rick Warner, incoming President of WEF, will be the headline speaker.

Member Solvie noted that he, Program Administrator Jake, and Member Risso attended an exam writing workshop in Olathe, Kansas. In October, the group will be working on developing the new exams and cut scores.



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

Member Solvie, Program Administrator Jake, and Member Risso will be attending ABC Strategic Planning workshops, and Board of Directors / Certification Commission for Environmental Professionals meetings in Tahoe in September.

9. Certification Program Assessment

9.1. NAC Regulation Questions

Member Solvie mentioned that a meeting was held in May with the working group and NDEP (Joe Maez, Bruce Holmgren, Nikita Lingenfelter). NDEP was receptive to all of the recommendations presented by the team (as outlined in the NWEA recommendation report). NDEP asked the group to prepare draft questions to be presented to their Deputy Attorney General (DAG) for interpretation on whether sufficient language exists in NAC or if a regulation change would be required to implement some of the changes being recommended. If a regulation change is required, language for the regulation needs to be submitted in early June to be considered. NDEP requested NWEA to assist in the drafting process.

Member Solvie noted that the regulation questions are complete and will be sent to Joe Maez today. He noted that next steps are to obtain feed-back from NDEP through their DAG on what objectives will require a regulation change. Those items will become the top priority to address with policy changes and clean-up being addressed immediately after. Member Solvie also noted that the working group still has work to do with regards to determining detailed recommendations for each objective, which will be presented to NDEP for consideration. As stakeholders, the certified community will be included in the process. Discussion was had regarding whether the policies should try to align with the water program and Member Solvie noted that Jennifer Carr requested during a previous Certification Board meeting that we assess our program and recommendations independently. Once the regulation questions are sent to Joe Maez and he has feedback from the DAG, he will respond back to the working group to expedite the work moving forward.

10. NV Division of Environmental Protection Update

Joe Maez noted that they are moving forward on the reuse regulations that are currently in the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB) court. They are creating a new category of reuse water, A+, and re-defining the beneficial uses of the existing categories (A – D). The goal is to create a potential opportunity for direct potable reuse. They are hoping to have these regulations adopted by the Environmental Commission by the end of this year. Once they get moved forward, NDEP plans to begin the workshops late this summer or early this fall. Since they may get questions at the workshops about who will operate these facilities and how can they be sure they are reliable, Joe Maez asked the Board what kind of training would be required to ensure operators could achieve this new level of performance and is the Grade IV certification sufficient for assessing competency. Joe asked if we knew what other states like California, Texas and Florida are doing to meet these higher expectations. Member Solvie offered to follow-up with ABC to obtain whatever information is currently available.

Member Drinkwater noted that his facility has just approved funding for a pilot test in partnership with UNR to vet out treatment technologies that would meet A+ water quality criteria. He noted that regardless of



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

strong academic and scientific arguments that prove the technologies work, there is a need for public education and outreach because of the lack of trust by the public in the wastewater utilities as water providers. He also noted that the question should be posed to the water boards – what would they support? Joe noted that the requirements fall within the wastewater operator arena as the water quality criteria have to be met before discharge and the water operators wouldn't be involved until they pulled the water from the reservoir for use.

Member Risso noted that conversations with the wastewater scheme folks at ABC have raised similar concerns. While creating a "new" class of certification seems like an easy answer, the process to develop valid, legally defensible exams is extremely costly and unless you have enough of a demand for the exam, it is cost prohibitive. She noted that her preference would be to see a dual certification requirement where the operator is certified as a WWT IV and perhaps a Water I or Distribution I. Chairman Edwards noted 20 years ago, we didn't have BNR facilities but as they came online, the operators learned how to operate them. Over time, the exams evolved and had more material related to BNR processes so the certification reflected the industry. He felt that this would continue to naturally occur with the exams as the technology advances. Member Risso noted that part of the item writing workshop held in Kansas was to add questions to the exam database that covered some of the newer technology. Joe noted that it would be good to have an agenda item to look at what other states are doing to ensure operators are qualified to operate these A+ water facilities and how it relates to certification.

Joe noted that Nick Brothers is the new Permit Branch supervisor. They have had a lot of turnover in the permit writing group so they are behind with issuing permits, however, NPDES permits are given priority. He also noted they are in the second year of the Circuit Rider Program with Broadbent and Associates and generally, they bring out Randy March or Bill Shepherd.

11. Water & Wastewater Operators Forum Update

Program Administrator Ashley reported that the Forum had technical difficulties and they have not had a meeting. There is no meeting minutes as the secretary is out on maternity leave. The next meeting is October 4th.

12. Educational Opportunities / Training Updates

Program Administrator Ashley will work with Paul Krauth to schedule a pump class in Las Vegas.

13. Public Comment

No public comment was heard.

14. New Business

No new business.



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MEETING MINUTES (continued)

15. Next Board Meeting

Member Risso noted that the next regularly scheduled meeting would typically fall the first week of November. The Board will tentatively plan for a November 3rd meeting in Carson City pending the scheduling of the NDEP Networking Event.

16. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Risso and seconded by Member Oswalt. Chairman Edwards called for a vote. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 11:36 AM.