

ARKANSAS WASTEWATER LICENSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012
ADEQ MEETING ROOMS 5C05/06

MEMBERS

Mark Johnson, Rogers Water Utilities, Chair
Jennifer Bouldin, Ph.D., Arkansas State University
Tommy Tooke, Tyson Foods, Inc.
Steven Upton, Heber Springs Wastewater Department
Kelly Bryant, Evergreen Packaging, Inc.
Dennis Brunson, Hot Springs Wastewater
Jimmy Smith, Searcy Water & Sewer
Craig Uyeda, Executive Secretary, ADEQ

MINUTES

The meeting of the Wastewater Licensing Committee was called to order at 10:03 a.m., on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, by Chairman Johnson. Members and attendees present were Johnson, Bouldin, Tooke, Upton, Bryant, Brunson, Smith; Randy Harper, AR Environmental Training Academy (AETA); David Richardson, AR Water and Wastewater Manager's Association (AWWMA); Martin Nutt, AR Department of Health (ADH); Dennis Sternberg, AR Rural Water Association (ARWA); Jonathan Richardson, AR Environmental Training Academy (AETA); William Winn, City of Fayetteville; Mo Shafii, ADEQ Water Division Assistant Chief; Craig Uyeda, ADEQ, AWLC Executive Secretary; Kevin Suel, ADEQ Testing Administrator and Sandy Luttrell, ADEQ Licensing Coordinator.

The February 8th meeting minutes were reviewed. Bouldin noted that her name was omitted under the Members list, which has since been corrected by Luttrell. Upton made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Smith. The motion was accepted.

Uyeda gave the financial report. Brunson asked if any ideas have come up regarding the allotment of funds to be used by training facilities. This pertains to the legality issues mentioned at the previous meeting. Both Uyeda and Shafii responded that appropriations would be brought up at the next legislative session.

Luttrell presented the licensing report. Sternberg asked if the Class IV test results were included in the 84% overall pass rate of testing performed in the past three months. Luttrell confirmed that it was. Upton asked what the ABC test pass rate was at this time. Suel responded, ABC test scores beginning from March, 2010 to the present, the pass rate currently stands at 16.5%.

Before continuing on to public comments, Uyeda wished to address the Committee. He recognized current members, Chairman Mark Johnson and Dennis Brunson, for their dedicated service on the Arkansas Wastewater Licensing Committee. Uyeda presented each with a plaque of appreciation for their many efforts and accomplishments during their six-year term on the Board.

Public comments were next on the agenda. Harper and Richardson were present for the Environmental Academy's attendance report.

Sternberg gave a report for the Rural Water Association.

Continuing under public comments, AWWMA's 2nd Vice-President, David Richardson, addressed the Committee regarding concerns his organization has over the low pass rate of Class IV test results through ABC's program. They want the Committee and ADEQ to know they are available and ready to assist in any way they can to help resolve these issues and make this program work for all of those involved.

Johnson responded that this has been a concern of the Committee's for some time. We believe the Academy's newly created 3-day Class IV review will prove beneficial to operators attempting to take and pass ABC's test. He stated that when he took his Class IV exam, they were taught what would be on the exam. This does not apply with the way the ABC test is administered.

Shafii added that to better prepare operators for the Class IV test level, they should begin by taking ABC's Class I followed through to a Class III test level. Their lack of knowledge reflects that classes are not being covered well enough to prepare the operators. Operators are not familiar with questions asked pertaining to permit procedures as well.

Brunson believes operators need a class available on how to study (better techniques). He brought this up at the previous meeting, asking Bouldin if the college offers preparation courses on studying to students. She confirmed this and would try to obtain materials on this matter.

Bouldin made a suggestion to create a mentoring group. This group would consist of Class IV operators willing to work and prepare wastewater operators for passing their Class IV test. She also expressed the need to encourage operators to take computer-generated sample test online to help them face any testing day jitters they may encounter when taking the actual ABC test.

Nutt suggested we check ABC's national rate on a state by state basis. He pointed out that it took 6-7 years before the Department of Health saw an acceptable overall improvement in pass rates for the water licensing program.

William Winn, Operations Manager with the City of Fayetteville, addressed the Committee concerning his experience as a wastewater classroom instructor for ADEQ's training providers (AETA and ARWA). He encourages all of his students to learn all you can and that Class IV operators should have a vast knowledge of every aspect of a plants operation.

Johnson broke-in on the many areas being discussed, to ask what the Committee would like to do to resolve these issues? No motions were presented, so he moved the meeting onward to the next category.

Under old business, Johnson brought up the next topic of addressing the Committee's concerns. Shafii was asked to comment on the list provided, which he stated he had not seen before today. Johnson decided this would be tabled until the next meeting, giving Shafii a chance to review the materials.

Under new business, the AWWMA Program Chair, Daniel Dawson, submitted their annual conference program schedule for the Committee to review and determine the hours of training to grant those in attendance. A motion was made by Bouldin that we grant ten (10) training hours to those operators attending the July 18-21, 2012, AWWMA's Annual Conference. Smith seconded the motion and it was accepted.

Finally under new business, nomination choices were reviewed for the current seat vacancies on the Board for Johnson and Brunson. Several mentioned the fact that Mr. Winn had journeyed so far to attend this meeting, which shows great support towards our mission. Smith made a motion to select William Winn and Lisa Ellington to fill the two positions being vacated on the Wastewater Licensing Committee. This was seconded by Tooke and the motion carried.

Johnson asked for the final time, do we have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Bouldin made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Smith. The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.