

**ARKANSAS WASTEWATER LICENSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2020
ONLINE ZOOM CONFERENCING MEETING**

Committee Members

Jennifer Enos, Chairman, Springdale Water Utilities
Lance McAvoy, Vice-Chairman, City of Fort Smith
Michael Overstreet, Jacksonville Wastewater
Doug Ford, Pollution Management, Inc.
Jeff Ford, Kimzey Regional Water
Wen Zhang, Ph.D., University of Arkansas
Richard Healey, Executive Secretary, ADEE

MINUTES

The meeting of the Arkansas Wastewater Licensing Committee (AWLC) was called to order by Chairman Jennifer Enos at 10:02 A.M. on Wednesday, November 4, 2020.

Public Present: Randy Harper, AR Environmental Training Academy; Dennis Sternberg and Susan Poe, AR Rural Water Association; Jamie Ewing, Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority; Alan York, Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment (ADEE), Water Division Deputy Director; Stacie Wassell, ADEE, Legal Division; Sandy Luttrell and Leslie Allen-Daniel, ADEE, Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Previous Minutes: After reviewing the August 12th meeting minutes, **Mr. McAvoy made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Mr. Doug Ford. The motion was accepted.**

Financial Report: Ms. Luttrell presented the quarterly budget and expenditures report to the Committee.

Licensing Report: Ms. Luttrell reported the number of wastewater exams proctored and license certifications issued during in the past quarter, which included Zoom video conferencing exams done on an individual basis. In classroom training with testing was very minimal due to social distancing and classroom availability.

Training Updates: Mr. Harper gave a report on the number of courses taught and participants attending for the Environmental Training Academy. During the 2020-2021 training schedule, they began offering zoom classes at their Camden facility. This has worked extremely well and with positive responses on the experience of in-class interaction with other operators, as well as the instructor. This option came about during the pandemic, due to the lack of facilities open to them for use around the state. They anticipate several more areas opening their doors for public use after the new year begins.

Mr. Sternberg announced that the Rural Water Association's 2021 calendar year training course schedule would be online and sent to DEQ and ADH when complete. They will be adding distant training courses with host sites next year, where the instructor will use a camera to communicate/interact with the operators attending the courses. Several test runs have been performed to better prepare for this training option and it will work well for all involved. Ms. Poe presented a report of training courses taught and students in attendance over the past quarter. She also noted that the pass rate for examinees was through the roof, which she attributes to students wearing of face masks. Less communication with others and more focus/attention on the training class instructor has made the difference.

Public Comments: Nothing was presented at this time.

Chairman Enos welcomed our new members, Jeff Ford with Kimzey Regional Water in Malvern and Dr. Wen Zhang with the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She stated that mature members were delighted to have them join us. New blood can offer new insight to carry the torch for the Arkansas wastewater industry into a brighter future. She also congratulated Mr. Doug Ford on his approval for a 2nd term on the Committee.

Old Business: Ms. Enos expressed her heartfelt "Thanks" for the opportunity to work alongside Michael Overstreet during his six years of service on this Committee. Although he will be missed when his second term ends on November 30th, his knowledge and efforts have been invaluable in keeping the licensing committee moving forward on the right path. Ms. Luttrell announced that his service plaque was ordered and should be ready within the week, which she will ship to him.

Ms. Enos welcomed our two newest board members to the Committee, Mr. Jeff Ford and Dr. Wen Zhang. Mr. Ford currently works for Kimzey Regional Water District in Malvern and has been working in the water/wastewater industry for over 40 years. Dr. Zhang has been working with the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville for the past 10 years. She is part of a team working on a national project identifying concentrations of Covid in wastewater. She specializes mostly in wastewater research, but has water research knowledge also, along with nutrient removal and emerging contaminants.

New Business: Ms. Enos announced that two letters of recommendation have been received for the two vacant positions on the Committee. One is for an active wastewater operator position being left by Mr. Overstreet and the other is for a nominee recommended by a private industry to fill the position vacated by Mr. Richardson who declined a second term of service. Members were presented with two recommendations received by DEQ from Ms. Ava Roberts with the Arkansas Environmental Federation. After some discussion, **Mr. Doug Ford made a motion to recommend the nomination of David Sartain and Jamie Ewing to the vacant positions on the Wastewater Licensing Committee to be presented to the Arkansas Pollution Control & Ecology Commission at their next meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Overstreet and it carries.**

Mr. Healey announced the topic of Water Otter training, a private national firm, who wish to be reconsidered for online training for wastewater operators, which was declined by the Committee a few years ago. Due to the Covid crisis and the lack of training available they would like to be reconsidered at this time for training approval with Arkansas. Mr. McAvoy stated with a possible vaccine coming out around the end of the year, we may begin to see things turn around early in 2021. With this being the case, **Mr. McAvoy made a motion to table the Water Otter training approval for six months, which was seconded by Mr. Doug Ford. The motion carries.**

Mr. McAvoy announced that the Water Licensing Committee agreed to waive the renewal training hours for the 2019 - 2021 water operator license renewal period, which was accepted by the Water Advisory Committee as well. Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) training requirements for drinking water licensed operators will be waived until June 30, 2023. **Jeff Ford wants to recommend that we parallel the ADH in waiving the training hour requirements for 2019-2021 license period, and present the Committee's recommendation to the ADEE Director. Mike Overstreet seconded this motion and it carried.** Mr. Healey will prepare a memo of your wishes, route it through his supervisor to the agency Director, to address the 2019-2021 training hour renewal procedure for licensed wastewater operators.

Ms. Enos addressed an earlier topic that had to be skipped due to Ms. Stacie Wassell's prior meeting commitment. She was able to join the meeting and explain that an earlier decision handed down from a judge regarding the matter of reducing a license suspension on Mr. Sayre, was overturned by the AR Pollution Control and Ecology Commission (APC&E). They were not in agreement with the decision to suspend his wastewater license for 20 months and raised it to a 36 month suspension.

Ms. Wassell went on with how the judge had wished there was some kind of regulation listed in Rule 3 that could better reflect proper judgement when dealing with this type of matter. Consistency was the method used to rule in this case, therefore previous suspensions handled through AWLC were reviewed. APC&E Commissioners wish to see updates made to Rule 3, which Ms. Wassell has already begun. She wants members to review and make notes of any additional changes/edits that they feel need to be addressed in these changes to Rule 3, as well. She plans to forward her red-lined notes to the committee members once it is complete, which she obtained most details from past committee meetings. An appendix of guidance to suspensions and revocations in the future will also be necessary for the Rule 3 revisions.

Chairman Enos announced the next scheduled meeting of this Committee: **February 10, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. (in person or through zoom).**

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.