

ARKANSAS DRINKING WATER ADVISORY AND OPERATOR LICENSING COMMITTEE

DRAFT – October 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes – DRAFT

A quarterly meeting of the Arkansas Drinking Water Advisory and Operator Licensing Committee (Committee) was held on October 11, 2018. The quarterly meeting was held at 10:00 a.m., at the Arkansas Rural Water Association, Lonoke, Arkansas.

Members present:

Roger Moren, Chair, Sardis Water Assn (2019)

Lance McAvoy, Fort Smith Utility (2024)

Jeff Stone, P.E., Executive Secretary; ADH

Aaron Benzing, P.E., Hawkins Weir Engineers (2021)

Scott Boggs, Searcy Board of Water Utilities (2023)

Member Absent:

Bradley Scheffler, Chair Elect, Piggott Water/Wastewater (2020)

Lashun Thomas, Ph.D., P.E., UA Little Rock (2022)

Department of Health (ADH) Staff & Guests present:

Martin Nutt, Training and Cert Officer, ADH

Ida L Hampton, Administrative Specialist, ADH

Dennis Sternberg, Arkansas Rural Water Association

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MOREN

Meeting called to Order by Moren, Committee Chair. Moren dispensed with need for introductions.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MOREN

Moren directed attention to the provided meeting minutes, and requested any corrections or an approval motion. Boggs motioned to approve the July 12, 2018 meeting minutes as presented, McAvoy provided the second, and the Committee approved the July 12, 2018 minutes.

TABLED BUSINESS – MOREN

High School Diploma Waiver – Nutt

No High School waiver to address.

High School Water Technology Course Development

Boggs requested a brief reminder of what this item was due to his absence at the last meeting when this item was discussed. Nutt provided a brief overview of the programs desire to introduce high school students to drinking water treatment and its job potential.

OLD BUSINESS – MOREN

ABC 2017 EXAM CONVERSION IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE – NUTT

Nutt reported the conversion to the 2017 version of ABC Water Treatment and Water Distribution License exams was on track to occur as requested by Committee on January 1, 2019. The 2012 version exams will last be used for December paper exams sessions and until December 31st for computer based exams. The 2017 ABC exam versions will be offered January 1 by computer based exams with paper exams to follow with the March 2019 paper exam sessions. He noted the conversion

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has become somewhat “bigger than life” with a lot of operator discussion about getting present exam taken instead of those new unknown exams. Nutt reiterated to the Committee that ABC had made no formal effort to change exam content or complexity, with the lone exception being the removal of compliance items. This led to a brief Committee discussion about the changes and which exams their operators were taking.

NEW BUSINESS – MOREN

License Committee Member Vacancy – Stone

Stone informed the Committee that Scheffler, Chair Elect, had resigned his Committee position due to work related conflicts. Stone noted that work and family commitments were certainly more critical than Committee work and stated appreciation for Scheffler service to the Committee. Stone then briefed the Committee on the Health Departments actions related to re-filling the relatively short remaining time of the position, in particular, if we went through the normal nomination process and would basically be seeking two nominees in a short time period. Stone then led a discussion as to the possibility of leaving the position fallow and making do with 6 members rather than seven. A discussion of pros and cons of leaving the position fallow concluded with a consensus of the Committee being if the position remained fallow it would not prevent the Committee from accomplishing its duties.

ABC Annual Conference Committee Attendance – Nutt

Nutt stated the ABC Conference was scheduled for January 8-11, 2019 in Savannah, Georgia. He stated that the Section had the resources to continue allowing the newest Committee member to attend, if the Committee agreed the Conference was beneficial. Several Committee members indicated they believed the Conference was beneficial to them. McAvoy indicated he wished to attend and the Committee recommended he be allowed to attend. Stone indicated he would support McAvoy and Nutt to attend. Nutt concluded by informing the Committee he would provide them a copy of the program should they desire a more in-depth report on a particular program topic.

National PFAs Issue Related To Arkansas – Stone

Stone noted that Emily Walkenhorst with *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* produced an October 7th article on drinking water in Arkansas concerning PFAs, which are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. Stone noted that PFAs are a growing national issues and Ms. Walkenhorst’s article focused on the UCMR3 2013-15 PFAs sampling within 48 Arkansas water systems required to sample, with those systems representing 57 percent of the state’s population. All systems had non-detect results for PFAs at the 20 parts per trillion detection limits for the analysis method. Stone noted the EPA health advisory is 70 ppt. He discussed the Section’s response and sampling concepts for PFAs noting he could not justify spending a large sum of money to sample all water sources for a contaminant not detected in a representative sampling of sources. He noted the Section would be able to respond to any source concern that might need sampling.

Upcoming Legislative Session Concerns – Stone

Stone predicted the legislative session is going to be active, with several possible bills relating to public water systems. He noted the Governors efforts to reorganize and reduce state government would be before the legislature. He noted the preliminary documents shared recently by the Governor left the drinking water program within the Department of Health and the ADWA&OL Committee was listed as a committee within the Department. He indicated the one change that would affect the program was the possible move of Protective Health Codes to the Department of Labor which would impact plan review

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coordination efforts. Other potential legislative action is possible legislation related to plan review for subdivisions being modified, and the PVC pipe legislation will most likely be back. Stone updated the Committee on the Water Provider Legislative Task Force reporting that it has focused on addressing small underfunded, not well maintained publicly owned water systems with a very broad look at possible solutions and the provision of water outside city limits. He noted the task force expected to have a formal report before the end of the year. He stated he fully expects the report will generate legislation. The last item he addressed was a possible increase in drinking water service fees, noting he had made Department management aware of the need for increased revenue to meet SDWA monitoring, and he felt management was receptive to the program's needs. Sternberg stressed the need to keep your local legislator informed during the upcoming session.

2019 Training Schedule Update – Nutt

Nutt indicated he had not received 2019 training schedules, draft or otherwise, from either trainer. He stated he left it on the agenda mainly to remind the trainers of the need for the program to review the schedules to address any major scheduling conflicts when the two schedules are compared. Sternberg then noted he had draft copies of their training schedule and would provide Nutt a copy.

2019 License Exam Schedule Update – Nutt

Nut referenced the provided exam schedule, noting that with the exam sessions decoupled from the training sessions he was able to produce the exam schedule. He stated the 2019 schedule was identical to the 2018 schedule except dates were changed. Exam sessions would continue to be the 1st and 2nd Fridays in March, June, September, and December with exams every quarter in Fayetteville, Lonoke, Jonesboro, Camden and Clarksville. Exam sessions in Nashville and Mountain Home (1st Thursday) would alternate each quarter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – MOREN

Executive Secretary / Section Director's Report – Stone

Stone stated his earlier presentations had addressed most of the points he wished to cover. He did report the Section's budget was stable. He then reviewed the substantial turnover in program staff or changes in duties being performed by existing staff due to promotions and lateral moves. He shared the difficulties filling vacant positions, in particular 3 open engineer positions, and an inability to have qualified individuals apply to fill the positions.

Training & Certification Officer's Report – Nutt

License Update – Nutt

Nutt started his license update report by referencing the normally provided spreadsheet detailing exam performance information. He noted he had provided quarterly results and in a few spots the numbers do not look good at all, that the passing rates unfortunately remained stable. He was not sure what effect the new exams would have on the passing rate. He noted the passing rates for first time takers were higher, versus a large group of repeat exam takers keeping the passing rates low. He stated he was stressing the need to study the actual reference manuals and that if the operator studied with a desire to know the information, instead of "I have to learn this", they had a greater success rate.

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Enforcement Plan Update – Nutt

Nutt in his enforcement effort report provided a handout to the Committee detailing enforcement actions. He referenced Stone's statement about Consent Orders working well by noting the number of systems that reach the consent order/hearing enforcement level that they then obtain a licensed operator.

General Program Update – Nutt

Nutt in his General Program Update informed the Committee that the program was processing applications, exam results, and licenses, as quickly as possible but not as quickly as he preferred. The exam passing rates are creating operator turnover, which means new applications to process and a much larger number of exams to process. He indicated that technology like emailing initial exam scores and on-line exam registration were saving significant time. He noted he was changing license issue dates to reflect the actual date the exam was taken/passed rather than the date the paperwork was processed. He mentioned that operators were beginning to address the 2019 renewal by asking renewal related training questions about not being able to document hours or their need for hours.

Arkansas Environmental Training Academy Report – Harper

The Academy did not have staff present and did not furnish a written report

Arkansas Rural Water Association Report – Sternberg

Sternberg provided an ARWA written training report detailing their training classes and attendance data for January through September 2018 with 380 direct course training hours, with 1,977 students. He noted this number includes their annual conference attendance which set a new record of 1,097 and there were more exhibitors than ever before. He announced that Jeff Ford, Deputy Director, had resigned to manage Kimzey Regional Water District and that Chris Harris had been promoted to Deputy Director. Sternberg concluded by reviewing Harris' qualifications.

OTHER BUSINESS – MOREN

No Other Business.

CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE – MOREN

The Committee confirmed their next meeting date tentatively for April 11, 2019 choosing to not hold a January meeting due to the normal January 10, 2019 date conflicting with the ABC Annual Conference.

ADJOURN – MOREN

Moren received an adjournment motion from Benzing, seconded by Boggs, with the Committee affirming the motion. Moren adjourned the meeting.

End

(Minutes approved????, as presented, April 11, 2019 ADWA&OLC meeting. amn)