

ARKANSAS WASTEWATER LICENSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016
Room 1E09

Committee Members

Jimmy Smith, Chairman, Searcy Water & Sewer
Lisa Ellington, Vice-Chairman, Paragould Light, Water & Cable
Jennifer Enos, Springdale Water Utilities
Rodney Williams, Ph.D., University of Arkansas
William Wright, Albemarle Corporation
Richard Healey, Executive Secretary, ADEQ
Tommy Tooke, Tyson Foods, Inc. - absent
Michael Overstreet, Jacksonville Wastewater - absent

MINUTES

The meeting of the Arkansas Wastewater Licensing Committee was called to order by Chairman, Jimmy Smith, at 10:01 A.M. on Wednesday, November 9, 2016.

Public Present: Dr. Mark Gross, Morrison-Shipley Engineering; Randy Harper, AR Environmental Training Academy; Susan Poe, AR Rural Water Association; Caleb Osborne, Associate Director, ADEQ Office of Water Quality; Bob Blanz, Acting Senior Operations Manager, ADEQ Office of Water Quality; Sandy Luttrell and Leslie Allen-Daniel, ADEQ.

Committee Chairman, Jimmy Smith, was presented with a service plaque for his six (6) years of dedicated service to the state as a member on the Arkansas Wastewater Licensing Committee by Mr. Healey. His valuable knowledge and contributions have been extremely beneficial and he will be truly missed by everyone.

Previous Minutes: The August 10th meeting minutes were reviewed by the Committee. **Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Enos seconded the motion and it carried.**

Financial Report: Ms. Luttrell presented the Wastewater Licensing Financial Report.

Licensing Report: Ms. Luttrell presented the License Issuance Report.

Training Updates: Mr. Harper reported that 19 classes were held during the last quarter, with 232 students in attendance with the Arkansas Environmental Training Academy. Also, the university is without a chancellor at this time, but are currently interviewing with hopes to fill this position before the first of the year.

Ms. Poe informed the Committee that the 2017 calendar was close to being finalized. The Arkansas Rural Water Association will offer renewal training classes for water and wastewater credit through the license expiration date.

Public Comments: Nothing additional was mentioned.

Old Business: Ms. Enos announced that the AWEA Past-President, Tiffany Mallard, confirmed new Class IV Wastewater Operators would be recognized at the Wastewater Awards Luncheon held at the AWW&WEA conference, but they would need to purchase their own lunch ticket. Discussion ensued over notifying facilities employing these operators to see about paying this expense on their behalf or checking other alternate routes.

New Business: Mr. Bob Blanz, with ADEQ Office of Water Quality, proposed the idea of a new license for non-municipal domestic sewage treatment plants. This license consideration came about due to an on-going history of noncompliance issues with biological process facilities, which are also known as package plants, activated sludge or recirculating septic systems. Most start experiencing system break downs after about 5 years of use. Altogether, there are about 75 facilities in Arkansas, about 50 have NPDES permits, while 20 or so use irrigation or soil injection systems. Mr. Blanz asked for the Committees opinion on this matter.

Mr. Williams introduced Dr. Mark Gross to the Committee, who recommends operators attend the manufacturers training for their particular sites or have the operation and maintenance (O & M) manuals readily available for their use, which usually does not exist. He mentioned that Oregon offers certification through O & M training curriculum with the Consortium Institute for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment. Sam Dunn at the Arkansas Health Department, where they have developed two sets of materials to train operators and designated representatives (DR's), particularly on the soil side of the spectrum. Also brought up, CSUS/California State University at Sacramento has training references available for Small Wastewater Systems.

Mr. Wright feels that the basic and advanced industrial license cover everything being discussed and they directly apply to what they do at Albemarle, with very little separation in the two systems. He also mentioned adding to the curriculum that is already in place.

Mr. Harper stated that most small Maw and Paw businesses, trailer parks and package plants have no clue how to run their plants and usually don't want to know, but rather than pay someone to do the work, they will manage it themselves. Ms. Poe mentioned the number of state park operators they have trained for licensure and that most need specific training. You cannot mix RV waste and activated sludge in certain concentrations and not have problems.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Blanz if he wants the Committee to make a recommendation about what needs to happen for a resolution to this problem. Mr. Blanz confirms the department would appreciate any assistance by the Committee on this matter. Mr. Williams further questioned, does ADEQ have jurisdiction over this area, or will this create an issue with the Health Department? Mr. Blanz answered: No, it falls under ADEQ's jurisdiction, due to it being residential septic systems.

Mr. Smith noted we will continue to discuss this matter at future meetings. The Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation to Mr. Mark Gross for his assistance at today's meeting and for being here with us.

New Business (cont.): Mr. Healey discussed ABC's bi-annual testing agreement with ADEQ for Class IV exams, which has been reviewed by ADEQ's Legal Division (memo provided). It has been brought to ADEQ's attention, ABC will not agree to accept responsibility for disputes concerning the customized exam for Arkansas. This agreement is effective through December 31, 2018, which allows us time to weigh our options. The Health Department encountered the same situation last year, when they converted all water license classifications to ABC's standardized tests. The Committee must now discuss and review solutions to this issue. We have time before we must renew this agreement allowing ABC's standardized tests for our wastewater exams or find a solution to keep our state specific questions in play.

Ms. Enos would like to see classes offered based on regulations and issues dealing specifically in Arkansas. Ms. Ellington stated that state specific questions could be included in Class IV review courses currently being taught through AETA and ARWA. Mr. Harper and Ms. Poe agreed they can also be included for other license classification levels, as well. Mr. Healey clarified that ADEQ and ABC are entered into this contract agreement, the Committee cannot vote to accept the contract, only to make recommendations to ADEQ. Mr. Smith stated this needs to be reviewed and discussed at future Committee meetings.

Mr. Harper and Ms. Poe informed the Board of problems they face during operator license renewal periods. The final six (6) months leading up to the license expiration date, classroom size doubles/triples in numbers due to operators trying to obtain last-minute training hours for renewal requirements. Most attending for training hours only are not focused on the training presentation like those scheduled to test at the end of the course. This creates distractions for the instructor, as well as those operators trying to learn. Constant interruptions while the instructor teaches, along with the use of electronic devices and cell phones during class. Mr. Harper suggested not allowing the licensure classes to be used for renewal hours.

Mr. Williams asked how we would propose this type of change. Ms. Ellington stated the Committee could suggest changes to the Regulation #3, which would go before the Commission and then on to the legislature. Mr. Williams noted that the description of continuing education needs to be updated on its verbiage because it is non-specific. Mr. Harper strongly encourages that we go in conjunction with the department, otherwise, be controversial when it reaches the subcommittee.

Ms. Luttrell presented documentation to the Committee on two (2) Missouri reciprocity applicants requesting Arkansas wastewater operator licenses. Tim Thorson holds a Class A (equivalent to an AR IV) and James Keith Sanderson, II holds a Class B (equivalent to an AR III). Ms. Luttrell informed the Committee that Missouri proctors state administered exams and she had asked both operators if they plan to move to Arkansas to work in the future. They responded that their primary focus was to live in Missouri and work within their watershed. **Ms. Ellington made a motion to approve Mr. Thorson for an Arkansas Class III operator license, with the opportunity to sit for his Arkansas Class IV exam, as well as, approving Mr. Sanderson for a Class III operator license. The motion was seconded by Ms. Enos and it carries.**

An Arizona reciprocity application was received for the Committee's review from Thomas Arn, a Grade 4 operator with an extensive 36 year resume. He works as a principal consultant for Raftelis Financial Consultants and resides in Hot Springs. After much review and discussion, **Ms. Ellington made a motion to allow him to obtain a Special Operators license through ADEQ's wastewater licensing system/non-technical Class III license (not an operator of a wastewater treatment plant system). In the future, he would be eligible to sit for his Class IV license only if he began working in the operation of a wastewater treatment plant. This motion was seconded by Ms. Enos and it carried.**

The Committee reviewed the final reciprocity applicant on the agenda, Gabriel Winston, a Class IV operator from Louisiana. Obtained license through state administered exam and plans to assist facilities in his geographical location, with no plans to move from the Bastrop area. **Ms. Ellington made a motion to grant him an Arkansas Class III license with the opportunity to test for the Class IV, as long as he meets all Regulation 3 requirements. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried.**

Ms. Luttrell presented training course submissions received from two providers requesting the Committee's acceptance of their training programs for continuing education credits. These completed ADEQ Criteria Guideline forms were reviewed along with the course agenda's provided. First, the Houston Industrial Training Institute is offering a "Basic Centrifugal Pump Hydraulics" 4-hour course they would like to have approved for training within Arkansas. The Committee's review brought about them questioning the other four (4) courses they were offering, which would also need their approval as well. Second, the Committee reviewed and discussed material provided by Sensus, a company offering training on water, gas and electric meters. The details offered were extremely vague and did not clearly show what would be gained by taking these courses. **Ms. Ellington made a motion to table this item until the next meeting, maybe ask them to be present for questions at our meeting. Would like more information on the other courses being offered through the Institute and additional details on the training courses with Sensus, like whether it is water or wastewater related training. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wright.**

Mr. Smith asked our attending guest to step-out so the Committee could go into Executive Session. The Committee received three (3) nominations to review for the vacant operator seat being left by Mr. Smith: from Little Rock Wastewater, Jo Anna Brown and Luke Baldwin; and from the City of Fort Smith, Lance McAvoy. The Board reviewed and discussed the details provided on each candidate before making a decision. **Mr. Wright made a motion to recommend Ms. Jo Anna Brown to the Commission for the vacant position on the Licensing Committee. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried.**

Ms. Ellington announced the next scheduled meeting: **February 8, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.**

Ms. Ellington /Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:3 a.m., which was seconded by Mr. Wright. The motion carried.