

ARKANSAS WASTEWATER LICENSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017
Room 1E09 – Conference Room

Committee Members

Lisa Ellington, Chairman, Paragould Light, Water & Cable
Rodney Williams, Vice-Chairman, Ph.D., University of Arkansas
Jennifer Enos, Springdale Water Utilities
William Wright, Albemarle Corporation
Michael Overstreet, Jacksonville Wastewater
Jo Anna Brown, Little Rock Wastewater
Jonathan Richardson, Martin Operating Partnership
Richard Healey, Executive Secretary, ADEQ

MINUTES

The meeting of the Arkansas Wastewater Licensing Committee (AWLC) was called to order by Chairman Lisa Ellington, at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

Public Present: Randy Harper and Kenny Harvey, AR Environmental Training Academy (AETA); Dennis Sternberg, AR Rural Water Association (ARWA); Martin Nutt, AR Dept. of Health; Kyle Leubner and Jack Strickler, North Little Rock Wastewater; Sandy Luttrell and Leslie Allen-Daniel, ADEQ.

Previous Minutes: The August 9, 2017 meeting minutes were reviewed by the Committee. **Ms. Enos made a motion to approve the minutes as written, which was seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion was accepted.**

Financial Report: Ms. Luttrell presented the Committee with documents displaying the last quarters Financial transactions and budget totals.

Licensing Report: Ms. Luttrell reported the numbers and types of licenses issued during the past quarter.

Training Updates: Mr. Harvey discussed classroom attendance and training hours issued during the last 3 months by the Environmental Training Academy. Mr. Harper announced new training courses that would be offered in 2018: activated sludge microbiology, pump operation/maintenance, chlorine safety and license renewal training.

Mr. Sternberg with the Arkansas Rural Water Association provided hand-outs with the total number of students attending class throughout the year, as well as the training hours allowed for each course completed. He announced their training course calendar should be complete and ready to print within the next two weeks. The association also has a new wastewater instructor, Shelby Townsley, who is currently training to assist with classes beginning early next year.

No "Public Comments" were brought to the Boards attention at this meeting.

Old Business: Ms. Luttrell provided members with the minute order forms approved at the recent AR Pollution Control & Ecology Commissions meeting. One order was for the appointment of our newest board member, Jonathan Richardson, while the other was to reappoint William Wright for his second term serving on the Wastewater Licensing Committee.

New Business: Ms. Luttrell provided details for the Committee to review a request for reciprocity by Jonas Rissler, a former Arkansas Class IV wastewater operator (held from 3/1995 through 12/31/2002). He wants the board to consider allowing him to sit for a Class IV exam to reinstate his inactive license now that he has begun working in the wastewater field since changing career paths in 2002. Members discussed his long absence from wastewater and agreed he should start from the beginning with a Class I license and work his way up to the Class IV. His previous work experience along with his accrued training hours (more than 500) will still count, as would his three years of holding a Class III license before moving on to test for a Class IV, as required in Regulation 3 (he already achieved in 1995 with original Class IV exam). **Ms. Brown made a motion not to grant reciprocity due to his lengthy absence, but allow him to test for each level of licensure (Class I – IV) continually without delay. The motion was seconded by Mr. Williams and it carries.**

Next on the agenda, the Committee will consider a request by Jack Strickler, an operator with North Little Rock Wastewater, to be granted the opportunity to sit for a Class IV certification exam. Although he has never held an Arkansas wastewater license, he provided over 950 hours of training hours completed and teaching credentials for courses he instructed. Mr. Overstreet and Ms. Brown are familiar with his background and know that he is well-knowledged in the water/wastewater field. **Ms. Enos made a motion to allow him to begin testing for an Arkansas Class I license and continue on up to the Class IV, without waiting the required three years after obtaining his Class III license. Ms. Brown seconded the motion and it carried.**

Mr. Healey announced that Mr. Martin Nutt with the Arkansas Department of Health was present to discuss with our Committee, the water licensing divisions experience dealing with examinations for all license certifications through the American Boards of Certification (ABC). They have been working with ABC for about 20 years, although they recently switched all license certification levels over to ABC testing. Exams must be valid and by using their services, ABC proves that you meet guidelines set by EPA. No more worrying about inadequate/outdated questions in state test banks.

ABC recommends 900 hours of training to prepare for their exams, which does not come close to what the state requires. This could be the cause for the huge difference in the pass rates. Several members voiced their views on requiring state specific training/testing, which ABC no longer offers through their exams. Who would teach these mandatory state regulation courses and offer exams afterwards, was the next question. Mr. Nutt informed us they now offer compliance courses that can be taken just once as in-house training, but not as a requirement for any license classification.

Mr. Nutt mentioned the annual ABC Certification Conference and Workshop that he has attended every year since 1995; the next one is quickly approaching in January, 2018. A couple of areas they will focus on during this event: "What it means to run a Certification Program and Education to Exam Validation." Mr. Healey suggested that we send one committee and one staff member to San Antonio, Texas for the conference scheduled for January 17 – 19. Ms. Ellington was extremely interested and being the Chairman on the Committee, she volunteered to go on the Committee's behalf. Mr. Healey will gather details to set-up registration and all preparations for this event and correspond with Ms. Ellington on his findings. The entire Committee was in support of this idea.

Ms. Ellington announced the next scheduled meeting: **February 14, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.