



Nevada Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum

Hosted by: Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701

Meeting Minutes Wednesday March 16, 2016 – 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Location: NvRWA Annual training and Technical Conference, Grand Sierra
Resort & Casino
2500 East Second Street, Reno, NV 89502 – Room Silver State 2

Phone conference to: 1-800-299-7631, access code 9347 898#

Agenda

- 1) **Call to order and Introductions. (Bob Foerster)** The meeting was called to order at 2:15pm.

Forum Members Present: Bob Foerster, NvRWA; Cameron McKay, KGID; Max Sosa, NDEP/BSDW Opt Cert. Program; Will Raymond, TMWA; Grant Perkins, General Manager of Panaca Farmstead Association; Jim Kerr, Elko County

Appearance by Phone: John Solvie, City of Las Vegas, ABC Representative; Tom Georgi, LVVWD; Maria Luisa Capati, Lhoist North America

- 2) **Approval of Forum/NTC Minutes from December 2, 2015. – Action Item**

Cameron McKay- Move to approve.

Jim Kerr- Second the motion.

Unanimous

- 3) **Recognition of Jennifer Carr, P.E., C.E.M. for work with the Forum during her tenure as NDEP BSDW Bureau Chief**

Bob Foerster- Recognizing Jennifer Carr of NDEP, formally the bureau chief of Bureau of Safe Drinking Water and having recently been promoted to an administrator position. Wanted to say thank you for all of Jennifer's service to this group and support over the years. They

will be giving an award to Jennifer at the awards lunch on March 17th. Bob encouraged everyone to attend the awards lunch.

Cam McKay- Commented on working together with Jennifer over 8 years and appreciated her service and help throughout those years. Always found Jennifer so straight forward and direct and that is something that is always appreciated. Jennifer is the kind of person that if someone needed her, she would always make time for you to help you. Appreciated the manner that she dealt with everything that came her way. Thanked Jennifer for all her assistance in the past 8 years.

4) **Approval of Member Roster-Review expiration dates- *Action Item***

Bob Foerster- The member roster currently has 3 people with expiration dates this month. Wants to wait until next meeting for elections, but will accept nominations. The people that have expiration dates are Ron Penrose with Tri-State Consulting, Rick Giltner with Southern Nevada Water Authority and Tom Georgi with LVVWD. Asked Tom Georgi if he is still interested in participating and Tom accepted to stay on the board.

5) **Acceptance of resignation from Cameron McKay, Forum Member for mid-sized water systems- *Action Item***

Bob Foerster- Cameron has been on this panel for 15 years and has done a great job for always being there and helping to hash out with some tough items like the period of time when all the systems went from being just distribution systems and now we have the arsenic rule coming to affect and a lot of people had to become treatment certified. It was a big job for all of them and wanted to thank Cam for all of his hard work.

Cameron McKay- Commented that he appreciated and enjoyed being on this board. Thinks that there are a lot of new ideas and it is time to step aside to let someone else come in with different ways of doing things. The workload is at the point now too where there are other various issues that need a lot more attention. Thanked everyone on the board to allow him to serve with them and appreciated the support from the operators throughout Rural Water. With that said, he would like to tender his resignation.

Darrin Price- Mentioned that he sat on this board with Cameron for many years and presented him with a gift then thanked him for his service on the board.

Cameron McKay- Move to approve.

Grant Perkins-Second the motion.

Unanimous

6) **Consideration of appointment to fill mid-sized water system vacancy- *Action Item***

Bob Foerster- Greg Reed of Round Hill GID graciously volunteered for Cameron McKay's position on the board. He is a well-qualified candidate.

Cameron McKay- Wanted to point out Greg's experience. He is a very active member in the Tahoe Water Suppliers Association and thinks Greg would be a good fit.

Jim Kerr- Move to approve.

Grant Perkins- Second the motion

Unanimous

7) **Training Needs/ Forum Input**

Cameron McKay- Mentioned he had the opportunity to attend the Common Ground Alliance Conference and one of the issues that was dealt with was in rural areas, the lack of training for locating underground utilities.

Guest –Would like to see more waste water operator certification treatment. A class that people can follow talking about treatment.

Bob Foerster- Commented that they were fortunate to have some waste water training. Announced that they have a new waste water circuit rider, John Colburn. He is very experienced and thinks he will be a good fit.

Grant Perkins-The administrative staff doesn't have a lot of opportunity here. Suggested maybe an administrative assistant conference some other time during the year. Small systems have a hard time leaving and then nobody would be in the office.

Bob Foerster- Commented that he will look into that. There has been talk about some type of training.

Guest- Asked now that certifications require continuing education units, would it be possible to get more classes in per day at the conference?

Bob Foerster- Mentioned that he will take that into consideration. They are always looking for ways to balance the needs of operators to get a lot of hours and for the vendors get a lot of contact time. Bear in mind that our organization, Nevada Rural Water, will bring training anywhere in the state. There are a few requirements for the training programs and for example, two systems need to be there.

Will Raymond- Commented that TMWA has public tours in the fall, but this group would have more interest in TMWA facility tours or ground water systems so if there is any interest

he will work with Max Sosa so there could be contact hours available. They are open to facilitating tour(s) if there is interest.

Bob Foerster- Mentioned if you are a small system operator, you are very limited on equipment processes that operators are exposed to on water and waste water. It's really hard to take a test that covers subjects that you haven't had familiarity with.

Will Raymond- Mentioned there was a situation in Verdi; it was an opportunity to work with Lyon County. It was an interactive moment where professionals can talk to one another and see what you guys do there and how do you guys do that. Opening up the dialog, thinks this is a great forum to facilitate something like that.

Max Sosa- Commented that there would a good opportunity to get training at a facility that operators that are limited to systems to go as high as a D-2 and they want to become a D-3 and they could get some cross training.

Darrin Price- Commented that he wanted to remind everyone that the California/Nevada section of American Water Works Association also has training available, but for those who can't travel, they can go to the website at <http://ca-nv-awwa.org/canv/cns>. This website covers a lot of subjects and qualifies for CEU's as well.

Max Sosa- Mentioned that there are external education resources on the NDEP/Water Operator Certification website.

Will Raymond- Mentioned he recently had some other operators do the California/Nevada section at AWWA training and it was only \$25 for an hour of training. Thinks this is a really neat program.

8) **NDEP Updates (Max Sosa, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water)**

Max Sosa-Congratulations to Jennifer Carr. On Sept 28th 2015, was promoted to Deputy Administrator for NDEP. As most of you know, Jennifer has been with NDEP for nearly twenty years and has worked in multiple Bureaus and programs over the years. Jennifer in her new role will oversee the Water Bureaus (BWPC, BWQP, BSDW) and BAS. We thank her for contributions to the op cert program.

Also congratulations to My-Linh Nguyen. As of November 23th 2015, was promoted to BSDW Chief. My-Linh has a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from Arizona State and prior to joining NDEP in 2006, worked for the Water Research Foundation. During her time at NDEP, My-Linh developed the Source Water protection program that is now an integral tool for BWPC permitting work. She has also been instrumental in the operation of the Reuse Steering Committee and worked in the Wastewater Treatment Operator Certification Program at BWPC.

Also congratulations to Susan Bunch, as of November 30th 2015 started her new endeavor at Water Pollution Control. Susan had been with Safe Drinking water for seven years, the last 2

with the operator certification program. She will be greatly missed and we thank Susan for her efforts.

Moving forward, please welcome Ms. Rachel Weingart who is already doing a great job reminding everyone to check the box! on the applications.

Again due to overall combined improvement of the operators preparing for the exams and better training “a not mastering category” was not reported by AWWA in the Water Treatment and Water Distribution Summary Report this year. As there is always room for improvement I have asked AWWA to list the deficient topic areas as a “ Partial Mastering” rate of more than 20% so that these areas can be reviewed and further fine tune future training. This shows a continued improvement by the operators and everyone involved in the Nevada operator certification program.

Now for a brief summary of the 2015 certification exams. March 2015, there were 102 applicants and the passing rate was 68%. The passing rate was also 68% for October, 2015 and there were 122 applicants. The June 2015 exam was exceptional, 91 out of 116 passed that is a passing rate of 78.5%. Great job everyone! That is the best passing rate I have seen in the three years I have been with the program.

Regarding the upcoming test this week, there are 137 applicants scheduled for the March 2016 exam. Best of luck to everyone.

9) NWEA Updates (Jake Jacobson, NWEA Program Administrator)

Bob Foerster- No NWEA updates.

10) Waterlines Publication (All Attendees)

a) Review of Prior Issue

Bob Foerster- Mentioned there was a good article from Greg and Michelle Stamatias talking about the SRF program and the priority list. Revised total coliform rule is in the issue as well.

b) Article Assignments for Next Edition

Bob Foerster- Always looking for ideas on topics or systems they like to see highlighted.

Darrin Price- Mentioned maybe it is time to do a short article about lead and copper again.

Jennifer Carr- Commented that the next day at the conference, Ross Cooper has training on how to calculate the 90th percentile with lead and copper. Agreed to put an article about lead and copper in the next edition.

Guest- Maybe an article about industrial public water systems would be beneficial.

Bob Foerster- Reminded everyone if anyone thinks of any ideas, please contact one of the members on the board. Always looking for article ideas for the next edition.

Jennifer Carr- Asked would operators think it would be a good idea and helpful for an article for the issue to talk about other water system compliance issues?

Bob Foerster- Agreed with Jennifer, along with other operators, to put an article that talks about other water systems compliance issues. Will take everything that was talked about into consideration as well.

11) Member's Open Comments

Bob Foerster- No comments.

12) Public Comments

Bob Foerster- No comments.

13) Agenda Items for the Next NWWOF Meeting

Bob Foerster- If anyone thinks of anything, please contact Max Sosa or himself with anything to add to the agenda for the next meeting.

14) Next Forum Meeting(s)- *Action Item*

Jim Kerr- Motion to schedule the next board meeting on June 15th, 2016.

Grant Perkins- Second the motion.

Unanimous

15) Adjourn

Grant Perkins-Motion to adjourn

Jim Kerr-Second the motion

Unanimous

Adjourn at 3:00pm

Reminder to Certified Operators: You are eligible to receive renewal contact hour(s) for attendance at Operator Forum Meetings!