

# Advisory Forum to the State Environmental Commission (SEC) On Certification for Operators of Public Water Systems

## Summary minutes of the meeting of June 20, 2008

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. in the Nevada Department of Conservation 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room, 901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The meeting was video-conferenced to the NDEP Las Vegas Office, Red Rock Conference Room, 2030 E. Flamingo Road, Ste. 230, Las Vegas, Nevada. The telephone number conferenced to was 1-888-363-4734, access code 1515199.

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call (Chairman Cameron McKay)

Members Present: Cameron McKay, Chairman; Harvey Johnson, and Marcellus Jones (LV video-conference). Members absent: Chet Auckly and Lynn Forsberg.

Note: Mr. Jones initially had some difficulty hearing the meeting, but that seemed to improve later in the meeting.

AWWA (via teleconference): Carol Husband and Gina Enriquez (Exam Administrator).

Representing the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Bureau of Safe Drinking water were: Jennifer Carr, Chief; Steve Brockway, Environmental Scientist; Nan Paulson, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: John Hulett, Washoe County Water Resources; Kaelin Goodman, North Valmy; Mike Workman, Lyon County Utilities; Bob Foerster, Nevada Rural Water Association.

### 2. Approval of minutes – March 11, 2008 Meeting

**Motion:** Mr. Harvey moved to approve the minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Mr. Jones and the vote was unanimous in favor.

### 3. Replace Vacancies of the Membership:

Chairman McKay spoke about the vacancies in the Forum from Darrin Price and Marie Pollock leaving. He said the Forum needed to have members to represent large, medium, and small water systems and an At Large member. He asked for statements from the candidates. Three people said they were interested and voiced their qualifications. They were:

**John Hulett:** He works at the Washoe County Department of Water Resources and has, since 1999, had T-4 and D-4 certifications. He has always been involved in water.

**Bob Foerster:** He works with the Nevada Rural Water Association, was their Executive Director, and has his T-4 and D-4 certifications. Mr. Foerster has worked overseas, has a wastewater past, and would like to represent Nevada.

**Mike Workman:** He is the Lyon County Director, has been involved in certification since 1986. He was in Incline Village and has been in water since 1974, about 34 years. Mr. Workman added that he is interested in small communities, loves certification, and being a member would be a

good way for anyone to be involved. He added that he would be more than happy to step aside to allow someone else to fill the vacancy to give that person an opportunity to experience being a member of the Forum.

There was some discussion on statute and questions from members.

Ron Penrose from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority arrived at the meeting during this discussion. He was introduced as Geoff DaForno's replacement as the Coordinator for the CA/NV certification program.

Discussion continued. Chairman McKay asked the size of the system each candidate had experience in. Mr. Hulett said he would be for the small to medium systems in rural areas. They have a total population of 25,000 that are scattered.

Mike Workman said he handles Dayton and Moundhouse as a small General Improvement District (GID), and Yerington will take over Crystal Springs.

Mike Workman deferred his possible membership to John Hulett so that John can gain the experience. He added that he is also willing to help out if needed.

Jennifer Carr asked Chairman McKay if the members wanted to caucus. Chairman declined.

Chairman McKay said he respected Mr. Workman's input and willingness to help someone else gain experience.

VOTES: Harvey Johnson made a motion to accept Bob Foerster as the At Large representative, and John Hulett as the Medium Public Water System representative. Marcellus Jones seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### 4. Exam Analysis Review

The AWWA Exam Analysis regarding the results of the March exam was not available due to personnel changes they have experienced.

Chairman McKay reviewed the table presented by Safe Drinking Water regarding the number of applicants who passed the exams, how many failed in each category, and the high and low scores of each grade. He expressed his concern over the number of people who received low scores and how low they actually were. The Chairman did recognize that some people do take the tests without intending to pass; they just want to see what it is like and how they will do without studying.

Chairman McKay talked about the examinations for certification. He offered to help Ron Penrose with proctoring if needed. Mr. Penrose said they just tested about 50 people, had two no-shows, and it went well.

Chairman McKay added that he would like to see more information on the NDEP BSDW Operator Certification website and the Advisory Forum page for operators to view. The information that

would be helpful is a breakdown by region, a breakdown by topic, and a score breakdown. The Chairman said he would also like to have the information more widely distributed.

Mike Workman suggested this analysis be included in Water Lines. He thought the results might act as an eye-opener for those who might test in the future. He said there is need for more study material for level 3 certification.

## **5. Review and Discussion - Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum Founding Documents**

Jennifer Carr asked if there were any comments on the background document. Ms. Carr referred back to the last meeting where she had said the number of sitting board members proposed was eight, as the actual number is seven. This would satisfy the requirements of NRS 445A.870 and that the membership could include NDEP, but that would create an even number of members.

Ms. Carr added that an operational document will be agendaized for the next meeting and be provided 30 days in advance. The main goal in continuing the Forum is for communication with operators. It's very important to not lose connection with the operators.

Ms. Carr stated she had worked on the Forum structure with Chet Auckly. She continued by reading the Mission and Organizational Structure (copy attached). She asked if anyone wanted to add anything. Both Chairman McKay and Harvey Johnson said it covers important points very well.

Jennifer Carr continued by saying the current Chair would become the Forum Chair and that the rotation presented needs some discussion. A means of doing business needs to be established to show how to operate the Forum in the future. How members are replaced should be documented. Ms. Carr said NDEP will maintain a website, electronic email, and will publish the agenda.

Chairman McKay added that he wants the Operational Document to be agendaized with Ms. Carr's bullet points for the document. Ron Penrose seconded the Chairman's statement and added that a draft guide should be made 30 days prior.

Jennifer Carr said that per the NDEP Web Manager, we can use a Google-based calendar for training and Forum meetings for the Operators. It might be a nice tool for operators.

Chairman McKay continued the website discussion by saying he did not see a schedule of classes available, except for in the CA/NV section. He added that he wants the AWWA to be more proactive with training and to notify operators. He asked if the NDEP email list could be used. Carol Husband said the AWWA training can be emailed and faxed. She asked to have the email list sent to her. NDEP does not have the fax numbers of operators.

Jennifer Carr added that there will be a link on the website for people who might be interested in being on a confidential email list to get Forum information.

John Hulett expressed his concern about the requirement of applying to test 45 days prior to the exam and desired for it to be shorter. Steve Brockway and Ron Penrose both stated the 45 day

requirement is difficult as it is and that 30 days would be tough with the number of operators testing now.

Carol Husband and Ron Penrose talked about the possibilities of registering for AWWA exams. With a 20 day deadline required, the AWWA could set up a special exam for Distribution Operators, but not for Treatment Operators. They would need a minimum of 10 people to test to set up the exams.

There was some discussion about the cancellation of the December exam and whether or not the operators wanting to test would create an overload in September or March. Ms. Carr reminded everyone that the AWWA has multiple exams so operators can test with the AWWA, and then apply for their certification through reciprocity. It was mentioned that the Treatment exam is unique to Nevada. Chairman McKay suggested we monitor the exams thru March, look at the statistics, and monitor for operator complaints or concerns.

Harvey Johnson pointed out that, for wastewater operators, there is on-line testing available with ABC and AMP at H & R Block. They have quarterly paper tests that will still be issued. He added that they will try to have the numbers from the on-line testing for the March NvRWA conference. Chairman McKay closed the discussion and moved on to Public Comments.

## **6. Public Comments**

Mike Workman shared his concern about the two year time frame in which certificates must be renewed. He asked if it was possible for the renewals to be multi-year or longer than two years. He asked Steve Brockway how the two years were working for NDEP. Steve said it was working well so far. He pointed out how longer time frames may not help with tracking CEUs because some operators forget about getting CEUs with the two year requirement now.

Chairman McKay and Mr. Brockway discussed other options, such as having an anniversary date as renewal time. Steve pointed out that it would be more difficult for managers to track their staff so the operators would have to accept more personal responsibility. The Chairman was not in favor of that.

Chairman McKay asked if DEP is set up for e-payments and if operators can still get CEUs for attending Forum meetings. Ms. Carr said DEP is planning on having e-payments up and running by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. DEP will look into operators being able to pay through this means. Steve Brockway remarked that operators can get two hours worth of CEUs for attending the meetings. Jennifer Carr mentioned that SDW will do more outreach.

Kaelin Goodman pointed out that Sierra Pacific is going paperless. He wondered if DEP would accept their operators' documents electronically. After more discussion, Ms. Carr said electronic documentation would be great. The only difficulty would be if DEP had to print many. Mr. Jones suggested they be attached to individual emails that are saved in a central file. He added that the individuals would have to keep their documents.

Using the same CEUs for both Treatment and Distribution was talked about. This will be looked into further and is unresolved.

Ms. Carr spoke of free training in Winnemucca that is being paid for by the EPA. It will be 8 hours of training. An email was sent to the operators who provided their email information to us.

John Hulett said he would like an update on where Nevada gets their exams and where Nevada compares with other states regarding their equivalent reciprocity. John asked if a table could be made to show this. Steve Brockway will make the table for the next meeting and can get a list from ABC.

Jennifer Carr advised the group that they are in the process of finalizing a regulatory amendment that was made to bring LT2 and Stage 2 provisions for L & C rule regarding primacy. There are also some name changes being made in the regulations from Health Division to NDEP. NDEP is also scheduling workshops for late in the summer.

The Chairman asked if there were any comments. There were none.

## **7. Schedule next meeting**

The next Advisory Forum was scheduled for September 23, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the DCNR Division of Water Resources conference room in Carson City. This meeting will be teleconferenced to Las Vegas and Elko. DEP will attempt to video-conference to Lynn Forsburg.

Chairman McKay adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.