

## **Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum Minutes**

Summary minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2009

The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. at Harveys Lake Tahoe, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor Zephyr Room, Stateline, NV. In conjunction with the Nevada Rural Water Association Annual Conference.

The videoconference and telephone access was not available at Harvey's Lake Tahoe, Zephyr Room.

### **1. Call to Order**

Members Present: Cameron McKay (Chairman); Harvey Johnson; Bob Foerster (NRWA); Chet Auckly (S.E.E. Company, LLC)

Members absent: Marcellus Jones (Vice Chairman); John Hulett (WCDWR); Lynn Forsberg (Elko County).

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

Also Present: Ron Penrose; Sara Jacobs (USEPA); Crystel Montecinos (Tigren, Inc.) Tom Hoffert; Greg Reed (RHGID); Darrin Price (SVGID); Mike Ariztia (SVGID); Stephen Gustafson (Hawthorne Utilities).

### **2. Approval of Minutes – December 2, 2008 Meeting**

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

### **3. Operator Training - Are Operator's needs being met?**

Cameron McKay stated 36 hours are sometimes difficult. Cameron asked if Crystel Montecinos could do four 8-hr classes a week apart verses four 8-hr days in a row. Crystel Montecinos stated rooms are more available during the daytime; Fridays are best for availability.

Question to Steve Brockway: Do they have to be college classes? Steve Brockway stated they had to be for credit if through college or university. IACET approved classes qualify also.

Ron Penrose stated UNR has some seminars that might apply thru the environmental program.

#### **a. Needs for post-secondary education?**

Maybe Mark Walker could assist with a curriculum. Oregon has a Water Operators Associate's Degree at Clackamas Community College (Career Track).

Backflow tester and specialist are two additional options.

On-line classes work for some but some operators need an instructor to be more effective.

Darrin Price mentioned that TMCC reached out to Sun Valley to ask about post-secondary needs. Further discussion ensued regarding Operator's need for a comprehensive list, posted on the web so they know what's available. It was mentioned that this was attempted in the past and Crystel Montecinos said she'd see what may still be around from that effort.

Ron Penrose would like to roll all TMWA water quality elements into a comprehensive program.

Bob Foerster: the training coalition looked into it about a year and a half ago but the effort tapered off because developing a curriculum was too much.

Chet Auckly: Is there any seed money to get it started; to develop a program? Jennifer Carr stated Federal grant dollars for education might be able to be found. Jennifer will watch federal registers for announcements that might be applicable. Also Jennifer stated T2 & D2 demographics should be looked at to find out what the market needs are specifically.

It was noted that the AWWA Water College is IACET approved.

#### **4. Performance Goals for 2009 – What Does the DW Operator's Forum hope to accomplish this year?**

Cameron McKay stated the Operators need to get their 36 hours.

Chet Auckly stated that he's been on the forum/board since its inception and has wondered if the operators would benefit from having annual goals with timelines? While there was general agreement that such goals would probably be beneficial, the idea was tabled to the next meeting.

#### **5. Exam Notification – Where might there be room for improvement in the process?**

Cameron McKay concerned that operators are not aware of being approved till 10 days prior to testing. Suggestion is send a post card, etc., something to just let them know that they are approved.

Ron Penrose states it's a two-step process. The State processes the applications for approval and then AWWA has the proctoring system under contract to the NDEP.

Jennifer Carr – The NDEP is looking at handling applications as a flow of processing instead of batch-processing.

Tom Hoffert asked if it could be a one-step process with the proctor's info in the NDEP letter? Ron Penrose noted that this could be a problem when test locations change (as they sometimes do).

#### **6. Report on Progress – On-Line testing options for Wastewater Certification – (Harvey Johnson)**

On line testing is going well, 20% are on-line even with an extra fee. Results/scores are up. Testers are focused on one question on the screen at a time, which may be a benefit; and scheduling is at their convenience; but Reno, LV and maybe Ely (?) are the only locations at this time.

#### **7. DW Operator's forum Website – (Jennifer Carr)**

In late February 2009 the NDEP web master posted the new web page for the forum. Operators are encouraged to utilize it often. The NDEP plans to have links for NvRWA (Nevada Rural Water

Association) and other operator-related entities. The website is not an NDEP page, it is just hosted there. Any members or operators can request that items be posted. It's address will be in the next issue of Waterlines.

Chet Auckly suggested maybe a presentation on the web-site by Jennifer would help.

**8. NDEP Project – Promoting Operator Careers in Rural Nevada – (Jennifer Carr/Steve Brockway)**

Jennifer – The NDEP took advantage of the State Certified Public Manager Program (CPM) curriculum to have a “consulting team” of CPM students prepare some fliers that could be used to promote the profession of water operators, especially in Rural Nevada. The CPM came up with brochures in a day in half regarding future water operator career opportunity. The NDEP will circulate the brochures for input from the Forum Members and begin to work to see how these can be circulated to various high schools in Nevada as well as other outreach opportunities. When complete, the brochures will be available to the municipalities and any other interested water systems to use as well.

**9. Member’s Open Comments:**

All Forum/Board members – Thanks to Crystel for the web conferencing – Great training.

**10. Public Comments**

There were none.

**11. Schedule 2009 Meetings –**

June \_\_\_\_\_ 2009, September \_\_\_\_\_ 2009, December \_\_\_\_\_ 2009

June was tentative. Board members will coordinate by e-mail to Jennifer to set a date.

**12. Adjourn Suggested by: Cameron McKay; 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Chet Auckly; Time: 2:30 p.m.**