Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 8, 2021 – 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

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Carson City: Bryan Bldg /Carson – Humboldt Room, 3rd Floor/ 901 S. Stewart St

Agenda

1. **Call to Order and Introductions. (Nathan Adams)**

   **Nathan Adams**- Called the meeting to order at 1:30pm

   Forum Members- Bob Foerster, Jim Kerr, Stacey Van Diest, Greg Reed, Nathan Adams, Dale Johnson, Andrew Hickman

   Guests- Crystel Montecinos, Paul Strasdin, Lance Goodman, Ryan Kolda, Bridget Harris, Ty Long, Linh Kieu, Katrina Pasqual, Eric Dominguez, Andrea Seifer, Stephen Plamer, Will Raymond, Joe Mathein, Aaron Hughes, Don Kolkoske

2. **Approval of Forum Minutes from August 12, 2021. – Action Item**

   **Jim Kerr**- Approve the Minutes
   **Stacey Van Diest**- Second
   Unanimous

3. **Wastewater Exam Results & Review: Ashley Jacobson, NWEA**

   Ashley Jacobson was not present

4. **Drinking Water: Exam Results Review Q3: Crystel Montecinos**

   **Crystel Montecinos**- Shared a presentation regarding the computer-based testing and the paper-based testing for quarter two. Twenty-seven people took the distribution 1 exam and 15 people passed. The highest grade was 90%. The topics that were most missed were monitor, evaluate and adjust disinfection. The reason that is being brought up is because that is the most missed on all of them. She feels like the operators in the distribution category think that disinfection is for treatment, but it is really for both categories. In distribution if anything breaks, loss of pressure or anything like that, you have to go through the disinfection protocol. So, when you are talking to your employees or peers, please talk to them about the disinfection protocols and how to study for it.
Jim Kerr - Asked if there is any way that we could evaluate some of those questions through NDEP to make sure they are even asking the right questions?

Crystel Montecinos - Answered that they do not have access to the ABC exams questions.

Linh Kieu - Also answered that he thinks that one of the things we can do is if we have some questions, we can pass them along to the exam proctors and to ABC themselves. Maybe we can open up some dialog to get a little more in-depth what these questions are and the nature of them. It could be one of those things that we ask ABC to come to one of the forum meetings to talk about it. At this point though, we do not have access to the exam questions.

Jim Kerr - Asked if there is any way we can audit ABC? We could try to tell ABC which questions that we should be asking the operators and the questions that the operators do not need to know in the state of NV.

Linh Kieu - Mentioned that is a good point and it is one of those things when we sign on with ABC, they pretty much are in the driver seat deciding if the questions whether or not they are relevant. That being said though, maybe we can ask ABC how they audit their questions.

Greg Reed - Mentioned that he has been in the process with ABC exams and the way they did this is they had the actual boards had the opportunity to go and sit down with about 60-70 operators. They would go over all the questions and bring up new questions to see if these questions on the exam are relevant. If we are interested in as a forum what their current process is currently. We should be able to get involved with that as a forum.

Linh Kieu - Mentioned that maybe we need to figure out what that process is now and how do we insert ourselves? We will look into this.

Andrew Hickman - Agreed with what Greg and Jim are saying. Agrees it needs some follow-up with questioning ABC or their audit process.

Crystel Montecinos - Moving onto the treatment results now. Those who took the treatment test both computer and paper based; overall pass rate of 64% across all grades for quarter two. Most missed categories were monitor, evaluate and adjust treatment.

Ty Long - Asked if we know where this stands with historical data?

Crystel Montecinos - Answered yes, they are right in line with previous exam results. Quickly added with the September written exam, the distribution passing rate was 60% across all grades. The treatment passing rate was pretty much in line with what we have had historically. It was low because there were only 2 people that took treatment exams. Katrina Pasqual asked Crystel to make an announcement that Water Pollution Control has awarded the funding for their circuit writer program, and it went to Broadbent.

5. NDEP Office of Financial Assistance: Capacity Development Discussion
   ~ Please see attachment ~

Eric Dominguez - Everybody was sent the questions that NDEP designed regarding to capacity development strategy. He is representing the Office of Financial Assistance and the Bureau of Safe Drinking Water. The capacity development strategy is an EPA requirement for all states in compliance with
the Safe Drinking Water Act. A major part of doing this strategy is to make sure we include as many stakeholders as we can get. So, when we talk about the questions we’re going to be asking, we’re increasing the participation of stakeholders and that is our main point of this exercise. He wanted to go over stakeholder activity they have had back in July with a survey that was issued. They had about 70 that were sent out and 16 replied. In September they had a stakeholder workshop and there were about 20 involved. From the workshop alone, the recommendation was that we needed more input and participation especially from the operator level. That is why they went with this meeting at the forum to ask some questions. A lot of people that they have talked to, the big question was what is capacity development and strategy? They got about 7 different answers from the whole group. He wanted to go over this definition and what this definition does with our strategy. If you change out the word capacity with the word ability, it makes it more understandable. The process for a water system to require and maintain technical, managerial, financial capacity, you need the higher levels of capacity to enable the systems to be capable providing continuous safe drinking water to the public. The strategy is for NDEP and the state of NV to develop and improve how we can help water systems with these three perspectives, technical, managerial and financial. Technical is the ability to operate the water system. Technical is the water systems personnel they have and what kind of competencies they have. How to manage what knowledge they have and what they know about regulation. Managerial is if the water system has the leadership from the board and the staff? Does it have the personnel? Is it maintaining, developing and retaining personnel? One of the newest topics is the infrastructure asset renewal capabilities. For financial, does the system have the ability to manage its financial obligations? We want to develop a strategy for improving that through either TA services or how we can use the state evolving fund to improve different areas for the state. When they were building their strategy, their goal was to look at what helps us to enhance the strategy. An enhancement would be getting the proper training and technical assistance. Maybe take some of the ideas with partnering up with water systems that do have the knowledge arranging visits.

6. **Forum Members: Mission Statement Review**

**Crystel Montecinos**- When we sent out the agenda to the forum members, we included the mission statement. The reason why this is coming up because in the forum last September, there were questions about the mission of the forum. We talked about trouble shooting it and coming up with some goals. Read the mission statement.

**Andrew Hickman**- Asked if he could have that sent to him and he could put some modifications on the statement. Thinks we need to put some language about engaging certification boards and working with them to come up with relevant questions regarding the operators within the state of NV.

**Crystel Montecinos**- Answered that she will send it out and make sure everyone gets a copy. Mentions that it is also on our ndep.nv.gov website.

**Nathan Adams**- Suggested that everyone look it over and email us to put it on the future agendas again.

7. **Forum Members: Training Needs and Open Comments**

**Bob Foerster**- Mentioned that they have the Nevada Rural Water Conference scheduled for the week of March 22-24 at the Nugget in Sparks. We can have a spot for the forum at the conference if everyone would like to attend there.
8. **Public Comments**

   **Guest**: Asked when the next written exam would be?

   **Bob Foerster**: Answered usually the next exam coincides with the conference. It usually is in that same week so it will probably be that Thursday or Friday.

   **Will Raymond**: Asked Linh if he could clarify that we are going to do all exam locations on that Thursday and the Reno location on that Friday?

   **Linh Kieu**: Yes, I am confirming that is our plan unless something gets in the way, and we can’t schedule the exam dates on those days. We will work with Will Raymond and AWWA.

9. **Call for Agenda Items & Forum Goals & for the next meeting**

   **Jim Kerr**: Suggested the mission statement and maybe how we want to move forward with ABC?

   **Crystel Montecinos**: We can have someone from NDEP follow up on that.

10. **Scheduling next Forum Meeting – (4th Qtr. meeting) – Action Item**

    **Nathan Adams**: We will be having the next forum at the NVRWA Conference.

    **Crystel Montecinos**: Mentioned that there will be some forum members that their terms will be expiring in March. There might be some elections so we can put that on the agenda as well. Crystel will be sending out an email with the board members that are expiring.

11. **Adjourn**

    **Jim Kerr**: Motion to Adjourn

    **Andrew Hickman**: Second

    **Unanimous**

    **Adjourned at 2:20pm**