

CALL TO ORDER The one-hundred-fifty-seventh meeting of the Water and Wastewater Operator’s Advisory Council was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Council President, Roger Skogen. This meeting was held in room 207 at FVCC Arts & Technology Bldg, Kalispell during the Kalispell Spring School.

Council members present:
 In person: Roger Skogen, Chair, Andrew Loudermilk and Jon Dilliard.
 Via conference call: John Alston, Crystal Richards, Don Coffman and Grant Burroughs.

Department personnel attending all or portions of the meeting: Julie Allen and Reta Therriault, Operator Certification Technicians.

Minutes Approved	Minutes from October 2, 2013 were reviewed and Roger made a correction to the section titled “Water Schools and In-Office Exams, Compliance Status Report and Enforcement Update”. The second paragraph, first sentence to read “...reported that November compliance rates...”, inserting the word, November. Roger called for a motion to approve the minutes as changed. The motion was made by Don Coffman to approve minutes as corrected. It was seconded by John Alston. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as corrected.
Advisory Council Officer & Member Update	Julie read the letter from the Governor’s office that made the effective appointments of Don Coffman for another term and Crystal Richards to replace Lorren Schlotfeldt. Crystal was introduced to the Council. She spoke briefly about herself and her interest in being on the Council. Contact list updates: “As of” date at top of list needs updating. Andy noticed his term end date was incorrect. (Julie corrected to 2018.)
PWS Update	Staff Update – Jon informed the Council of Shelley Nolan’s resignation and that she is seeking other opportunities. Andrea Vickory has been moved to a non-supervisory position. The Data Management team has been moved under the Monitoring & Reporting staff. The Bureau is seeking a replacement for Andrea’s position. Shelley’s position will not be filled. Program finances are doing well and in good shape. There was a larger surplus that allowed so the bureau has been paring it down. Some of the funds have been used to help METC and spending funds from program money rather than SRF. PWS funding is stable. There is a projection that the bureau may hit a deficit in 2016 or 2017. PWS may try to raise connection fees at next legislature. John Alston asked what the increase might be and Jon said they would propose a 50% increase then use some flexibility to set fee at what is needed per year with a base fee of \$2.00 per connection and a base of \$50 for transient systems and \$100 for NTNC and community systems. John Alston asked about raising renewal fees and Jon D said the monies have to be spent within the program so would not help PWS. Although OpCert funds could be used to help fund training costs.

	<p>Roger asked about the federal shutdown and any lasting effects or issues the bureau saw. Jon said there were none and that the grants were still working smoothly. He stated that EPA said there would probably be a cut coming but state grants would remain the same. SRF may go down but the set asides will help this.</p>
<p>Water Schools and In-Office Exams, Compliance Status Report and Enforcement Update</p>	<p>Julie reported on the 2013 Fall Water School Exams in Bozeman, the 2014 Small System/Colony Training in Great Falls and the current in-office exam stats. She provided handouts on these. Reta asked about putting totals on the stats and suggested leaving in those examinees that did not attend the school reviews but just took the exams. Julie mentioned that she pulled out those because they skewed how the review was affecting the pass rate. Julie provided a handout and reported that compliance rates were up and back to normal. Andy asked if the stats could be broken down on a per class basis. Reta suggested it could be done off the current compliance report.</p>
<p>Other Issues</p>	<p>Recommended Operator Duties/Responsibilities: Julie provided an updated list that incorporated last meeting's edits and additions. Jon suggested adding "and update" to #13 so it would read Develop <i>and update</i> an emergency response plan. Reta spoke about Philipsburg and the pilot program for operator proficiency. She mentioned the O&M manual requirement and that adding it to this list would be a good idea. Roger agreed stating that it would make for a well-rounded operator plus the system would have the means for someone to step in on short notice if necessary. Andy suggested rewriting #5 to include the O&M. Grant asked if an emergency response plan had to be filed with the state. Jon said no, but systems are required to have one in place. Roger asked the council where they wanted to go with the duties/responsibilities list. Jon said get it distributed to the operators and systems and Roger said getting feedback from the operators and systems would be beneficial. The council was ok with the document with the changes made. Julie will get it distributed. It was suggested with renewal notices.</p> <p>Exam Updates: Jon stated that this process has sort of come to a standstill with Shelley's leaving the bureau. He said that in talking in house there has been some concern about moving current operators to new certifications. He floated the idea that certificates stay the same for current operator, have a break (6 mos.?) then go with the new certifications. We're still working out how our classifications fit in with ABC's standardized classifications. There was discussion on whether some operators may end up taking something more than they need. This would only happen if an operator chose to take a higher classification exam. Standardized exams open up online testing. Also exam development is already done with standardized exams. Roger asked about a time frame when the change could be expected. Jon stated that ABC is still correcting and providing reports for the Montana exams just not supporting them as far as the legal aspect is concerned. Andy asked if this was a topic that should be tabled. Jon said no, and although it would be slow, it should be kept on the agenda.</p> <p>Contract Operators – Julie brought some models of how other states handle contract operators. Andy asked if we require a copy of contracts and Reta said</p>

	<p>no we do not. Roger suggested tabling topic until next meeting so that they could review the model material. Jon said a responsibilities list may help systems understand what they should be paying for in a good operator. Roger mentioned that the list could clarify to a system what an operator should be doing. Andy mentioned that often times systems are naïve and do not understand what “in responsible charge” means. The item was tabled.</p> <p>Julie and Reta brought up taking the notarized signature off the applications. Julie explained that it could make the process faster because the application could be emailed into the office. Roger and Jon asked what the ramifications could be. Reta explained why it was put on the applications to begin with: there was a single instance of falsifying information that the person signing actually filled out the application. Julie mentioned that we are now asking for proof of citizenship and verification of education, both good for determining that the person whose name is on the application is the same person applying. Don explained what a notary does and in this case the notary is just verifying the signature and not the information in the document. The council ok’d removing the notarization section of the application.</p> <p>Job Service Education Assessments – Reta reported that these are working well and the Job Service staff, especially Mr. Byrd has been very cooperative.</p> <p>Miscellaneous – Roger asked what happens if an exam proctor wants to take an exam. Julie said that ABC would create a special exam for that person.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	The date of the next meeting will be October 8, 2014 at 1pm at the Fall Water School in Bozeman.
ADJOURN MEETING	At 2:42 p.m. Don Coffman moved to adjourn the meeting. Andy Loudermilk seconded the motion. Roger Skogen adjourned the meeting.