

One-hundred-sixty-ninth meeting
Water and Wastewater Advisory Council
Wednesday, June 9, 2021
Zoom Meeting, Montana

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was held via Zoom and began at 2:02 p.m. Council members present: John Alston, Logan McInnis, Andy Loudermilk, Craig Woolard, Ron Edwards, and Leo Malinak.

Department personnel attending all or portions of the meeting: Greg Olsen, Operator Certification Program Supervisor and Jen VandenBos, Operator Certification Data Tech, Reta Therriault, Operator Certification Data Tech, Ryan Weiss, Section Supervisor, Gino Pizzini, Acting PWS Bureau Chief, Amy Steinmetz, Water Quality Division Administrator .

Minutes Approved	John Alston called the meeting to order and the previous meeting minutes were approved as written.
Advisory Council Member Update	John said there are some changes to the council. Greg Olson gave the update that Amy Steinmetz took the Water Quality Division Administrator position and Gino is currently the acting bureau chief and then Greg will be acting bureau chief after until the position is filled.
Bozeman Spring Water School Update	Craig Woolard presented on the Bozeman Spring Water School. He said they have about 170 participants and it went pretty well and ran smooth. He went over highlights of what went well and lessons learned. The school consisted of 2 days of presentations. They received a lot of excellent and good ratings as well as great feedback from the survey that was sent out. The webex virtual event worked well. There were a total of 8 speakers and presented on topics that were most requested. Through the feedback received, people would like to preserve the online option for future schools, regulations are important, and case studies are effective and well received. John mentioned that we need to have more operational people stepping up and talking about the good things that are happening in other departments throughout the state other than Bozeman. Gino asked if there is a way to find out what information or regulations people would like to see or if the survey could include an area for comments. It would be a good idea to find some smaller systems that would be willing to give a presentation or tag team the presentation with another individual or staff member. Craig mentioned that MWOI2 would be willing to give some sort of incentive. Logan said Missoula would be willing to offer up a few people to present at the next water school. John said he would be very interested in the process that Missoula Water took to take over a private water entity.
Exam Scores from MRWS Conference	Jen reported on the exam scores from the MRWS conference. There was a great turnout. We had 83 exams. This was the first scheduled exam date in over a year. The exam pass rate was relatively low. Ron said the exam pass

	<p>rate is low. Greg reported that himself and Jen have broken the results down to topics so it can be broken down to modules to target the areas that need to be studied more. Logan raised the question on how many people are using good study material and what the cost is for them? It was brought up we don't know how much preparation is being done prior to taking the exam. Some ideas that have been brought up to increase the pass rate: Craig has spoken to Amy about putting separate training modules online with ATO as well as doing interactive focused training online. Gino said what if there was a library with AWWA books to loan out. Reta brought up there are many operators/ applicants that push to make the 30 deadline. The application needs to be received in the office 30 days prior to taking the exam. Andy suggested the classes be broken out and pull the higher certifications in one area and the lower certifications in another. Gino commented that the operators/ applicants are meant to prepare prior to coming to the review. The classes are meant as a review to answer questions. Greg also brought up the MRWS apprenticeship for an idea for new operators to have a seasoned operator as a mentor.</p>
Public Water Supply Updates	<p>Greg reported that Amy has taken the division administrator. Gino will be acting bureau chief until June 18th and Greg will be acting bureau chief until the position is filled. Greg Butts has transitioned from the field services section supervisor to the ground water rule manager. Lisa Kaufman is in the six month mobility field section supervisor. Brian Hogenson will be doing the surface water treatment rule and his DBP position.</p>
Cards Vs. Certificates	<p>John commented that the large certificates need to come back. He doesn't like the small certificates. For most operators, the large certificates are a sense of pride for them. Ron commented as much of a headache as the operators go through to pass the exam, they should get something.</p>
Non-certified operator supervision requirement	<p>Greg reported that he has spoke with an operator who had concerns with newer operators that are being left alone with in a system. That situation put's stress on them. Two scenarios would be only the supervisor is certified or they have a temporary certification. John commented that anyone in Bozeman that is on call and in charge is certified.</p>
Access to PWS by board members or non-certified personnel	<p>Amy gave the background. She received a call from a HOA. The entire board wants keys to the water system and wants DEQ to regulate that. This is something that is generally brought up by smaller communities. DEQ has no statutory authority to regulate system access. DEQ gets a lot of calls from operators wanting us to say the president can't go in the pumphouse. A solution could be better education for the boards. A pamphlet or brochure could be created or an element to help operators to know how to talk to elected officials. Communication is a 2-way street.</p>
Future Meeting Dates	<p>The next meeting will be held during Bozeman Fall Water School. Wednesday, October 27, 2021. Jen will send out a meeting invite when it gets closer to Fall. Meeting was adjourned.</p>