

One-hundred-seventieth meeting
 Water and Wastewater Advisory Council
 Monday, November 22, 2021
 Teams Meeting, Montana

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was held via Teams and began at 1:31 p.m. Council members present: John Alston, Logan McInnis, Andy Loudermilk, Craig Woolard, and Greg Olsen.

Department personnel attending all or portions of the meeting: Libby Murray-Henrikson, Operator Certification Program Supervisor, Jen VandenBos, Operator Certification Data Tech, Darryl Barton, Section Supervisor, Lisa Kaufman, Field Services Section Supervisor.

Minutes Approved	John Alston called the meeting to order, and the previous meeting minutes were approved as written.
Council Member Updates	Jen shared that she heard from the Governor’s office they had one individual interested in the vacant wastewater member position. The name just had to be ran by the Governor.
Public Water Supply Bureau Updates / Introductions	Greg Olsen, the new Public Water Supply Bureau Chief gave staff updates for the bureau. Lisa Kaufman is the permanent field section supervisor and Libby Henrikson is the new technical services/ operator certification program supervisor. Greg reported there have been some changes in the PWS Section. Brian Hogenson is moving on from DEQ. We will be hiring for the SWT rule manager, RTCR rule manager and in the field services area, Katie Luther is retiring in next month so her position will be out for hire in our Kalispell office, and there is also a field inspector position open in our Billings office.
Bozeman Fall Water School Update	Craig reported on the Bozeman fall water school. His impression was that it overall, pretty happy with how it turned out. There were probably about 200 in person attendees and 80 online attendees. The comments he received on the sessions were generally positive. One major feedback he received from operators was the expectation that they would receive their full 20 hours of CECs, they need to add more dual credits, and a complaint of not as many options for the wastewater operators. A few logistical things he received feedback on parking (can’t fix that), they need to work on timing, and the meet in greet probably should have been moved to the morning rather than evening after training. Craig said a lot were appreciative being in person. The free math session could have been advertised better. The overall input of what operators would like to see is operations and regulatory stuff. John commented that the timing of the school is bad at the end of October. It is right in the middle of hunting season. Craig said unfortunately the dates are set for the next 3 years, however it is a good time to have it on campus. John said he received very positive feedback from his employees that attended the leadership classes. Logan said he had good feedback from his employees that attended. Greg said the overall feedback was good. If anything, the water test prep area could be a

	<p>bigger room. The water side always has more people than the wastewater side. Lisa said the main thing she heard was there needs to be more options to get the full 20 hours. Jen agreed as well and mentioned a lot of operators hold both the water and wastewater certifications and like to attend the dual credit classes so they can earn credits for both at one time. Craig said the ultimate goal of MW2OI is to fill a gap where training doesn't exist. He doesn't want to complete with other training providers.</p>
ATO/ MSU Office Training Modules	<p>Jen shared analytics regarding the scoring in each topic area for the exams. Jen said we will be going through each topic area and evaluating them. The goal will be to create 30 – 45-minute training modules for operators to review to assist with exam preparation. The goal will be to have the review sessions be strictly review at the water schools. Craig said he has been working with the folks at the ATO office to design the modules for online training. The training modules will be capable to embed videos, you are able to talk over a PowerPoint slide and there is a glass board available to work out math problems. The ATO office individuals are the delivery experts. The training modules will also include self-assessments and it also has the capability to track questions they are missing and that will give us feedback on modules to see what is working. This will be an effective online training tool and the idea is to make the review session a polishing step. Craig said there will be a very low cost for operators to access the training to pay for upkeep. The DEQ contract money can be used to fund the development. Greg mentioned there may be some SRF funding that can be used to cover development costs. Libby will be attending the ABC conference where there are many ABC trainers.</p>
New Operator Certification Exam Certificates	<p>Jen shared the new exam certificates that were created to send out to operators when they passed their exams. They will receive this in addition to their official license. Jen said this was created after we received feedback about bringing back a big certificate for operators to give them some recognition for passing the exam. John said he was very pleased with the response from DEQ regarding the certificates and they look very professional.</p>
Regulatory Reform	<p>DEQ has started doing regulatory review. We will be going through all of our rules to see what needs to be reviewed. Jen reported Operator certification is reviewing the CEC requirement for new operators certified. Currently, the rule is if someone becomes certified in the first six months of a biennium, they are required to get CECs. If they become certified after the first six months, say January 1st, they are not required to earn CECs until the next CEC biennium. We are looking to do away with that rule and completely waive operator from having to get CECs in the biennium they are certified in and then not require them to earn CECs until the following CEC period.</p>
Update on Operator Renewals and Revokes	<p>Jen reported that there were about 100-120 licenses to be revoked due to non-payment, operators retiring, or choosing not to renew. John thought that was high. Jen said that is about average every year.</p>
Additional Discussion	<p>Craig asked the group for our thoughts on spring water school. He would like input on where, when, and if they should do it face-to-face. Jen mentioned that the current CEC period will end May 31, 2022, so it will be important to have something prior to that ending to give operators a chance to get remaining</p>

	<p>CECs they need. John mentioned the AWWA conference will be April 26-28 and Greg mentioned that MRWS conference will be in March. Jen believed it was the end of March. Lisa said there is a need in eastern/ north-eastern part of the state like Billings. Craig said he was thinking in the Glasgow, Glendive, or Miles City area. Possibly further east. Greg said that in an off CEC yeast they could do training in the Missoula or Kalispell area. Craig said he will plan on having the Spring School in Eastern Montana in late May.</p> <p>Logan asked about the Bozeman exam results. Greg pulled up the results and stats on his computer screen and Jen walked everyone through them. Exam results seemed to be low scoring. Darryl mentioned on the 1C exam that 40% of individuals passing the exam isn't great, but many of the operators had scored in the 60% range. Jen mentioned we are looking for volunteers for the 1C exam evaluation. We are wanting to re-evaluate the current exam to see if it's the appropriate fit for our class 1C operators. Logan said he could most likely find a person to take it.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting</p>	<p>Jen will send out a meeting poll when we get closer to June to set a meeting up. John would like to see it after the Spring School so we can have an update on how it went. Meeting adjourned.</p>