

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 13, 2002
10:00 a.m.

TCEQ
12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg. A, Rm. 257
Austin, Texas

MINUTES

Members Attending

Larry Bell
Clark Benson
Richard Harbuck
Cathy Henderson
Todd Henry
Debbie McReynolds
Mauro Perez
Fernando Rico
Craig Sherwood
Curtis Smalley

Members Absent

Bobby Jean Porcher
Mike Moreno

Others Attending

John Fenoglio, Southwest Texas State University
James Fischer, Texas Water Utilities Association
Noreen Helmle, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Susan Hier, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Alex Hinz, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Bailey Londagin, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Juanita Lopez, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Paul Muraca, Texas Engineering Extension Service
Cathy Rutherford, TCEQ Operator Licensing
Walt Shaw, Southwest Texas State University
Robert Stewart, Texas Rural Water Association
Robert Tinstman, TCEQ Operator Licensing

The meeting was called to order by Debbie McReynolds, Chair, at 10:00 a.m. It was noted that a quorum was present.

Non-members in attendance were introduced.

The Minutes of the September 20, 2002 Meeting were approved.

John Fenoglio and Walt Shaw of Southwest Texas State University reported on the Wastewater Job Analysis. A copy of the handouts are with the original of these Minutes. There was much discussion after the report. Clark Benson commented that practical, real experience is apparent in the report. Bob Tinstman noted that lower level operators are performing tasks for which they are not being trained. There was discussion and questions about D license operators.

Alex Hinz distributed copies of the revisions to 30TAC 290.46(e). A copy is with the original of these Minutes. He asked the Committee to review both versions and send comments to him by Thursday, December 19, 2002. There was a brief discussion. Debbie reminded everyone to get their comments in writing to Alex by December 19, 2002.

Noreen Helmle gave an update on the EPA Expense Reimbursement Grant. She said that the grant funds should be loaded into the TCEQ budget by the end of the month. Then, the Request For Proposal (RFP) process begins. The RFP should be posted in the Spring for 30 days. A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held sometime during the posting period.

Juanita Lopez gave an update of TCEQ activities. She said that the Legislative Session will begin on January 14, 2003. A \$5 to \$12 million state budget shortfall is expected. We know of no legislation at this time concerning water and wastewater operator licensing. There may be legislation filed to move BPAT, CSI, Water Treatment Specialist, Landscape Irrigators, and UST Installers out of TCEQ as a result of the Department of Licensing and Regulation's sunset review. The committee discussed whether to take action, such as writing letters expressing opposition. It was decided not to take action until bills were introduced. She distributed the "TCEQ Biennial Report to the 78th Legislature, Vol.II. Occupational Licensing is addressed on pgs. 43-44.

Debbie McReynolds discussed committee membership business. She asked James Fischer when TWUA would be hiring a new Executive Director. James said that the decision would be made within the next few days. She reported that five committee members' terms, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, will end on August 31, 2003. Please send recommendations for new members to Juanita Lopez, Noreen Helmle, or her. She opened the floor for nominations for a new Chair and Vice-Chair. Curtis Smalley nominated Cathy Henderson. No other nominations were made. The Committee voted unanimously that Cathy Henderson be the next Chair. No nominations were made for Vice Chair.

The Committee took a break for lunch.

After lunch, Bob Tinstman presented the Recommendations from Groundwater and Surface Water Job Analyses. A copy is with the original of these Minutes. Each recommendation was discussed and voted on by the Committee. The following is a summary of the voting.

1. Train and test on core tasks.
Accepted unanimously.
2. Minimum education: high school diploma/GED
Accepted unanimously.
3. Maintain “A” and “B” licenses.
Accepted unanimously.
4. “A” operators should be competent to operate any system.
Accepted unanimously.
5. No changes to amounts of continuing education.
Accepted unanimously.
6. Entry-level (D) operators: Minimum work experience: 3-6 mos.
Accepted unanimously with commenters differing on the exact amount.
7. “D” ground, “D” Surface.
Accepted by 2 members. Rejected with comments by 8 members.
8. Supervised “D” operators monitor normal operations only. No corrective action.
Accepted unanimously with comments
9. Document OTJ training with checklists.
Accepted unanimously with commenters questioning the method of implementation: regulatory requirement vs. employer tool to aid training and development.
10. Management training for “B”.
Accepted unanimously with commenters suggesting that “B” and “A” training should be different based on job tasks.
11. More lab training for surface water operators.
Accepted unanimously.
12. Surface water license for GUIs.
Accepted unanimously.

13. VSS groundwater license.
Accepted unanimously with commenters questioning the manner of implementation: how does one define 'VSS'?
14. Successive progression D - A.
Rejected by 1 member. Accepted by others.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.