

Minutes
Louisiana Committee of Certification
July 8, 2013
Lake Charles Civic Center
Lake Charles, Louisiana

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM.

ROLL CALL:

A. Determination of Quorum.

Committee Members in attendance were:

Dirk Barrios (Vice-Chairman), Tom Walton, Tom Owens, Greg Shelden,
Mayor Glenn Brasseaux, and Grant Magnon.

Absent members were: David Wittner, Jake Causey, and Dennis McGehee.

A quorum was achieved.

Recognition of Visitors and Others:

DHH-OPH staff in attendance: Steve Hoss and Jim Mooring.

Visitors included: Mary Louise Sally, Brandon Dubois, Pattie Barrios,
Mike Thornton, John Neilson, Dean Caldwell, and Pat Cradeur.

B. Announcements: There were no announcements.

MINUTES:

The minutes from the May 22, 2013 meeting were distributed and reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Mr. Walton and seconded by Mayor Brasseaux. The minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Mr. Barrios reported that David Wittner sent a letter to Mr. Marios Papadopoulos reminding him that the LRWA Annual Convention in July was his last opportunity to fulfill the requirements of Dr. Guidry's letter of suspension. Mr. Cradeur verified that Mr. Papadopoulos is not in attendance at the Conference.

Next, he addressed the case of Mr. Steve Ward. At the suggestion of attorney David McCay, a letter was sent to Mr. Ward on May 31, 2013 informing him that the Committee was considering disciplinary hearings against him. The letter offered him the opportunity to respond and show that formal proceedings were not necessary. Mr. Ward's letter of response was distributed to the Committee for review. The decision was made to revisit this matter in "Old Business

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

The Administrator, James Mooring, informed the Committee that an administrative appeal to Dr. Guidry's revocation order was filed by Jeff Pruett. The administrative judge upheld the order.

The staff is working on the rule change regarding the minimum educational requirement language which was voted on at the last meeting.

Next he mentioned that someone is seeking to reciprocate FL and AZ certificates. Florida does not reciprocate with Louisiana so by law we may not reciprocate with FL. Patrick Cradeur sought clarification and stated his opinion that the state should reconsider that position.

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Training Officer, Steve Hoss, distributed a report summarizing the 2013 exams to date as well as the previous five years for comparison. Mr. Hoss informed the Committee that the Wastewater Collection 3 and Water Distribution 3 exams are still 50 questions. He believes he will have the WD3 exam to 100 questions by the September exam.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Causey was not present. Dr. Mooring stated that the Program has received 3 nominees with biographic information from LA Conference regarding the seat which will expire in September 2013. None have been received from LMA for the other position. The mayor stated that LMA's documents should be received shortly.

The mayor returned to the issue of reciprocity and made a motion to have the DHH attorney look into changing the law to remove the language which mandates that reciprocity may only be issued if the certifying state reciprocates with LA. Mr. Magnon seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition.

ASSOCIATION REPORTS

Louisiana Conference: Tom Walton reported the 2014 Short Course will be held in Shreveport and that LWEA will cosponsor the conference. The Southeast Region has become active with several training classes scheduled and over 100 members already.

LELAA: Steve Hoss – One (1) person is scheduled for the Wastewater Lab 1 exam and another for the Wastewater Lab 2 exam. .

LETA: – No report.

LRWA: Pat Cradeur – The July 2013 conference is underway. The location of the 2014 conference has yet to be determined. It will not be in Alexandria as the facilities will not be ready.

OLD BUSINESS

The Committee considered the matter of Marios Papadopoulos. Dr. Mooring reiterated what had been discussed in the Administrator's Report.

Next Tom Walton reported that the membership of LA Conference preferred the "Professional Operator" designation. Mr. Cradeur asked where this leaves us. The staff stated that the cost of the designation change has not been researched yet, and reiterated the attorney's opinion that a designation change will require legislation. The Committee suggested that the issue be revisited when the cost to change has been determined.

The Administrator reiterated that the procedures are underway to change the Rule to reflect the minimum educational requirement language. The change will reflect existing Program policy.

The issue of Mr. Steven Ward was revisited. After considering Mr. Ward's letter of response, Mr. Walton made the motion to proceed with a disciplinary hearing and to provide Mr. Ward with a 30 day notice. Mayor Brasseaux seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition. Attorney David McCay was contacted by phone to determine a date for the hearing. August 14, 2013 at 10 AM was agreed upon. Mr. McCay believed that date will satisfy the requirement of "reasonable notice".

NEW BUSINESS

The proposed 2014 exam schedule was presented for review. A motion to accept the exam schedule with the understanding that the July exam will be held Friday, the same week and location of the LRWA Annual Convention, was made by Mr. Walton and seconded by Mr. Owens.

The next item discussed was the consideration of municipal swimming pool operation as approved operator experience points. Dr. Mooring informed the Committee that he had received two different requests to consider this as approved experience and he sought counsel from the Committee. A letter from the mayor of Rayville regarding this was presented for consideration. It is the Committee's consensus that municipal swimming pool experience does not meet the requirements for approved experience.

The next item concerned a letter sent from Mr. Dean Caldwell requesting continuing education hours from events he had attended as an exhibitor. He listed the events with dates and the number of hours attended. The staff understood that continuing education hours have been approved to exhibitors in the past. It was staff's opinion that since third party verification of attendance is required for all class attendance, it would be unfair to accept nothing more than a letter from the person requesting the continuing education.

The staff contacted Mr. Caldwell concerning this. The staff was unable to receive what it considered to be third party verification of his hours of attendance so credit was denied. Staff suggested that if Mr. Caldwell disputes the decision he should bring this before the Committee for consideration. Mr. Caldwell addressed the Committee seeking resolution. Dr. Mooring asked Mr. Cradeur if it would be possible for LRWA to provide a letter verifying exhibitor attendance. He confirmed that is possible. Mr. Walton stated that in the past, credit has been given for out-of-state conference attendance with submission of badges and hotel receipts. A motion was made by Mr. Owens to accept badges and hotel receipts for out-of-state events and letters verifying attendance from event sponsors as evidence of attendance. Mr. Magnon seconded the motion which passed without opposition.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Walton asked if staff was still considering pursuing the issuance of endorsements. Mr. Hoss responded that it will require legislation.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

John Neilson addressed the Committee and asked how an exhibitor earns continuing education for exhibiting and will he be allowed to show receipts, instead of the sign in sheets, as evidence that he attended this conference. Mr. Walton answered that if an operator attends an approved out-of-state event, badges and receipts will be accepted as proof of attendance. Also he stated that exhibitors gain education by interacting with the other exhibitors just as other operators are assigned continuing education hours for visiting exhibitors to learn about new equipment, techniques, etc.

Brandon Dubois asked why college hours are approved for education points no matter the curriculum. Mr. Barrios stated that 3 California State University Manuals are given the same education credit as one year of college. He next questioned the emphasis on education points and was under the misunderstanding that 50% of the qualifying point total must come from education. Dr. Mooring stated that at least 25% of the qualifying point total for Class 3 and 4 certificates must come from education and that in his review of other states' programs, most require some educational component for higher levels of certification. Also the gentleman questioned why continuing education hours were valued so low and why college semester hours were valued so high, no matter the subject matter. Mr. Barrios responded that it is in the industry's best interest to attract college educated individuals, rather than deter them. Mr. Magnon stated that perhaps the issue should be revisited.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Brasseaux and seconded by Mr. Walton. The motion carried by acclamation. With the next meeting date to be August 14, 2013 at 10 AM in the Bienville Building in Baton Rouge.