

# LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

9643 Brookline Ave., Ste. 101, Baton Rouge, LA 70809



## REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 1:00 P.M.

Physical meeting at

Louisiana Engineering Center

9643 Brookline Avenue

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

and

Virtual Public Meeting Hosted on Zoom

## MINUTES

Chair William Schramm called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., Tuesday, May 10, 2022, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm, William Finley, Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, Elizabeth McDade, Michael Simms, and David Williamson, Board Members; Mabelle Hall, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; Maria Mata de Leder, Administrative Coordinator; and Mallory Pilié, Project Coordinator.

Absent: Lloyd Hoover and Todd Perry, Board Members; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary.

Guests: Elizabeth Levy, Louisiana licensee and employee with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality; Clare Falcon, Director, Louisiana Geological Survey; Chase Cromwell, Louisiana licensee and employee with LEAAF Environmental; Patrick Baudoin, Louisiana license candidate and employee with LEAAF Environmental; Elizabeth Baudoin, license candidate supporter.

Quorum was established. Roll Call and Visitor Sign-in are documented on paper and as part of the meeting registration record on Zoom.

### Public Comment Period

No comments from guests were recorded. However, Schramm asked Williamson to introduce the proposal he had sent to Schramm earlier in May regarding a change to the beginning of each official meeting. Williamson explained that he had attended meetings of other organizations at which each meeting began with a pledge of allegiance to the flag and an invocation. He suggested that this board adopt a similar routine. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming.

## Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the March 8, 2022, regular board meeting were reviewed. Williamson moved to accept the minutes; Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote, and the motion passed.

## Treasurer's Report

Finley presented the treasurer's report for March and April 2022, reporting that delays in receiving the bank statement created a delay in reviewing the revenue and expenses for the period. Finley told board members that the packet of materials includes a draft budget for the new fiscal year; Macon explained that the draft shows a fairly firm accounting of expenses for the current fiscal year but is less firm for revenue. She said the budget will be updated before the July meeting with the remaining revenue and expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30.

Finley suggested streamlining and simplifying the budget categories to make the revenue and expenses more transparent. He also discussed the need to plan for the future with the possibility of decreasing numbers of active licensees and the need to retain existing licensees and recruit new ones. He discussed the various categories and explained how changes to/combining some of those categories would be beneficial. He pointed out that 70% of the board's expenses are in **salaries**; he explained that this category is important because the work of the board must continue, and that work is increasing as the board begins to undertake new projects. He said the second category is **travel**, which has always been necessary for the board to network with other state boards and will be even more important as board members reach out to state universities to educate them on the importance of having graduating geoscientists take the ASBOG exams. He said the third major category is **administrative**, which are essential to maintain the board's work. Discussion ensued.

As he mentioned at the March meeting, Finley reported that he and the staff have determined the number of licensee renewals for those under 60 and those 60 and older. He again pointed out that the licensee population is aging, which will ultimately mean that the income from renewals will decrease over time because of the lower rate older licensees pay. He also reminded board members that these older practitioners will eventually retire or otherwise leave the pool of those renewing. Finley then suggested several ways to provide service to licensees that will help with retention, using the existing budget expense categories for board activity as guidance. Discussion ensued.

Macon commented that the convenience fee charged for online payments has been showing up as revenue when the cost of the transaction is under \$5 and as an expense if the cost is over that amount. She said it would make more sense to keep the cost of transactions in one category to provide information on how closely the fee covers the full cost of those credit card transactions. Board members discussed the possibility of raising the fee to cover those costs fully.

Falcon told the board that the Louisiana Geological Survey (LGS) is converting one of area of its facilities to a dedicated educational space, and she invited the board to use that space to provide professional enrichment opportunities in collaboration with LGS. The board thanked Falcon for the invitation, and Finley said such collaboration could help with educating the public regarding the importance of geoscience to the State of Louisiana.

Additional discussion ensued, with board members recognizing the decline in enrollment in geology and geoscience programs in Louisiana specifically and across the U.S. more broadly. The idea of raising fees in

response to the increased needs of the board was also discussed, and the consensus was to add this discussion and further discussion of simplifying object codes to the next meeting agenda for additional discussion. Williamson moved to accept the treasurer's report; Culpepper seconded; the motion passed.

### **Standing Committees**

Application Review Committee: Stiegler called on committee members McDade and Williamson to confer with her on their decisions on the list of candidates. She then recommended license candidates 1, 2, 4, and 5 for approval; she noted that the committee needed more information on candidates 3 and 6. She recommended all four GIT candidates – 1, 2, 3, and 4 – for approval. Finally, she recommended candidates 1 and 2 for approval to take the ASBOG exams, noting that the committee needs more information from candidate 3. She pointed out that the bottom of the list shows those candidates for testing that have already been approved. Stiegler moved to accept the recommendations; Finley seconded; the motion passed.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that the ASBOG exam was held on March 18, 2022, at the Galvez Building in downtown Baton Rouge. He said proctors were Macon, Mata de Leder, and Pilié. The results of those examinations have been received: He reported that of the seven people who took the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam, five passed, for a pass rate of 71%; of the four people who took the ASBOG Practice of Geology exam, three passed, for a pass rate of 75%. Schramm asked how many candidates have been approved to take the exams in October; Macon said, as of the date of this meeting, five have been approved. She added that several others are still working on applications. Schramm asked when the deadline for applications is; Macon told him July 8, 2022. Schramm pointed out that the October 2022 exams are the last paper and pen exams, as the exam will be administered electronically beginning in 2023. He asked Macon if she would be attending the ASBOG Zoom meeting to discuss the Computer Based Testing; she said she intended to attend. Macon then reminded the board that the Administrators' Workshop has been cancelled at ASBOG's Fall Annual Meeting so participants can focus on the Task Analysis Survey. Board members then discussed the survey, with Schramm stressing that the importance of the survey and asking members to announce it at local geological society meetings.

Williamson said the SOP for application review states that GIT applicants must have at least one "acceptable reference" and asked what constitutes an "acceptable reference." Several board members said that was explained in the rules. Williamson said the rules state only that the "reference must be acceptable to the board." Hall said she will find the passage and send it to him. A brief discussion ensued.

Compliance Committee: Schramm, Mata de Leder, and Pilié reported that they have been meeting to evaluate the log sheets and documentation of the 2022 auditees. As of the date of this board meeting, 14 of the 24 auditees have passed the audit review; two decided to retire rather than participate in the audit; two others voluntarily relinquished their licenses; and six more are still pending review and have been sent reminders. Schramm added that the board's previous practice has been to allow those whose licenses lapse to request reinstatement of their licenses up to three years to make that decision. He said that, if someone decides to voluntarily relinquish the license rather than submitting continuing education documentation to the board, that person should not be given three years to change his/her mind. Finley disagreed. Discussion ensued.

Schramm then brought to the board's attention an issue regarding a possible complaint and called for a motion for the board to go into executive session. Williamson moved to call the board into executive session to discuss the board's approach to handling this issue. Culpepper seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote; the vote was unanimous.

After the board returned from executive session, Schramm turned the discussion to the need for an advisor opinion from legal counsel regarding cooperation among state agencies. This document is to be created and approved by the board at the July meeting and disseminated through all available media – website, journal, mail and email to various agencies. The need for protection for whistleblowers was discussed.

Schramm brought up the need for changes in the way continuing education credits for attending geological society meetings are handled. He asked the Ad Hoc committee to reconsider the limitation on the number of hours allowed for attending these meetings. These administrative changes will not affect the requirements for 14 hours of geoscience education and one hour of geoscience ethics. General discussion of the requirements and audit processes ensued.

Outreach Committee: Finley announced that he would be presenting an ethics presentation to the Lafayette Geological Society later in May. He said he is working on some ideas and will report later on those ideas.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: Simms reported that the committee had three meetings, two for logistical planning on Zoom and one in-person meeting on April 20. He said the focus was on rules changes, but the committee also talked about revisions to the mission statement, services to licensees, and cooperation with other state agencies. He said he hopes to schedule another in-person meeting within a few weeks. Brief discussion ensued.

Office Committee: Macon reported that the journal issue is still in progress. She also announced that the staff is working on a bio page for board members and staff and presented a mock-up of the page. Schramm commented that an extension of this idea could be a history of the board as a future project.

Pilié also brought to the board's attention that the staff have requested a change to the home page of the website to make finding information easier. Discussion about the website ensued.

### **Legal Comments**

Hall pointed out that she learned at the in-person Ad Hoc committee meeting that board members had never had an orientation, and she offered to prepare and present an orientation for board members regarding their responsibilities. She stressed that the most important responsibility of board members is to enforce R.S. 37:711.12(A) of the Louisiana Professional Geoscience Practice Act, which states, "Unless exempted by this Chapter, a person shall not engage in the practice of geoscience unless the person holds a license issued under this Chapter." She said that is the only task the board is to perform – to license qualified geoscientists and handle complaints against those who violate the rules associated with the license. Questions and discussion ensued.

**Other Business**

Schramm reported on the April ASBOG Council of Examiners meeting. He said, in addition to the regular focus on the examinations, the group focused on the Task Analysis Survey that ASBOG is creating to update its documentation of the work done by geologists nationwide. Questions and discussion ensued.

**Adjourn**

The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 12, 2022, at 1:00 pm. Finley moved to adjourn; Williamson seconded; the motion passed. Schramm adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.