

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS
9643 Brookline Ave., Ste. 101, Baton Rouge, LA 70809



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 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 1:05 p.m., Tuesday, March 14, 2023, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm, Michael Simms, Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, Lloyd Hoover, and David Williamson, Board Members; Kaycee Garrett, Board Member (awaiting legislative confirmation); Machel Hall, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; and Maria Mata de Leder, Administrative Coordinator.

Absent: William Finley and Elizabeth McDade, Board Members; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary; and Seija Meaux, Project Coordinator.

Guests: none

Quorum was established.

Public Comment Period

No comments from guests were recorded.

Civil Law Training

The initial item on the agenda was a special training session that covered public meetings law, which was provided by Louisiana Assistant Attorney General Lauren Sudduth.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the January 10, 2023, regular board meeting were reviewed. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. Williamson moved to accept the minutes; Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Board Treasurer William Finley, Macon provided the financial report. She explained that the packet included an amended first page of the treasurer's report to add a note that the February expenses included the purchase of the Xerox printer/copier and to delete the line item for the Capital One checking account since that account had been closed for more than a year. She said Finley found that balances are normalized for the next couple of years. She added that the office staff reviews the online credit card sales at the beginning of the calendar year to assess expenses related to that service. She reported that raising the convenience fee from \$5 to \$6 in July 2022 has had the intended effect of cutting losses in revenue. She said the overall loss is shrinking and should be near zero by the end of the fiscal year. Culpepper moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented; Simms seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Stiegler said seven applications for PG license had been reviewed, and all seven (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) were recommended for approval. She said two ASBOG testing applications had been reviewed, and both (1 and 2) were recommended for approval. She reported that two members of the committee had encountered issues related to marginal or unusual degree programs and asked that the board discuss these issues so the committee has a clearer understanding of its mission; board members complied with this request and ultimately agreed that more detailed descriptions of coursework with vague titles be requested from applicants. In addition, Hall suggested continuing the discussion at the May meeting after board members have more time to consider the role of education in assessing the competence of applicants. Stiegler then moved to approve the recommended applicants; Williamson seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that six candidates have registered to take the online ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam and six have registered to take the ASBOG Practice of Geology exam on March 16 and 17, 2023.

Williamson explained that Macon had developed a list of potential contacts at the five universities in Louisiana that currently offer degree programs in geoscience. Macon asked if the Louisiana Geological Survey should be included and how the board wanted to use the list. Williamson said he thought the survey should be included and suggested sending a letter to these contacts to introduce them to the board and to explain the licensing process and requirements. Schramm asked Macon to draft the letter and include copies of the new

brochure. Williamson reported that he had been speaking with Centenary students in various classes.

The board continued the discussion from previous meetings regarding the possibility of offering those who had been approved to take the ASBOG exams in Louisiana a free Zoom workshop to prepare them for the exams. Macon asked if board members would participate or if they wanted the students to help each other with a facilitator. Schramm said board members would participate. Schramm mentioned that ASBOG is working on a series of online exam prep courses. Additional discussion ensued. Macon suggested preparing and setting up the Zoom meeting for late summer with the understanding that, if the ASBOG courses are online by that time, the LBOPG offering will be cancelled. Board members agreed. Macon also requested information on the AEG presentation on taking the exams; Schramm agreed to send that information to be added to the LBOPG website.

Compliance Committee:

Mata de Leder summarized the work done so far on the 2023 continuing education audit. She reminded the board that 29 licensees were randomly selected for audit. She recapped the process and presented a statistical analysis of the rate of response. She reported that 20 people (representing 69% of the total selected) have responded; the reviewers have had no response from seven (24%); one has retired, and one is deceased (7%). Of those 20 responding, 12 (41% of the 29 total) have already passed the audit, and 8 (28% of the 29 total) are still under review. She asked for comments. Discussion ensued.

Outreach Committee:

Macon and Schramm reported on their attendance at the 2023 Joint Engineering Societies Conference (JESC) in Lafayette. Discussion ensued, with an endorsement from Schramm and Macon for board member attendance at these meetings.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: Simms reported that Finley has completed his review of the current rules and sent his suggested revisions to the rest of the committee for their review. He also reported that Hall had submitted a document that compares the contents in the statute and the content of the rules with suggestions for streamlining and cleaning up the rules. Hall then cautioned that some of the revisions suggested in Finley's document may not be acceptable in the current legislative climate. She suggested as well that the board's adopted SOPs be incorporated into the regulations and explained the process. She asked the board to provide an opinion on this idea. Schramm suggested having a special board meeting to discuss the changes; Hall suggested discussing the changes at a regular board meeting but making this discussion the sole order of business. Discussion of these two suggestions ensued, with an agreement to meet at a special meeting in June.

Schramm asked Simms about the strategic plan. Simms reported that committee members are close to completing it. Schramm asked what the plan should include; Simms said the plan will indicate the direction the board plans to take in the future. He provided a few examples and explained the process. Schramm pointed out that the five-year plan is very late and needs to be on file as soon as possible. He asked Simms to provide an outline of the plan for discussion at the May meeting. Simms said he would have that outline ready.

Office Committee: Macon reminded board members once again to complete the state's required online ethics training and send her their certificates of completion for the record. She also reminded them that their financial disclosure statements are due to the state in May. She said she had sent an email with links for both of these requirements and would send the links again if anyone had not seen them. Board members asked that the links be sent again.

She also reported that the Louisiana Engineering Center (9643 Brookline Avenue) has had several issues. The LBOPG office had been without heat or air conditioning since shortly after the January board meeting. Repairs to the building were ongoing to correct these issues.

Macon then mentioned that Williamson had asked if the board administration had procedures to follow in case of emergency, e.g., in the event of a building fire. She explained that emergency plans are in place, written into the board's office procedures manual for years: In the event of a critical issue, such as a tornado, hurricane, or fire, the priority is preservation of human lives. The next priority is preservation of agency records. All critical records are already electronic and are preserved offsite through both Dropbox and Crashplan; office staff also back up records on external hard drives attached to both office computers. Additionally, all physical property is insured through the Louisiana Office of Risk Management. All properties with values over \$1000 are recorded through the Louisiana Property Assistance Agency, and all properties of any value are recorded with Risk Management.

In response to a question from Schramm regarding the JESC, Macon reminded board members that she has informational brochures, in case anyone would like them for their own meetings and outreach opportunities. She also asked Schramm about upcoming conferences that may be appropriate for board participation. Schramm mentioned the Solid Waste Conference and the LSU Groundwater Conference. Discussion ensued, with several suggestions for participation.

Legal Comments

Hall reported that the State Legislature passed Statute 2583 in 2022, which requires that occupational licensing boards review any regulations that are questioned by members of the public. The statute further requires that boards must limit regulations to the least restrictive possible. She explained the details of the new statute and its possible

ramifications for the board and suggested that this statute be kept in mind as the board revamps its regulations.

Hall also passed along a suggestion she had heard at a recent conference: To read the board's mission statement at the end of every meeting to keep members mindful of their reasons for serving the public. She further suggested reading the section of the statute [R.S. 37:711.12(C)] that states, "A person shall not take responsible charge of a geoscientific report or a geoscientific portion of a report required by municipal or parish ordinance, state or federal law, state agency rule, or federal regulation that incorporates or is based on a geoscientific study or geoscientific data unless the person is licensed under this Chapter" at the beginning of each meeting to remind board members of their mission.

She reported that the board had its first official complaint in 2022 and explained the broad details and outcome of that complaint.

New Business

Schramm introduced the newest board member, Kaycee Garrett, who was appointed on February 10, 2023, and is awaiting legislative confirmation. He thanked her for serving, allowed board members to introduce themselves to her, and asked her to introduce herself to them. Schramm mentioned that, once she is confirmed, she will serve on a committee. Hall explained to Garrett the difference between a regulatory board and other types of boards. Garrett alluded to her work for DNR in explaining that she understands the regulatory function of the board and offered her assistance in any area needed.

Announcement of the Next Meeting and Adjournment

The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 1:00 pm. Williamson moved to adjourn; Stiegler seconded; the motion passed. Schramm adjourned the meeting at 4:32 pm.