

**Minutes**  
**COMMITTEE OF CERTIFICATION**  
**August 27, 2015**  
**9:00 AM**  
**Crown Plaza**  
**4728 Constitution Ave.**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 71101**

**1.) ROLL CALL**

A. Determination of Quorum.

Committee Members in attendance were: Dirk Barrios, Chairman, Mayor Vern Breland, Tom Walton, Delos Williams, Barbara Featherston, Camille Mize and Amanda Laughlin.

Absent Members were: Grant Magnon and Tom Owens.

A quorum was achieved.

Recognition of Visitors and Others: JW Hellums, Jr., Roger Kelley, Rusty Reeves, Pat Credeur, Doil Nelson, Curtis Davis, Dennis McGehee.

DHH personnel in attendance: Jim Mooring, Steve Hoss.

B. Announcements: There were no announcements.

**2.) MINUTES**

The minutes from the July 14, 2015 meeting were distributed and reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Tom Walton and seconded by Camille Mize. The minutes were approved.

**3.) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Dirk Barrios had no report

**4.) ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Anika Hubert had applied for and taken a Class II Wastewater Collection exam, passed, and was issued a Provisional Certificate until the legal process is completed. If DHH's decision to revoke her certification is upheld, then Ms. Hubert will lose her Wastewater Collection II certification also. Ms. Hubert's Class II certificate was inadvertently not signed prior to being sent to her. She contacted the Ops Cert office and was asked to send it back and they will send her a signed certificate.

Mr. Mooring stated that Louisiana now has a reciprocal agreement with Mississippi for the Water Certifications. Louisiana already had a reciprocal agreement with Mississippi for Wastewater Certifications.

## 5.) TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Steve Hoss discussed with the Committee the exam passing rate statistics from 2009 thru 2015.

## 6.) SECRETARY'S REPORT

Amanda Laughlin had no report.

## 7.) ASSOCIATION REPORTS

**Louisiana Conference** – Tom Walton reported that the 2016 Conference will be held in Shreveport at the Shreveport Convention Center. The host hotel being the Hilton Shreveport. The Louisiana Conference will host the Train-the-Trainer workshop here at the Crown Plaza.

**LELAA** – Steve Hoss reported that one person attempted the Lab exam but was not successful.

**LETA** – Jim Mooring reported that there was a lot of interest in the Train-the-Trainer workshop. The numbers were so large that they could no longer hold it at the DHH office downtown. He thanked the Louisiana Conference for getting the room at the Crown Plaza.

**LRWA** – Pat Credeur reported that they had 1200 attendees at his conference and thanked DHH for their work. Steve Hoss reported that 463 operators took a total of 998 exams with an overall passing rate of 50.8% (includes attendees and walk-ons).

**LWEA** – No Report.

## 8.) OLD BUSINESS

**Demetrius Jones** – He received his letter on the Train-the-Trainer training class and will be attending. Asked if he could bring along a few others that will be providing training once Beth Jones retires.

**Operator Complaint** – Jim Mooring reported that he received an operator complaint from Robert Gilbride concerning a company operating a sewer treatment plant with the operator holding only a Wastewater Collection certification. The operator in question was Ms. Anna Vollenweider. After Mr. Mooring read the complaint, a motion was made by Tom Walton, second by Delos Williams, to continue the investigation process on Ms. Anna Vollenweider. Motion passed.

**St. John Parish Operators** – Letters to both Kevin Branch and Danielle Roussel were sent certified mail and regular mail asking for them to attend today's Committee of Certification meeting. The green slips from the certified mail have not been return as of this meeting. Motion to table until next meeting by Tom Walton, Second by Amanda Laughlin, motion passed.

## 9.) NEW BUSINESS

Jim Mooring reported that two operators may have forged their supervisor's signatures on their exam applications for the July 17, 2015 exams in Lake Charles. Mr. Horace Jason (WWC1), City of Lake Charles, and Mr. Joshua Taylor (WT1,WP1,WD1), City of Alexandria, have received zero's on their exams until their supervisors can verify the signature is in fact theirs. Mr. Pat Credeur stated that it is wrong if they did falsified the supervisor's signature but asked why is a supervisor's signature needed? He can go take a driver license exam without a supervisor's signature. Mr. Roger Kelley and others stated that the supervisor's signature is required to verify the operator's experience. Mr. Rusty Reeves stated that a supervisor could refuse to sign the operator's application thus preventing the operator from advancing his/her certifications.

Mr. Jim Mooring stated that he received a letter from William Smith, DHH via Ms. Carter, DEQ, concerning allegations against an operator for falsification of paperwork. Tom Walton said that the operator has not been convicted of anything yet so there is no need to begin the process of removing his certifications. The consensus of the Board agreed to wait and see what DEQ's investigation turns up.

#### **10.) COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC**

Mr. Doil Nelson that the High School Diploma/GED requirement may be hard on some people, it also inspires people to go get their GED (referring to one of his operators).

Discussion on operators "renting" out their certifications and not being involved in the day to day operation of the systems.

Roger Kelley asked about drinking water at off shore systems. Who is responsible? Amanda Laughlin said that DHH is not but she thinks the Coast Guard is. JW Hellums said that he believes this is covered under international maritime laws. Rusty Reeves stated that oil platform companies (BP) a few years back had been asking about chlorine residual requirements of 0.2 mg/L but they could not tell him if it was free or total chlorine. Dirk Barrios said that once the water leaves the docks that water systems no longer have control of the water.

Curtis Davis told the Committee that operators up north Louisiana have been complaining that the low passing rate (40%) on Water Distribution Class I exams is because the exams have many water treatment questions on them. Mr. Davis asked Steve Hoss if there is something that instructors are not covering for the Water Distribution Class I exam? Steve Hoss told Mr. Davis that any time that he changes exam questions the passing rate goes down for a while.

Jim Mooring told the Committee that DHH Ops Cert cannot take credit card payments at this time due to cost of 1.8% plus \$0.05 per transaction. David Booth says that LDEQ takes credit cards. Still researching with the fiscal office. JW Hellums ask if it was legal for DHH to charge a small transaction fee without having to go to the Legislators? Amanda Laughlin will have to research that. Pat Credeur offered to help support Ops Cert rate increases at the next legislation session. Roger Kelley said that operators would study harder if exam cost were \$200.00 instead of \$5.00 and that the passing rates would increase. Pat Credeur said that he did not know if water systems would support \$50.00, \$75.00 or \$100.00 per test or not. Steve Hoss said that it would be ideal to collect the fees in advance once the operator has been approved to take the exams and has the points (test fee, certificate fee and the ID card fee). Rusty Reeves asked what about the fees collected by DHH for the operators that failed the exams? Steve Hoss explained that the test fee would include receiving the certificate and ID card if the operator passed his exam. The operator would not have to fill out more paperwork or pay additional fees if he passes. So for the \$50.00 exam fee it would include the exam fee, certificate fee and the ID Card fee. Ms Barbara Featherston said that this way would help the process flow better. Currently she said that the process being used now requires paperwork and checks to be mailed back and forth delaying her operators from receiving their certificates and delaying their pay raises. She said that she would love to pay the higher fees and that this would stop operators from taking

exams just to get the exam questions. Dennis McGehee stated that if testing fee includes the certificate and ID Cards, then DHH would have to spend less time on the phone talking with operators. Pat Credeur wanted to know what DHH's opinion was on what Dennis McGehee just said. Jim Mooring stated that would be great if they could do that but it would require Legislation. Discussion on supplying paper certificates vs the operator downloading a copy from the website. There is a list of certified operators on the DHH site for people to look at.

Mayor Vern Breland asked Jim Mooring about the LMA Committee Member position. Jim Mooring said that he had talked with LMA a few weeks ago and that they assured him that they will give him a list soon.

**11.)NEXT MEETING DATE**

October 29, 2015, 1 PM, Bienville Building Room 671-673, Baton Rouge

**12.)ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Tom Walton, Second by Barbara Featherston, Motion Passed.