

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

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



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Thursday, March 21, 2024, 1:00 P.M.

Physical meeting at

PPM Consultants, LLC

7936 Office Park Blvd, Suite A

Baton Rouge, LA 70809

and

Virtual Public Meeting Hosted on Zoom

MINUTES

Chair William Schramm called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m., Thursday, March 21, 2024, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm (in-person), Melanie Stiegler, William Finley, David Culpepper, Elizabeth McDade, and David Williamson (all virtual), Board Members; Mabelle Hall, Legal Counsel; and Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary.

Absent: Kaycee Garrett, Lloyd Hoover, and Michael Simms, Board Members; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary; Sadé Dennis and Seija Meaux, Project Coordinators.

Guests: Jessica Littleton (LDENR) and Jamie Love (BRGS and LDENR).

Quorum was established.

Statement of the Board's Mission and Purpose

Schramm read from R.S. 37:711.12 (C), part of the statute that created the board, to remind those present of the board's mission.

Public Comment Period

No comments were forthcoming.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the January 25, 2024, regular board meeting were reviewed, and Schramm called for discussion. Williamson moved to accept the minutes with those revisions, and Stiegler seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Report and Discussion of Pending Legislation (House Bill 620)

Schramm reported on the progress of the proposed legislation to increase fees charged by the board. Discussion and questions ensued, with issues ranging from the projected fiscal impact to whether the increase will cause some licensees not to renew.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Stiegler reported that the committee reviewed applications for one license and five testing (ASBOG) requests. She said the committee recommended for approval 1 for license; and 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for examination. Stiegler moved to accept these recommendations; Finley seconded the motion. Schramm repeated the motion, called for discussion, and, when no discussion was forthcoming, called for a vote; the motion passed.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that he and Schramm had held an open meeting with testing candidates and other interested parties. He pointed out that attendance was a bit disappointing because he and Schramm made the presentation on the evening of Mardi Gras, February 13. However, two candidates attended, and the presentation was successfully recorded and uploaded to the website. Schramm pointed out that the presentation has been reviewed and approved by the ASBOG executive committee.

Williamson also reported that, for the March 2023 examination administration, the national average for the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam was 65.7%; Louisiana's average was 83.3%. For the ASBOG Practice of Geology (PG) exam, the national average was 80.3%; Louisiana's average was 100%. The national average score for the October 2023 examination was 65.1% for the FG exam and 80.3% for the PG exam; Louisiana's average score was 53.3% for the FG and 79.7% for the PG. Overall, Louisiana's scores compare favorably with surrounding states, particularly Texas.

Compliance Committee: Schramm began his report by asking board members to consider attending the ASBOG meetings, especially the Council of Examiners workshops.

He then presented the latest information on the 2024 audit. He showed the spreadsheet of audit activities, indicating the approved audits so far. He mentioned that several questions have arisen regarding activities that do not count for credit. In response to this issue, he is preparing a presentation to answer these questions and to provide guidance on submitting audit materials. This presentation will be posted on the website. Williamson asked if the stringency of the audit process is an impediment to license retention. Schramm and Finley responded that Louisiana's statute requires this level of stringency. Discussion ensued.

He also presented a "statement of affirmation" to be completed by licensees when their licenses lapse. This statement was created in response to previous board discussions regarding licensees whose licenses have expired and who are requesting reinstatement of their licenses. Schramm asked board members to review the statement. He then asked if anyone was opposed to using this statement as part of the reinstatement process. Board members indicated that they approved the statement.

Outreach Committee: Finley reported that he would like to build a library of continuing education presentations and links on the board's website, with varying materials available over time. Schramm mentioned that the geological societies offer virtual meetings that are recorded and suggested asking

them to share the recorded sessions with the board to be offered on the website. Discussion ensued. Schramm asked the committee to come up with a plan to ask the societies to share their recordings. Williamson pointed out that the Shreveport Geological Society already offers its recorded presentations on its website. Additional discussion ensued.

Williamson reported that he presented a lecture on lignite coal mining in Louisiana at Centenary College earlier in March, and he will give another lecture in April. In January, he met with a first-grade class to discuss rock and mineral identification.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: McDade reported that, as the new chair of this committee, she is continuing the work of developing a strategic plan for the board. She is communicating with committee members to set up a meeting to decide on direction. She has a collection of documents that the committee had discussed, and she mentioned that Culpepper had also shared a copy of the Texas board's strategic plan. Hall suggested also looking at the strategic plans of other Louisiana boards, including those on the Legislative Library. Macon mentioned that she had set up a special place for the committee's documents on the board's Dropbox account and would help committee members reconnect on that platform. Discussion ensued.

Office Committee: Macon reported that the website developers are waiting on the board to begin using the recently completed compliance review functionality. When members of the compliance committee are ready to have the Comit Developers staff train them on the new pages, the next phase (implementation) of the project can commence. Schramm suggested asking this year's auditees who have not yet responded to participate as beta testers.

Macon updated the board on the office lease. She said the Louisiana Engineering Foundation (LEF), the agency from which the board rents its office space, has offered a two-year lease as they decide how to proceed after LAPELS vacates the building at the end of the year. She reminded board members that she had previously sent them the draft lease for review, and she asked board members to make a decision on this lease. Culpepper moved to accept the two-year lease; McDade seconded the motion. Schramm asked for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion carried.

Macon also reported that the LA Office of State Procurement had sent a notice that contracts for legal services with the Louisiana Department of Justice (LDOJ) are now limited to one year with a maximum of two extensions. She said LDOJ had prepared a draft contract for the new fiscal year, and she reminded them that she had forwarded that draft to all board members for review and consideration. She asked them to make a decision regarding this contract. Williamson moved to accept the contract with LDOJ; Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion passed.

Macon then explained to the board that the state requires all employees who travel on state business to have driver authorization forms on file with their home agencies. She told them that she had begun forms for each board member and had included them in each member's physical folder. She asked them to complete the forms when next they attend a physical meeting. Discussion ensued.

Finally, Macon reported that the Joint Engineering Societies Conference was held February 28 and 29, 2024, at the Cajundome in Lafayette. The board participated in the conference, and many LBOPG licensees attended.

Treasurer's Report

Finley reported that, in January revenue exceeded expenses; in February, expenses slightly exceeded revenue. He explained that the revenue to expense ratio is still relatively stable and balanced. He suggested that the board's financial situation can be improved through outreach. Discussion ensued, with Schramm suggesting a charge for viewing the presentations.

Love pointed out that the proposed fee increases may drive away dual license holders (engineering and geoscience). Additional discussion ensued, with Hall mentioning that, at some point, the board may need to join with another board for greater efficiency and better funding. She said, however, that is not a possibility without additional legislation.

Finley then reported on the budget to date. He said the budget indicates that revenue is just barely exceeding expenses, but some budgeted expenses (legal fees) remain unbilled for the year. He said if those expenses had been charged as expected, the bare margin of revenue to expenses would have flipped the other way. He said he would rather have a more accurate picture of the board's financial obligations and would like the legal fees to be billed, so that the board has a better understanding of its fiscal health.

Finley then moved to accept the treasurer's report; Culpepper seconded the motion. Schramm asked for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion carried.

Legal Counsel's Comments

Hall had no additional comments.

Announcement of the Next Meeting and Adjournment

Schramm read the mission statement of the board into the record and reminded board members to make progress toward goals. The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 1:00 pm in the Engineering Center conference room at 9643 Brookline Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA. Williamson moved to adjourn; Culpepper seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.