

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

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



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, September 12, 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 1:06 p.m., Tuesday, September 12, 2023, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm, William Finley, Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, Lloyd Hoover, and David Williamson, Board Members; Machel Hall, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; and Seija Meaux, Project Coordinator.

Absent: Michael Simms, Kaycee Garrett, and Elizabeth McDade, Board Members; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary; and Sadé Dennis, Project Coordinator.

Guests: None.

Quorum was established. Schramm read from the statute that created the board.

Public Comment Period

Schramm noted that no members of the public were present.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the July 11, 2023, regular board meeting were reviewed. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. Williamson moved to accept the minutes; Culpepper seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Finley presented the Treasurer's Report for July and August 2023, reporting that, for the two-month period, July and August, the administrative accounts showed a slight increase. He said the increase occurred despite the extraordinary expense of \$4500 for the annual ASBOG dues. Despite this increase, he suggested that the board needs to find ways to encourage licensees to maintain their licenses, including the possibility to provide additional continuing education opportunities as presentations on the website.

He said the checking account appears to be stabilizing, and he is continuing to monitor the accounts. He mentioned that other ways to increase income need to be explored, including short-term CDs or investments, but his initial efforts to find such opportunities led him to the conclusion that high-yield CDs were not available to entities like this board. Discussion ensued, with the suggestion of a money market account or business CD.

Finley moved to accept the Treasurer's Report; Williamson seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion and a vote. The motion passed.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Stiegler reported that the committee reviewed applications for one license and one testing request (ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology only). She said the committee recommended both for approval: 1 for license; and 1 for examination. Discussion of the timeline for online registration for the examinations briefly ensued. Stiegler moved to accept these recommendations; Culpepper 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 made the Zoom presentation, "Tips for Taking the ASBOG FG and PG Exams" on Wednesday, August 9. He said eleven potential testing candidates attended via Zoom, most of these candidates are state employees, and five were new and had not yet begun the application process. Macon said several of the candidates provided feedback, all positive, on the experience. She added that several commented that they planned to wait until 2024 to take the exams.

Schramm asked Williamson about his upcoming presentation to students at Centenary; Williamson reported that presentation is scheduled for October 25. Schramm told the board he was invited to speak on September 15 at the regularly scheduled Friday afternoon seminar at LSU. He then reported that several continuing education presentations are coming soon, including NOGS Deepwater Symposium in 2024. He also announced that ASBOG recently released a series of videos intended as study materials for the Fundamentals of Geology exam; these videos are to be offered for a fee (Schramm said he thought the amount is \$75 each). Schramm ended with a report on the ongoing interest in the geoscience ethics presentation he and George Losonski have been offering. Discussion ensued.

Schramm suggested that the presentation he and Williamson had made could be expanded to provide either a half-day or full-day course to provide candidates with information on each of the 43 topics covered by the ASBOG exams. He said the board could potentially charge fees for such a course. Additional discussion ensued, with Finley stating that the board should offer at least some continuing education to its licensees.

Schramm reported that the videographer who films the ethics presentations had suggested the board get its own YouTube channel for future presentations.

Williamson asked about the recording of the “Tips for Taking the ASBOG FG and PG Exams,” and Macon reported that the entire recording was lost because of an editing mistake. Meaux suggested inviting the LSU Geology Club to attend and participate in the next Zoom presentation, which is tentatively scheduled for mid-February. More discussion ensued, including the suggestion that the next presentation be held at LSU with both physical and virtual audiences.

Compliance Committee: Schramm reported that, as of the date of this meeting, 20 auditees have passed the continuing education audit, three are inactive with expired licenses, one is retired, one is deceased, one is still under review, and three have not responded at all. Schramm commented that these numbers are representative of the entire population of licensees. He pointed out that the number of inactive, retired, deceased, and nonresponsive licensees represent 31% of the total pool of auditees. Discussion ensued.

The question arose regarding whether the board should be actively investigating geological reports submitted to other state agencies. A lengthy discussion ensued. Hall told board members that anyone could research reports submitted by those agencies but suggested that the board staff should not be tasked with this project. Macon reported that the other state agencies do check to be sure those who seal reports are actively licensed. Additional discussion ensued. She offered to ask representatives of those agencies if the reports would be rejected if the sealing geoscientist was not actively licensed, and the board agreed.

The discussion then turned to whether nonresponsive auditees should be sanctioned. The discussion culminated in the revelation that nonrespondents ultimately cannot renew their licenses, effectively ending their ability to act as licensed geoscientists in the state.

Schramm asked the board to review and make a decision regarding the new list of randomly selected licensees for the 2024 audit. Culpepper moved to approve the list of auditees; Williamson seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion; with none forthcoming, he called for a vote. The motion passed.

Outreach Committee: Finley reported that the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) has initiated a pilot program that will shift from research to job training. This program will provide training in specific areas of geoscience (energy resources, environment, etc.). He said he is attempting to use this opportunity to set up a meeting that will encourage integration of several academic units and to improve communication among those units. By

integrating information from across these areas into the pilot program, students may potentially have better professional outcomes. A brief discussion ensued.

Finley also reported that he is working on documentation to determine best practices for geoscience work. He explained the document, giving examples of past problems with work by governmental agencies that did not take geological issues into account, and asked board members to review the materials he presented to them and make recommendations. His ultimate goal is to publish this document on the board's website.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: No report; Schramm pointed out that the board would be discussing statute and rules changes later in the meeting.

Office Committee: Macon reported that Dovetail Digital is continuing to work on the continuing education reporting pages for the existing database. She said the primary representative with Dovetail is currently on medical leave but will report on the project at the November meeting.

Macon reported that Mary Claire Ruckert, the director of LES, had provided a draft agreement for the new five-year rental contract that will begin in 2024. The current contract will end on April 30, 2024, but both she and Mary Claire would like to set up the new agreement to begin with the beginning of the new fiscal year, July 1, 2024. The monthly rent will increase from \$314.25 to \$383 in that first year of the new contract and will increase by 5% each year to plateau in the fourth year of the five-year contract. The draft agreement indicates that the total rent to be paid over 62 months (May 2024 through June 30, 2029) will be \$24,445.84. The rent installments are:

May 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025: \$383.00 per month

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026: \$388.75 per month

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027: \$394.58 per month

July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028: \$400.49 per month

July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029: \$406.50 per month

Schramm mentioned the possibility of upgrading the meeting capabilities in the conference room as a part of the rent increase. He said the room needed a projector, sound system, camera, new projector screen, and a new dedicated monitor/TV. Macon pointed out that, after replacing almost every HVAC unit, repairing a leaking roof, and eradicating vermin in the attic of the building, all within the last six months, the Louisiana Engineering Foundation is not likely to expend additional funds for new equipment in the conference room. Macon said she had been in conversations with William Tripoli, the IT manager for LAPELS, and they had discussed splitting the cost of improvements between the two boards, and possibly with the other tenants in the building. Schramm suggested looking into grant opportunities. Macon agreed that this seemed like a good idea. Brief discussion ensued.

Macon reminded the board that the ASBOG Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 24 through October 26, and the Fall COE Workshop is scheduled for October 27 and 28 in Spokane, Washington. Schramm said David Culpepper has already asked to represent the board at the COE workshop; Finley indicated that he, too, is interested.

Macon announced that Luzma Mata de Leder resigned her position effective August 18, and on August 7, a second Project Coordinator/Student Intern, Sadé Dennis, was hired. Macon said Dennis is a senior at LSU majoring in geology and minoring in coastal and environmental science. She and Meaux both attended field camp this summer and participated in the 14th Annual Louisiana Water Conference.

Macon then reminded board members that she had sent an email on August 31, about the Joint Engineering Societies Conference (JESC), which is scheduled for February 28 and 29, 2024, at the Cajundome in Lafayette. A speaker track in geoscience is planned, and the organizers are calling for papers. Each speaker receives one free admission. Macon requested approval from the board to participate at the conference as an exhibitor. Williamson moved to exhibit at the conference; Culpepper seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Legal Counsel's Comments

Hall reported that she and her staff have reviewed the regulations and made suggested changes and that the document has been sent to Schramm and Macon for distribution to the entire board. She said that, in addition to cleaning up the language and eliminating redundancy, her goal was to add items mandated by the State Legislature, such as rules related to Zoom meetings. She asked that all members review the changes and send their comments and suggested edits to her. Finley asked if his previous changes had been incorporated into the document; Hall explained that most of those previous changes were already in the statute and to avoid redundancy in the rules, they were not included in the new document.

Hall then recommended the board go into executive session to discuss proposed statutory changes. Williamson moved to go into executive session; Culpepper second the motion. Schramm called for a vote on this motion; the vote was unanimous for going into executive session.

When the meeting reconvened, Schramm pointed out that Macon had already forwarded the new document to all board members. He reiterated that the new document is intended to eliminate redundancy, clarify the rules, add the enforcement procedure as discussed, and update minor procedural descriptions.

Other Business

Schramm reminded the board that all officers who served in the 2022-2023 FY had been nominated to serve again for the 2023-2024 FY: Schramm as Chair; Simms as Vice Chair; Stiegler as Secretary; and Finley as Treasurer. Williamson moved to accept the slate of officers, all of whom agreed to serve after having been nominated with no opposition; Culpepper seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion; there was none. He then called for votes. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcement of the Next Meeting and Adjournment

Schramm read the mission statement of the board into the record and reminded board members to participate in their committees and to make progress toward goals. The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 1:00 pm. Finley moved to adjourn; Stiegler seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 3:39 pm.