

MINUTES
South Carolina Environmental Certification Board Meeting
July 25, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.
Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building
110 Centerview Drive, Midlands Room
Columbia, SC 29210

Meeting Called to Order

Vice Chair, Phillip Thompson-King, called the meeting of the South Carolina Environmental Certification Board to order at 10:06 a.m. Other members participating in the meeting included: Doug Kinard; Jason Fell; Ken Tuck; and William Van Ward. A quorum was present.

Staff members participating during the meeting included: Hardwick Stuart, Office of Advice Counsel; Johnnie L. Rose Jr., Board Executive; and Cleve Langdale, Program Coordinator.

Others participating included: Katherine Boone, Creel Court Reporting.

Statement of Public Notice

Public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the S.C. Board of Environmental Certification Board Office, Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building, and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Members of the public who wish to observe may do so by live streaming at:

<https://llr.sc.gov/env/videos.aspx>

Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: To approve the agenda of the July 25, 2024, meeting.
Fell/Van Ward/approved.

Introduction of Board Members and Others

Board members and Board staff were introduced.

Approval of Excused Absences

MOTION: To excuse Ken Rentiers, Josh Castleberry, and Jay Swearingen from the meeting.
Kinard/Fell/approved.

Approval of the April 25, 2024 Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the April 25, 2024 meeting, with the correct Board Member making the motion for the excused absences.
Kinard/Fell/approved.

Chair's Remarks – Phillip Thompson-King, Vice Chair

Vice Chair Thompson-King asked that all present recall the impact the board's efforts have on the public and the environment.

Staff Reports

Mr. Rose gave the Board Executive's Report:

- Reminded Board members to refer media contacts, licensees, and/or applicants to staff for assistance.
- Requested that any educational and workforce development tools board members utilize be brought to staff's attention.

Finance Report

As of May 21, 2024, the Board had a cash balance of \$554,497.93.

Advisory Opinions, Office of Advice Counsel

There were no advisory opinions.

OIE Report-Office of Investigations and Enforcement

There was no report from the OIE.

IRC Report- Office of Investigations and Enforcements

There was no report from the IRC.

ODC Report-Office of Disciplinary Counsel

There was no report from the ODC.

Application Hearings

- a) Allen, Mark - EWD – Did not attend
- b) Cheverier, Taylor – EBL – Did not attend
- c) Hall, Justin – EPC
Mr. Hall appeared before the Board for an Application Hearing. With him for testimony was his supervisor, John Williams. He was not represented by counsel. All persons testifying were sworn in by court reporter. Application hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event a verbatim transcript is necessary.
- d) Hill, Dana -EBL, EWT, EDS
Mr. Hill appeared before the Board for an Application Hearing. He was not represented by counsel. All persons testifying were sworn in by court reporter. Application hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event a verbatim transcript is necessary.
- e) Jones, Maurice – EWT – Did not attend
- f) Law, Scott – EBL – Did not attend

g) Stogner, Christopher – EWT

Mr. Stogner appeared before the Board for an Application Hearing. With him for testimony was his supervisor, Robert Judy. He was not represented by counsel. All persons testifying were sworn in by court reporter. Application hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event a verbatim transcript is necessary.

MOTION: To enter Executive Session for legal advice, with staff remaining.
Fell/Tuck/approved.

MOTION: To exit Executive Session. No actions were taken during executive session.
Fell/Kinard/ approved.

MOTION: To grant reciprocity to Mr. Hill at the 'A' level for Biological Wastewater and Water Distribution, and to direct staff to review and process Mr. Hill's Water Treatment application as a 'D' level application.
Fell/Ward/approved.

MOTION: To approve Mr. Stogner's application, and for staff to be granted the authority to backdate Mr. Stogner's experience appropriately.
Tuck/Fell/approved.

Old Business

Credit for Laboratory Experience Towards Operator Licensure Experience – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose introduced Mr. John Young's proposal that laboratory operators at facilities be considered operators for licensing and experience purposes. Mr. Rose further stated that many other states already follow this standard.

MOTION: To approve laboratory operators as facility operators for the purposes of licensure and experience with the board.
Tuck/Fell/approved.

Strategic Planning – Johnnie Rose

The strategic plan discussion be deferred until the board meeting at the first of the year.

New Business

New Approved Testing Facility – Johnnie Rose

Aiken Technical College will now be offering PSI testing services for water and wastewater.

Out of State Water/Wastewater Programs and Certifications – Johnnie Rose

This item be deferred until information is received from a relevant party.

Qualifying College Credits for Experience Credit – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose presented materials for the board to review regarding computer science courses. Mr. Fell asked that the topic be placed on the agenda for full discussion at the next board meeting.

Water Professionals International Testing Updates – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose stated that WPI is preparing the updated exam and that it should be prepared for review by the fourth quarter. The Board discussed the exam review committee should be meeting more frequently, ideally before the next meeting in October. Mr. Thompson-King stated that the exam review committee has been postponing meeting in anticipation of the new exam being released.

MOTION: To convene the exam improvement committee to determine findings and collect information prior to the next board meeting.
Fell/Tuck/approved.

Exam Pass/Fail Report(s) – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose presented score reports from 2006 until the present day.

Exam Passing Score Reduction – Paul Calamita and SCWQA

Mr. Calamita experienced technical difficulties and the meeting progressed.

Exam Time Reduction – Jason Fell and Johnnie Rose

Mr. Fell stated that there is a financial burden put on operators by the four hour time limit. He suggested that a three and a four hour time option might be preferable.

Exam Passing Score Reduction – Paul Calamita and SCWQA

Mr. Calamita presented, on behalf of the South Carolina Water Quality Association, a request that the passing score for the exams administered by the board be lowered from 70% to 60% as an interim measure.

MOTION: To lower the passing rate of all licenses under the board currently at 70% to 60% with a sunset provision of December 31, 2026.
Van Ward/Fell.
Aye: Ward, Fell, Tuck, Thompson-King.
Nay: Kinard.
Approved.

4th Quarter Board Meeting Date Change – Johnnie Rose

MOTION: To move the 4th quarter board meeting to November 7, 2024.
Fell/Tuck/approved.

Discussion Topics

Public Comments

Mr. Jim Matthews stated that PSI’s study materials need to be more specific, that some of their questions are downright wrong, and that their references are inadequate.

Mr. Josh McDowell, a B level Biological Operator, stated that in spite of his experience and qualifications he consistently makes in the 60% range and does not believe the exam accurately reflects the capabilities of operators.

Mr. Rip Tafta of the exam review committee stated that he is available and happy to help with exam development.

Mr. Niel Clemmick of the City of Cayce stated that the 'D' level exam is simply unnecessary and should be removed, and further stated that the needs to know criteria for each level is both excessive and incomplete.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Adjournment

There being no further business:

MOTION: To adjourn.
Tuck/Fell/approved.

The meeting adjourned at 12:43 p.m.