MINUTES
South Carolina Environmental Certification Board
Board Meeting
July 23, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building
110 Centerview Drive, Midlands Conference Room
Columbia, South Carolina

Call to Order
Vice-Chair Phillip Thompson-King called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Statement of Public Notice
Vice-Chair Thompson-King stated that public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the S.C. Board of Environmental Certification 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.

Invocation
The invocation was given by Mr. Tuck.

Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adoption of Agenda
MOTION: Mr. Castleberry moved to adopt the agenda.
Mr. Swearingen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Introduction of Board Members and Others
Board members present included: Vice-Chair

Phillip Thompson-King, Vice-Chair, Biological Wastewater Representative
Ken Tuck, Water Treatment Representative
Van Ward, Physical/Chemical Wastewater Representative
Jason Fell, Water Distribution Representative
Josh Castleberry, Higher Education Representative
Jay Swearingen, Well Driller Representative

Staff members and others present included:

Johnnie Rose, Board Executive
Hardwick Stuart, Advice Counsel
Maurice Smith, Office of Investigations and Enforcement
Chris Elliott, Office of Disciplinary Counsel
Sherri Moorer, Administrative Coordinator
Katherine Boone, Court Reporter

Approval of Excused Absences

MOTION: Mr. Ward moved to excuse the absence of J. Kenneth Rentiers and Douglas Kinard.
Mr. Castleberry seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2026

MOTION: Mr. Fell moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026, meeting.
Mr. Swearingen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Board Vice-Chairman's Remarks – Phillip Thompson-King

Vice-Chair Thompson-King thanked Board Members, staff, and public members for their attendance.

Staff Reports

a. Board Executive's Report – Johnnie Rose

Mr. Rose provided general updates and financial information.

b. Office of Investigations and Enforcement (OIE) – Maurice Smith

Mr. Smith reported 14 complaints, with 1 active case, 7 closed, and 6 pending further investigation.

Investigative Review Conference (IRC) – Maurice Smith

Mr. Smith stated that the IRC report includes 2 cases for dismissal, 2 cases for formal complaint, and 1 case for formal complaint with citation.

MOTION: Mr. Castleberry moved to approve the IRC Report.
Mr. Ward seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

c. Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) Report – Chris Elliott

Mr. Elliott reported 3 open cases, with 1 pending a hearing.

Application Hearings

James Douglas (EBL) – Mr. Douglas appeared before the Board via WebEx for an application hearing. He was not represented by counsel. All persons testifying were sworn in by the court reporter. Application hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event that a verbatim transcript is necessary. Mr. Fell recused himself from the hearing.

MOTION: Mr. Tuck moved to enter Executive Session for legal advice.
Mr. Castleberry seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Tuck moved to exit Executive Session.
Mr. Swearingen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
No motions were made or no votes were taken during Executive Session.

MOTION: Mr. Castleberry moved to accept Mr. Douglas' education from Penn Foster based on the 2024-25 Report of the Accreditation of School Districts in South Carolina, Option 2: accreditation through an accrediting entity accepted by Higher Education (Cognia), contingent

upon verification by staff that Penn Foster was accredited at the time that Mr. Douglas received his diploma.
Mr. Tuck seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Eric Richardson (EWD) - Mr. Richardson appeared before the Board via WebEx for an application hearing. He was not represented by counsel. All persons testifying were sworn in by the court reporter. Application hearings are recorded by a certified court reporter in the event that a verbatim transcript is necessary.

MOTION: Mr. Swearingen moved to enter Executive Session for legal advice.
Mr. Fell seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Swearingen moved to exit Executive Session.
Mr. Castleberry seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
No motions were made and no votes were taken during Executive Session.

MOTION: Mr. Swearingen moved to deny the request based on S.C. Code §40-23-320(B)(3), which does not provide a grandfather clause for licensure.
Mr. Kinard seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

New Business
Review and Discussion for Next Steps of the Interagency Workforce Development Initiative
Mr. Rose asked to move this item to the next meeting.

Water Professionals International (WPI) LIC26 Conference Update.
Mr. Castleberry said the biggest takeaway from the conference was Artificial Intelligence (AI) for training, and the vision for test making and validation. Mr. Ward agreed that the AI images used in the exams and guides are better, and the hope is that it will help improve pass rates on the exam.

Discussion and Vote for Approval of Remote Proctored WPI Certification Exams Given by PSI.
Mr. Castleberry recused himself from this discussion.
Mr. Rose stated that PSI has a Live Remote Proctoring option for administering the certification exams. He showed the Board members a video from PSI explaining the remote proctoring examinations. This will be included on the October agenda for further discussion.

Interpretation and Application of: Regulation 51-3.F.2.e; 51-3.F.3.d.; 51-3.F.4.d; 51-3.F.5.d; 51-3.G.2.e.; 51-3.G.3.d; 51-3.G.4.d.; 51-3.G.5.d. -Regarding the Affidavit's Verifier
Mr. Rose asked for clarification on who can sign and verify work experience on the Experience Verification Forms. Many licensees have complained that former employers refused to sign the forms after they terminated employment. This discussion is pending more research on the issue and alternative ways to verify employment.

Interpretation and Application of Regulation 51-4.E – Regarding Continuing Education for Trainees.
MOTION: Mr. Castleberry moved to enter executive session for legal advice.
Mr. Tuck seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Fell moved to exit executive session.
Mr. Tuck seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
No motions were made and no votes were taken during Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Castleberry moved to table the agenda item until a future date.
Mr. Fell seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Public Comments

Mr. Jim Matthews presented several questions regarding examination pass rates, scoring, performance numbers, and Need to Know Criteria. Mr. Rose requested the questions be sent by email for inclusion as an agenda item at a future meeting.

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Ward moved to adjourn the meeting.
Mr. Castleberry seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:19 p.m.