

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission NC Department of Environmental Quality

WPCSOCC Meeting Summary – Feb 9, 2024

Archdale Building, Raleigh NC, 10 AM

Roster

MEMBERS Present

Marchell Adams-David (via Teams)
Steve Barry
Mark Brantley - Chair
Martie Groome
Chester Lowder
Jim H. Lynch
Bob Rubin

MEMBERS Absent:

Matthew Haynes
Arnold Allred
Jonathan Russell
Ken Stines

STAFF

Patrick Beggs, DWR
Ashley Coleman, DWR
Christine Ryan, NCDOJ
Jeff Talbott, DWR
William Toole, Deputy Secretary of State
Jenee Williamston (via Teams)

GUESTS

Cheri Proctor, NCRWA
Corey Bassinger, DEQ

Preliminary Matters

P1. Oath of Office – Deputy Secretary Bill Toole for WPCSOCC Chair Mark Brantley

P2. Call to Order – Mark Brantley – Chair

P3. Notice of NC State Government Ethics Act Requirements – None noted.

In accordance with the NC State Government Ethics act, it is the duty of every commissioner to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest. The Chairman for today's Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission meeting hereby asks:

“Does any commissioner have any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest with respect to any matter coming before this commission today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from participation in that matter.”

P4. Revisions or Additions to Agenda

Staff asked to add agenda item 2402011 – Discussion of Collections Need-to-Know. It will be discussed after 240207 (Subsurface NTK).

P5. Review and Approval of Minutes for November 3, 2023.

Commissioner Lynch noted he was not present in November and please remove his name from the roster.

Motion to approve November 3, 2023 Meeting Summary (Lynch)

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission

NC Department of Environmental Quality

Second. (Rubin)
Motion passed unopposed.

Action Items

Requests for Approval of Reciprocal NC Wastewater Certifications

	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Certification Sought</u>	<u>State of Origin</u>	<u>Exam Type</u>
240201	Candidate #1	CS-IV & WW/Bio IV	LA (I, II, III, <u>IV</u>)	State
240202	Candidate #2	WW/Bio IV	MA (I, II, III, <u>IV</u> , V, VI, VII)	ABC
240203	Candidate #3	WW/Bio III	NY (1, 2, <u>3A</u> , 4)	ABC
240204	Candidate #4	PC-II	TX (D, C, B, <u>A</u>)	State
240205	Candidate #5	PC-II	NV (<u>I</u> , II, III, IV)	ABC

240201 – Candidate #1

Motion to approve candidate sit for both exams. (Lynch)
Second (Rubin)
Motion passed unopposed.

Comments: Remind candidates who are approved to sit for exams that NC has regulatory information that need to be reviewed and understood.

240202 – Candidate #2

Motion to approve candidate for WW3 OIT certification. (Lowder)
Second (Barry)
Motion passed unopposed.

240203 – Candidate #3

Motion to approve candidate for WW3 certification. (Groome)
Second (Barry)
Motion passed unopposed.

240204 – Candidate #4

Motion to approve candidate sit for PC2 exam. (Rubin)
Second (Lowder)
Motion passed unopposed.

240205 – Candidate #5

Discussion: The candidate holds a PC2 certification through the Water Professional International (WPI) ABC registry.

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission

NC Department of Environmental Quality

Motion to approve PC2 certification in accordance with NC Legislation. (Rubin)

Second (Lynch)

Motion passed unopposed.

240206 – Certification School Training provider, Thomas Marino

Motion to approve Thomas Marino to teach Biological Wastewater 1 Certification School (Rubin)

Second (Adams-David)

Motion passed unopposed.

240207 – Subsurface Wastewater Operator Need-to-Know

Motion to approve the Subsurface Need-to-Know as presented today. (Lowder)

Second (Adams-David)

Motion passed unopposed.

240211 – Collections Systems Wastewater Operator Need-to-Know

Current Collections Systems NTK is from 2004 and needs updating. Commissioner Stines has worked with subject matter experts, and we now have a 2019 version. We need to do a final review and approval in 2024. We will use the Subsurface NTK review logistics as a guide.

We need two Commissioners to join Commissioner Stines on a Collections NTK committee. Staff will work with them and subject matter experts to produce a final draft for Commission approval.

Commissioners Rubin and Barry volunteered to be on the Collections Needs-to-Know committee with Commissioner Stines. Staff will contact the Commissioners to begin the process.

240208 – Remote Continuing Education Availability

Currently continuing education is approved through December 31, 2024. Providers need time to plan their curriculum so we need a decision preferably by the May 2024 Commission meeting. Does the WPCSOCC wish to allow the temporary approval to continue to offer virtual training beyond the December 2024 expiration date?

Discussion:

- What is the intent of continuing education? Is it to educate operators and increase their knowledge?
- The only way to know if it increases knowledge would be to have exams on continuing education. We don't think that is something we want to do.
- Discussion about how in person training is better but students can still just sit in a classroom and not be actively involved.
- Do we feel strongly enough about requiring in person continuing education?
- There are advantages of virtual education, especially in remote or rural areas.
- Being in a room with other operators is useful for idea sharing, even outside of the class topic.
- Is there a way to require some in person credits? That would be difficult.
- Can we research what other commissions are doing?

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission

NC Department of Environmental Quality

Motion: Table this discussion until May. (Lynch)

Second: (Barry)

Motion passed unopposed.

240209 – Change to exam date.

Staff asked to change the December 12, 2024 exam date to December 5, 2024, to help with staff planning, specifically due to renewal season.

Motion to change the exam from December 12th to December 5th. (Lowder)

Second (Adams-David)

Motion passed unopposed.

240210 – Wilbur E. Long Award

Background:

At the November 3 2023 meeting, it was decided to hold the one candidate received in 2024 until February 9, 2024 to consider adjusting the deadline and announcement for future awards.

Discussion:

Update the application to include all types of waste and animal operators if possible and to include a reference to the DEQ Regional office.

Set the annual nomination deadline for June 1.

Commission decides in August if an operator will be given the award.

Work with NC One Water and NC Rural Water Association to present the award live at their respective conferences (November and May.)

Motion to move the application deadline to June 1, include the current applicant in the June 1, 2024 deadline submission, and require communication with the DEQ Regional Offices. (Barry)

Second (Lowder)

Motion passed unopposed.

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission

NC Department of Environmental Quality

Information Items

2402A - December 2023 Exam Pass Rates

	TOOK	PASS	FAIL	%	HISTORICAL
AWA	20	19	1	95	79
AWB	5	5	0	100	90
CS-I	92	75	17	82	81
CS-II	82	59	23	72	75
CS-III	48	38	10	79	69
CS-IV	22	15	7	68	76
LA	16	11	5	69	69
SI	11	10	1	91	76
SS	7	7	0	100	82
WW-I	158	107	51	68	58
WW-II	87	45	42	52	48
WW-III	33	12	21	36	43
WW-IV	17	15	2	88	60
PC-I	31	9	22	29	62
PC-II	6	3	3	50	65

Exam pass rates above or equal to the historical average:

AWA / AWB / CS1 / CS3 / LA / SI / SS / WW1 / WW2 / WW4

Exam pass rates below historical average:

CS2 / CS4 / WW3 / PC1 / PC2

Staff also included a report of biological wastewater 1-4 classes by school provider by grade for the December 2023 exams. Staff is working to improve the reporting of: Passing Rates of All Schools by Providers Over Time.

Discussion:

- The December 2023 and the Historical pass rates for Biological Wastewater are not good.
- These exams are our gatekeepers to operator certification so we don't want 100% pass rates.

Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission

NC Department of Environmental Quality

2402B - Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Facility committee update

Background: The Cherokee Wastewater Treatment Plant, run by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) contacted the Operator Certification Program about operators trying to apply for the Collections 2 exam. Requirements for the CS-2 exam include 6 months of experience at a CS-1 classified facility. This facility is not classified by NC. It is a federally classified facility and NC does not have jurisdiction over it. The collection system falls under the NPDES permit for the wastewater treatment plant (WW-4). NC classifies treatment plants and collection systems separately. Staff is unable, by rule, to approve these exam applications. This affects several operators. A committee of Commission Council Christine Ryan, Commissioner Groom, Commissioner Rubin and Jeff Talbott has will look into these issues.

Update:

The Committee is researching other states and contacting the EPA to learn how others work through this complication.

It is possible the EBCI operators can apply for NC reciprocity certification through inclusion on the Water Professional International (WPI) ABC registry.

The Committee will meet and report back at the next Commission meeting.

Concluding remarks

Welcome to Commissioner and Chair Mark Brantley.

Announcement of next scheduled meeting

The next meeting of the Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission is scheduled for **Friday, May 10, 2024 at 10:00AM** in the Archdale Building Ground Floor Hearing, Raleigh NC.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Barry).

Second (Lowder)

Motion passed unopposed.