

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 7TH, 2006

**Members in attendance: Julia Forgue, Fred Kurdziel, Bill Patenaude,
Jon Schock**

**Others in attendance: Scott Duerr and David Gaipo, Aquarion
Operating Services**

Greg Schultz and , RIDEM-Legal

Mr. Patenaude opened the meeting with the matter of the Town of Westerly, under the agenda item “Operator Issues.” Mr. Patenaude briefed the Board of the previous meeting’s discussion regarding communications with Aquarion Operator Services, the contract operator for the Westerly WWTF. Said communications resulted in concerns over staffing at the Westerly WWTF, and how DEM-approved positions correspond with Board regulations and statutes. Mr. Patenaude provided Board members with copies of the response letter, received on June 5. (The letter was from Aquarion Operating Services and not the town, which prompted the Board to contact Westerly officials to supply a written endorsement of the information contained in the Aquarion response.) The letter

explained the hierarchical and organizational systems in place both within the operations of the wastewater facility and as part of the contractual agreement between Aquarion Operating Services and the Town of Westerly. Aquarion employee and Westerly operator Mr. Gaipo added to the content of the letter that in regards to the Aquarion contract, he provides financial management, and as such is in charge of the project as it relates to the internal structure of Aquarion. In regards to the operations of the facility, Mr. Duerr is the in-charge superintendent, as the licensed operator, with Mr. Gaipo taking the role of Assistant Superintendent, working under Mr. Duerr. Mr. Patenaude stated the Board's concern that this dual roll of project supervisor and sub-superintendent operator could provide an opportunity for a deviation from the letter and intent of the Board's regulations and statutes. Mr. Gaipo stated that he was under the impression that the town and Aquarion were in fact in compliance with all state regulations, and asked for clarification if they were not. Mr. Schock stated that he was uncomfortable with an assistant superintendent being the contract firm's supervisor, and asked if the facility needed an assistant superintendent. Mr. Patenaude referred to Westerly's DEM-approved organizational chart, noting no assistant superintendent, due to a DEM policy which allows smaller facilities to operate without a Grade 3 assistant if they have other access to such a licensed operator in case of the absence of the superintendent. In Westerly's case, both the town and Aquarion have Grade 3 operators at their disposal. Ms. Forgue noted that it is common for contract operators to provide a "general manager" to

oversee the contractual obligations as it relates to the operations of a wastewater facility. Mr. Patenaude agreed, but reiterated the concern of one individual acting in a capacity as both a supervisor and a subordinate of a wastewater superintendent, stating that this was “new ground,” and suggested he would have to review if other contract firms operate in such a capacity. With regards to Westerly, Mr. Gaipo provided more detail about his duties, again stating that his position’s capacity was in service to the town as a liaison with Aquarion, within Aquarion as the project supervisor, and that his position “helps out as needed” at the facility; this is in addition to similar duties at other facilities in Massachusetts. Mr. Shock noted the concern of how such duties reflect the Board’s understanding of staff operational duties, especially as it relates to definitions in the Board’s regulations, and as stated in formal submitted applications.

Mr. Shock motioned to continue the matter to the next meeting, pending an additional review of the matter and a formal letter from the Town that the Aquarion Operating Services submission was in fact the Town’s understanding with regards to the Board’s written concerns to it. Ms. Fogue seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and as such the motion passed.

The next item discussed was the results of the May 2006 operator exams; Mr. Patenaude noted a higher success rate than in previous exams, especially for the Grade 3 and 4, presumably related to a

pre-exam study course for higher grade examinees.

The next item discussed was the minutes of the May meeting.

Mr. Shock motioned to approve the May open minutes with grammatical amendments. Mr. Patenaude seconded the motion. Messres. Kurdziel, Patenaude and Schock voted in favor of the motion; Ms. Forgue abstained, as she was not present at the meeting. As such, the motion passed.

Mr. Shock motioned to approve the May closed minutes. Mr. Kurdziel seconded the motion. Messres. Kurdziel, Patenaude and Schock voted in favor of the motion; Ms. Forgue abstained, as she was not present at the meeting. As such, the motion passed.

The next item discussed was Mandatory Retraining for Renewal, which Mr. Patenaude briefed the Board that the bill was currently before a Senate committee and had not yet been moved to the full Senate.

The next item of business was New Business. Mr. Patenaude noted that he had attended the June 5th Operator's Challenge, as part of the NEWEA Spring Meeting in Mystic, CT. He complemented the Rhode Island team—made up of West Warwick Operators Brian Lavalley, Don Shurtleff, Robert Sheridan, and Cranston's Scott Goodinson. Dave Perrotta from East Greenwich was the team coach. The team

did exceptional compared to other New England teams, but with New York teams added to this years competition, their overall standing was not as high as it would have been in a New England-only competition. Still, Mr. Patenaude said the operators represented Rhode Island very well, and as Chair he would be sending letters of commendation to the team and its supporters.

With no other new business,

Mr. Shock motioned to close the meeting. Mr. Patenaude seconded the motion. With all members voting in favor, the motion passed.