



State of Idaho  
Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses  
Idaho Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater  
Professionals

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**Minutes of 11/20/2024**

<b>Board Members Present:</b>	Bryson Ellsworth, Vice-Chair Jerri Henry Laurelei McVey Kyle Marine Niki Summers	<b>Division Staff:</b>	Jessica Spoja, Executive Officer Kolby Reddish, Agency Lead Counsel Jesama Rosensweig, Licensing Sup. Erin Einarsson, Board Support Spc. Amanda Lee, Board Support Spc.
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**Board Members Absent:** Stacy Stuart, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM MT by Vice-Chairman Bryson Ellsworth.

**APPROVAL OF THE 09/25/2024 MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the 09/25/2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**DIVISION BUSINESS**

**Finance Report:** Executive Officer (EO) Jessica Spoja presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, Quarter One, Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals (WWP) Financial Report. Licensing fees remain the main source of revenue and personnel is the primary expense. EO Spoja added that she reviews staff coding allocated to the Board to ensure personnel time is being entered correctly. Board Member Laurelei McVey asked if the Board could receive a breakdown of how that time is spent on specific tasks. Vice-Chairman Ellsworth agreed and asked for a breakdown on how staff is spending time on new licenses, endorsements, renewals and phone calls and suggested identifying the most time-consuming tasks as compared to the revenue received. EO Spoja will bring those breakdowns to the next meeting and will include information comparing how time was allocated pre-OASIS and post-OASIS. Since the launch of OASIS, the time spent on WWP licensing has been reduced and EO Spoja will review those numbers and projections with the Board at the next meeting.

Tondee Clark, Training Coordinator for the Idaho Rural Water Association, commented that she is receiving calls from licensees who are having trouble reaching DOPL staff for assistance. EO Spoja appreciated the information and noted that DOPL is continuing to monitor response times and working to resolve issues as quickly as possible. To ensure a quicker response time, EO Spoja emphasized that questions should be emailed to the [wwp@dopl.idaho.gov](mailto:wwp@dopl.idaho.gov) email and not sent to a DOPL staff member's individual email. The WWP email is listed at the top of the WWP page on the DOPL website at [dopl.idaho.gov/wwp](http://dopl.idaho.gov/wwp). EO Spoja checked the queue within OASIS and noted there were no outstanding tasks for the WWP Licensing team at that time.

Board Member McVey prepared estimates of the WWP financial projections FY 2024 - 2029 and reviewed those findings with the Board. FY 2025 – 2027 included the DOPL projected expenses and Board Member McVey estimated a 3% projected increase for FY 2028 – 2029. The cash balance reserve goal of 130% of yearly operating costs was provided by DOPL. Board Member McVey included a table showing the 2013 and 2024 fees for Application, Endorsement, Original License, Annual Renewal and Reinstatement, and then projected the results of increasing those fees by 25%, 50% and 100%. To eliminate debt, cover ongoing expenses and begin building the cash balance reserve, increasing fees by 100% would bring the Board closest to that goal by FY 2029. Board Member McVey suggested the Board first review expenses to identify inefficiencies and reduce personnel costs before considering fee increases.

EO Spoja provided the Board with suggestions on how to reduce personnel costs which included reducing the number of Board meetings per year and reviewing the application requirements to identify ways to simplify the approval process. Board Member McVey appreciated the feedback adding that she would like the Board to discuss the impact of responsible charge and system classifications requirements. Vice-Chairman Ellsworth recalled that before zero-based regulation (ZBR), the Board met quarterly and that he had anticipated returning to quarterly meetings once ZBR was completed. EO Spoja suggested the Board consider scheduling virtual meetings to reduce travel costs. Board Member Niki Summers asked if special meetings could be scheduled as needed for the Board to discuss applications and EO Spoja responded that it is preferred that scheduled meetings have a minimum of three to four topics on the agenda, but that she would discuss that option with the Administrator.

Board Member McVey asked if the honorarium payment can be waived and EO Spoja replied that board members can elect to waive their honorarium by contacting DOPL Board Support. Board Member McVey asked if credit card fees can be charged to the credit card user instead of being absorbed by the Board. EO Spoja noted that the decision for all boards to cover credit card fees was made by DOPL administration, but that she would ask if it could be temporarily changed for boards like WWP who have a negative cash balance.

Reviewing ways to generate additional revenue, Board Member McVey reviewed fees in Idaho as compared to neighboring states, noting that Idaho is below the regional average for annual renewal, original license (including application and exam), reciprocity/endorsement and backflow license fees. Board Member Kyle Marine asked if DOPL has noticed an increase or decrease in number of applicants entering the profession. EO Spoja reviewed licensing data for FY 2021 – 2024, and replied that the number of licenses, including active and inactive, has steadily increased. In FY 2021 the license total was 3,735, FY 2022 was 3,613, FY 2023 was 3,704 and FY 2024 was 4,025.

Board Member Jerri Henry asked which license types take the most time to review and Board Member McVey replied that for her, reciprocity and then Class Levels III and IV are the most time consuming, specifically due to the verification of responsible charge. EO Spoja shared that the continuing education (CE) credit update to OASIS is live and that applicants are no longer required to enter their CE credits when renewing. Only those selected for an audit will be required to provide that information. Therefore, renewals are now automatically processed through OASIS. DOPL staff are only reviewing CE credits for reinstatement applications. Vice-Chairman Ellsworth reiterated that with that update, it will be beneficial for the Board to see the breakdown of where DOPL staff is spending their time and that he anticipates there will be a decrease in personnel costs.

**OASIS Update:** The OASIS development team has updated the public search to include the license class and is working on adding the license class to the pocket cards. EO Spoja will notify the Board as soon as that issue has been resolved and is live. Once that change has been made it will be populated to all licenses including those issued prior to the update. Board Member McVey requested that all licensees be notified once that update goes live and asked if that information will be included on the certificates as well. EO Spoja replied that the certificates are entered manually and that DOPL staff can make those changes once the update is live. Additional fixes to the OASIS system will include changing the “work verification” section to list both “on-site hours” and “responsible charge hours” and changing “employer” to “system facility”. EO Spoja will meet with the OASIS team to determine a solution tracking the hours entered for drinking water and wastewater.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

**Negotiated Rulemaking:** Agency Lead Counsel (ALC) Kolby Reddish provided the Board with an overview of the negotiated rulemaking process. Board Member McVey requested that the Board be provided with a schedule that includes the deadlines. EO Spoja will forward the Division of Fiscal Management’s 2025 schedule to the Board. Board Member Marine asked if the Board would like to discuss issues they encountered during the last rulemaking process and how they would like to proceed for the next session. Board Member McVey requested that the most recent draft always be available online for the public to review and that the Board track and formally address every comment received. EO Spoja confirmed that stakeholder involvement in the rulemaking process is essential and reviewed the various steps taken to ensure the public is invited to participate. This includes posting the meetings online, emailing the schedule to licensees and related associations, sending reminders during 21-day comment periods and documenting all comments received for the Board’s review. Vice Chairman Ellsworth asked how the Board should communicate their questions or comments on the rules outside of public meetings. EO Spoja requested that Board members email herself and Board Support Specialist Erin Einarsson directly. DOPL staff can then share items with the Board either on the SharePoint site or through a blind email. ALC Reddish reviewed the Idaho Open Meetings Law with the Board.

The Board discussed topics they would like to address during negotiated rulemaking, including classification experience requirements, skipping levels, apprenticeship programs, responsible charge, CE credits and fees. Ms. Clark requested that a previous rule, which granted the carryover of six hours of training into the next year, be reinstated. Board Member Marine submitted a letter outlining topics he would like the Board to discuss during negotiated rulemaking, including education credits for plumbing apprenticeships, electrical apprenticeships and journeyman licenses as well as reviewing the education credit calculations for college courses versus CE. Board Member Summers reiterated that notifying license holders about the negotiated rulemaking schedule, public hearings and proposed rule changes is imperative.

**OASIS Application Review:** Corrections to the application have been submitted to the OASIS development team but were not available for review by the meeting date. This topic will be discussed at a future meeting once those corrections have been populated. Board Member McVey noted that licensing staff has added license type and previous license dates to recent applications. This has made it much easier to calculate hours and responsible charge and she requested that staff continue including this information.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – APPLICATION(S) & DISCIPLINE**

**Motion to Enter Executive Session:** A motion was made and seconded that the Board enter executive session under Idaho Code § 74-206(1)(d) to consider records that are exempt from disclosure under the Idaho Public Records Law, Idaho Code § 74-106(9). The purpose of the executive session is to consider documents relating to the fitness of an applicant to be granted a license or registration. Roll call: Vice-Chairman Ellsworth–aye, Board Member Henry–aye, Board Member McVey–aye, Board Member Summers–aye, and Board Member Marine–aye. The motion carried unanimously.

**Motion to Leave Executive Session:** A motion was made and seconded to leave executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION(S) RESULTING FROM THE EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion(s) re: Application(s):** The Board Members were consulted as subject matter experts.

**Motion(s) re: Discipline(s):** There were no discipline cases.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:56 AM.