

Minutes – Thursday, November 8, 2007

State Well Drillers and Pump Installers Examining and Advisory Board

Board Members Present: Norman Primost, Anthony Tirro, Joseph Pepe, Sr., Art Becker, Pete Demicco, Karl Muessig, Dick Dalton, Fred Sickels

Others Present: Holly Papp (DEP), Steve Reya (DEP), Pat Bono (DEP), Melinda Strahle (DEP), Tracy Omrod (DEP), Vince Monaco (DEP), Anthony Stegner, Gary Poppe

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Norman Primost at 9:40 AM with a quorum present.
2. **Review of Minutes from September 13, 2007 meeting** – Change Fred Sickels from “others present” to “Board Members present”. A motion to accept the minutes with the change was made by Tony Tirro and was seconded by Art Becker. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Review of Executive Minutes from September 13, 2007 meeting – A motion to accept the minutes with the same change as the regular minutes was made by Dick Dalton, seconded by Art Becker, and unanimously approved.

3. **Testing and Licensing Issues**
Melinda Strahle explained that there is an applicant who is unable to obtain a copy of his high school diploma, however submitted documentation showing that he had secondary education past high school which would have required a high school diploma. The board agreed that his alternate forms of proving graduation from high school were acceptable; no vote is needed, application will be accepted.

Certification of Pump Installer Exam Applicants – This testing cycle, 20 pump installer applicants were accepted and 3 were rejected. Fred Sickels asked why there were three rejected, Steve Reya explained that it was mostly due to lack of experience, and/or problems with the application such as an incorrect signature page. Joe Pepe asked how pump installer applicants' listed experience is verified. Steve Reya stated that the current regulations only

require that two references certify the applicants' experience and that their signature pages are notarized. A motion to accept the list as prepared was made by Pete Demicco and was second by Karl Muessig and the motion carried.

Certification of Soil Borer Exam Applicants – This testing cycle, 19 soil borer applicants were accepted, 1 was rejected, and one applicant is pending. Pending applicant Anthony Stegner is present at the meeting to request a variance of an application requirement. A prior application of his was rejected in 2005 because he had not been on the apprentice list for long enough. He has drilled Category 5 wells deeper than 50 ft (requirement), however, because he works on federal land under federal programs (EPA), none of his greater than 50-ft wells have been permitted by the Department. He is asking the Board to approve the referenced work without a permit/record so that he may sit for the exam. A discussion of administrative issues such as this case and the disagreement about the need to permit federal projects ensued. A motion to approve Anthony Stegner's application was made by Dick Dalton and was seconded by Art Becker; the motion carried. A motion to accept the rest of the approved test applicants was made by Karl Muessig and was seconded by Tony Tirro; the motion carried.

Certification of Monitoring Well Exam Applicants – This testing cycle, 23 monitoring well driller applicants were accepted, none were rejected, and one is pending. Anthony Alexander's application status changes from "pending" to "approved" due to the agreement to accept alternate certification for high school graduation. A motion to accept the list as amended was made by Art Becker and was seconded by Pete Demicco; the motion carried.

Certification of Scores from October Master Driller Exams – All of the examinees either failed the exam or were "no shows". Vince Monaco mentioned that the Department is looking into changing the regulations so that smaller public supply wells may not require a Master Driller's license (based on the complexity of the well, not the use). A motion to accept the list as prepared was made by Dick Dalton, seconded by Pete Demicco, and approved unanimously.

Certification of Scores from October Journeyman Exams – Joe Pepe asked how the Department allows testers to come in and review their exam results. Holly Papp explained that it is in the regulations that they have 30 days to review the exam from the date of their score letter. The Board discussed the possibility of lowering passing scores. Vince Monaco stated that the requirement to complete a course prior to taking the exam might be added when the Continuing Education program is started. Norm Primost noted that an assessment of the level of competency in the drilling world might be needed when deciding whether or not to lower the standards. Joe Pepe suggested that the minimum amount of experience required to take the pump

installers test might need to be raised. A motion to accept the list as prepared was made by Karl Muessig, seconded by Dick Dalton, and passed unanimously.

Certification of Scores from October Journeyman B Exams – Norm Primost asked how many of the testers had taken the exam before, Melinda Strahle noted that 4 of the 7 had taken the exam on previous dates. Gary Poppe thinks it comes down to a lack of studying. Fred Sickels believes a lot of it is attitude. Art Becker suggested that the Board take a look at the technical section of the exams. A comment was made attesting to the fact that two of the drillers who failed the test are good drillers. Fred Sickels thinks that maybe we need to take other areas into consideration for good drillers who aren't "book people". Norm Primost added that the Board needs to review the Journeyman, Journeyman B, and Monitoring Well exams all at the same time (side by side). The Board will set aside a time to review those three exams and the suggested study material as well. Dick Dalton noted that a lot of the questions have ambiguous answers. Art Becker, Tony Tirro, and Dick Dalton volunteered to look at the exams. A motion to accept the list as prepared was made by Karl Muessig, seconded by Dick Dalton, and the motion carried.

4. **Proposed 2008 Board Meeting Dates** – January 10, March 18, May 22, July 10, September 18, and November 18 were accepted as the 2008 State Well Drillers and Pump Installers Examining and Advisory Board Meeting dates. The Department will post the meeting dates on the NJDEP website and send out public notifications. Art Becker suggested adding another tab or link on the website to make it easier to find the dates of tests and Board meetings.

5. **Technical Issues**

Update on grout demo – Steve Reya said that there is currently no new update. The drilling company's job is on hold; a new date will be scheduled.

Discussion of GPS Units – Norm Primost has researched handheld GPS units with Art Becker and George Striker. They were looking to find some that will be acceptable for use in order to meet the requirements set forth in the regulations that go into effect on July 1, 2008. Norm Primost reviewed with the Board the three units that he believes would be best. Pat Bono suggested taking the three units in the field with someone from the Department (Lou Jacoby) and someone from NJGS in order to test each unit. The Board asked how the Department is planning to enforce the new standards. Pat Bono explained that they will use a variety of methods; some submittals will be blatantly wrong, and the Department will eventually be taking a look at the data to see how accurate it is. E-Permitting will help. The Board also asked if there will be penalties for "willful non-compliance". Fred Sickels said we will need to talk to Enforcement and that it is important for the drilling community to understand that many groups (within and outside of the Department) will use this information and it needs to be accurate. Norm

Primost suggests encouraging drillers to keep data so that it can be verified if it is ever questioned. The Department agreed to give the NJGWA a list of all NJ licensed drillers so that the association can include non-members when they send-out information concerning suggested GPS units. Tony Tirro asked if the submittal of coordinates will be required for soil borings? The Department stated that they are still considering that point.

6. **Update on Board Vacancy Applicants/Process** – Pat Bono explained that there were 8 applicants for the vacancy of a driller of any class (Dan Bowen, Joseph Yost, Gary Poppe, Jeffrey Marchesi, Charlton McGinnis Jr, Joseph Neri, Ben Thies, and Michael Gunther). The Department has reviewed any current or past enforcement actions against applicants and has taken into account what knowledge/experience the Board had recommended looking for in an applicant. The Department has recommended 2 of the applicants to the Commissioner; the Commissioner will appoint one of them to the Board. After the appointment has been made, thank you letters will go out to the 7 other applicants with encouragement to apply again the next time there is an opening. Norm Primost announced that he is retiring from the board in July 2008. He will be available if anything is needed. Pete Demicco announced that he has accepted a new job in Delaware and will most likely be moving there and resigning from the Board in July 2008 as well. This will make two openings in the Board that will need to be filled. Fred Sickels noted that he appreciates the quality and professionalism that the board displays.

7. **Program Updates**

New SOP for Deviations from Set-back Minimums – Pat Bono discussed the new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for obtaining pre-approvals for domestic (new or replacement) wells that will not meet the minimum setback distance requirements from potential sources of contamination. The Department now requires an approval from the local administrative authority (health department) before it will approve a well permit for a well that will not meet the minimum setback distances. The well owner or driller are required to provide the local administrative authority with a photocopy of the well permit application which accurately depicts site features and shows the reasons the minimum set-back distances cannot be met. The local administrative authority then verifies the information and faxes the approved permit copy to the Department. The procedure was recently instated and is working.

E-permitting – The Department has been finalizing the design with the consultant, however, a final draft has not yet been realized. No drastic changes have been made. However, more work needs to be done to make the NJEMS interface function properly. Licensed drillers will enter their “portal account” by entering with their license number instead of their registration number; entry will be password protected. This web-based program will handle well permitting, cancellations, records, modifications, and

abandonments. There will be a way to upload drawings/maps and additional documents.

8. **Other Issues**

Review of revised exam questions by Board members – A motion to enter Executive Session was made by Art Becker and was seconded by Tony Tirro; Open Session was suspended and Executive Session was entered at 2:50 PM. The Board returned to Open Session at 3:40 PM with a motion made by Art Becker and seconded by Pete Demicco.

9. **Adjournment**

At 3:45 PM a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tony Tirro, and was seconded by Pete Demicco. The meeting was adjourned by Norm Primost.