

**Advisory Council
for
Certification of Public Water System Operators
September 5, 2019 Meeting
Office of Drinking Water Conference Room
Draft Minutes**

Members in attendance: Sharon Duca, City of Dover; Rick Duncan, Delaware Rural Water Association; Jay Guyer, Municipal Services Commission (via tele-conference); Keith Mensch, Office of Drinking Water; Clarence Quillen, Tidewater Utilities.

Others in Attendance: Ed Hallock; Ashley Kunder, Office of Drinking Water; Rob Penman, III, SUEZ Water Delaware; Dustan Russum, Town of Frederica.

The meeting was brought to order by Rick Duncan at 9:42 a.m. Motion for approval of the minutes with changes was made by Sharon Duca, seconded by Clarence Quillen; all approved and the motion was carried.

- **New License Applications Reviewed – 25**
- **Draft Regulations Review** – Keith Mensch asked the Council if they had any last issues to discuss about revising the regulations before they were submitted for the regulatory review process and indicated that he had a couple issues to discuss. Rick Duncan raised the issue of a lack of definition for process-related and non-process-related courses. The Council discussed and agreed that definitions for process-related and non-process-related courses were needed for the revised regulations. Keith Mensch asked the Council to provide input they may have on these definitions via email to him and he would present proposed definitions in the next Council meeting.

Keith Mensch stated the definition of continuing education units (CEUs) and educational contact hours (ECHs) in the existing regulations is inconsistent with how it has previously been applied, i.e., five ECHs credited for general/exhibit hall attendance to a conference, and that the Council should consider changing these definitions if they want general conference attendance to be credited. Clarence Quillen mentioned that Maryland permits this for selected conferences and that a vendor 'sign-off' is required, resulting in one credit hour for general attendance. Keith Mensch stated that the Wastewater Certification Program at the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) does not credit general attendance to the Delaware Rural Water Association (DRWA) annual conference, but does credit general attendance to the American Water Works Association (AWWA) TriCon conference with one credit hour. Keith Mensch also stated that DNREC's Wastewater Certification Program also credits

**Advisory Council Meeting
September 5, 2019 Minutes
Page 2 of 4**

one hour for attendance to their Advisory Council meetings and that this Council could also consider that, which might increase operator attendance to these meetings.

Member of the public, Ed Hallock, stated that operators have been receiving these credits for years and that it is not fair to eliminate them without advanced notice. Keith Mensch stated that he spoke with the Deputy Attorney General regarding this and that it would be against the regulations to issue credit hours for events beyond the definitions provided in the regulations. Rick Duncan stated that he has observed operators learning from vendors. Keith Mensch agreed, but stated that he would not do anything that violates the regulations, recommending that the Council move forward with redefining ECHs/CEUs and in a manner that is fair for all conference providers. Rick Duncan recommended exploring the definitions to allow for crediting hours to operators for general/exhibit hall attendance. Member of the public Rob Penman, III stated that Maryland approves attendance to AWWA's TriCon conference, by crediting one hour with proof of visiting 10 exhibit hall vendors. Rick Duncan stated that DRWA's annual conference has had 'sign-off' sheets for the past two years for operators to show proof of visiting vendors in the exhibit hall.

Keith Mensch stated that he also has concerns about the number of hours previously credited for exhibit hall attendance to conferences, being five hours per day. Keith stated that it essentially diverted hours away from other training providers, such as Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC). Rick Duncan stated that they were all non-process-related hours and that they were trying to get more process-related training courses at the DRWA Conference to provide more process-related hours. Keith Mensch stated that when everyone on the Council completed their application to be appointed, they answered a question that asked if the candidate had a financial stake in any decisions the Council could make and that he thinks that Rick does here due to the large number of hours operators get for general attendance to the DRWA annual conference. Rick Duncan stated that he disagrees with that.

Member of the public, Ed Hallock, indicated that approval of hours for general attendance to the DRWA annual conference was approved by the Advisory Council at a previous time and explained that, initially, the requirement was only 10 hours every two years. He continued to explain that when the required hours were doubled to 20, it offered other training providers such as DTCC to regain their student base. Keith Mensch stated that this is an Advisory Council and that the DHSS Secretary can make decisions based on that advice. Keith reiterated the need to revise these definitions, indicating he will research it and asked for Council input. He stated that these definitions need to be fair to operators, training providers, and all parties involved.

- **Course Approvals**

- Illinois Prairie Research Institute – *Groundwater and Well Care for Public Water Systems* was reviewed for 2.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training.
- Cadmus Group – The in-person training and webinar entitled “*Risk Assessment & Emergency Response Plan Training*” was reviewed for 7.0 ECHs and will be held on 11 different dates starting on September 11, 2019 and ending on November 15, 2019. Anyone interested in registering should contact the Cadmus Group. All council members approved this as non-process-related training.
- Delaware Rural Water Association – Six courses were submitted for review. *Basic Understanding of Fluoride Used in a Drinking Water System* was reviewed for 3.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training. *What is a SCADA System, And Making It Work For You In Your Treatment Process* was reviewed for 6.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training. *Process Control Applications Used in Water & Wastewater Treatment Facilities* was reviewed for 2.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training. *21st Century Principles of Water/Wastewater Hypochlorite Disinfection and De-chlorination* was reviewed for 7.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training. *Flood Resilience: Training for Water and Wastewater Utilities* was reviewed for 6.5 ECHs. All council members approved this as non-process-related training.
- **DE Rural Water Course Approvals from June 2019 Mtg** – *Smith & Loveless Pump School* was resubmitted and reviewed for 6.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training. *Service Line Brass, Pipe Repair & Drilling and Tapping Pipe Training* was resubmitted and reviewed for 6.0 ECHs. All council members approved this as process-related training.
- **Bill Zimmerman’s Resignation from the Council** – Keith Mensch stated that Bill Zimmerman was the only Council member that hadn’t submitted an application to be reappointed and read Bill’s resignation email. The Council accepted Bill’s resignation.
- **Council Member Terms** – Keith Mensch stated that Division of Public Health leadership is still working on Council appointments and reappointments and that he is not directly involved. He has been told to expect a definitive plan on this for the next Advisory Council meeting in December.

**Advisory Council Meeting
September 5, 2019 Minutes
Page 4 of 4**

- **Other Business & Public Concerns** – Keith Mensch indicated the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has asked about internal and external reviews of Delaware’s Operator Certification Program. He suggested the Council meetings themselves contributed towards internal reviews, but was not aware of external reviews and that the EPA stated the external reviews could not be done by the primacy agency for the Safe Drinking Water Act in Delaware, which is DHSS. Member of the public, Ed Hallock, stated that he recalls external reviews were done every five years and a review was previously done by Glenn Davis and Dave Scheppens of DNREC’s Wastewater Advisory Council, which was accepted by EPA.

Rick Duncan mentioned that the annual DRWA Expo was coming up on October 4, 2019. Registration was required by September 13, 2019 in order to attend. Rick stated that a variety of vendors will attend and it will be good for training and networking.

Rick Duncan also mentioned that DRWA’s Water Apprenticeship program has now been approved by the US Department of Agriculture and the Delaware Department of Labor. The first class will start on October 16, 2019. The program is for new drinking water operator employees and is based on an agreement signed with the Southern California Office of Water to use their training materials. Rick stated the classes are one day per week for a total of 144 hours of classroom time. Rick stated that seven candidates have currently applied for the apprenticeship program. Rick stated that he would like to try to incorporate endorsement classes into the program also. Jay Guyer asked if the information for the program is on DRWA’s website. Rick stated that it should be and if it isn’t yet, it will be soon.

Rick Duncan requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Clarence Quillen motioned to adjourn; Sharon Duca seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried and the Advisory Council meeting was adjourned by Rick Duncan at 10:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled for December 5, 2019 at Office of Drinking Water Conference Room, Edgehill Shopping Center.

Sincerely,

Keith Mensch, REHS/RS
DHSS Secretary Designee
Advisory Council for Certification of Public Water System Operators

KM/tlp