

# Washington State Geologist Licensing Board meeting audio transcript

June 13, 2024

Carla Brock (00:00:02):

All right. It is 10:01 AM, and I'm calling the regular board meeting of the Geologist Licensing Board to order. The board will provide an opportunity for public comment during the meeting. As a courtesy, we encourage participants to mute their mics, or your phone if you called in, when you're not speaking to reduce the background noise. Remember to unmute your mic or your phone when you are speaking. Also, if you're in the room, please remember to silence your cell phones and any electronic devices until the meeting's over. During the meeting, for board members, to help us capture the information correctly, please state your name when making comments. All right, and then, Sydney, can you call the roll call?

Sydney Muhle (00:00:50):

Yes. Chair Brock?

Carla Brock (00:00:56):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:00:57):

Vice Chair Gillum?

Carrie Gillum (00:00:59):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:00):

Board member Struthers?

James Struthers (00:01:02):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:09):

Board member Hanell?

Casey Hanell (00:01:09):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:09):

Board member Dudley?

Noah Dudley (00:01:10):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:11):

And Board member Halbert?

Speaker 1 (00:01:18):

We can see you, Bill, but we can't hear you.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:20):

You're muted.

William Halbert (00:01:22):

Present.

Sydney Muhle (00:01:23):

All right. Thank you.

Carla Brock (00:01:29):

All right. The next agenda item is the approval of today's agenda. Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (00:01:35):

We do have a couple of requested changes, if we could. Items 7.3 and 7.5 are related, so if we can discuss those together. And then we've also had a request from staff to move item 7.2, the budget discussion up to right after our awards and recognition so that they are free to go on to a scheduling conflict. They were able to make room for us. So if the board is okay with that.

Carla Brock (00:02:03):

Great. Does anybody have any discussion about modifications to the meeting agenda for today? Okay, if not, can I have a motion to approve the agenda?

Casey Hanell (00:02:15):

I move to approve the agenda as amended.

Carla Brock (00:02:22):

I have a second. All right, any further discussion? All right, the agenda is approved.

Sydney Muhle (00:02:32):

Oh, if we can have a vote.

Carla Brock (00:02:33):

Oh, that's right. I forgot about the vote. All in favor of approving the amended agenda, say aye.

Several speakers (00:02:39):

Aye.

Carla Brock (00:02:43):

Any opposed? All right. The agenda is approved as amended. All right. The next agenda item is to approve the minutes from the March 7th, 2024 special meeting of the Geologist Licensing Board. Those minutes were provided with our packet ahead of time. Is there any discussion about the meeting minutes from the March meeting? Any revisions? Any edits? Anything? If not, I need a motion for approval.

Casey Hanell (00:03:32):

Move to approve the board minutes.

Carla Brock (00:03:36):

I have a second.

Several speakers (00:03:36):

Second.

Carla Brock (00:03:40):

Thank you. I already asked for discussion, but is there any discussion? All right. All those in favor of approving the special meeting minutes of the March 7th, 2024 geologist board meeting please say aye.

Several speakers (00:03:53):

Aye.

Carla Brock (00:03:56):

Any opposed? All right. The meeting minutes are approved. All right. The next agenda meeting is, or the next agenda topic is awards and recognition and I'll turn it over to Sydney for this.

Sydney Muhle (00:04:16):

Thank you. Our first recognition is we have recently had a couple of board members who have turned off. We did our recognition for board member Tom Tebb at our last meeting, but board member Eileen Webb was not able to join us in March, so she's joining us virtually today. Board member Webb was appointed to the Geologist Licensing Board in 2016 and served two terms. Her term did expire on May 1st and so we just wanted to take a moment and share our appreciation for her two terms of service with us. We do have a plaque and Eileen, I know you can't see it, but we do have a plaque that we'll be getting over to you recognizing your time with the board and so if anybody had anything they wanted to share.

(00:05:06):

But I know for me, Eileen has been a driving force for this board and, when I started with the board, was a very warm, excited welcome for me joining as staff and have really come to appreciate Eileen and everything she brings to the table. She's always been one to even just send me a quick Teams chat and "Hey, I've got a question", or "Hey, somebody brought this to me. Do you have time to work this out with me?" And I really appreciated that in her willingness to share her love of geology with the rest of the states, so thank you, Eileen.

Eileen Webb (00:05:49):

Oh, stop. You're welcome. It's been a long eight years, but you know there's some good work that's been done and to be done, so thank you.

Casey Hanell (00:06:07):

I'll just second what Sydney's comments were when I joined the board in 2019. Eileen was the first to reach out. Again, very welcoming and driving force. Just really motivated to get the board doing great work. Always involved with ASBOG and the Council of Examiners and very engaged. So just have really appreciated both the warm welcome and the dedication to service on this board, Eileen, it was a pleasure to serve with you. Thank you.

Eileen Webb (00:06:41):

Thank you for all the compliments, I really appreciate it.

Speaker 2 (00:06:46):

Eileen, I want to share that I really appreciated your support when I came into the board's program. You went through quite a bit of transition with us, not only through COVID, through watching our transition from being an in-person board to a virtual, to none of the staff that supported you being here. It has been a tumultuous time period and what I have always appreciated is you've continued with your passion for the profession, for the integrity and the high standards that you've kept us to. And I appreciate that you've helped us to be better. Sydney has been able to realize a lot of that dream and so thank you for helping us shepherd into that.

Eileen Webb (00:07:42):

Thank you. You guys stop.

Carla Brock (00:07:49):

I won't say anymore because I think we've said it all, but I agree with what everyone has said and we'll miss you and don't be a stranger. We hope to see you around soon.

Eileen Webb (00:07:58):

I'll be haunting the hallways I'm sure somehow some way, but I get to be a public person now, right?

Carla Brock (00:08:06):

That's right.

Eileen Webb (00:08:07):

Yeah. Well thank you everybody. Like I say, it's eight years is a long time, but like I say, we've done some really good work and there's always good work to continue new ideas, new changes and the profession and the laws and et cetera. And keep up the good work, everybody right? You can do it without me. I know you can. All right, thanks everybody.

Carla Brock (00:08:43):

Thanks Eileen.

(00:08:43):

All right. Now Sydney is going to welcome the new board members.

Sydney Muhle (00:08:47):

Absolutely. We do have two new board members who have joined us since our last meeting. Board member Noah Dudley and board member Bill Halbert is joining us virtually and I will turn it over to them to tell you about themselves.

Noah Dudley (00:09:00):

Hi, I'm Noah Dudley. I have been a licensed geologist since 2019, a licensed engineering geologist since 2020. I'm honored to serve on the board. Thank you for selecting me and I hope to make a positive impact while I'm here.

William Halbert (00:09:19):

Hi, I'm Bill Halbert. I'm been a licensed geologist since whenever the geology, the license was enacted at 2001, 2002. Also have certifications as engineering geologist and hydrogeologist, owner of Insight Geologic at Olympia and I'm very pleased to be appointed to the board and hope to work with you guys and accomplish great things. Thank you.

Carla Brock (00:09:52):

Great. Welcome to you both. Okay, we're going to move on to old business. We're going to start with an outreach update and discussion.

Sydney Muhle (00:10:01):

Actually on this one, this is where we could go to the seventh, week two.

Carla Brock (00:10:06):

Okay.

Sydney Muhle (00:10:07):

Start with member who have to go to their next meeting.

Carla Brock (00:10:10):

Budget discussion, okay. So I guess I'll turn it over to Bill.

Bill Dutra (00:10:14):

Good morning everyone. My name is Bill Dutra. I work with the Department of Licensing and Business and Professions division. This is a very going to be very short overview. I wanted to start with, I'm not coming here to say surprise, you're getting big pay increases. That's not why I'm here to talk. Happy to say that it looks like [inaudible 00:10:36] and a little bit more deep dive with you regarding your budget.

(00:10:38):

What I'd like to talk to you about today is the Department of Licensing is contemplating and moving towards some agency request legislation that will affect geologists. Earlier this, I think it was in the last month, myself and the assistant director Jen Clawson met with Chair Brock and Chair Gillum to kind of give an overview of what this looks like. The geologist budget must be self-supporting. Right now you're kind of in the standalone account, self-supporting.

(00:11:05):

What we are contemplating and asking to do and what we'd be proposing to do is moving geologists along with some other professions with small licensing numbers into what we call our Business and Professions 06L account. You still have to be a dedicated self-supporting account, but you'd be in with very large licensing groups. The advantage to this is that you would have, the best way to look at it is some overdraft protection. If there is a very large case, for example, you have a very large case, you have a lot of AG costs and you draw down some of your balances. This would stop from us having to say, we need to do emergency rulemaking and go get more fees from you to help pay for your account and help pay for your program.

(00:11:51):

Each program, each licensing program by law, by statute is required to have a three month operating balance. Some of these programs with smaller licensing basis, geologists, funeral cemetery, landscape architects, they struggle sometimes with having those three month operating accounts. Moving to the 06L account, which we call it an internal coding 06L account, sort of eliminates that crisis from you having that. There is a lot in there. There are currently 18 different professions with an 06L account that we license and regulate. Adding three more with this agency request legislation is a bigger benefit to you long term.

(00:12:29):

Some pros for this, if there is significant fee increases in the future, I'm not saying you have them right now, I have nothing in front of you. So you're getting a fee increase if there are significant fee increases in the future, this gives us the opportunity to have discussions to stagger those fee increases out over a couple of different renewable periods if necessary, depending on what they are, versus at all, it's going to happen at once. We do not want to negatively affect anyone. This is purely an advantage for the geology licensing program in their licensees. It is not, we still have to maintain your money separately. You still have to pay for yourself. You still have to do this. This just gives you some advantages.

(00:13:18):

If at any point in time during this process, if the industry comes back either through the legislative process or through our office and through Sydney and say, we don't want this, we don't want this, we'll stop. But again, we are tasked with looking at advantages for our programs. All of our programs, we believe this is one kind of put it in perspective. Every program when they come into the Department of Licensing and new program, they all started the 06L account because there's a lot of startup fees that you cannot cover through time for whatever reason. And I don't have the history even though I've been here since '93, I don't know the history of why programs, but they move out of this 06L account for some reason. But as some that have been on the board and I know Mr. Hanell, I apologize. As you may know, because I recognize the name, over the last couple of years there's been some struggles with trying to do

some outreach work, trying to do some travel to do some other things. We believe by doing this, by pulling some other levers that we've pulled that we can pull legally, we've trying to loosen up that stress and anxiety of "Can I go do something? Can I not go do something?" The work that Vice Chair Gillum just did, I believe you went out and did some outreach work here recently.

Carrie Gillum (00:14:37):

Yeah, we went to the Hydro Symposium.

Bill Dutra (00:14:40):

Symposium. We want to be able to give some more freedoms and opportunities that's not a big issue that we have to debate and try to figure out how to do something. We believe doing this will allow us that mechanism. Again, this is agency request legislation. We have to go to the legislature to do this. There are very minimal costs for doing this, but any costs that are IT related, we'll try to mitigate those. But those will be mitigated out by all the programs that we're moving out of their, what we call standalone sitting out there by themselves into this. So it's not going to be bored by all of just one.

(00:15:18):

I can try to get some very specific definite number of what that would look like, but preliminary. I know this is not going to sound great, but for those of us that are in government, we're dealing with hundreds, millions, and billions and I think it's well less than a hundred thousand dollars for multiple programs spread across. I think it's closer to \$60,000. That's what the initial looks like to do that, but we'll get some definite numbers. I just wanted to explain, bring that all to the board. Again, we did talk with Chair Brock and Gillum who asked us to do more exploration on this after we explained what we were doing. So if there's any questions from the board members, I will try to answer.

(00:16:04):

Yes, sir.

Casey Hanell (00:16:05):

You mentioned when new programs start up, they all start in this 06L account?

Bill Dutra (00:16:11):

Yes sir.

Casey Hanell (00:16:12):

Does it take agency request legislation to move them out, or what's the mechanism of why they're moved out and then need a law change to move back in?

Bill Dutra (00:16:21):

I believe it did take a legislative to move them out at some point in time, or it was written into when the bills came as that they would be in 06L for a certain amount of time to when they could support themselves. Then they would be out. But to move them back in, we were asking for agency request legislation to bring them back in.

Casey Hanell (00:16:41):

Then one just follow up, it sounds like there are a lot of benefits to this. That would be great. Are there, other than that IT cost, any downsides that you see to this?

Bill Dutra (00:16:54):

We have not seen any downsides to it right now. We've looked at it from a lot of different angles. We've tried to forecast out what is the next budget cycle might look like for us for geologists. When I say us for geologists right now, we cannot see those. What those look like.

(00:17:14):

All of our costs are going up. Let's just be honest about that. Transparent. We cost more money to regulate this program. Our insurance goes up for our fuel, our salaries, everything goes up. It is difficult for smaller programs to kind of take on their fair share of what that looks like without having to make some significant fee raises on them. Doing this for some of the programs, we will not say we'll always eliminate fee increases, but we hope that they're minor and that they're small. There are some programs unfortunately that are not doing, this is not the conversation I'll be having with them because their increases are rather significant, but they're not part of the 06L account. So those are some of the drawbacks.

(00:18:02):

We cannot see any negatives at this point, and again, if the industry and the board at some point, at any point during this process or legislative processes are not in favor, we'll pull them out. We'll stop. That's okay. Because it does not eliminate any work from us. We still have to track all of your expenses and all of your license fees separately among everybody else. So you're not going to be funding another program and another funding will not be supporting you.

Carla Brock (00:18:35):

Bill, when we first talked about this a couple months ago, it seemed like this was only going to be something that was beneficial if most or all of these small programs were amenable to it. It sounds like that's probably the case?

Bill Dutra (00:18:48):

Right now. Yes. So we have talked with your funeral and cemetery and landscape architects. We are also going to, and we've gotten the same response from all three. We are going to talk to some other programs to see if they want to join in with this, but if they don't, that's fine. Our focus right now is geology, funeral cemetery, and landscape architects is what the agency request legislation will be. If we add others, we'll add others.

Carla Brock (00:19:15):

Great. Okay.

Sydney Muhle (00:19:20):

I think from the staff perspective, we're looking at the biggest piece being risk mitigation. I think you are going to have to rely on Carla and Jim for some historical knowledge, but I believe shortly before COVID, it was the geology program that actually had a very large case that

moved forward and ended up elevating all the way to the Washington Supreme Court and that cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars very immediately to hit that program. And that takes any fund balance just immediately down to zero. And that was all in attorney's fees and legal costs and filings and all that. And so our hope by doing this is to mitigate that risk as much as possible so that it's not as tremendous of an impact to the program on the rare occasion that those moments happen. We hope they don't, but...

Bill Dutra (00:20:08):

Absolutely. Over time we can see we have a situation like that, that we can see through forecasting, that you're going to repay that money back into your account or fund balance back to it. We can do that being part of this larger pool account, pay that money back. I mean, you've got to pay it back if you use it, but it wouldn't be the case of, again, immediate significant increases to hurt the industry. We don't want to raise fees ever, but it's just the cost of doing business.

Carla Brock (00:20:48):

Any more questions before we move on? Nope. Thank you very much. Okay, thank you. All right, we'll get back to our agenda with old business and we'll start with an update on and discussion on outreach. And I know we've had two specific outreach opportunities over the last quarter. If there's anything else, we can talk about it at the end, but maybe Vice Chair Gillum, maybe you want to give us, well you're on both of these. You want to give us that an update on or a report from the Hydro Symposium and also from the ASBOG COE spring workshop?

Carrie Gillum (00:21:33):

The Hydro Symposium we both got to attend and I would say I don't know how long it had been since we had tabled that symposium in particular, but I would have to say that it was very educational for me, realizing what people are looking for and also the fact that I had not been an applicant. I think I got my licensing 10 years ago and being an applicant then compared to now is probably very different. We had a lot of questions that were coming in, of course about when the results are going to come back, I think just a week before the results actually were coming from our spring examination. But then we also had a lot of people who of course were interested in the licensing process and more than anything the kind of non-traditional, especially when it came to education, but also professionals.

(00:22:34):

And so I think if anything that was the most eye-opening part for me was times have changed, educational routes have changed as well as professions, where we have a lot more of this kind of general environmental scientist, where it's not just geologist or in a certain specialty profession that are in the state that are having to work in those specialties, but yet not able to necessarily get into those positions because they don't have the education or the professional background, because they come from out of state or different universities or colleges. So I know that's something that we have had discussions about and I work on the committee that's looking at the verifiers of these applications that we're getting. So it was like I said, very eye-opening and making me realize that that's something that we do need to start focusing on here is the board of how do we address these particular instances because I think times are changing and then yet be able still stick to the whole thing of why we have geology licensing and the protection of our citizens and stuff under that licensure.

(00:23:55):

I think that was my big takeaway. I really enjoyed the interaction. We had a lot of people that were even from the education part that came up and said, "Oh yeah, I would love for you guys to come at the university." I think that if we could get more pamphlets, fact sheets, that kind of stuff available to give out, but also I was thinking if we had them available on our website through the licensing and the license board, I think that would be very beneficial.

(00:24:25):

I know that I need to learn more so that I can be a better spokesperson when I go to these things, but then also if I could send people to be like, "Hey, if you want more information, you can go and get it from this particular fact sheet or brochure if I don't have it with me." We're in a digital age and I think a lot of people would appreciate that and having that available to them. So that was the kind of key takeaways that I took from that. I don't know if you have anything to add. Because we were definitely divided. There were so many people coming to the table.

Carla Brock (00:24:55):

Yeah, it was busy.

(00:24:57):

And we were there two years ago, we had a table and it was very similar. And I think the thing about the Hydro Symposium as opposed to some professional meetings is that it's a good combination of professionals and students because there is a high involvement from the universities, and so we get a lot of questions from people who are looking to get licensed and start their careers as licensed professionals, and they have a lot of questions about how that works and how they can get a license and what kind of job they need to be able to get the experience. And so I just find that it's such a valuable place for us to have a voice to do that outreach. So I know we leaved pretty hard to have a table there and have a presence and I think Carrie would agree that we see the value in doing that.

Carrie Gillum (00:25:50):

We should continue doing that.

Carla Brock (00:25:52):

Yeah.

Carrie Gillum (00:25:52):

We should continue.

Speaker 3 (00:25:53):

Question. It be beneficial for us to have one of our licensing professionals there with you at the table?

Carla Brock (00:26:01):

I wouldn't hurt. I think so. I know there was a lot of times that I was just like, you might need to contact one of our licensing professional people like Sydney and be like, I don't know exactly

what the answer is to that. It's like I was willing to admit, I don't know exactly how that works, especially when it came to some of the application process and that's again where I said, this is where I could probably benefit myself to be able to benefit whoever I'm interacting with to understand what it is that you guys do if I'm going to be the one that's being sent out to do this outreach, because I can probably speak as a professional, but it's been 10 years since I've been through the application process and I'm finding that each applicant can have unique experience too. Mine was definitely unique and I shared that experience because I had to go through some verification myself, so everybody may have different questions that you guys could answer that I can't because I don't have that experience.

Speaker 3 (00:27:01):

Put that down for suggestions for next year.

Carrie Gillum (00:27:03):

Experience.

Sydney Muhle (00:27:03):

Put that down for suggestions for next year.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:27:04]

Speaker 4 (00:27:04):

Absolutely.

Sydney Muhle (00:27:05):

This conference happens every two years.

Speaker 4 (00:27:07):

Every two years. Even years, right?

Sydney Muhle (00:27:12):

Yep. And the swag was popular.

Speaker 4 (00:27:15):

Oh, good.

Sydney Muhle (00:27:16):

People were very surprised.

Speaker 5 (00:27:18):

What kind of swag?

Carrie Gillum (00:27:19):

They had tumblers, water thermoses, and then little bags for study things with post-it notes. Yeah, they were actually really surprised to see that. They're like, wow, BOL has [inaudible 00:27:35].

Speaker 4 (00:27:39):

It's a secret. It's a secret.

Speaker 5 (00:27:42):

Just kind of echoing what you both were saying. I feel like I kind of lucked out with where I went to school. I went to Western Washington University, I think Bob Mitchell, professor there was a board member at the time and he just kind of made sure everybody got on that path or at least was very aware of that path. And I think if I hadn't happened to attend that school, I might not have been as aware of how to get to where I am today.

Carrie Gillum (00:28:08):

Oh yeah. Well I was definitely not told about it when I was going to school in Arizona and I was licensed very, very late in the game. I remember seven years out from when I was graduated, I went to an interview and they said, so do you have your GIT? And I said, my gi what? So that's the story I tell so many people when I interact with them, especially college, either in college or recently graduated. I said, this is your opportunity now to do it. Don't wait 15... I can't even remember how long now it's 15, 20 years because then you have to relearn it all over again. So again, I feel like I'm a very kind of non-traditional professional in that I didn't realize about licensure and then got licensure very late. So yeah, it's definitely something I think we need to be doing outreach for. We should definitely talking to college level, but also I think because we have specialties here, people coming from out of state don't know about that necessarily.

(00:29:19):

All right, any more discussion or questions about the hydro symposium? All right, let's move on to the spring. COE. Hey, I'm up again. So my first COE I will have to say anybody who has the opportunity to go to this, and I know that this was expressed to me at the time, if you have the opportunity to go, I will echo that. It is definitely something that I had preconceived ideas about that I was just totally blown away once I got there. So we did sit there and you spend two days with all the exams that were previously given, but then also the one that's going to be given in the next session. And we used to sit down and take the test, which was very interesting because again, it's been 10 years plus since I've taken an exam and to find out what I have forgotten or maybe not focused on has been very interesting.

(00:30:24):

But one of the big things that was so awesome about it was everybody there we're all professionals or educators and included in a group my first time there and they're like, no, you're part of us. And they are very open and accepting and everybody was being heard for their inputs. And of course everybody has their specialty, which was so helpful because these questions can vary. And again, I have chosen my specialty and I know what I know and have forgotten what I don't study and work with right now, but others have. And so having the number of people we did there, which was about 50 people attended, and not necessarily every state, sometimes there were multiple people from states. I found out that there was another DNR person there that I did not know about. So I mean it was just a great collaboration to make and the whole idea is to make the test better so that it is clearer to the person who's taking it so that they have a better chance to pass.

(00:31:38):

Where a lot of us examinees just sitting there going, they're trying their best to not let us pass. They're trying to make this hard as being someone who's talked to so many people who have taken it. That is not the case. I definitely walked out of there going, no, they are trying their best to make this easy, clear, relevant because a lot of these questions have been made over the years and industry and education has changed again. And they definitely are trying to make sure it's still relevant to the point where some of the people who are working in the industry are like, oh no, this terminology has changed, so we need to change the question and the answers to reflect that. And we went through that process and that's where I think I walked away and was just like, there is benefit. This is what's happening.

(00:32:34):

And then also looking at the comments that the examinees were leaving, we were told by the, I can't remember what they're called now...

Sydney Muhle (00:32:43):

The psychometrician.

Carrie Gillum (00:32:43):

The psychometrician. He says not every group does that where they look at the comments and actually take them into consideration when they're going through and reviewing the exams. Not every industry does that. And so I felt really proud to be a part of that, too. We're taking feedback, we're making those considerations. And again then I didn't feel like as an exam is like, oh, they're all out to get us. They don't even care. Why do I even bother writing stuff down? It's actually, we're serious about it. We're serious about making sure we have people that are successful.

(00:33:24):

And yeah, I would, like I said, encourage anybody that's on our board to be a part of that. I would happily do it again. So yes, I think we only had one question that we were kind of like, I don't know about this question. There was a lot of people that struggled with it, but otherwise it seemed like the exam was pretty successful. And yeah, like I said, loved it. Thanks for sending me.

Speaker 4 (00:33:57):

The Council of Examiners. For those of you who don't know meets twice a year in between the examinations and they always review the exam that was just given and the one that's going to be given. And we as a board typically try to send one person, at least one person, to every COE. We've had some budget limitations in the past, but we think we're over those, so we'll be able to do that. So yeah, we'll talk about... Is that part of today's agenda?

Carrie Gillum (00:34:22):

It is.

Speaker 4 (00:34:22):

Is talking about the fall COE.

Carrie Gillum (00:34:26):

It's definitely intensive. My mind was tired after all that, but I've felt so accomplished once I had finished that. I was a part of a group that was very meaningful.

Speaker 4 (00:34:38):

And I've been participating for the last six years. So if anybody is interested in going and has questions, feel free to reach out and ask me more about it or Carrie too after her first foray into the COE. Okay. Let's move on to new business. Deborah, give us an update on the spring exam. Please.

(00:34:59):

Do we have a number [inaudible 00:35:03] I had a quick question for the board members. ASBOG does send us a copy of the exam results, which is an extensive packet that we get sent afterwards. Would it be something that the board would find of interest? I think that there's parts of it we can definitely share. I'm not sure if there's anything that we couldn't send directly to board members if you were interested. Okay.

Carrie Gillum (00:35:43):

Yeah, there's nothing [inaudible 00:35:45] included.

Speaker 4 (00:35:45):

Yeah, so we'll go ahead and make it a practice and we'll get that sent out because I'm going to summarize a lot of it and I was realizing you could actually find this interesting, these things.

(00:35:57):

So we're going to start with talking about the ASBOG exam pass rates for this last fall or this last spring, sorry, in spring we had for the fundamentals, Washington had 69% of our applicant's past out of all jurisdictions, that was only 66.3% passed. So we are definitely higher for the practices of geology, we had 95% of our applicant's past compared to 77.3 for all jurisdictions. Some of the things that I was looking at from this guide, and I'll send it, there were 805 candidates total that took the fundamentals not just in Washington but of all candidates and 396 of all candidates that took the practices of geology.

(00:36:55):

What I found interesting was there's some graphs that talk about how many times applicants had taken the exams and what you start to see is there is a diminishing return on once you have taken it more than, so the first time we have about 81% pass cumulatively for the fundamentals. Two times it ends up dropping down. Let's see, so valid percentages. Sorry, I was looking at the wrong one. Anyways, these charts show you that you start to see that the percentages of the test takers as they get into three times the likelihood that they're going to pass is diminished quite a bit and if they're taking it at four times, they almost should restart.

(00:37:52):

So there's tables like that in there. I think those are the things that you're looking at at the Council of Examiners, a lot of these statistics where they're coming up with the data. So it is really interesting. So I'm going to go ahead and send that out to you so you can dig into that. And I don't know why we hadn't been sharing that before. It just dawned on me that you'd be interested. So we'll get that sent out.

(00:38:19):

And for our engineering geology, have to see it up there. Looks like my stopped working, so not looking as great for our specialties for the spring exam, we had total number of candidates was five and 60% pass rate, so better than last fall, but still pretty low. Hydrogeology, next one, we had 12 examinees and only 40%.

(00:39:10):

I did not capture, and I think I'll start doing that, how many of them were first time takers and how many were second and third time. It's not something we've been tracking in the past, but we can definitely start including that just for informational purposes. I know as we're reviewing the examination, that may be helpful, some additional data points for us and then there they are together. So for both spring engineering, 40% hydrogeology, 60%. I think we are getting closer to having our exams finished being reviewed and [inaudible 00:39:57] about that.

Carrie Gillum (00:39:59):

Yeah, we'll talk about that.

Speaker 4 (00:40:02):

Any questions for the board?

Speaker 5 (00:40:06):

This might be a better comment for later point in this meeting, but I have heard from people, and this was my own experience as well, that as far as actually understanding what content is going to be on the engineering geology exam specifically, and I'm sure it's similar for the hydrogeology exam, it's pretty cryptic. There's a multi page long table of references with approximate breakdown to how many questions and many of these references are full textbooks. So, I'm thinking that might be an opportunity add some clarity for candidates so they can more effectively target their study and preparation.

Speaker 4 (00:40:42):

Neat suggestion.

Carrie Gillum (00:40:50):

Maybe once the actual exam reviews are done, we can keep those two committees going to provide that additional [inaudible 00:40:57] online as well.

Sydney Muhle (00:40:57):

Yeah.

Speaker 4 (00:40:59):

It would make sense. It would make sense. So when you look at the work that ASBOG does after each and every exam that we review ours once every 10 years, it's probably not the pace that we would want to be reviewing our specialty exams. Working with Oregon, they've definitely got some budgetary struggles as well that make it difficult to help them in the review process for our shared exam. But that should not be stopping us from how often we're reviewing the hydrogeology and even the engineering. I think we can lead Oregon into making changes that we would like to see.

Carrie Gillum (00:41:47):

Well, we'll talk more about that when we get to the committee and task force reports. Okay, so let's see. We'll move on. We did 7.2 already, which was the budget discussion. So we'll move on to agenda item 7.3, which Carrie touched on a little bit, and we brought up during the last meeting to add to the agenda for this meeting, which was starting a discussion about revising our educational requirements to be more accommodating of changes to the educational systems and their degree requirements and their degrees.

(00:42:29):

Just one example is historically somebody with an environmental science degree does not have the right educational background to qualify to take the FG in Washington. And I think we all know that our profession is hurting for people and if we can expand it a little bit, make our requirements a little more flexible or expand them to be a little more appropriate to the profession and attract new candidates, I think that's going to be better for the profession, better for public health and safety, better for the board. So we wanted to add this to the agenda today to start having this discussion. There's some question about whether or not this would require some rule revisions. We have some educational guidance that is just a guidance that's not in rule, and then we have some educational requirements that are in rule. So we just wanted to start a conversation about this and move towards making some changes. I think.

Sydney Muhle (00:43:35):

And if I can, that's why I wanted to tie 7.5 into this because there are components of the educational side that do tie into a lack update. And something that staff has been seeing for probably a good year or two now, but especially over the last several months is the need to just go back and take a look at the wax. Some areas that I think the last time a rule change was done, nobody foresaw that those areas would maybe be gaps. And now that we have applicants who are applying through, not what we're calling nontraditional, but especially alternative pathways to licensure, needing to provide some additional clarification not only for our applicants to understand what's expected of them, but for staff to have something more concrete to provide them with this is what you're going to need to do for an alternative pathway toward licensure. And then a couple of just other areas of the rules that it's, while we're doing it, let's kind of make it all encompassing and any cleanup that needs to be done, go ahead and do that.

(00:44:50):

So my hope with the WAC update is to roll it into part of the educational requirement discussion, maybe form a committee. I know we have several that are going right now, but if we could, it's one that we've been trying to push until some of our bigger projects were done and I think we're

to a point we can't push it out any further. So if we could look at putting together a committee from the board to start working on that WAC update with staff would be myself and our licensing and customer service professionals helping identify where we are, seeing some of the gaps and relying on you guys to see what you guys are seeing and hearing out in the profession and see what we can come to and hopefully bring that back within the next year I'm hoping. I know WAC updates are not a small undertaking, but I think if we can start moving that direction, it'll really help.

Carrie Gillum (00:45:49):

Are there other WAC updates that need to be made or?

Sydney Muhle (00:45:52):

I think there are a couple, and unfortunately I don't have my notes up on it, but just again, small areas that I think nobody foresaw that that would be a gap down the line. And now we've had somebody find that gap and it's okay, we need to close the loop there.

Carrie Gillum (00:46:07):

Yeah, I think we did the last one, four or five years ago maybe.

Sydney Muhle (00:46:10):

Yeah, I think it was pre covid and I think there had been...

Carrie Gillum (00:46:14):

And it took a long time, it took four or five years.

Sydney Muhle (00:46:16):

It does take quite a while, but I think there were also a couple of things that the board had wanted at that point and that the AG's office had said no. And now that we've gone through other WAC updates with other programs, the AG's office has changed their stance on that, and so it's okay now we could maybe get those things put back in that the board originally wanted.

Carrie Gillum (00:46:43):

So would we form a new committee for WAC updates or I think before when we did it, all of the board members were involved in the WAC updates.

Sydney Muhle (00:46:52):

Yeah, we can do it whichever way the board would prefer. I think we found that in terms of keeping things rolling quickly, that forming a committee can help and then reaching out to the full board once the committee reaches a certain point. Okay, we need the full board input on this, let's push it out, present it at the next meeting, get the board input, and then they take it back and continue workshopping and keeps the wheels moving in between quarters a little faster.

Speaker 4 (00:47:22):

That makes sense. Okay. So I guess we are forming a committee and asking for interest to begin WAC updates.

Speaker 6 (00:47:35):

Be interested in serving on that committee and just a little more broader context as it ties into the conversations you were having at the hydrogeology symposium and this education department. Last week I was at the Association of American State Geologists annual meeting and there was a whole breakout session around this topic of how universities are changing their departments and a lot of geology departments are disappearing and they're being morphed into environmental science departments or including lots of other disciplines. And the courses aren't lining up with a lot of the educational requirements that we have for licensure. It creates a real conundrum because the profession still does need people that know these topics in depth. And there were some great presentations, one was focused on, I think when we're in the field of geology, it feels like this is happening just to geology. When in reality when you zoom out a little bit, universities are hitting an enrollment cliff across all of their disciplines.

(00:48:52):

And so they've gone through a period of time where enrollment was strong, they could expand their educational opportunities and their course offerings. Their budgets were strong and now that's cutting off, and so they're needing to again shrink their department sizes. Struggling with administrations that look at, well, how many graduates are you graduating from your department every year? And if that number is small, consolidating and watering down the education that they get. I don't have a solution to propose, but it is a nationwide problem. It's a education system problem that is much more broad than just geology. So our challenge will be how do we navigate ensuring that people coming into the profession have the education they need to protect the public safety while not putting up a barrier out there that's insurmountable or for people to enter the profession.

Speaker 4 (00:50:00):

I think the challenge you're going to face is like Sydney had mentioned, the alternative pathways is how you define in an alternative pathway the depth that you need within the profession and how to prove that competence with practical experience. And that is difficult and that's not where we as staff can help you with because now we're talking about your areas of practice, not just what would the education, because it was easy when you could say, yeah, you need these classes, this many credits, this is what that equates to. Now, we have to stop and think more strategically. What does a practical experience look like that would equal this in education?

(00:50:49):

And if we can get really clear in the WAC for that, that will help our staff be able to look at it and be like, oh yeah, this makes sense. We'll have to rely less on the board to deep dive that and we can get more people in taking the exams, getting licensed. But that is going to be difficult and it's necessary work because to your point, we're seeing less and less of that with the universities. They're not making it as easy for us to say, oh yeah, you've got all the credit you need. It's just not happening. It's just too broad and it becomes difficult. You saw a lot more applications this last couple of years for you to review. That's part of the struggle that we're seeing.

Speaker 5 (00:51:33):

I'd be interested in serving on that committee.

Speaker 4 (00:51:40):

I would too. Sydney.

Carrie Gillum (00:51:41):

Okay. Yeah, this is ...

William Halbert (00:51:45):

Bill Halbert would like to participate as well.

Sydney Muhle (00:51:49):

I think we're limited to three due to quorum issues.

Carrie Gillum (00:51:52):

Oh, that's right.

Sydney Muhle (00:51:52):

Otherwise we're getting into board meeting. But we can understand this is probably going to be a very large undertaking. So if at some point one of you needs to step back for work or whatever, then we can ask another board member to step in.

Carrie Gillum (00:52:11):

As Casey mentioned, this is an ongoing discussion at the national level too. We often talk about this at the ASBOG annual meeting, which we'll get to next, but all of the states are dealing with this same issue and declining numbers of registrants. So, we're not special.

Sydney Muhle (00:52:28):

And board member Halbert has his hand up.

Speaker 4 (00:52:31):

Yeah, Bill.

William Halbert (00:52:31):

Yeah. But before we get too far along, one of the things I noticed in the graph of at least the fundamentals graph that was presented is we have declining almost consistently declining pass rates over the last four years. We're still doing better than national average, but I am wondering if we need to kind of maybe dig into that a little bit deeper if we can, and see as we discussed, who's taking the test for the second time, the third time, and kind of washing out who in that pool is not passing because they're may be on the edge of our requirements for licensing, educational requirements for licensing. I think that leads us into this discussion of who else should we be allowing to participate as environmental science majors? Are we going to invite them to participate only to have them wash out? So I'm looking forward to hearing what the committee comes up with. And again, I would love to participate when.

(00:54:03):

Again, I would love to participate when that opening occurs. Thank you.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:54:04]

Carla Brock (00:54:09):

Thanks, Bill. Yeah, I think, Deb, that the ASBOG statistics that you share might shed some light on it. They track all sorts of test statistics, so there's lots more information in there. I think you said the total numbers, and I think the FG was something like 800, and the practical was something like 300.

(00:54:28):

A big part of that is because there's a lot of universities in both member and non-member states that give the test as an end-of-major evaluation of their educational programs. And so there are certainly some schools that just, their educational programs do not stand up to the requirements needed for somebody to pass the test. The whole intent is so that they can modify their educational requirements for those students. There's a lot of interesting information behind the statistics too.

Sydney Muhle (00:55:07):

I have a question for the purposes of notes. I heard Hanell, Dudley, Halbert, and Brock all voice interest. Is there a consensus on who? Have we gotten that far, am I jumping ahead?

Carla Brock (00:55:22):

I think we went with the first three to speak up, so Casey, Noah, and Carla, and then Bill as an alternate if one of those three needs to drop off of the WAC update. With that committee, we'll bring a standard report every quarter and get feedback from the board at that point, so the entire board will be involved. It'll just be the keeping the wheels rolling forward in between meetings that that committee will do.

Noah Dudley (00:55:51):

With interest, I'm happy to step back, because I'm on a committee already. Being that Bill's new to the board, it seems like it'd be good to get, if, Bill, you're interested, some initial engagement in a committee and get that work rolling.

William Halbert (00:56:12):

I accept.

Carla Brock (00:56:16):

Sydney, you'll kick that off, and send out information and schedule a meeting, or something like that?

Sydney Muhle (00:56:20):

Yeah. At this point, it'll probably be after the 4th of July holiday that we'll get it scheduled, understanding that we'll probably be working around summer vacations and things like that for

everybody. But yeah, we'll get a scheduling invite out either end of this week or early next week to start fleshing out what your schedules look like for the next month.

Carla Brock (00:56:40):

Right. Okay. Any more discussion about WAC updates and related topics?

(00:56:51):

Nope? Okay. We will move on to 7.4, which is discussion about the ASBOG annual meeting that's happening in October in Fort Collins. The annual meeting is a combination of the annual business meeting and the Council of Examiners. Sydney, do you want to give us the information?

Sydney Muhle (00:57:11):

Absolutely. The annual meeting this year was supposed to be occurring in Wyoming, and apparently Wyoming did not have a space large enough to accommodate the annual meeting for us, so they moved it a couple hours south into Colorado. We'll be in Fort Collins October 23rd through 26. They have not released a whole ton of information on it yet, but it will be at the Marriott in Fort Collins. The annual business meeting will start on October 23rd, field trip will be on the 24th, and then the COE will be the 24th through the 26.

(00:57:50):

We do have budget to send a board member. That will include flight, accommodation, food, all of the above. We would just need to know who the board would like to send, and then, as additional information is shared from ASBOG, we'll get it out to you guys.

Carla Brock (00:58:08):

As a member state of ASBOG, we're required to provide a voting delegate.

Sydney Muhle (00:58:13):

Correct.

Carla Brock (00:58:14):

They can be virtual, but we encourage in-person participation whenever possible.

Sydney Muhle (00:58:20):

Yes. Traditionally, the person that we send to the COE also serves as our delegate, and so we usually select a voting delegate and then an alternate. I know last year Chair Brock was our alternate, who ended up being our delegate who went. Our initial appointee had to drop out.

Carla Brock (00:58:38):

For those who don't attend in person, there's also the opportunity to listen in on the annual business meeting just for information. For those who are new to the board and/or can attend, it's a really good introduction to ASBOG as an organization to just listen in. The annual meeting goes all day long. It's typically a six or seven-hour meeting, but it's a good introduction to all of the business that happens under the ASBOG umbrella.

Sydney Muhle (00:59:07):

A lot of really great information. I got to go in person last year. We hosted in Spokane last year, so I actually got to go in person, and getting to hear more about the psychometricians and their work... It never occurred to me the amount of energy and thought process not just behind building the questions, but even behind how questions are phrased, and even down to the color that's used on the exam. It's not a pure black, it's very specific color-coded to assist folks who are visually impaired or have color blindness. It never occurred to me the amount of thought that the psychometricians put into that. That was very interesting to learn about, and was great to bring back and pull that into some of our other work.

Carla Brock (01:00:03):

Right. I guess I will ask for interest in participating via in-person attendance at the ASBOG annual meeting in October in Fort Collins. Anyone interested in attending in person?

Noah Dudley (01:00:16):

I would be, but I have a conflict. But I'm interested in calling in virtually to that.

Carla Brock (01:00:25):

Right. Yeah. You should do that.

Sydney Muhle (01:00:29):

I will say ASBOG is one of our few national organizations who has fully embraced the virtual attendance option. They do a great job with it.

Carla Brock (01:00:37):

They do.

Sydney Muhle (01:00:37):

I've gotten to participate both ways, and I got just as much out of the virtual attendance as I did the in-person. It was really good. As far as the staff perspective goes. I know the COE and the networking that happens on the board member side is completely different.

Carla Brock (01:00:52):

Yeah, and the virtual attendance is only for the annual meeting. I'm interested in attending. Casey's too busy.

Casey Hanell (01:01:05):

I agree.

Carla Brock (01:01:06):

James is typically too busy.

James Struthers (01:01:10):

Yeah, I'm afraid so.

Carrie Gillum (01:01:14):

I'm going to have to bow out for the ... As much as I'd like to go, I only get one trip a year.

Noah Dudley (01:01:19):

I'm going to be gone the week after for the whole week, and I think two weeks without my wife and toddler is too much.

Sydney Muhle (01:01:31):

Board Member Halbert, would you be interested in even being our alternate if something comes up for Chair Brock?

William Halbert (01:01:37):

I have a previous commitment at the end of October, so I wouldn't be able to participate even virtually.

Sydney Muhle (01:01:47):

You're it.

Carla Brock (01:01:47):

I'm it. I'd better go

Sydney Muhle (01:01:51):

All right. Sounds good.

(01:01:58):

All right. Let's move on to agenda item number 8, which is complaint cases. It sounds like we have one case that Vice Chair Gillum will present to the board.

Carrie Gillum (01:02:12):

My first time doing this.

Sydney Muhle (01:02:15):

Typically what you'll do is you'll read the case number, and then your complaint summary, and your facts, and then what your recommendation is.

Carrie Gillum (01:02:23):

So just go off of the ...

Sydney Muhle (01:02:24):

Yes. Then, if there are any questions from the board members, they'll ask you to ask the case [inaudible 01:02:29].

Carla Brock (01:02:29):

Okay. Then do we vote on it?

Sydney Muhle (01:02:32):

Yes. It'll be voting to accept or deny the case manager recommendation.

Carla Brock (01:02:38):

Okay.

Carrie Gillum (01:02:39):

Okay. So this is case number 2023-12-2774-00GEO. Complaint summary is on December 7th, 2023, a complaint was received about a licensed geologist engaging in unprofessional conduct. The complainant alleges that an email received from the geologist was threatening. The email stated that the geologist requested that his work not be published without his permission or the geologist would report the complainant to the state licensing board. The mention of the report to the board was taken as a threat by the complainant and considered unprofessional conduct. This email was sent after geologist was removed from a project in which both the geologist and complainant had been working on.

(01:03:32):

The facts was, when determining what is unprofessional conduct, the following was reviewed. I looked at the geologist's RCW 18.220.130, the unprofessional conduct, and then also RCW 18.235.130 unprofessional conduct acts or conditions that constitute. After reviewing the applicable statutes, it was determined that this did not rise to the level of acting against the respondent's license. Therefore I'm recommending this case to be closed without further action.

Noah Dudley (01:04:19):

Can you describe a little bit more when you were reviewing those RCWs, kind of what those stated and why your determination is it doesn't rise to that level?

Carrie Gillum (01:04:32):

So it seemed to me that for unprofessional conduct it was very, an egregious type of act had to occur under that type of unprofessional. And this complaint from the complainant was more, it was subjective of they felt like they were threatened, but really from the amount of information was given, there was quite a bit from both sides that was given, is that the person the licensee was saying just as it was stated is, I don't want you using my stuff based on this information, which it falls under our licensing rules, you don't use another licensed professional's work without their consent. So again, it wasn't egregious and that's why I went ahead and said that it wasn't necessarily unprofessional.

Speaker 4 (01:05:43):

Just to help you out, 18.235.130 is what we call the Uniform Professionals Act. So it's unprofessional conduct under this. There are very specific, as you called out, misrepresentation, advertising falsely, deceptive, misleading, incompetence. These are all things that would fall under there. So threatening is not typically one of them unless you're looking at something that would rise to the level of a misdemeanor or a felony.

Carrie Gillum (01:06:26):

Thanks for that. I couldn't remember all what was under there.

Speaker 4 (01:06:29):

It's a big chapter, it's a big section.

Carrie Gillum (01:06:34):

It just seemed like it didn't fit within the definition for unprofessional conduct. And then also the degree at which the information that was being told in this email, I did not take it as necessarily being threatening as much as it was more educational, like "This is what the rules say. Don't use my work or else this is what I can do," and not necessarily like "or else I'm going to get you." It's just, this is the consequences that can occur because this is what the rules say for licenses and geology in this state.

Noah Dudley (01:07:11):

Is there a statutory or legal definition of threat, in this case?

Carrie Gillum (01:07:15):

No.

(01:07:19):

And that's kind of where I was looking. The complainant called out that it was unprofessional conduct, and so I was looking for that terminology within both the geologist RCW, but then it also led me to the professional RCW.

Carla Brock (01:07:43):

Great. Any further discussion?

(01:07:49):

So we vote to approve the conclusion. Is that what we do? Or the recommendation?

Sydney Muhle (01:07:56):

We'll vote whether or not to accept the case manager recommendation.

Carla Brock (01:07:59):

Okay. Do I need a motion to accept it?

Sydney Muhle (01:08:02):

Yes please.

Carla Brock (01:08:04):

Okay. Can I have a motion to accept the case manager recommendation for the case?

Noah Dudley (01:08:10):

I move to accept the case manager's recommendation.

Carla Brock (01:08:14):

May I have a second?

Speaker 7 (01:08:14):

Second.

Carla Brock (01:08:18):

Any further discussion? All those in favor, please say Aye.

Speaker 7 (01:08:23):

Aye.

Carla Brock (01:08:23):

Aye.

Noah Dudley (01:08:23):

Aye.

Carla Brock (01:08:27):

The opposed? Okay, great. Thank you. Thank you, Vice Chair Gillum. All right, let's move on to section our agenda item nine, which is the reports. And Sydney, I think I'll turn it over to you.

Sydney Muhle (01:08:49):

Thank you. I think I get to do most of these. All right, so we'll start with the Engineering Geologists Specialty Exam Review Committee. This committee I think has met two or three times in the last quarter. They've completed their initial review of the exam and are now going back through and looking at statistics and comments and kind of doing the COE piece of this and really highlighting the questions that they want to focus on with the Oregon board and to complete that review. So they do have one more meeting that we need to get on the books for either later this month or early next month to just finish reviewing. They've made it through one of the exam forms, they have to complete it with the other one and then we'll be ready to move forward with Oregon.

(01:09:45):

On that note, Deb and I met with the staff from the Oregon board a couple of weeks ago and they indicated that their board has undergone several changes, including one of their committee members has now left the board. They are willing to continue participating on the EG review but it'll add a little bit of complication getting on their schedule.

(01:10:11):

They indicated that they did not do the same level of review that we did. They just took a really cursory look at it and then were going to wait and see what we did before they went any further. I think what we ended up coming to a decision on is, they will look at sending their board members to us and we'll use the work that the committee has done as a template for where to dive in and the questions that we really need to focus on. I think they're going to do another

review just to make sure. We're going to let them know what is identified and they'll go through and make sure that they don't have any additional that they'd like to bring forward. But they're in a very different position than what we are.

(01:11:04):

As Deb alluded to, they're also having some budgetary struggles and they are looking at a very large fee increase again this year after having one last year. So they're definitely struggling. And so with that, they would not be able to assist on the psychometrician review if we were to go that route. But we'll kind of see what comes out of that joint meeting as far as how we proceed and if the psychometrician [inaudible 01:11:36] and so Casey, I don't know, or Casey or Jim, if you guys have anything you wanted to add.

Speaker 7 (01:11:42):

Call it Summary where we're at.

Sydney Muhle (01:11:45):

Never know if I forget something.

Speaker 7 (01:11:47):

It was pretty good.

Sydney Muhle (01:11:53):

The caffeine is still kicking in today, so we never know if I've forgotten something. So on the hydro geologist side of things, we have not met for a significant amount of time, so I'm pulling together the same statistics that Casey and Jim are utilizing for their review. So I'm pulling those together and then I'll get something on the books with you. I know our former board member, Tom Tebb, had agreed to still help out as he is able to on the HG review, but now with board member Halbert also being in HG, I don't know if he would be willing to.

Carla Brock (01:12:37):

And so is Kerry.

Sydney Muhle (01:12:38):

And so is Kerry. I don't know if either or both of you would like to participate on that and if so, we can schedule some time with you to get up to speed on the review side of things.

(01:12:51):

What Carla and Tom had done is they came into the building here at DOL and sat down and actually went over the full exam, and they were able to get through both of them in I think just over three hours. I was super, super impressed. We were fully ready to do a second full day and they were like, we got this. So we can give you guys that opportunity to have that review and then kind of fold your comments into the work that they already did and then bringing you all together with the statistics and all of that and really highlight the areas that you guys need to focus on.

(01:13:35):

I think for the most part, the exam forms were pretty good. There was some language that needed to be updated that just isn't used anymore, and a couple of maths weren't mathing, but these were originally created in the green screen forms and pulled out of that database into Excel and then put into Word and just the changeovers... Some of the math didn't follow correctly, so exponents weren't where they were supposed to be and things like that. And that tracks with a lot of the comments that we had as well. So we're aware of those issues and getting those fixed, but I think those were kind of the main issues. I don't think there were really any questions that you guys pulled out that were issues.

Carla Brock (01:14:24):

Are you digging down to question statistics? Are you going down that far or is it just more general exam statistics?

Sydney Muhle (01:14:31):

No, we're actually digging into question statistics. So one of our management analysts went through all of the exam iterations and the exam cycles and put together the statistics on how frequently questions are answered correctly, incorrectly, and then I think what we're finding on the EG side of things is, okay, does that just mean it's a hard question or is the question incorrect? And that was a really good guide for them to kind of narrow down which ones they need to look at.

Carla Brock (01:15:01):

Yeah, that'll be super helpful I think, to see how they perform and rewrite them or at least evaluate whether or not they need to be rewritten.

Speaker 4 (01:15:10):

One of the things to come to mind is that we still, for both of the exams, we have a bank of questions that when we did the examination development, we did not rotate in. So if we determine that there are questions that we feel are no longer valid or we need to rotate out, we have a bank of questions. So we can go that route before we dive into getting a psychometrician, is rotate in some new questions and see how those perform, and at least that'll give us more information before we look at it. We still have earmarked money for a psychometrician was dedicated and unless the legislature pulls it back, those funds are still there and available.

Carla Brock (01:15:54):

Great. All right. Is there any interest from Carrie or Bill in joining the Hydro exam review committee?

William Halbert (01:16:04):

Yes, I'd be interested.

Carla Brock (01:16:07):

Great. We can have three, right? Yeah, let's all do it. That'd be great. That way when I term off next year, you guys will still be involved.

Sydney Muhle (01:16:16):

You're assuming we let you term off.

(01:16:26):

Notes updated. I will forget by the time we leave this room. Thank you. Okay, so our next one is the Working Titles committee and I'm going to call on Jim. I don't know if you and Tom were able to get together at all before Tom termed off, but they had previously met with our AEG, Elizabeth Lagerberg, and gotten some guidance on what the guardrails are for us to be able to provide any guidance on working titles. And so Jim, did you and Tom meet at all?

James Struthers (01:17:02):

We were not able to meet prior to him departing, unfortunately.

Sydney Muhle (01:17:08):

Okay. So that's something that we can continue to work on. Another option is I can meet with Jim and kind of get what they had completed up to this point and then bring it back at the next meeting, if there's anything else that we need to pull in an additional committee member.

Carla Brock (01:17:26):

That sounds like a good idea.

Speaker 7 (01:17:27):

Yeah, I think it would be helpful to get a summary of what work and information was gathered and kind of a reminder of what the initial committee was formed to do and then identify if there's more.

Sydney Muhle (01:17:41):

Okay. So Jim, I'll get something to you and get on your schedule here in a few weeks.

James Struthers (01:17:50):

Okay, that sounds good.

Noah Dudley (01:17:50):

For my information, is the intent of that committee kind of to suss out what you're allowed to say your title is in a position, based on your level of licensure?

Sydney Muhle (01:18:00):

Yeah. So a little bit of background for the board. This came out of a request from our former board member, Tom Tebb, regarding the use of the title geologist, engineering geologist, hydro geologist, because we're finding that across different sectors, those titles can be used to describe things other than what we would consider the standard professional practice of those types. And the board had expressed a lot of concerns regarding that. I know at the state level we do have some positions that are titled as a hydro geologist, but they're not performing hydro geologist specific work and are not licensed positions. And so that was really what this committee was created to do was to look at how big of an issue is that, what are the risks

associated, and then is there any guidance that the board can put out regarding the use of those titles.

Noah Dudley (01:19:04):

Thank you.

Sydney Muhle (01:19:09):

Okay. And then our last one is the title of this committee we probably need to settle on, but it's basically become our application requirement verification committee. This committee has kind of evolved what they've been doing. Originally it was supposed to be looking at our experience verifiers and making sure that they were people who were able to verify experience and had an adequate background to be able to do that, but it kind of evolved as we went through our last exam cycle to encompass our application requirements in general, because we did have a very large influx this past spring of our non-traditional or alternative pathway applicants. They've been really doing a lot of deep dives on some applications and really spending a lot of time going through and seeing from one person to the next who we are able to approve to sit for the exam.

(01:20:10):

So they have done a lot of work. We do have a couple more to bring to them that have been patiently waiting. Right now what we've been working on with our licensing partners is kind of outlining what that process needs to look like just so that we're making the most efficient use of those board members' time. But they have met, we do have several applications that are still in the works, and I'm sure we'll get more as we're gearing up for the fall exam cycle here in the next couple of months. So I don't know if Carrie or Jim, if you guys had anything to add, but they've been a huge resource for us. I know I have learned a lot going through that process. I know our licensing team has also learned a lot, but just especially with what we're calling non-traditional applicants, it's been a huge education for us to understand just how...

(01:21:03):

It's been a huge education for us to understand just how big the concerns are regarding education.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:21:04]

Carla Brock (01:21:07):

I've been surprised at the number of people-

Sydney Muhle (01:21:10):

Yes, so are we.

Carla Brock (01:21:13):

... That we have reviewed. So that was... Yeah, and when I got on that committee, I was just like, "Wow." I think I was originally told, it's not that much and it's not that often. And then I was like-

Sydney Muhle (01:21:24):

It was originally not that much.

Carla Brock (01:21:27):

It was like over 30 or something like that. I was just like, "Wow."

Sydney Muhle (01:21:31):

Yeah. When we had looked at historical, I think we had up to six a year and so we were like, "Yeah, this will be quick and easy." And then we get into our first meeting, we had 30 applications that they needed to review at least some piece of, and just we had a huge flux from out of state, non-ASBOG member states that very much did not have the traditional that we're used to seeing where we kind more or less have the check boxes that we can just go down the list. They didn't have that and so we had to look for equivalencies and okay, what meets what doesn't. And then we had a lot of verifiers that were not traditional, that we look for verifiers and then we're seeing a big uptick in our alternative pathway applicants as well.

Carla Brock (01:22:21):

That's definitely shed the light though on this whole thing. Again, we were at the Hydro Symposium, the same questions were coming to us, but then also me working on that committee, I'm seeing more and more of those applicants that are coming forward and how do we, as people who are looking at these, try to make it fit in that box, knowing that this is kind of what it's moving towards?

Speaker 6 (01:22:43):

Well, and then also I wonder how it ties into the declining pass rates we're seeing on the fundamentals as we're evaluating these alternative pathways, that more people are allowed to actually sit for the exam. Is it being reflected that these non-traditional pathways aren't providing the education needed to pass the exam? And we're seeing that on that trend of the people passing the fundamentals test.

Sydney Muhle (01:23:11):

I think what's been really eyeopening for us as staff has been most of our professions, you start out with a really small building block and then as you gain additional certifications and experience, you kind of grow your bucket and helping folks understand that with geology, you start out in a big bucket and then you become more specialized as you gain experience and knowledge and additional licenses. And so it's been a very big flip of understanding for folks that I think just we hadn't been in it enough to really understand that and it's helped us be able to explain that a lot better.

James Struthers (01:23:54):

Yeah, this is board members Struthers. I think the committee is really valuable in that it allows a means of consistent decision making regarding some of these issues. I'd really recommend that that committee remain in force pretty consistently.

Sydney Muhle (01:24:15):

Absolutely. I'm pretty sure as staff we're not letting you guys go. We're relying on you too much now.

James Struthers (01:24:23):

Yeah, I think it's... Some of the issues, it's difficult for an individual board member to make some of the decisions that we're making together as a committee.

Carla Brock (01:24:35):

I'd agree. Yeah. Having more than one mind on this, and especially when it comes to experience definitely is valuable.

Sydney Muhle (01:24:47):

And as a staff member, I really have to give kudos to Jim and Carrie and as they're going through these, they're pulling coursework in real time and "Okay, this person came from this university, let's see what that course description actually is," and really putting all of that together. So the amount of work that they're doing in each of these meetings is incredible. So thank you guys very much.

Carla Brock (01:25:09):

Thank you.

Sydney Muhle (01:25:12):

All right, well then I am up next as well on our centralized investigations and audits unit report. Unfortunately they got double booked. So you guys get me for this one again and I'll do my best to answer any questions. Right now we have one case that is an investigation that has not been assigned to a case manager yet. I believe that case is actually still in intake. So I don't even know if it's been assigned to an investigator just yet. And then we have two that are in management review. The one from Vice Chair Gillum I believe will be coming out of that status now that that has been approved. And then one with board member Hanell for a grand total of three, which I think is a little bit high-

Carla Brock (01:25:52):

A lot of access [inaudible 01:25:53] have one staff.

Sydney Muhle (01:25:57):

All right, and then I will turn it over to our program manager, Tanya Hessler from our licensing customer service support team for the licensing cap.

Tanya (01:26:06):

Good morning everyone. I just want to say as the program manager of the licensing unit, the committee's input for all of that influx of applications was greatly appreciated. Very greatly appreciated. All right, so here's the licensee counts broken down from age 65 and above to under 25. Through May of 2024, there are 1815 active geologists, and 277 geologists in training for a grand total of 2092. And then we have our specialty geologist active licensees grand total of 763. From January of '24 through May of '24 the licensing unit has processed 717 renewals and 71 applications. And here's the license history from 2019, showing in 2019, 2215 licensed geologist, and then coming into 2024, that number is now 1815.

Sydney Muhle (01:27:19):

Thank you.

Carla Brock (01:27:19):

Is there any [inaudible 01:27:21] here?

Tanya (01:27:19):

Does anybody have any questions?

Sydney Muhle (01:27:27):

And I did notice the slight dip this year, and so I was actually going to get with Tanya as well as one of our management analysts who helps put together this data and see if that was just because of the renewal period that we're in, if that led to that flux or if that is a true flux. So we'll be digging that.

Tanya (01:27:45):

Thank you.

Speaker 6 (01:27:47):

I'll submit a comment at this point. I've had interaction with multiple licensees that have had trouble with the renewal process just as it is on the website and maybe thinking they renewed their license or can't figure out how to renew their specialty endorsement and occasionally go a long time without realizing that they thought they had renewed it and that isn't actually the case. So we've had quite a bit of conversation about the new website and the new process and I'm not sure what there is to be done about that, other than if there is a detailed instruction that we can put on the website if it isn't already there. This is how you need to do it, these are the boxes you need to check. The language may seem funny on there, but really this is what you're supposed to do. That would be helpful. It may already be there and I apologize if it is.

Sydney Muhle (01:28:48):

I think we have that detailed guide, it just might not be up on the website.

Speaker 8 (01:28:56):

It's more of the fact that you have to renew your geologist license first. You have to pay that one fee and then you either have to click continue or if you come out of that page, you have to log back in and then your endorsement renews on there. And it's a question that I field about five times a day every day. So we could probably add something to...

Sydney Muhle (01:29:21):

Yeah, that's a web update that we need to do. And so we actually do have somebody who has now been tasked with doing all of our web updates for the division. So we'll get on her calendar. She's kind of tied up with the whole revamp and doing all of the behind the scenes everything. But I think she's starting to get freed up now and I've actually had a couple meetings with her this week going, "Okay, I'm ready to start taking some of this on." So we'll get on her calendar and be like, "Okay, we've got a job for you."

Speaker 6 (01:29:51):

That happened to me a couple years ago.

Speaker 9 (01:29:54):

It happened to me this year.

Speaker 6 (01:29:54):

License lapse?

Speaker 9 (01:30:00):

No, no, I didn't let my license lapse, but I came close to my birthday and encountered what you're just describing. I was like, there's no box for me to check to add my endorsement.

Sydney Muhle (01:30:10):

It's very scary, right?

Speaker 9 (01:30:12):

Yeah, it is. And then check out and then keep pushing buttons. And finally when I came back in I was like, "Oh, I can check a box now."

Speaker 8 (01:30:20):

Jeez, now it makes me wonder.

Speaker 9 (01:30:22):

Yeah, super helpful, because again, I have interacted with some that have specialty endorsements that thought, when they went through the process, that wasn't part of it, and it turned out they discovered a little bit later that it wasn't. Then that was very alarming.

Speaker 6 (01:30:39):

I know of somebody who stamped multiple documents during a multi-month period where that happened and yeah, I guess you just track that you made a good faith effort to renew your license at that point.

Sydney Muhle (01:30:50):

I know, if you remember. You know that it didn't renew.

Speaker 6 (01:30:56):

So yeah, if there's frequently asked questions or just a process, like these are the steps, that'd be super helpful. And then if there are actual improvements to the website, that can happen.

Sydney Muhle (01:31:09):

Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 8 (01:31:10):

And is there a reason why it processes that way, that you have to do it separate?

Sydney Muhle (01:31:15):

It's the way that it goes through the system in the background, and because the specialties are technically an endorsement onto your geologist license, the system has to catch up in order to activate that special-

Speaker 8 (01:31:27):

Okay. Can we put something on the news section of the board? We have that little news page. Can we just put something up there that kind of explains it, even if it's just a paragraph saying you have to do this first and then you go in-

Carla Brock (01:31:41):

Double check.

Speaker 8 (01:31:42):

Double check, yeah, your endorsement.

Sydney Muhle (01:31:44):

Yeah, we'll get something on there right away just to give everybody a heads up as we're working through the revamp, but we'll make sure that we get those detailed instructions on [inaudible 01:31:55].

Speaker 8 (01:31:55):

As well. And then it might even be worth reaching out to these 180 people and just confirming that they meant to let their licenses lapse. Or you say you're going to dig into it a little more. I mean if it looks like that might be something that's useful, we could do it, but I mean maybe it'll be obvious that they had no intention of renewing. But...

Sydney Muhle (01:32:17):

Another thing that I've heard of with other programs, and I don't know if it is the case with geo as well, I would assume it is, but that we're finding a lot of our renewal notices that are going out electronically are going into people's spam folders.

Speaker 6 (01:32:33):

... Renewal notice. Or if there could be a notice that, "Oh, your license is lapsed or you're endorsing this lapsed."

Sydney Muhle (01:32:39):

And I think we even had one program that they said they didn't get the initial notice, they didn't get the first past due notice and then they got the, "Hey, you're going to be expired now," that actually came into their inbox and the other two went into spam. We're going, "Okay, how is this being filtered?"

Tanya (01:32:56):

... Dive that they were doing on that, and it had something to do with a link in the renewal notifications. So our system is set up that we have reminders that go out at a 120, 90, 30 days,

and then seven days. That was built into it for all of our programs so that the reminders were actually being sent out, which was really exciting, because that was more than we could do for the paper renewals when we were paper based. Unfortunately what we found out is a lot of the programs are only hearing about it after they have expired with a, "Hey, by the way, your license expired." And they're like, "Why didn't you remind us?"

(01:33:40):

Well, we've got record in the system that it did, but it's going into the spam mail. And so that deep dive looks like it is about a link that is in the renewal notice that is not in the you've expired notice. So they're looking at it and seeing ways because this isn't just a geology program issue, this is across all of our licensing programs, that they're seeing the same issue. Our intent is to make sure that we let our licensees know before they expire because that's less costly for you, lots easier for us. We receive a lot less phone calls and we receive a lot better will when we remind you instead of telling you you're expired. So, working on that.

Speaker 8 (01:34:27):

I will say I do appreciate the reminders, but I also think it is our professional responsibility to make sure our licenses are always active, whether we get reminders or not.

Sydney Muhle (01:34:40):

All right, and then back to me for our master action item list, we're still in the process with our exam review committees. We just went over that. Still working on our charter review with the AGs office. Our specialty exams and how frequently we offer those, that's kind of been placed on hold while we work through the exam reviews and then also getting our arms around the ASBOG exams and how that electronic administration was going to change what that looks like. So we'll probably be bringing that back maybe over the winter to look at for next year now that we've had a couple of ASBOG exam cycles to figure that out.

(01:35:24):

Outreach is always ongoing and I'm sure we'll have more discussions now that we're into summer and we'll start hearing from the universities as they plan for their fall semesters, probably start hearing from them into August. And so any of that that comes forward, we'll bring to the board. Scope of practice discussion we've already covered, reaching out to California to learn how they have dealt with their specialty licenses. I believe we reached out to them and have not heard back. So I will follow up with them again. And then our experience verifier subcommittee is ongoing. So that'll actually be coming off the action list. So let's just see. Any questions?

Carla Brock (01:36:13):

All right. Oh. All right. Thank you Sydney. We have now reached the very exciting public comment portion of the meeting. The public may address the board on matters within our jurisdiction, either verbally during the meeting or by submitting written comments in advance. Written comments are limited to no more than 500 words and must be emailed to board staff no less than two business days prior to the meeting. Sydney, do we have any written comments?

Sydney Muhle (01:36:42):

We do have one.

Carla Brock (01:36:43):

Okay. In addition to the written comments, verbal comments may be raised during the meeting and are limited to one three minute comment. In response to all public comments, either written or verbal, the board is limited to requesting that the matter be added to a future agenda for discussion or directing staff to study the matter further. We are not able to discuss public comments that are raised today in today's meeting, and inflammatory comments and language will not be permitted. So I guess we'll first ask for verbal comments and then we'll have Sydney read the written comments. So are there any participants on the phone call that wish to provide a public comment? Okay, looks like not. If there are, feel free to raise your hand until we get to the end of the public comment section of the meeting, and I'll turn it over to Sydney to read the written comment.

Sydney Muhle (01:37:54):

All right. Hello. I'm writing to the board in hopes of getting some clarification on the purposes of preparing to retake the Hydrogeologist specialty licensing exam and to provide some comments regarding the exam and the reference list. Clear communication of expectations for memorization of formulas and conversion factors would help all examinees know what is needed to be prepared to sit for the exam. When I took the exam I did not understand why some formulas or conversion factors were provided and others were expected to be memorized. It seemed random. Hydrogeologic formulas aren't something we need or are expected to have memorized as part of our professional work. What is expected is to know how to apply them to specific problems and it seems reasonable that this should be reflected on the test. Providing formulas and conversion factors needed to answer exam questions seems appropriate. Can you confirm what the expectations are regarding memorization?

(01:38:59):

There is a total of 47 references in the study guide, 36 of which each contribute only 1% of the exam. Many of these references appear to cover the same topic. The content specifications help some, but there is a lot of redundancy. There are over 15,000 pages of material. This makes obtaining and reviewing all of the material seem unrealistic given that we are primarily professionals with full-time jobs, many of us with families. An improvement would be to list specific chapters or page ranges within each textbook/reference, particularly for references that only contribute one to 3% of exam questions. References on the study guide are from 2008 and earlier. The majority are pre-2000. While some practices and concepts have not changed over the last 20 years, some have changed significantly. I'm concerned that using more up-to-date resources such as those examinees would be exposed to on the job or by attending conferences, webinars, and trainings could result in getting questions wrong on the exam.

(01:40:11):

Hydrogeologists should be assessed based on the current standard of practice. Some of the older reference material is difficult to obtain or no longer available. The rough estimate of the total cost of obtaining all available references is \$ 1716 to \$2345. Because hydrogeology is a specialty area of study, the average local library will not have these resources and this represents a significant expense to the examinees. I've attached the reference list with the cost

estimates, number of pages, and some additional comments/questions regarding availability of specific additions and items that are no longer available. The above comments falls within the 500 word limit for public comments. Not sure if the only way you can review comments or questions from the public is through this process, in which case my comments/questions regarding specific references would need to be submitted separately. Please let me know. I hope to attend the last half hour of the board meeting this Thursday, but I have another meeting to attend so may not be able to. Thank you Diane [inaudible 01:41:24]. So if the board likes, we can forward that to the HG committee for part of their review.

Speaker 8 (01:41:32):

That's a good idea. Yes.

Sydney Muhle (01:41:40):

Okay.

Carla Brock (01:41:41):

It's time to move on to the conclusion of our meeting. We'll start with announcements. Are there any board members that have announcements they would like to share at this time? Okay. Are there any requests from board members for future agenda items? Future meeting agenda items. All right, Sydney, can we review the action items list and the items for the next agenda?

Sydney Muhle (01:42:23):

So with the budget discussion, we have to bring back additional data to the board at a future meeting, developing a one pager of information on the geologist profession to provide at outreach events, coordinating attendance of licensing professional at the 2026 Hydrogeology Symposium and future symposiums, sending the board the most recent ASBOG exam result packet and keeping that as a standing practice. I will be reaching out to the WAC update committee members to start scheduling a meeting, coordinating the travel for Chair Brock to attend the ASBOG annual meeting in October and continuing to coordinate the EG exam review, including the meeting in Oregon. Sorry, consolidating the work associated with the HG exam and getting that scheduled with our new committee members, scheduling a meeting with board member Struthers on the working title practice. And then I'll be working with our licensing team on the licensee counts as well as the website update.

Carla Brock (01:43:52):

Great. That is a lot to do.

Sydney Muhle (01:43:54):

It's a lot to do.

Carla Brock (01:43:54):

You can do it.

Sydney Muhle (01:43:54):

You guys are never boring.

Carla Brock (01:44:00):

Okay, well I think that's it for today. The time is now 11:45 and this meeting is adjourned.

Sydney Muhle (01:44:09):

Thank you guys.

Carla Brock (01:44:10):

Thanks everybody.

James Struthers (01:44:11):

Yeah, you guys take care.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:44:16]