

Washington State Geologist Licensing Board meeting transcript – December 07, 2024

Chair Hanell (00:00:02):

Calling this special board meeting of the Geologist Licensing Board to order. The board will provide an opportunity for public comment during the meeting.

(00:00:11):

As a courtesy, we encourage participants to mute their mics or your phone if you called in when you are not speaking, to reduce the background noise. One challenge is remembering to unmute your microphone or your phone when you are speaking.

(00:00:26):

Also for board members to help us capture information correctly, please state your name when making comments. Thank you. And I'll turn it over to Susan. Will you please take roll call?

Susan (00:00:39):

Yes, I'll start with you. Chair Hanell.

Chair Hanell (00:00:43):

Present.

Susan (00:00:44):

Vice Chair Brock.

Vice Chair Brock (00:00:46):

Present.

Susan (00:00:48):

Board Member Gillum.

Member Gillum (00:00:50):

Present.

Susan (00:00:52):

Board Member Struthers.

Member Struthers (00:00:54):

Present.

Susan (00:00:56):

Board Member Tebb.

Member Tebb (00:00:58):

Present.

Susan (00:00:59):

And Board Member Webb.

Member Webb (00:01:01):

Present.

Susan (00:01:02):

Wonderful. Thank you.

Chair Hanell (00:01:07):

All right, so we'll move next to the approval of our agenda. I will need both a motion and a second to approve the agenda for the day.

Member Tebb (00:01:24):

Chair Hanell, I'll make a motion to approve the agenda.

Member Struthers (00:01:31):

Yeah, this is Member Struthers. I second that motion.

Chair Hanell (00:01:36):

All right, the motion has been moved and seconded. Is there any discussion? All right, hearing none we'll move to a vote. All in favor of approval, say aye.

Vice Chair Brock (00:01:53):

Aye.

Member Webb (00:01:54):

Aye.

Member Struthers (00:01:54):

Aye.

Member Tebb (00:01:54):

Aye.

Member Gillum (00:01:54):

Aye.

Chair Hanell (00:01:57):

Aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, the motion carries. We have an agenda for the day, so we'll move to Item Number 4. It's the approval of our meeting minutes from our special meeting on September 14th, so we'll do the same. We'll need a motion and a second for approval of our meeting minutes.

Vice Chair Brock (00:02:36):

This is Carla. I make a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented in the packet.

Member Tebb (00:02:42):

Yeah, this is Board Member Tebb. I'll make a second.

Chair Hanell (00:02:48):

All right. The motion has been moved and seconded. Is there any discussion of our meeting minutes from the September 14th meeting?

(00:03:04):

Hearing none, we'll move to a vote. All in favor of approving the meeting minutes from September 14th, say aye.

Vice Chair Brock (00:03:11):

Aye.

Member Tebb (00:03:12):

Aye.

Member Struthers (00:03:12):

Aye.

Member Webb (00:03:12):

Aye.

Member Gillum (00:03:12):

Aye.

Chair Hanell (00:03:16):

Aye. Any opposed? All right, hearing none, the motion carries. And we'll move to Item Number 5. For this item, Awards and Recognition, I'll ask Sydney to take over.

Sydney Muhle (00:03:40):

Thank you. Thank you. Welcome everybody. It is my pleasure this morning to introduce our newest team member, our military spouse liaison Jason Lin to the board.

(00:03:52):

Mr. Lin joined the department a couple of months ago. And I'll turn it over to him to tell you a little bit more about himself and what he does.

Jason Lin (00:04:03):

Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Thanks for having me here this morning. My name's Jason Lin. As Sydney said, I've just joined the department here in the last couple of months. I am the military spouse liaison here with the Boards, Commissions, and Outreach Team.

(00:04:23):

I'm from Florida, attended the University of Alabama where I got my bachelor's degree before joining the Navy. So I spent 20 years in the Navy. I was a linguist. I learned Arabic and Pashto. Spent some time in that region of the world, but I was able to relocate here for my final tour.

(00:04:41):

My wife's from the area, so we wanted to get back out here to Washington and settle down. And we were able to do that in 2020. So I just recently retired in August before coming here to the department.

(00:04:55):

I'm really excited to be here. The military community, military spouse community is one that I have obviously a great admiration for. It's one I'm close to.

(00:05:07):

And being here, being able to help the department work on removing some of the barriers for military spouse licensure, professional licensure here in Washington is going to be something that I'm really excited about, and look forward to helping be part of the solution.

(00:05:29):

Some of the implementation with this program requires some training. So everyone has likely seen the emails with the training that was put together by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It's a quick 30-minute; if 30 minutes is quick; it's a quick 30-minute video with a little survey at the end.

(00:05:53):

There's a lot of good information in there. I've watched it. I think everyone on our team has watched it, so I think it'll shed some light on some of the barriers and some of the issues that affect the military spouse community.

(00:06:10):

Then once we complete that, we had a requirement by January 1st. We will fulfill that requirement, and then we'll have a lot of work to do in the next year or so as we move forward.

(00:06:19):

So thank you for having me. I'm glad to be here, and I look forward to working with everyone.

Sydney Muhle (00:06:26):

And really quick before we move on, just to reiterate what Jason was saying about that training: I know a good portion of our board has completed that. But if you have not, if you could bump that up your priority list a little bit, we would really appreciate it.

(00:06:42):

We do have until the end of the calendar year. But we also don't want it running into everybody's holiday schedules and us trying to hunt you down while you're spending time with your families. And we'd like to really stop pestering everybody about it. But now that we're within the same month and we're creeping up on the deadline, we're starting to pester people more and more.

(00:07:04):

So if you could please get that done as quickly as you can, if you have not already. We'll get you added to our tracker and get you removed off the list so you can stop seeing the bothersome emails from us.

Chair Hanell (00:07:23):

All right, thank you, Jason, and welcome. Board Member Tebb.

Member Tebb (00:07:29):

Yeah, I just wanted to welcome Jason and I appreciate the work he's doing. I would imagine if we haven't gotten an email recently to fulfill the training, that we've met that requirement.

(00:07:42):

I'm pretty sure I have, but I've got a lot's going on. So I may have misunderstood whether I've taken the training or not, but I believe I did.

Sydney Muhle (00:07:53):

I believe you did. But I will double-check our training log. We'll actually be sending out another reminder either this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

Member Tebb (00:08:01):

All right, thank you.

Sydney Muhle (00:08:01):

That way it's nice and fresh for everybody. So if you don't get that reminder email, that means that you have completed it.

Chair Hanell (00:08:10):

All right, thanks Sydney. Thanks for helping us all stay on track with getting trained as well.

(00:08:19):

All right, we'll move to Item Number 6 on our agenda, Old Business. We'll start with an outreach update and discussion. So I'll ask if there's any board members or board staff that have outreach activities to report out on for this meeting.

Sydney Muhle (00:08:45):

I can start us off. We did get some additional contact from the University of Washington, and they've requested a board member attend one of their classes, I believe, today. And Vice Chair Brock was kind enough to agree. Unfortunately, they let us know last minute.

(00:09:06):

So I reached out to Vice Chair Brock directly and said, "Hey, do you happen to have availability?" And she did. So thank you to her for doing that today.

(00:09:16):

I'm looking forward on the report out. Because it kind of feels like this one's been a little bit haphazard with UW. So hopefully we'll get a little bit more streamlined for next go-around and have a little bit better planning in place.

(00:09:30):

But I think them trying to plan around holidays and finals and when the university was shut down, it's just been a little bit chaotic. So hopefully that won't be the case moving forward.

(00:09:42):

We are still waiting to hear from WSU and hopefully get on their schedule for the spring. But at least establishing a good relationship with UW and people to contact and getting to know their department a little bit better.

Chair Hanell (00:10:07):

Thanks for that update, Sydney. And thanks, Carla, for taking that on.

(00:10:14):

Other outreach updates or discussion around outreach?

Sydney Muhle (00:10:22):

I guess one more quick thing on this: we did find the spreadsheet that the board had discussed at the last meeting with all of the information on it. Susan was finally able to get through the entire thing just this past couple of days to make sure everything was accurate and up to date, and that we're including the most recent contacts we've gotten from UW.

(00:10:44):

But I don't know if it is just the version that the spreadsheet was originally created in, not necessarily agreeing with how Excel is operating now or what's going on; but we're encountering some struggles with the spreadsheet. That's why you all have not received it yet.

(00:11:01):

We're going to try and get it into a little bit more user-friendly format, and then we'll ship it out to you guys. We just ran out of time before this board meeting. But it is in progress and we're working on it, so we'll get it out as quickly as we can.

Chair Hanell (00:11:19):

Fantastic, thank you, Sydney. Other comments or discussion on outreach for this meeting? Board Member Tebb.

Member Tebb (00:11:32):

Yes, thank you. I was curious: are we planning any events in the spring, or in 2024 for that matter, for any kind of in-person board visits to any colleges? Or is that part of the planning process that once we get the list that we'll go through? Maybe I'm jumping the gun here.

Sydney Muhle (00:11:56):

I imagine that's one that as we get through the list, the one today with UW, it was just kind of a last minute, "Hey, we're going to be doing this virtually, if you guys are able to attend."

(00:12:09):

"Cool."

(00:12:09):

"It's just for a quick hour."

(00:12:14):

And even on their side they're going, "We don't see the need to bring somebody all the way in for an hour-long class."

(00:12:21):

So we're just kind of taking it event by event, looking at each one and what the universities are asking for as well. So yeah, that's certainly a possibility.

(00:12:32):

We're just waiting to hear from the universities and what they have going on. Because they're all trying to navigate the new virtual world as well in making those transitions.

Member Tebb (00:12:41):

Thank you.

Chair Hanell (00:12:49):

All right, any other thoughts on outreach activities?

(00:13:00):

All right, very good. We'll move to Item 6.2 in our Old Business, which is a discussion about the professional licensing for geomorphology and fluvial geomorphology. This relates back a little bit to comments we have received in the past, and we've had some board conversation around it.

(00:13:25):

I understand we have some new public comments on this subject. So I think for the benefit of this discussion, it would be helpful to hear those comments now. And then in doing so, opening up the opportunity for any public comment specific to this topic. But Board Member Brock?

Vice Chair Brock (00:13:49):

I was just wondering if we could have a quick update on the background for this. I think it was tied back to a single public comment. So I was just wondering if we could just get a quick update before we dive into it on the reason that it's on the agenda for this meeting.

Sydney Muhle (00:14:06):

Absolutely. This is tied to a public comment that the board did receive over the summer. The subject was brought forward by public member Jeff Phillips, just requesting information about why geomorphologists and fluvial geomorphologists were required to have a geologist license in Washington state.

(00:14:32):

So when the board discussed it at the ... Let me back up a little bit. When the subject first came up, it came up as a public comment. The board can't discuss public comments as just a public comment. So

from there, the board requested that it be put on the agenda for the following meeting. That was in September.

(00:14:49):

In September the board had a brief discussion about the pros and cons, both directions, and requested that staff come back with a little bit more research about the impact of this topic on current active licensees. We've done the research that we are able to, and we'll provide all of that as the discussion moves forward.

(00:15:14):

But that was where it was left, though there was a general sense that fluvial geomorphology and geomorphology are tied into the practice of geology in Washington state, and are topics that are covered under ASBOG examination and the licensure that we issue based upon that.

(00:15:38):

So before the board made any determination one way or another, we wanted to see what the impact of this would be. And that is where we are at today.

Vice Chair Brock (00:15:52):

Do we know where that indication of licensure requirements came from? Did that come out of a complaint or a board review of a complaint case? Or do we know who it is, or who indicated to this public person that licensure was a requirement?

Sydney Muhle (00:16:12):

I do not know who indicated that licensure was a requirement. Unfortunately, I don't know. I didn't think to dig in that far on it.

(00:16:23):

It's a very small number of people. But I imagine, just based on the reading of the geologist RCWs and WACs, somewhere along the way it appeared to someone that geomorphology fell under the practice of geology as it's defined in Washington state.

Vice Chair Brock (00:16:44):

Okay. Thanks.

Sydney Muhle (00:16:49):

All right, And so with that I can go ahead and read the two additional public comments that we have received on this. First one was received December 4th from Dan Scott.

(00:17:00):

"Dear Board Members, Please consider the following public comment regarding the applicability of the Washington state geologist license LG to fluvial geomorphology.

(00:17:10):

"Many river management agencies require either a Professional Engineering, PE, or Licensed Geologist, LG, to supervise river engineering and assessment work. Or, more broadly, work that falls within the scope of fluvial geomorphology.

(00:17:27):

"However, having just gone through the process of earning my own geology license, I found the geology license to be an inadequate test of whether a professional is able to supervise and/or lead fluvial geomorphic work.

(00:17:42):

"The knowledge and experience requirements for geology licensure focus strongly on the core aspects of geology such as hydrogeology, geophysics, geochemistry, engineering geology, and economic geology, which are generally not required to practice fluvial geomorphology effectively and safely. Geomorphology is only a small portion of the ASBOG exams, and one can acquire an LG without having taken a single geomorphology course.

(00:18:16):

"This mismatch also excludes fluvial geomorphologists from professional practice. Fluvial geomorphic knowledge intersects only marginally with the knowledge and educational requirements for traditional geologic practice. It is thus difficult and can be infeasible for someone fully trained as a fluvial geomorphologist to acquire the knowledge and education required for geology licensure.

(00:18:43):

"For example, I hold a BS in earth and space science from the University of Washington. And I felt like I was learning an entirely new, and for my work, mostly entirely useless field of study just to pass the ASBOG exams.

(00:18:59):

"For fluvial geomorphologists coming from a physical geographical background, geology licensure is entirely out of reach, due to the lack of education in geologic topics that are completely irrelevant to most fluvial geomorphic work.

(00:19:20):

"This mismatch between the knowledge required for an LG, and the knowledge required for the actual practice of fluvial geomorphology, negatively impacts fluvial geomorphic practice.

(00:19:32):

"Specifically, it prevents otherwise-qualified professionals from practicing to the full extent of their abilities; places unnecessary burden on those who can seek licensure; and allows those who may be only poorly qualified geologists lacking fluvial geomorphic training to legally practice on the margins of their scope of professional experience.

(00:19:56):

"I suggest the board discuss how to rectify this issue. One potential solution could be to create a separate license specific to fluvial geomorphology, as it differs substantially from the practice of more traditional geology.

(00:20:13):

"Alternatively, the state could consider informing agencies that an LG should not be a requirement for performing fluvial geomorphic work, if a definition of that work could be found that differentiates it from more traditional geologic practice. Thank you for considering this comment.

(00:20:33):

"Sincerely, Dan Scott, PhD LG."

(00:20:40):

Second one:

(00:20:40):

"Dear Board Members, I write to comment on the issue of requiring a geology license for professional practice of geomorphology and fluvial geomorphology that you are currently considering.

(00:20:55):

"I'm a professor with the University of Illinois specializing in fluvial geomorphology. I listened to the discussion from your September 14th meeting, and have concerns about limiting qualifications for the practice of geomorphology and fluvial geomorphology to someone with a geology license.

(00:21:14):

"Within the United States, the field of geomorphology has a long history dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, in which it has been embedded as an academic discipline within both geography and geology. All three of my degrees; bachelor's, master's, PhD; were obtained within geography departments.

(00:21:36):

"Many academic programs that train geomorphologists can be found in geography departments, including my own department here at the University of Illinois.

(00:21:45):

"Other prominent geomorphology programs in the United States that are offered in geography departments include those at Dartmouth University, the University of Wisconsin, UCLA, Michigan State University, University of California at Berkeley, Louisiana State University, the University of Florida, Texas A&M University, the University of Alabama, the University of Colorado, the University of Oregon, and Arizona State University to name a few.

(00:22:13):

"Outside of the United States, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and other countries, geomorphology is primarily housed in geography departments rather than in geology departments.

(00:22:23):

"At the University of Washington, as you note, geomorphology is offered in the geological sciences. And the geography department does not offer a geomorphology program. Not all geography departments in the US offer geomorphology, but neither do all geology departments.

(00:22:43):

"Over the years, I personally have trained my students in geomorphology at the bachelor's, master's, and PhD levels. And most of these former students are now professional geomorphologists in academia, in government agencies, and in the private sector.

(00:22:59):

"I am certain that my numerous colleagues who are faculty members specializing in geomorphology within geography departments in the United States and around the world can make similar claims about their former students.

(00:23:12):

"These colleagues not only have educated and trained many professional geomorphologists in the workforce, they have also contributed through their own research to fundamental knowledge in the field of geomorphology.

(00:23:24):

"To contribute to geomorphology education, I recently published a textbook that is being used by many departments, including geology departments in courses on geomorphology. This textbook is a product of my experience teaching courses related to fluvial geomorphology over 35 years.

(00:23:45):

"I understand that creating a separate license program for geomorphology would be difficult, and it may be hard to justify. But geomorphology truly is an interdisciplinary field that transcends geology. Over the past 30 years, this field has expanded into civil engineering, and has become embraced by many ecologists as well.

(00:24:08):

"A geology degree is not necessary to be a geomorphologist. But some training in geology is part of the curricula related to geomorphology. Training in physical geography, including courses in geomorphology, as well as remote sensing and GIS, and in civil engineering is also important in geomorphology.

(00:24:34):

"If you want to attract a diverse group of highly qualified professionals in the field to work in your state, you may want to consider relaxing or modifying in some way the requirement of a geology license for geomorphologists.

(00:24:49):

"Sincerely, Professor Bruce Rhoads, University of Illinois."

Chair Hanell (00:24:58):

All right, thank you Sydney. And then, am I correct now that because we accepted those public comments at this point in the discussion, it's appropriate to open up the floor for any audience members that may have a public comment specifically related to this topic? Is that correct?

Sydney Muhle (00:25:16):

Correct. Any public comments related to any other topic, not geomorphology or fluvial geomorphology, will need to wait until the public comment portion of the agenda. However, the board can allow for public comments on this topic at this time.

Chair Hanell (00:25:31):

All right. So at this time, I'll ask if there are any members of the public present at this meeting that have a comment specifically related to this topic of geomorphology, fluvial geomorphology and licensing?

Jeff Phillips (00:25:54):

I can start. This is Jeff Phillips. I'm the public member that started this process through my first public comment.

(00:26:05):

I guess what I would like to do is echo the public comments that we just heard. I don't really think I need to add to those, but I would just like to note a couple of things.

(00:26:19):

I provided a packet of information, which included a set of I think around 40 responses from a message I sent out to Geomorphlist, which is a listserv for geomorphologists that's international. You can look through those comments and get a sense of the response that I got from that group.

(00:26:48):

Then I also have a spreadsheet that was provided. Hopefully you have that, which is through those comments, a list that was compiled of the universities in the United States where geomorphology is in a non-geology program.

(00:27:08):

So that's one thing. I don't know if we want to discuss those or confirm that the board has those materials, but that's the first thing.

(00:27:16):

And then I guess the second piece is that I would just like to open up any questions that you might have. I unfortunately wasn't able to address any public comments at your last meeting. I was on the road and lost service and wasn't able to join.

(00:27:39):

But I know in the beginning part of the session there were a lot of questions about me and my background, how many others are there like me, and just, "Where's this guy coming from?" sort of questions. So I'd be happy to answer any board member questions.

Chair Hanell (00:28:02):

Board Member Brock.

Vice Chair Brock (00:28:05):

Hi, Jeff. I guess I would pose the same question to you that I posed at the beginning of this discussion today. Is that, do you know where the indication of licensure requirement came from?

Jeff Phillips (00:28:18):

Yeah, it's been with me my entire career. I started at the Skagit River System Cooperative. I was actually more of a broad geomorphologist at that point, and not focused as much as I am now on fluvial geomorphology.

(00:28:40):

I worked with the tribes as a co-manager, and we identified unstable slopes. And when timber companies were laying out harvest areas, that requires a geology license.

(00:29:00):

At the time, I worked with a licensed geologist who had been grandfathered in when the licensure was first set up. He was a hydrologist. He didn't have a geology background, but he was grandfathered in.

(00:29:15):

That was the first time I went to attempt to get an LG. And I wasn't able to because of my background is the University of Utah physical geography earth science. I actually took several courses in the geology department, but I didn't take the full undergrad that's required for the license. So I was denied.

(00:29:43):

And then later I worked at Tetra Tech. That's when I focused more on specifically river work. We started getting a request for proposals, so that was as a consultant. And we'd get requests for proposals that had the requirement that-

Jeff Phillips (00:30:02):

That had the requirement that you had an LG and a PE. So then I made my second attempt and really at that time I poured everything out there. Not just my educational background, but also my work experience at that point, because I had quite a lot of work experience and I was denied then. Then most recently, I'm actually working at a firm called Biota Research and Consulting and we're a subcontractor to Jacobs who does work with WSDOT. So I work on fish passage projects for WSDOT. We were interested in doing peer review for them and there was an LG requirement for me to be able to do peer review for geomorphology for WSDOT fish passage projects.

(00:31:00):

So to me it's been, throughout my career, I see it now. There's been very recently a post from WSDOT and their requirement is that either... So it's for a fluvial, geomorphologist junior level and you have to either have an LG or a PE or be able to get one. So basically to my mind, you should just be hiring an engineer or a geologist at that point, because as was stated, you're ruling out a decent number of geomorphologists when you make those requirements.

PART 1 OF 5 ENDS [00:30:04]

Chair Hanell (00:31:47):

Okay. Other-

Vice Chair Brock (00:31:48):

So it's-

Chair Hanell (00:31:48):

Oh, go ahead, Carla.

Vice Chair Brock (00:31:50):

I was just going to clarify. So it sounds like there's two separate issues here. One is employer requirements for employment and the other is the ability of people who have a geomorphology education that comes out of a geography program not being able to meet the educational requirements for even testing for an LG license. Is that true?

Jeff Phillips (00:32:19):

Yeah. That's exactly my experience, is that if I had had the opportunity to sit for the exam, I would've taken it and I think I would've been happy enough to have a geology license, even though I know that that's not really going to... I see it as inappropriate for my field, but I would've been happy to do that as just a matter of course, especially early on in my career. I wasn't able to because of my educational background. Just to put it in perspective, it would've literally been essentially going through an entire undergrad. Because if you haven't taken the core geology courses, it's not just like taking a couple of courses. It's years of undergraduate study when you're already in your workplace and in your field working.

Chair Hanell (00:33:22):

Board Member Tebb.

Member Tebb (00:33:24):

Yeah. Thank you for the opportunity for this discussion. Two questions. First question is, I guess for our board staff to help clarify. This essentially, this requirement, came out of the legislation that enabled geology licensing. Is that an accurate statement?

Sydney Muhle (00:33:47):

Yes, and I'm actually pulling up the geologist statutes right now. So if we can come back to that question? Where I keep circling from a staff perspective is the work being done meeting the work defined as being to be done under a geologist license in Washington state? So I'm pulling that up.

Member Tebb (00:34:12):

Yeah, that's my understanding, which is why I asked the question. Wondering if it might need a legislative fix? Then secondarily along those lines, how are other states do we know... Maybe Jeff or someone from the public can respond here who's interested in this topic. How are other states addressing this issue?

Jeff Phillips (00:34:35):

I can start and I see Dan has his hand up and he can probably carry on from there. Actually, I live in Wyoming currently and I work in Wyoming and Idaho primarily. Then really just the WSDOT work in Washington. I know in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the field of geomorphology is not a licensed field, is how they handle it. So in a similar situation where we're doing a river design project, where in Washington they might require you have a PE and an LG, here in these states it's really just a PE. So the PE ends up being the stamp for the projects.

Member Tebb (00:35:38):

Thank you.

Sydney Muhle (00:35:40):

Before we call on anybody else to answer that, I just want to point out we have to be very careful with the Open Public Meetings Act requirements. So we can't have a ton of ongoing conversation. I know we're trying to get to the bottom of this and that's why I've been letting it roll. We want to be really careful about having too much back and forth dialogue on public comments. I just don't want us to get in trouble.

Chair Hanell (00:36:09):

Appreciate that. Thank you Sydney. So I do see a hand up from another public member, Dan Scott. Dan, would you like to provide public comment on this topic?

Dan Scott (00:36:24):

Yes. Thank you for holding this discussion and reading my comment earlier. I just wanted to add to what Jeff mentioned. Two things. Jeff, I second what you were saying about the way other states deal with this. To my knowledge, I live in Colorado and I practice in both Washington and Colorado, and in Colorado there is no LG licensure. There's no geologist licensure, so they sidestep the issue to some degree. I don't know of a state that has separated out fluvial geomorphology. I wish I had an example of that to give.

(00:37:00):

The thing I wanted to add earlier, just to clarify the problems that this causes. Carla, I think you mentioned two of them, which was people getting employment and not being able to acquire licensure to get employment and then people not being able to do work. The third one I would add, and this comes from the employer side of things. So I'm an owner at Watershed Science & Engineering and we've been actively trying to hire another fluvial geomorphologist and we've found that we've had a lot of difficulty finding someone who could both fulfill the job position. So of actually doing fluvial geomorphology, while eventually also being able to acquire their LG to practice more independently. So we've seen our hiring pool be significantly restricted by this requirement. So it not only affects people trying to do work and people trying to get jobs, but also employers who are trying to hire people to do fluvial geomorphologic work.

Chair Hanell (00:38:08):

Thank you very much for that comment, Dan. All right. Are there other public comments from members of the public that are here today that would like to offer comment on this topic prior to a more broad board discussion of the topic?

(00:38:37):

All right. Hearing none. Let's open it up for a little bit more board discussion. I do have a few thoughts, so I will share them. One, another issue I heard within the comment was a concern that someone that obtains a geologist license then has the authority to do fluvial geomorphology, even if it's been a very minimal part of their training. My understanding of the law is that's incorrect. Just because you have a license, you still are required to practice within your scope of knowledge and training. So a geologist license does not authorize you to practice fluvial geomorphology if you are not trained in it and don't have education and experience. So I wanted to address that concern and that point and I'm interested in other Board Member opinions on that, especially if they're different than that. Any other information on that? Board Member, Struthers?

James Struthers (00:39:47):

Yeah, Casey, I think I would second that sentiment. I would fall in that category of people that does not practice in fluvial geomorphology, even though I am a licensed geologist. So there is a requirement in the law and in the regulations to practice within your scope of knowledge. So nothing really about the licensure framework really allows, it doesn't authorize people to do things that are beyond what they are actually knowledgeable from a professional perspective.

Chair Hanell (00:40:34):

Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (00:40:36):

So just to return to Board Member Tebb's question, I did pull up the definitions in our RCWs for the practice of geology. If the board wants, I can also read the definitions for practice of engineering geology and hydrogeology, but since we're specifically talking about the LG licensure. So in the RCW, the practice of geology means the performance of geological services, sorry, lost my place, to work including but not limited to the collection of geological data, consultation, investigation, evaluation, interpreting, planning, geological mapping or inspection related to the services work that applies to geology and the responsible supervision thereof, the performance of which is related to public welfare or the safeguarding of life, health property and the environment except as otherwise specified or provided for it in this chapter.

Chair Hanell (00:41:53):

Thank you, Sydney. So we can maybe with that background and then, if you wouldn't mind, would you also read the definition of the practice of engineering geology please, Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (00:42:12):

Absolutely. Had to highlight it for myself, so hopefully I don't lose my place this time. So the practice of engineering geology means performing of geological services or work including but not limited to consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, geological mapping, and inspection of geological work and the responsible supervision thereof, the performance of which is related to public welfare or the safeguarding of life, health property and the environment except as otherwise specifically provided by this chapter. Includes, but is not limited to the commonly recognized geological practices of construction, geology, environmental geology, and urban geology.

Chair Hanell (00:42:58):

Thank you. So first, again, I'd really like to appreciate Jeff and Dan both bringing the comments and everyone that's submitted comments. I have a lot of empathy, because my background is in what I would say forest geomorphology, but that translated into a need to learn engineering geology. Even though I had a very niche role, I too spent the beginning of my career doing work sounds like similar to what you were doing, Jeff, slope stability in the forest. I actually brought concerns to the board back in 2009 when I was having problems or having this a similar conundrum of having a small niche of practice and a narrow field, but that does fall under a license. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, I had the opportunity to expand my scope of knowledge and learning and studying and coursework. So I think when we get into fields that do have fairly niche practice or a narrow scope of practice and they have a license requirement, this is just a dynamic that plays out under our current RCW and licensing structure.

(00:44:34):

I think that the concern, Jeff, that you were bringing up about education requirements, and I think Dan as well, education requirements being such that students trained in a cross disciplinary way might not

meet the education requirements. I believe the board updated education requirements in 2019, I want to say, but there is now a clause in there for educational equivalencies. So while some attempts prior to 2019 might've been a little more black and white on whether you met the course requirements or not, the WAC definitions now include the opportunity for an evaluation of educational equivalency, which can include on-the-job training. So where we are at the current state I think is more open to considering alternative education/on-the-job training education in determining whether an applicant is able to sit for the exam or not. So I wanted to share that out as well.

(00:45:59):

Then depending on what the actual work is that we're talking about with our current RCW, it does seem to squarely fit in RCW definition of the practice of geology and potentially engineering geology. So that is an RCW requirement in our state at this current time, but I'll open it up for other Board Members' thoughts, reflections, comments. Board Member Struthers?

James Struthers (00:46:54):

I spent some time going through the list of programs that was provided and it was during my review I noted that it was somewhat of a mixed bag. It seemed that of the institutions that were listed, many of them had not a lot of coursework in terms of geomorphology or they didn't have a geography program or some other place that would cover the teaching of geomorphology or that course content was actually administered under the geology programs. So I'm not really clear what the list of institutions provided really was intended to convey since it does seem like a mixed landscape out there, which I think is part of the problem as you indicated, Casey, that we're facing. It's an edge or multidisciplinary field similar in that way to what we see with engineering geology.

(00:48:19):

I would just like to convey that it does appear as you indicated to be covered within the umbrella of the RCW as currently framed. So I'm not really sure where else you would regulate it. Being fluvial geomorphology does have the potential to impact the public quite strongly, I'm not sure that exempting it from regulation is probably a wise path. As Tom indicated, that would probably take some legislative solution.

Chair Hanell (00:49:01):

Board Member Brock.

Vice Chair Brock (00:49:04):

Thanks. Yeah. I think about what we can do as a board and even as the licensing department to address this issue and I think the only thing we can do is look at educational equivalency on a case-by-case basis. We can't change what employers require for hiring. We can't probably change the definition of the practice of geology. I don't know this for sure, but I doubt that the state is willing to put the resources into a separate regulatory and licensure program for fluvial geomorphologists. It seems like the only thing we can do is try to help people who have unconventional geology educations meet job requirements by providing some more flexibility in our educational equivalency reviews.

Chair Hanell (00:50:17):

We'll go with Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (00:50:21):

Just to Vice Chair Brock's point, that is actually something that we'll be bringing up and discussing later in the meeting that we as staff have found a little bit of risk associated with our current practices and how we've been reviewing particularly non-traditional pathways. Given that the field of geology is so broad and does vary so widely across the United States and how it's regulated, we've found some risks associated. So we'll actually be bringing that topic up here in just a few minutes.

Chair Hanell (00:51:02):

Board Members Struthers?

James Struthers (00:51:05):

Yeah. I'd like to dive in a little bit on something that Board Member Brock brought up. The board really doesn't have a lot of control over how perspective contract issuers like Washington State Department of Transportation choose to frame the requirements for their contracts. They're perfectly within their rights to just state a requirement that someone would be a fluvial geomorphologist, but then also piggy back additional requirements on top of that. That is a common thing that you see. It's similar to what you see and in requirements by some municipalities that geotechnical construction work that would be otherwise within the license purview of an engineering geologist to supervise be performed only by an engineer. They have the ability to add additional requirements beyond the licensure.

Chair Hanell (00:52:23):

Right. Other board comments or discussion on this topic?

Eileen Webb (00:52:33):

This is Eileen. I just want to say that I agree totally with Carla and that's all I want to say. Ditto.

Chair Hanell (00:52:42):

Board Member Webb, could I get you to maybe articulate just a little bit more which specific parts of Board Member Brock's comments you agree with.

Eileen Webb (00:52:52):

Everything she said. I also understand the follow-up comment about the difficulty of potentially doing a legislative heavy lift to change whatever it is that we have to whatever it might be. I understand the difficulty with you can't change statute very easily, that sort of thing, but I do know that Washington is one of the most highly regulated states regarding professional licensing compared to all the 50 states. We're up there near the top.

(00:53:26):

I also acknowledge and recognize that we have no control over what contracts say and what consultants or their clients require for what kind of professional background to bring to a project. I know that in Oregon we handled this issue years ago and just said don't touch it. So I come to the table with that in the back of my mind, but I really feel for what our guests are going through. I don't have the answers, but I'm hearing a lot of good comments, but none of them have a good resolution or something that's easy. So keep talking, people. Keep bringing your opinions and I'll keep listening. That's all I have to say.

Chair Hanell (00:54:31):

Thank you, Board Member Webb. Other discussion?

(00:54:49):

All right. Hearing none. Let's move to our next agenda item, agenda item 6.3, which is the Association of State Boards of Geology Annual Meeting Report. So I will be asking both Sydney and Carla to report out on some of their experiences. I can just give my brief experience there. I had the fortunate opportunity to go and provide some welcoming remarks and sit in on the first half of the business meeting in my capacity as state geologist. So that was really fun to be able to be there, hear some of the updates and discussion. Then it was awesome that, for many people at the meeting, it was their first trip to Washington and for many more than that it was their first trip to eastern Washington. So I'm glad we had the opportunity to host the meeting and have some folks experience Washington and eastern Washington for the first time. With that, I'll turn it over to Board Member Brock for her report out and then we'll turn it over to Sydney after that.

Vice Chair Brock (00:56:14):

Great. Thanks, Casey. Yeah, I echo those sentiments. It was a good meeting. It was fun to have so many people from the east coast and the Southeast in Washington that had never been there before. We had a really fun field trip that was led partly by Casey's colleague Kelsey who lives in the Spokane area and it was a really great field trip. It snowed on us the whole time and a lot of people from the Southeast were really excited to see snow. So that was really fun.

(00:56:46):

The meeting itself was great. There's always a lot of box checking topics. We talk about budget, we talk about committee members, we talk about committee actions, things that have been done throughout the year, but also things that are planned for the next year. Some of the highlights, we spent a lot of time talking about computer-based testing because that's all still really new and everybody's still trying to work out the kinks. I'll look forward to hearing a little report out from board staff on the fall administration of the ASBOG exam. Sounds like there were some hiccups in that, as there were across the country.

(00:57:31):

Excuse me. Some other notable things that I think our board might be interested to hear about are the task analysis survey, which was done last year, and those results were presented at the annual meeting. If you recall, ASBOG through the member states distributed surveys about the practice of geology and lots of people responded. Lots of people from Washington responded, which was great. The results of

the task analysis survey inform the ASBOG exams and the content of the exams. So you can look at, if you go to the ASBOG webpage, they have the 2023 task analysis summary there. It's pretty interesting to see.

(00:58:22):

As part of that, there was a small group of subject matter experts, I think all of which are geology professors, who developed a new fundamentals of geology prep course and they're offering that for a fee to anyone who wants to take it in preparation for the fundamentals of geology examination. So we talked a little bit about that, and that was just rolled out this year, earlier this year. We'll be in development probably for the next couple of years based on comments and feedback from people who take it and based on, I don't know, a variety of, I think, data gathering activities that that group is doing. Then there's also a new ASBOG handbook, which has been updated. Mostly just because it was needed to be updated, but also to reflect the results of the task analysis survey.

(00:59:31):

So I think those are really the things that are most interesting to us on the technical side. I think Sydney probably has some interesting things on the administrative side that she can share.

Sydney Muhle (00:59:46):

On the administrative side, it was great. We covered a lot of the same topics between the two days, but there were a couple of areas that we got to expand on a little bit more as staff and just some of the nuts and bolts stuff that we experience behind the scenes. The computer-based testing done...

Sydney Muhle (01:00:03):

... stuff that we experienced behind the scenes. The computer-based testing demonstration was great. It was very similar between the two days, but I think we did get to dive in a little bit more and kind of play in the background test environment a little bit more, and that was really interesting. But I think more than that, it was really cool as staff to get to see, and I wish they had touched on a little bit more during the annual meeting day.

(01:00:26):

All of the prep work and all of the different considerations that go into writing the computer-based examinations and the language that they use is all very specific and designed to be as open and inclusive as possible, understanding that we do get a lot of licensees, especially here in Washington State. I know it's one we encounter frequently, but who English is not their first language.

(01:00:51):

And so hearing that they tailored the language of the examination to account for that and understanding education inequities across the United States and just all of the different considerations that go into it. And then they even broke down the tones and the colors that they use within the exam itself. And the black text, it's not just black text, it has certain hues built in within it, and that's to help account for people who struggle with color blindness or other such issues.

(01:01:29):

And we had no idea. I think that was kind of the general feeling in the room is we had no clue all of the thoughts and considerations that went into that. So it was very eye-opening, and I think it made everybody who went into, that was our very first subject of the day on the administrator day, and I think a lot of people were ready to kind of come at the pro-metrics folks with pitchforks and torches, and that kind of gave everybody a little bit of a pause to go, "Okay, maybe there's a little bit more to this than just plugging some questions into an exam and hitting go."

(01:02:02):

And so it just really, really cool and also gave us a lot of good considerations to take into the discussions on our specialty exam review. And as we're moving through some of that, just some of the different considerations, especially around the language and kind of plain-talking some things versus where to use highly technical language versus where we can plain-talk some things and how to create that equity within the examination, so it was really cool.

(01:02:31):

We also had a really good discussion around a projected enrollment cliff that is coming through the education side, and it's not just in the field of geology but kind of across all of the geo sciences that they're just seeing a drop of interest in some of the younger generations.

(01:02:53):

And they're projecting that enrollment cliff where everything will drop off, and then a couple of years down the line, that will impact licensing. So there's a lot of really good research that's been done on that through the American Geo sciences Institute and made a really great contact through them.

(01:03:10):

So getting copies of all of his research to bring to the board at a future date and give that to you guys just for your knowledge and consideration as we are working through a lot of different topics that you guys are trying to address right now.

(01:03:28):

That also led into discussions around whether or not students are being adequately prepared for what they're going to encounter in the workforce. And I think that's part of the last discussion that we had is we're finding that there's a growing disconnect between what the universities are preparing their students for and then what they actually see.

(01:03:45):

Even going into examination, I've had that comment as people are leaving exams that, "This is not what I'm prepared for in school, and I didn't know that that was what I was going to be tested on." And so just really interesting to see that we are not the only ones that hear that, that it is a field-wide discussion that's going on.

(01:04:08):

The administrators were also given time to discuss how the different jurisdictions handle different concerns. It was very enlightening for me to see how different jurisdictions put different emphasis on different approaches. We take a very education, cooperation, trying to make sure everybody is doing what they're supposed to legally and safely, and others take very hard-lined regulatory enforcement perspectives.

(01:04:37):

So it was an interesting discussion. At one point, it got a little heated with some people really getting defensive of their approach. So I think that was something that I definitely was not expecting.

(01:04:51):

But then finally, we got to have a pretty lengthy presentation from several geologists from around the country on different things that they have worked on, different projects. There was a presentation from a representative from the State of California on a mansion that had been built on a fault line, and the house was being pulled in two different directions, and it was shifting.

(01:05:21):

There was another one from the Midwest regarding how some chemicals that had been released during manufacturing had made their way through the geology and led to significantly increased cancer rates among people who lived within a hundred-mile radius of the facility.

(01:05:45):

So just from the staff side, we don't get to see everything you guys do. We get to hear little stories or little anecdotes here and there, but we don't get to see a lot of those details or have those big presentations and get to see all of that information.

(01:05:59):

So it was really cool. It gave me a whole new appreciation for all of you and all of the work that you do. So it was a great presentation, great day, round of discussions, made a lot of great contacts that we'll be able to hopefully utilize as we're working towards some of the board goals in the future.

PART 2 OF 5 ENDS [01:00:04]

Chair Hanell (01:06:24):

Fantastic. Thank you, Sydney, and thank you board member, Brock. Are there any questions from other board members with respect to the ASBOG annual meeting? Board member Gillum?

Board Member Gillum (01:06:43):

Yeah, I just wanted to say that I was able to attend the virtual presentations that were available and I am very inspired to hopefully be able to attend one of these in person.

(01:06:56):

I really did learn to appreciate the fact that even though I knew not everybody was necessarily licensing the same way and not every state in the US licenses, it was like to hear all the differences that are out there and just through the little snippets I was getting, it was like wow, it was very eye-opening.

(01:07:19):

But it was also eye-opening to hear that they are all struggling kind of with the same things that we are. It's like how do we keep licensing numbers up? How do you do your education and outreach about the issues and then also licensing in general.

(01:07:33):

So yeah, I was very happy that even though I didn't go in person, this was my very first time I guess attending to see what the mechanics were about and now I'm hoping in the future to actually be able to kind of go through the full week that's available and really be able to immerse myself in it because it does sound like from what you guys just reported, there's a lot to take in and then also to be able to kind of see what else is going on beyond just our state would be very educational and a great thing to hear.

(01:08:03):

So I just wanted to make that comment.

Chair Hanell (01:08:10):

Thank you. Board member Gillum. All right, any other board comments with respect to the ASBOG annual meeting? All right, hearing none, let's move to item seven on our agenda and 7.1, new business.

(01:08:35):

So the first on our new business is a discussion around licensed hydro geologists stamping. This is a discussion that board member Webb has requested and I will ask board member Webb to kick our discussion off please.

Eileen Webb (01:08:55):

I looked back at the notes hoping that there'd be just a seed of what the point of the request was and I don't remember what it was. There's a lot of things we could talk about regarding licensed hydro geologist stamping. Does anybody remember what that was? It's not in our notes or meeting notes.

Sydney Muhle (01:09:14):

Unfortunately it was just an email from you asking for a discussion on stamping for hydro geologists. You didn't give us your reasoning behind it. This was shortly after you and I had had a discussion regarding an application you had reviewed through Ecology and so I don't know if it was related to that issue.

Eileen Webb (01:09:39):

I don't know. I would just say that was three months ago. I left it to you to be the person to spark my memory for me.

Sydney Muhle (01:09:46):

I wish I knew it was you just asked that we put this item on so we put it on.

Eileen Webb (01:09:52):

Hey, would anybody like to talk about something related to this? Yeah. Otherwise, I would just say I apologize, I forget what it was and if you can't remember either, then that's, well I guess we can move on.

Chair Hanell (01:10:11):

All right, any other board member comment or discussion on this topic? Hearing none, to item 7.2. So this will be our fall exam and score release update. So I'll ask Deb to report out on this please.

Deb (01:10:37):

Thank you Chair. Hannah, do we have the slides? Okay, perfect. Thank you. Oh, sorry. It looks like the formatting of the slide has changed, but okay, so starting to talk about the ASCBOG statistics.

(01:10:54):

So there were thirty-two jurisdictions that took the exam. So for the fundamentals of geology, total candidates were 845 out of all of the jurisdictions. They were scored on a 138 different questions. So for the fall with the fundamentals we had all jurisdictions was a 65.1% pass rate. Washington fared with 76.2%. So we're scoring a little bit higher in the fundamentals for the practices of geology. Out of all of the jurisdictions there were 438 candidates total and that was scored on 109 items.

(01:11:51):

All jurisdictions, the pass rates were 79.7% and for Washington our pass rates were at 90.3%. So very good. Good rates of passing on those. Go ahead and go to the next and let's talk about, oh, turned out a little weird. So here at the department we welcomed a total of seven candidates for the engineering geology exam and out of those we had 100% pass. So very exciting on those rates.

(01:12:31):

Unfortunately, for the hydrogeology we had seven candidates and the pass rates were a little less exciting. We only had 14.3% pass, so only one candidate passed on the hydrogeology which shows that it's a very difficult exam.

(01:12:52):

That is really all that I have. There is a report that I think after this meeting, Sydney's going to share out with all the board members from ASBOG that breaks down the task analysis survey and the work that the COE did with the examination. So it's quite a lengthy report and it'll get you a lot more details. We did not include that in the packet because it's way too large.

(01:13:20):

So we'll send it out after the fact and if you have any further questions, we'd be happy to help with that. I'm going to turn it over to Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:13:31):

Thanks Deb. I just wanted to highlight as vice chair Brock had already pointed out, we did have an issue on the ASBOG exam related to an administration facility at Western Washington University.

(01:13:48):

Unfortunately we're not 100% certain what happened. We're waiting to hear from ASBOG because it was their exam, we're letting them take the lead on it, but apparently when the examinees arrived, the facility was not ready to administer the exam, so we're still waiting for a full report.

(01:14:09):

It did delay the exam by several hours and as ASBOG did hear numerous complaints from the examinees at that facility that due to the change and the stress, it understandably led them to believe that they may have struggled more on the exam than they would have otherwise just due to the delays. So once we receive a full report from ASBOG on what happened, we'll bring that back for the board.

(01:14:37):

But in case the board did hear about it from anyone, we wanted to make sure you were aware ASBOG does know about it and is moving forward trying to understand specifically what happened and where the fail point was. And we'll be working with them ahead of the spring exam to make sure that we don't have those fail points anywhere else, including at Western Washington.

Chair Hanell (01:15:06):

Thank you. Sydney, any board discussion or questions, comments with respect to the recent examinations board member Tab?

Member Tebb (01:15:18):

Yeah, thank you. Well, it looks for the fundamentals and the engineering. It looks positive. I can't help but wonder what happened with the hydrogeology. I don't know whether that may have been related to the Western Washington issue or not, but it's something to pay attention to.

(01:15:40):

I did notice that looks like we had a higher passing rate in the years of 2020 and 2021, but then subsequently a declining in 2022 and 2023. And I just can't help but wonder if there was a difference in the exams or if there was some other pattern here that may explain that. Or it could be just that folks weren't prepared for that particular test, that particular quarter. But I am just interested in any other thoughts from board members or staff. Thank you.

Chair Hanell (01:16:23):

Deb.

Deb (01:16:23):

Thank you for the question. Member Deb. If you'll recall, we do have two different examinations that we administer and there is a difference between the two exams. We do see typically that pass rates for one of the exams tend to be a little bit better. I think part of the reviewing to make sure that we are using updated language and that everything is matching up. We're still underway for getting back together for the hydrogeology. Is that correct, Sydney?

(01:16:58):

So we'll need to go back for both of them. So as we move into reviewing the questions and making sure that they're matching up with the industry, I think that will help our pass rates. And a lot of it is, like Sydney said, it's just updating language. The question may be correct, but there may be different language that's used currently.

(01:17:23):

So it's been a while since we've created those examinations and they still need to be looked at. Hopefully at the beginning of the year we'll be able to finish that work and make those changes.

Sydney Muhle (01:17:40):

And just to add to that a little bit, board member, this was unrelated to the issue at Western Washington that was specifically for the ASBOG exams, so the PG and the FG, the specialty exams were issued at the Department of Licensing facility.

Chair Hanell (01:18:02):

Right. Other board discussion questions, comments with respect to exam pass rates from fall exam? Board member Struthers?

James Struthers (01:18:15):

Yeah, I'd like to just comment that the 100% pass rate on the engineering geology exams is pretty much nothing short of a modern miracle having just reviewed that thing.

Member Tebb (01:18:28):

Yeah, I would second that. And a board member Brock and I also, I think we take the hydrogeology one as well thought so.

Board Member Brock (01:18:40):

Yeah, I thought so.

Member Tebb (01:18:41):

They're tough. I would agree.

Deb (01:18:46):

It's important we don't capture how many of our candidates are second, third time test takers, but there were quite a few that have already sat for this exam one time previously. So for some of them the practice makes perfect.

Chair Hanell (01:19:08):

I anecdotally think that's a common experience for at least the engineering geology exam. It's usually takes two times to experience it, maybe understand a little bit more what the scope is and study more in a more effective way.

James Struthers (01:19:31):

Yeah, I would second that as well. I think culturally there's an acknowledgement in the people that in the engineering geology field that passing it on the first go is not necessarily the norm.

Chair Hanell (01:19:49):

Board member Webb.

Eileen Webb (01:19:55):

If you follow ASBOG task analysis and whatnot, the pass rates actually decrease for the ASBOG exams over time. People, if they're going to pass it, they're more likely to pass it the first time and it just decreases over time.

(01:20:11):

Apparently there's probably a big difference between what we're experiencing on our state specific exams and the national one because there's a pretty robust council of examiners at hand for the national. I don't know that we have that kind of, even on diminished level, state level might be something to think about.

(01:20:39):

I also am curious what kind of comments that we get because I hear about it all the time. At work, people approach me and complain about the exam and even apparently describing questions that are outdated or answers that every single one of them is wrong and they offer the correct one.

(01:21:02):

And I get a lot of that at data dumping on me, so I'm just passing it along for what it's worth, that yeah, I do recognize that we don't have as robust of accounts of Examiners kind of situation that ASBOG does, but whatever we have, maybe that needs to be beefed up a little bit or at least share some of the comments that we get back from examinees. Just a thought and maybe that was my email. I don't know. Checking out.

Chair Hanell (01:21:41):

Thank you board member Webb. Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:21:45):

Thank you. So yes, board member Webb is correct and we do not just license geologists as you are all aware, we do have a number of licensing bases that do take examination and the trend line that we see across all of them is generally you might see a slight bump for second time exam takers, and then a sharp drop-off.

(01:22:16):

That second exam kind of seems to be the deciding factor that if you're going to pass, that's the one to pass. Otherwise, subsequent times after that you're more likely to struggle. So it's not a guarantee, it just seems to be the trend line that the struggle just kind of deepens the more times you take it after that.

(01:22:36):

As far as the counsel Examiners know, unfortunately we don't have the base that ASBOG does with reviewing our exams. With the EG exam, and we'll dive into this a little bit more with the report out on those committees with the EG exam, that is the one that we co-own with the state of Oregon. So as we move through that review process, we'll be pulling them into the discussion and it'll be a much more robust group looking at that one.

(01:23:05):

Unfortunately with the Hydro geologist exam, we own that one on our own and so we are kind of an island in that regard. At the ASBOG annual meeting, I was approached by the state of California who told me that they're experiencing the exact same issue and that their EG exam is also as old as ours is, but found out that we have a much more robust question and answer pool than what they do on file for theirs.

(01:23:36):

So they approached and said, if we can get in on this review with you guys or maybe at least resource share. So that's something that we'll be looking into how we can do that while still maintaining exam security for all involved parties. But at least the ability to have some additional resources out there. Especially that the EG exam seems to be a much bigger resource for the coastal states than it is throughout the rest of the country.

Chair Hanell (01:24:14):

Board member Struthers.

James Struthers (01:24:17):

Yeah, I find the California outreach to be somewhat surprising considering how resistant they were to sharing resources and reciprocity and things like that initially when that test was created.

Sydney Muhle (01:24:33):

Yeah, I was very surprised.

James Struthers (01:24:34):

Is there just a change in how they're administering things down there or do you have any insight into that?

Sydney Muhle (01:24:41):

The impression that I got is just they're experiencing the same thing where the exam versions that they have are as old as ours are, and they're needing an update. But I think the decision for them to resist years ago is now they're experiencing some of the consequences of that and that they're kind of on their own with no additional resources to pull in for that examination.

(01:25:08):

So I think that was where the discussion came from. But they have seen a sharp decline specifically in their engineering geology exam pass rates, and we had just finished the scoring for ours and I knew that we had a hundred percent pass rate and was very excited to say for once that's not the case for us.

(01:25:31):

And they said, I wish we could stay the same. Unfortunately their pass rates for their engineering geologists exam, were much closer to what ours are on the hydrogeology side, were down in the teens or low twenties for their pass rate. So yeah, it was a very interesting conversation.

Chair Hanell (01:25:49):

All right, other board member comments or discussion on this topic? All right, well I'll just, I will also echo, it's encouraging to see that engineering geology exam pass rate, that's not common so, yay. All right, I see board member Struthers.

James Struthers (01:26:28):

Yeah, just out of curiosity, do we publish the names of the new licensees online or on the web page or anywhere?

Sydney Muhle (01:26:38):

We stopped doing that on the web page because that information has gone to being more static information, but we do provide them to the board after we administer.

James Struthers (01:26:52):

Thank you.

Chair Hanell (01:26:56):

All right, so we'll move to our next item on the agenda in new business, which is 7.3, non-licensed experienced verifiers. And I'll ask Sydney to lead this discussion please.

Sydney Muhle (01:27:11):

Thank you, Chair Hennell. So this is a topic that has become a more prevalent discussion among staff and reached the point where it's okay, we're having this discussion too frequently, we need to take this to the board.

(01:27:24):

So currently the process when we have non-licensed experience verifiers as the board is aware for any members of the public, when we have experienced verifiers who are not licensed geologists or not licensed geologists within the state of Washington.

(01:27:39):

And we do request that they provide us with information on their background, their education, their experience, and the things that let us know that they are allowed to or have the experience to verify a geologist's work.

(01:27:55):

The notion of that does seem to vary widely across the US, particularly among jurisdictions who don't have any sort of licensure requirements. We get a very wide variety of backgrounds submitted for experience verifiers with no real concrete way to determine from one to the next.

(01:28:17):

So the practice has been to get all of that information and then provide it to an individual board member for each of you to review and then send us back a yay or nay. What we're finding is that that is presenting a risk to the program and to the board and to you individual board members in that there's no discernible way for us to say from one board member to the next things that you guys look at and consider.

(01:28:45):

And so then when we get questions about, okay, well why was my experience verifier not good enough? But yet I know so-and-so down the line who their experience verifier was fine and they seem to be pretty similar. And if that were to evolve into a complaint or down into a legal process, it's not a very defensible position for us to say, well, a board member told us that it was fine. And we want to give you guys a more solid foundation. We want to eliminate that risk and not allow that to be a space where the program or the board could suffer for that.

(01:29:23):

I had a conversation with our assistant attorney General Elizabeth Berg, and I don't know if she's been able to join us. I know she had a scheduling conflict this morning, but she did provide me with some background information and she agreed that that was a space for some risk.

(01:29:39):

She didn't like having any one individual board member potentially hanging out there and getting a complaint that, oh, you let them do it, but not me. What happened? So she came back with a very interesting idea that staff is wholeheartedly in supportive and that is creating a committee to review these applications and-

Sydney Muhle (01:30:03):

Committee to review these applications and to come to a consensus. We would be looking for three board members to meet once a month and go through each of these, hash out the pros and cons, and is this person meeting the things that we would like to see? And to have those discussions. It's an area that staff just does not have the technical knowledge to be able to make those decisions. It's not clear cut for us, and we want to make sure that it is a defensible process for you guys.

(01:30:33):

As part of that, and I think we kind of touched on it with the fluvial geomorphology discussion, we could look at also adding in non-traditional education as well. That is another process where we send it to individual board members and ask you guys to give us a thumbs up, thumbs down. And that's another space where we've found that from one board member to the next, there's going to be different answers. And to us, we don't have the knowledge to be able to answer on your behalf, and we don't want to take it to a bunch of different individual board members and ask you guys to write up an individual assessment for each of us to create a legally defensible position. So it just makes more sense to pull you guys into one space once a month and have you look at that.

(01:31:27):

If the board were agreeable, we would be looking at putting this committee together to review those non-traditional pathways. The traditional pathways that we have that it's clear cut, yes, they meet, that's not a concern for us. It's the non-traditional education, the non-licensed verifiers, things like that, that it's just not so clear cut. And so it would be a once a month meeting. If there's no need for the meeting, then... I apologize that you just saw my dog in the background. She's not normally in here. But would be a once a month meeting. If there are no pending applications, then we would not be asking you guys to meet. But otherwise once a month, and then the appointment would be for one year. And at the end of each year we would bring it back for reappointment so that we're not relying on the same people. Unless you guys just really enjoy doing it, and want to stay on that committee. I see Board Member Brock has a question.

PART 3 OF 5 ENDS [01:30:04]

Vice Chair Brock (01:32:25):

Well, I was just going to say, a lot of licensing boards do that as part of their regular meetings. Is there a reason that we couldn't do that?

Sydney Muhle (01:32:34):

We can. If that is the board's wish, we can certainly add that to the agenda. It will add some bulk to your guys' agenda, and some time, so that is just a consideration. And so I would take direction from the

board on the board's preference. I know some of our board members have to take personal leave time in order to do the meetings, so that would just add to the duration of these meetings. Just a consideration for you guys in that.

Chair Hanell (01:33:01):

Yeah, our meeting run times have been right at two hours with our agendas of late. And so it seems if we were adding that workload, we'd add another hour probably to our meetings. Go ahead, Board Member Gillum.

Board Member Gillum (01:33:30):

Yeah, I was wondering, do you know about how many of these we get in a certain time period?

Sydney Muhle (01:33:36):

So it depends. Some months we have none or maybe one or two. Right now I think we have six or seven that are pending. And then the discussion around each of those, it could be a really brief, oh yeah, this person needs, we're not concerned about this. Or it could evolve into a much broader conversation. I know lately we've seen a large number of applicants coming out of the state of Colorado, which does not require licensure for geologists at all. And so we get a very wide range of backgrounds on our experience verifiers from that state, and some that looking at it even as staff, I'm like, "Okay, this feels pretty clear cut. But yeah, let's get a board member's take on it and make sure we're not missing something." Others, even as a staff member, I'm looking at this going, "How does this person even connect to geology work whatsoever?"

(01:34:31):

And so knowing that we as staff have those questions, you guys will see things that are more in depth than what we will. But also I know I've had times where I've put through those requests and I'll have a back and forth discussion with the board member who is seeing some of those same questions and going and kind of missing where this connects and how this person is qualified. And so then we have to go back to the applicant or the verifier, get additional information, bring that back, pass it back up the chain. So it just adds a considerable length of time to the processing.

Board Member Gillum (01:35:08):

Okay, thanks.

Chair Hanell (01:35:10):

Board member Teb.

Member Tebb (01:35:13):

Yeah, well first of all, thank you for the discussion on this topic. I always find it a little bit interesting because we have had individuals that are kind of close, and I think in some cases when I've done that verification when they feel close, I've recommended to staff to check with another board member just

as sort of a check on my review. But I do like the suggestion of a separate monthly meeting. I guess I have a difference of opinion with board member Brock about whether we have it on this format, but I think this is a good idea and I think it sounds like a good business practice. So I support it in whatever fashion the board decides to take.

Chair Hanell (01:36:04):

Board member Struthers.

James Struthers (01:36:06):

Yeah. I would also chime in in support of this idea. I think that when you're looking at especially licenses or applicants from outside the state where they're supported by an engineer in particular that may not have a large amount of geotechnical background or geologic background at all, I think it's probably wise to have a consensus opinion on this. It's also probably a lot more defensible at the end of the day.

Sydney Muhle (01:36:46):

And I think that's where our biggest concern was, is the risk associated with this. It's one of those we haven't had an issue with it yet, but it doesn't mean there isn't space for there to be an issue with this. And the last place that we as staff want to put the program or the board is in a position where we're issuing licenses on behalf of the board to somebody who shouldn't be licensed and the worst case scenarios happen. So we want to make sure that whatever we're doing is legally defensible and that we are doing our best to safeguard the process and the licensing as best we can.

Chair Hanell (01:37:31):

I will agree that it sounds like a good business practice, and my preference would be that it is kind of a subset that's a separate monthly meeting of a subset of the board. One, just from a workload perspective, it seemed like a more frequent meeting there'd be less time required in a focused group, whereas at a quarterly meeting it may fluctuate, but it could have the potential, especially when people are submitting their applications, to be able to sit for an exam in the fall or the spring, that's when a lot of that verifier information comes in and has the potential to be a significant amount of discussion that would need to happen amongst all of us and during this meeting time. So my preference would be to set up the smaller committee. I'm interested in other board discussion or opinions on whether to do it as part of this forum or to have a monthly forum board member tab.

Member Tebb (01:38:46):

Yes, I would vote in favor of a separate forum, and I'd be happy to volunteer.

Chair Hanell (01:38:54):

Thank you. Board member Gillum.

Board Member Gillum (01:38:58):

Yeah, I agree with having a separate monthly, and I think I would be of interest of that too.

Chair Hanell (01:39:09):

All right. Sydney, from a process perspective, do you need any sort of vote, or does this need to be put on an agenda and be formalized in any way? Or is this something we can do ad hoc?

Sydney Muhle (01:39:25):

If we can go ahead and vote to create that committee, if we get into this and the committee finds that it really isn't worthwhile to do that monthly meeting, feel like it would be fine to add to the board meetings, they can always submit that report of the chain. This will be a standing report under our committee assignments. So that can certainly be something that they report out on and just say we kind of feel like this isn't really meeting the need for the monthly, let's go ahead and put it back on the quarterly board meeting and see how that goes. That's always an option that we can do. But if we have a motion one way or another, that would be great.

Chair Hanell (01:40:02):

Okay. And I think a report out at the quarterly meeting, just on the progress and even there were seven reviews that were needed to be done this month or something like that would be helpful. Board Member Webb.

Eileen Webb (01:40:20):

I just wanted to check in and see how this kind of a committee would be affected by our public meeting law. That's all.

Sydney Muhle (01:40:33):

We are allowed to set up committees under the OPMA, and the only time that we would have to go through the full process of posting and minutes and all of that is if the committee is having a public hearing, taking public comment on a particular matter, or is going to be issuing a formal full report for board action. So if you guys were submitting, doing a review and then submitting a report to the board that the board has to then take action on to issue those, that's when we would have OPMA guidelines kick in. So it's still something that would be totally allowable, but the structure that we're providing for right now is a very simple structure under OPMA. So yeah, we'd be fine with three board members on this committee.

Chair Hanell (01:41:34):

All right. So at this point I'll ask... Oh, sorry. Board member Teb.

Member Tebb (01:41:40):

Yeah, thank you Chair. I was going to make a motion to the board to commit or to explore the opportunity of a committee to review the applications for licensing, whether they be for specialty or for the fundamentals, and that that committee would review materials submitted being either educational or work background.

Sydney Muhle (01:42:09):

Really quick clarification. To explore it, or to establish it?

Member Tebb (01:42:13):

Excuse me, to establish it.

Sydney Muhle (01:42:15):

Perfect. Thank you.

Chair Hanell (01:42:19):

All right, is there a second? Oh, before we move to a second, I see Deb.

Deb (01:42:28):

And I just want to further clarify that we are only talking about the applications where we have questions if it is a sponsor that we cannot identify readily their credentials or we're looking at alternative pathways. Everything else, the licensing staff will still have the power to approve if it is cut and dry. So just wanted to make sure that we are clarifying that you do not want to see all of our applications.

Member Tebb (01:43:00):

Yes. Thank you for the clarification. Amend my motion as stated.

Deb (01:43:08):

I second the motion.

Chair Hanell (01:43:10):

All right, the motion has been moved and seconded. Is there any board discussion? All right, hearing no discussion, we'll move to a vote. All in favor say aye.

Group (01:43:28):

Aye.

Chair Hanell (01:43:29):

Aye. Any opposed? Hearing none opposed, the motion carries to establish the new committee. Thank you for that discussion.

(01:43:54):

And now we'll move to item 7.4 on the list, which is the 2024 meeting schedule. And I will ask Susan to present the proposed meeting schedule and then we will need to vote after we review the schedule.

Susan (01:44:13):

So I have up on the screen the proposed meeting dates. The proposed meeting dates are March 7th, June 13th, September 12th, and December 5th at 10:00 AM.

Chair Hanell (01:44:29):

All right, any discussion on the proposed meeting dates?

(01:44:40):

All right, hearing none, I'll ask for a motion to approve the 2024 meeting schedule.

Eileen (01:44:49):

This is Eileen, and I so move that we approve the 2024 meeting schedule.

James Struthers (01:44:56):

This is Struthers. I second that.

Chair Hanell (01:45:00):

All right, the motion has been moved and seconded. Any board discussion?

(01:45:08):

All right, hearing none, we'll move to a vote. All in favor say aye.

Group (01:45:16):

Aye.

Chair Hanell (01:45:16):

Aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, the motion carries. And we have a 2024 meeting schedule. Yes, Deb?

Deb (01:45:32):

Just quickly to go back to the last action item that we had, you identified that you wanted to have a subcommittee, however you didn't identify members to serve on that subcommittee. If you did, can we get clarification on who would like to serve?

Chair Hanell (01:45:50):

Yes, certainly. I heard board member Teb and board member Gillum. And I understand we were looking for a three member subcommittee. Is there another board member willing to serve in this capacity at this time?

(01:46:16):

Board member Struthers?

James Struthers (01:46:18):

Yeah, I'll volunteer to serve on that.

Chair Hanell (01:46:22):

Fantastic. So we have board member Teb, board member Gillum, and board member Struthers that will be our inaugural members on the subcommittee. Thank you, Deb.

Deb (01:46:36):

For that.

Chair Hanell (01:46:44):

All right, so item 7.5. 2024 board goals. And I will ask Sydney to lead this discussion, please.

Susan (01:46:55):

Casey, I'm actually going to take this for Sydney. So we set goals in the year 2023 this year. And so there is the priorities on this little slide that we have and the goals that were determined by the board. And so just going into 2024, we thought we would bring this back and just make sure that these are the goals that you would still like to continue to focus on, or if you would like to maybe update the goals for 2024.

Chair Hanell (01:47:33):

All right, we'll open the floor for board discussion.

(01:47:55):

Board member Teb.

Member Tebb (01:47:58):

I would just say that these goals look really fairly good and that I'm comfortable with them. I particularly like the second one where we've had discussion over the year on that issue with our state agencies and others that I've brought to the board's attention, so appreciate that.

Chair Hanell (01:48:17):

And I have a question on that bullet point in terms of where the board's either authority or ability to engage, what form would that take, and what are the steps that need to take place in order to get to a policy statement?

Sydney Muhle (01:48:46):

In regards to the specialty exam? The reviews?

Chair Hanell (01:48:50):

No, with respect to that second bullet point that says, "A clear policy statement on titles of geologists, hydrogeologists and engineering geologist." Oh, go ahead Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:49:05):

Sorry I didn't answer that. On the policy statement, this is stemming from the item that board member Tamba had brought forward earlier this year regarding the titles of geologists, hydrogeologists, and engineering geologists and their different uses. I believe that stemmed from some employers within the state using the term hydrogeologists for non-licensed positions. So this was where that priority had stemmed from.

(01:49:39):

So to get to that, I think we would probably need to work with our assistant Attorney General Elizabeth Lagerberg. So I don't know if the board would want to put together a committee on that to work on addressing that. There is some risk involved with the use of titles, and I believe Elizabeth at the time had brought up a case that was coming out of the engineers board regarding use of the term engineer, and we had held off doing anything with it pending the outcome of that court case, and unfortunately that court case ended up kind of vanishing up into smoke.

(01:50:18):

So we didn't get a determination one way or another out of that one. And it kind of put this policy statement back a couple of steps. So we can certainly work with Elizabeth and again, she sent her regrets. Unfortunately she had a scheduling conflict this morning and wasn't able to participate in this meeting. But we can certainly take something back to where the other thing is that it can certainly put a request into her to put some information together for the board and we can look at having an item for that at the next meeting and then kind of determine where the board wants to go from there, whether it's establishing a committee or how the board would want to move forward based on her recommendations.

Chair Hanell (01:51:01):

Thank you, Sydney. Board member Teb?

Member Tebb (01:51:04):

Yeah, no Sydney, thank you for that background, and I completely agree, that's how I recollect it. I think the court case, it was settled or something to that effect where the actual issue at hand about the nomenclature of the use of engineer really wasn't settled legally in that context. Rather, it was the case was settled in that issue was not resolved.

(01:51:29):

I like your suggestion about how to proceed forward, but I would just think that a policy statement from the board about the use of the title geologist, hydrogeologist, or engineering geologist would be

consistent with the law that's written in regards to the use of the title. And that's not necessarily how it's being used in our state human resources process.

(01:51:55):

And so I'm just looking for alignment there, and it could be as easy as geologist in training or something to that effect in a similar fashion that the engineering series is looking at. My time on the board is running short, so this was just one of the [inaudible 01:52:15] items I was hoping to try to address, but if it takes more time and the board needs to be more reflective, I'm fine with that. I just feel that this issue will remain to be an issue as it relates to the use of the title and how it's being used in other state agencies, including my own. Thank you.

Chair Hanell (01:52:41):

Yeah, I appreciate that, board member Teb. And recalling some of the conversation we had before, it seems like the use of the title is clear in statute, and if the concern is that state human resource classifications have hydrogeologist one through five but you don't need a license until hydrogeologist three, let's say for example, is that something that is able to be addressed at the agency level with working titles? And I guess that's the workaround that we've used in my work environment, that state DOP job classification is one thing in its own kind of barrel of fun, but addressing it through the working titles is how we have done it at our agency.

Member Tebb (01:53:45):

If I may respond to that, yes, that's how we've done it as well. The problem is that we have hydrogeologists threes and fours that aren't licensed, okay? And to me, I think that isn't in conformity with what I believe the law says. So I think the part of the responsibility of this board is to respect and protect the value of licensing, and a policy statement could do that. So just a thought there on my part.

Chair Hanell (01:54:32):

Yeah, I think it would be good to set up a subcommittee and get into that discussion more. I don't want to derail our goals here, our goal discussion here. I think it's an important discussion, and it will take more discussion and reflection. So thank you, Tom.

(01:54:54):

Okay, other discussion around our goals, board goals at this point?

(01:55:11):

All right. Hearing none, let's move to item 7.6. More report out on the council of examiners. So Sydney, I'll ask you to lead this discussion.

Sydney Muhle (01:55:26):

So this one is actually not a report out, this is for the spring COE and to designate somebody to attend. So this was a very last minute addition. Unfortunately, it seems to just be the trend right now that all of our national organizations are running about a week behind our schedule to put everything out. So as

we were finalizing the packet to send to the board, we got an email from [inaudible 01:55:50] saying, "Hey, time for spring COE." We said, "Okay, let's make an adjustment really quick."

(01:55:56):

So that is why it is so far down on the agenda. But yes, the 2024 [inaudible 01:56:01] Spring Council of Examiners workshop and field trip will take place in Dallas, Texas, April 5th through the 7th, 2024. We do have capacity within the program budget for a board member to attend. We anticipate it being somewhere around \$3,000 for a board member to attend. So we do have the capacity to cover that, and so wanted to bring this to the board to look at sending a delegate to Dallas. This one will be a highly sought after event by the other jurisdictions, as it is taking place directly under a solar eclipse next spring.

Vice Chair Brock (01:56:43):

That's what I was going to say. That's why it's so early. The notification came out so early. They usually would come out in February, but because [inaudible 01:56:51] has to nail down the number of people that are coming, because they have limited space because they reserved the hotel a couple years ago when they realized that there was a full solar eclipse. And since then the hotel has wisened up and said, "Oh, well we can't give you any more rooms, so you better tell us." And they're going to release all the rooms that aren't reserved by I think January, maybe.

Sydney Muhle (01:57:16):

Yeah, it's a pretty quick date. Props to Dina [inaudible 01:57:25] from [inaudible 01:57:25]. She did her homework on this one. The hotel is actually directly underneath the path of totality for the solar eclipse next year. And she also, again, before they realized it, she got it put into the contract that apparently there is a rooftop facility at this hotel, and that has been reserved during the eclipse. So it will be a very special one for whoever gets to attend.

Chair Hanell (01:57:59):

Board member Gillum.

Board Member Gillum (01:58:02):

Yeah, I heard about that during the conference and I was just like, "Wow, that was the best planning ever."

Sydney Muhle (01:58:14):

She did her homework. And Dina, listening to all of the research and the work that has gone into planning this one, I think it's probably been more than any other council of examiner's workshop she has done to date, but she wanted to make sure that this was something that she could provide for our attendees. So we very much appreciate her. Those who have not had the opportunity to meet Dina, she is phenomenal. She works so hard on behalf of [inaudible 01:58:45] and on behalf of all of us, and we adore working with her and love all the work that she does. So this was very cool for her to do. She

could have totally put it in Wisconsin, nowhere near, and she made sure you guys were taken care of on this one.

Chair Hanell (01:59:06):

All right, well in working towards delegating a member from our board to attend, I heard interest from board member Gillum in attending in-person in an upcoming meeting. So I would like to nominate board member Gillum, and then open the floor for further nominations and discussion.

Vice Chair Brock (01:59:33):

Yeah, I think it's really important that someone attend. I think it's great that we have the budget to do that. That hasn't always been the case for the spring COE because because there's not the annual meeting associated with it that we're expected to participate in. I think it would be great if Carrie can go. Yeah, that's all.

Chair Hanell (01:59:56):

Board member chair.

Sydney Muhle (01:59:57):

I agree.

Member Tebb (01:59:59):

I was just going to second the nomination.

Member Tebb (02:00:00):

...the nomination.

PART 4 OF 5 ENDS [02:00:04]

Member Struthers (02:00:04):

Yeah, I support her going as well.

Chair Hanell (02:00:10):

Are you available to go for Member Gillum?

Carrie Gillum (02:00:14):

I believe so. I was planning on doing something, hopefully, for that time and I hadn't nailed anything down yet, because I wanted to see the eclipse, so this would actually work out perfectly.

Chair Hanell (02:00:29):

All right. Is that something we need to vote on Sidney or is-

Sydney Muhle (02:00:35):

Yes, please.

Chair Hanell (02:00:37):

Okay. So, I will ask for a motion to delegate Board Member Gillum as our representative at the 2024 ASBOG Spring COE workshop.

Eileen (02:00:49):

This is Eileen, and I so move what you just said. I think she should go.

Chair Hanell (02:00:57):

There are second?

Member Tebb (02:00:59):

I'll second it.

Chair Hanell (02:01:01):

All right, the motion has been moved and seconded. Any board discussion? All right, hearing none, I'll call for a vote. All in favor say, "Aye."

Group (02:01:12):

Aye.

Vice Chair Brock (02:01:12):

Aye.

Member Tebb (02:01:17):

Aye.

Chair Hanell (02:01:17):

Aye. Any opposed, indicate by saying, "Nay." Hearing none, the motion carries. Congratulations. Board Member Gillum.

Sydney Muhle (02:01:31):

So Carrie, Susan will be reaching out to you here very shortly to start making those travel arrangements. We know it's going to be very difficult to get into the area, so she'll want to start making those as quickly as possible so that we can get you a nice, easy flight in and out.

Carrie Gillum (02:01:50):

Sounds great. I'm used to traveling and flying, so not a problem. I'm used to the crowds and everything.

Sydney Muhle (02:02:02):

Okay.

Chair Hanell (02:02:02):

All right, agenda item eight, Reports. Sydney, will you please lead this discussion?

Sydney Muhle (02:02:08):

Absolutely. So to start us off with our engineering geologist exam review committee. That committee has met once so far for half a day. They did take the full half-day and will still need an additional day on top of that. So they are scheduled to meet, I believe, in January season. I know you sent it to me and I have it [inaudible 02:02:33]. Go ahead.

Susan (02:02:37):

January 11th, I got Casey and Jim scheduled for another test taken.

Sydney Muhle (02:02:45):

So they'll be completing their review. And then once that has been completed, we'll compile all of their comments and the data from that review and start scheduling the meetup with Oregon, and hopefully get that ball rolling. On one hand, it's very nice for that committee to have the additional resource of Oregon, but on the other hand, that's an entirely separate body of people that we're going to be working around scheduling.

(02:03:11):

So the plan had originally been, and hopefully still will be, scheduling an entire day for that committee to go down to Vancouver. And that way, Oregon, it's the halfway point for us and for Salem, and we'll meet at a facility in Vancouver and have you all be able to compare notes and see if we can get something hammered out to make whatever adjustments are needed to that exam.

(02:03:43):

The second part of that, and I guess it's really the second part for both... Let me back up. The hydrogeologist exam has been reviewed. Carla and Tom were able to come in and knocked out their review. So that one has been done. I am compiling their notes, putting them together with all of our comments from examinees, and then we'll schedule another time after the new year for both of you to come in and go over those notes and see what changes we need to be made.

(02:04:16):

I think there were a couple of comments of numbers that didn't format correctly when the exams previously existed in an entirely different computer system were pulled out, put into an Excel

spreadsheet, were then pulled out of that and put into a Word document. And through all of those changes and portings, some number formatting got messed up, little things like that. So we'll be going through all of those. And then I believe there's also some language changes that we need to look at. Terminology that has changed or that isn't as widely used as maybe it once was. But then again, with the information that we got at the ASBOG conference and the considerations that go into the ASBOG exam, such as using more plain language where we can. So we'll be bringing all of that to them for the hydro exam.

(02:05:12):

Same pieces of that discussion for the engineering exam, just on a little bit broader scale. And the second piece on both of those will be working, we are still working toward the psychometrician contract that had originally been scheduled, as the board will remember, pre-COVID. And COVID derailed the entire thing, and we lost that contract as a result. Just simply timed out on us. We do still have the funding for that, so our assistant administrator, Debra Allen-Ba, has been working on getting that put back through our procurement process so we can get another psychometrician under contract and do their complete review.

(02:05:53):

So the review that each of the committees is doing right now is a current status and minor changes that we can look at to address in this moment. The psychometrician is for the long-term review. Just because the exam is so old, we want to make sure that we are reviewing it on a more regular basis, with a psychometrician, to try and get the best results that we can for our licensees who take that exam.

(02:06:23):

So that is where we are at. We have not heard on a contract award yet, but we will keep the board posted, hopefully at the next meeting on a more robust status update on that second half. But otherwise, we will be looking to meet with all of you at different times in January and we'll report back next meeting.

Chair Hanell (02:06:49):

Fantastic, thank you. Any board questions or discussion on the specialty exam review committees or process? All right, hearing none, let's move to 8.2.

Sydney Muhle (02:07:06):

All right, and I'm going to rush through these reports as quickly as I can, as I know we are cutting into a lot of your guys' time for your next round of meetings. So, total cases closed right now sits at four. We have one that is currently in a management review, for a grand total of five this calendar year.

(02:07:28):

And our licensee account report, total active is we have 1,773 total licensees within the program. We're looking at 2,369. And then specialty endorsements, we have 242 engineering geologists, 427 hydrogeologists, and then 81 licensees who have both. And then below that, you can see the new

licensees with the endorsements that were issued since the last board meeting, and they were all engineering geologists.

(02:08:12):

And so, as the board is aware, this is just the trend line that we've been trying to show you guys on where licensing is at. All of our programs did experience that dip in 2020 and we are seeing a rebound. And I think the geologist licensing has seen a healthier rebound than what some of our other programs have, so we're very pleased to see that.

(02:08:37):

Go to the next one? At the last board meeting, the board had asked where the geologist program falls in terms of total number of licensees across all of the DOL licensing programs. So as you guys can see, you fall in that top third. Granted, the top three, so cosmetology, notary, and real estate make up a healthy chunk of that. So if we were to remove those three programs, you guys would certainly be among the top number of licensees that we have. And certainly among our regulatory boards, you guys are certainly high up there with only the architects having more than you guys among our regulatory programs.

(02:09:26):

Even though having less than a full percent of our total number of licensees, again, if we take out those top three, you guys are certainly high up there. We've also had an action item that we were very excited to cross off our list. This was the question that had come in to the board last spring, from the board to staff last spring, about whether or not there had been issues verifying candidates for licensure. We already discussed a portion of this with the establishment of our committee to review some of those non-traditional pathways.

(02:10:06):

But for the board and the public's awareness, when we do get candidates in, applications in for candidates that don't follow the traditional licensure pathway, we do take the additional step, program staff, specifically our geologist customer service support licensing professional, Lupe Ramos, who is amazing. If you haven't had the opportunity to work with him, we are so excited he took over for Star when she abandoned us last year for the sunny skies in Arizona.

(02:10:41):

But Lupe is amazing. He has jumped in with both feet and is doing an amazing job for us. So he will reach out to those individual universities and get all of the additional information on their curriculum, and go through match what he can, and then he send it to, or previously sent it to a board member for review. That will now be moving to that separate committee for the committee to review. And so, it'll add a little bit to the body of work for that group.

(02:11:13):

And then, once a determination is made, then it comes back and then we can proceed with the licensure process if they're approved or with the denial process if that is the case with that individual one. This

does reflect one out of every 20 to 25 licensure applications. So it is not a super high number, but it's not insignificant either. And the process can add an additional month or two to the application process.

(02:11:42):

By the time Lupe calls the university, probably has to go through several contacts to get to the right location or to be able to get the curriculum, time for them to send it back him to process what he needs to, get it to a board member, a board member to set time aside to review. So hopefully, through this committee, we'll at least be shortening that timeframe by even just a couple of weeks. That'll certainly alleviate a little bit of pressure for our licensees. But, again, this was just a report out to the board on a request for information that the board had had. So are there any questions on that?

Chair Hanell (02:12:22):

This is Chair Hanell, no questions on that. And just a comment on the previous slide about where we fall in terms of boards and commissions, not for conversation here, but future conversation. Then curious how that then equates to budgets. Because I think that's where at least my interest in this information came from was then, as the pool of all the people, all of the license fees that go in and the programs, and then how programs pay for shared services, I'd say. So anyway, just wanted to provide that context. That was at least my interest in seeing this information and possibly a future discussion.

Sydney Muhle (02:13:12):

Yeah, absolutely. And I can certainly work with our budget manager on putting together an information packet to bring back to you guys at the next meeting, if you guys would like to see that and some of the background work that she does to review those. I can let you know that she does go through each individual program, she and her team, because it's a lot of work for one individual. But, she and her team do go through and they look at all of the program dollars that are being spent, how they're being allocated, how they're being divvied up, to make sure that they're being accurately reflected from one year to the next.

(02:13:46):

So that if we have a program that is... Because we do have a couple of programs where we're really just a pass-through for information, and there's not a ton of staff time and work that goes into it. If anything, they might use a little bit more technology than maybe what a different program does, but they go through and look at all of those individual pieces and make sure that what the program is using is what they're being charged. So, within as best that they can tell, with all of the data and everything that we provide for them.

(02:14:19):

And I don't know how often they did it previously. I can ask her for that information if she's aware of it. Our budget manager has only been with us for about a year and a half, so about as long as the board has had me, you guys have had her as well. There are some things that she might be able to speak to, there are other things that she just can't tell what the person in that seat before her did or how frequently they did it. So I'll see if she happens to know that information.

(02:14:46):

But I know she did just go through, especially for the geologist program and some of the budgetary discussions that we had beginning of the year and some of the challenges, she took a very special interest in the geologist program and went through with a fine-tooth comb and got very, very granular to make sure that what this program was paying for is what was accurately reflected. So I know she was able to make a few adjustments to save the program's money. They weren't large adjustments, the numbers were not far off, but it was time for a review to make sure that you guys were being charged for what you're using. She was able to go through and do that for you guys.

Chair Hanell (02:15:24):

Thank you.

Sydney Muhle (02:15:24):

Casey, Board Member-

Chair Hanell (02:15:34):

Board Member... Yeah, Board Member Tebb.

Member Tebb (02:15:35):

Yeah, my apologies. I have to run to another meeting, but I apologize for having to leave early.

Chair Hanell (02:15:46):

Thank you. Take care.

Sydney Muhle (02:15:53):

All right, and I will turn it over to Susan for her to go through the action item list with you guys really quick.

Susan (02:16:01):

So we've got a big list here but we knocked a lot of it out. So we have the exam feedback review committee, that is still in progress. We are going to bring the charter review back in 2024. The specialty exam frequency, administer the exam cost and budget, that's currently on hold. The research, whether there are issues verifying candidates for licensure, that was completed today and a report out. Outreach, the student plan, the student outreach best practices document, that's currently in progress. And from what I understand, you'll be receiving something really soon about the task analysis survey.

(02:16:47):

The hydrogeologist scope of practice, I believe that's something that will be addressed in a agenda item at the next meeting, with Elizabeth's recommendations. Reach out to the state of California to see how they've dealt with the hydrogeology codes and statutes, that's still in progress. Staff to reach out to the

licensing department to inquire about questions or complaints about the geomorphology, that was completed. Arrange attendance for ASBOG, that was completed.

(02:17:28):

Staff to update the total complaints for the ASBOG meeting minutes, that was completed. Data for the different exam tests with this specialty exams, I believe Deb reported out on that today. And then we showed the licensing trends with our report out, in the reports. We showed how the geologists rank with the other DOL professions. The listserv sign up information, did you have an update on that Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (02:18:07):

Yes. And I apologize, I should've had that included in the packet. But I did reach out on that. It is not currently listed with our renewal notifications, and unfortunately, those are hard coded into the licensing systems. So, in order to change that, we would have to do a special ticket and there's costs associated with all of that. That's something that maybe we can keep on the radar for our licensing team the next time they go in and are doing anything with the renewal notices. Hopefully, that's something they can slide in and won't be a big cause. But, to do it as a one-off, there would be a larger cost associated with that. So we'll keep looking for other ways to encourage people to sign up for that listserv, but I think at the moment it's probably not the wisest investment for the program.

Susan (02:18:56):

Thank you. And then we provided statistics on the renewal rates. And there was an item that got cut off on the master action item list. I apologize, that's in regards to the contact information for the universities, and we are going to review the pamphlets and the handouts that we provide for the outreach, just to make sure that it's still current and up to date. It looks like it's been a few years since the information has been used, so we just want to make sure we have the most current information that we're handing out to our students.

Sydney Muhle (02:19:38):

And with that piece of information that I just found out about within the last 24 hours is, we were given some information about DOL looking to go back in and review some of that handout information. So they will be pulling us into that discussion for all of our programs, including geology. So, as we move forward with reviewing all of those handouts, we'll certainly get you guys out what we have. But, please know that we will have the opportunity next year to look at revamping that. So if you have any ideas, please feel free to share them, because we will be having those ongoing discussions starting in January, I believe.

Chair Hanell (02:20:23):

All right. Thank you, Sydney. Any questions or discussion from the board on the board or staff assignments? All right, hearing none, let's move to number nine on our agenda, the public comment period. So, the public may address the board on matters within the board's jurisdiction, either verbally during the meeting or by submitting written comments in advance. Verbal comments are limited to one 3-minute comment. Written comments are limited to no more than 500 words and must be emailed to

dolboards@dol.wa.gov no less than two business days prior to the meeting, with the subject line, "Public Comment: Geologist Board Name."

(02:21:13):

In response to all public comments, 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. Inflammatory comments and language will not be permitted. So this time, if there are any members of the public that have held on this long, thank you so much, and we'll open it up to any public comment at this time.

(02:21:51):

All right, hearing none, let's move to item 10, conclusion. So at this point, I'll ask are there any announcements that board members have that they would like to share with the board today's meeting? All right, hearing none, item 10.2, are there any future agenda items that have not yet been discussed today and added to a future agenda that people would like to get on our next agenda? Board Member Brock.

Vice Chair Brock (02:22:30):

I wanted to add the Washington State Hydrogeology Symposium to the agenda for the next meeting. We've previously attended and had a booth there, so I want to make sure that we discuss that during our next meeting.

Chair Hanell (02:22:47):

That's fantastic. And will the timing on that work out, Carla, in terms of when the meeting is and when the symposium is?

Vice Chair Brock (02:22:55):

I think so. I think it's in April, isn't it? I think our meeting's in March?

Chair Hanell (02:23:00):

That sounds correct.

Sydney Muhle (02:23:06):

We'll certainly-

Vice Chair Brock (02:23:07):

Yeah.

Sydney Muhle (02:23:07):

... add that. And then, Carla, we'll reach out to you and get additional information between now and then.

Vice Chair Brock (02:23:12):

Okay.

Chair Hanell (02:23:13):

Perfect. Thank you. Okay, other-

Vice Chair Brock (02:23:15):

Yeah-

Chair Hanell (02:23:15):

... requests? Oh, go ahead, Carla.

Vice Chair Brock (02:23:17):

I was going to say we've been a sponsor before, but I can share that information with you. Yeah.

Sydney Muhle (02:23:23):

Okay, thanks.

Chair Hanell (02:23:26):

Other requests for future agenda items? All right, hearing none, we'll move to 10.3, the review of action items and items for the next meeting. Susan, will you please lead this discussion. Running out of gas.

Susan (02:23:48):

That's okay, it's getting late in the meeting. I have for agenda items, we will have recommendations from Elizabeth in regards to a policy statement about working titles. We will have a budget report from our budget manager and discuss what Carla just requested, the hydrogeology symposium. And then for the action items, I have, we have a brand new committee that was just formed. So I will organize meeting dates for approximately once a month, with Secretary Tebb, Board Member Gillum and Struthers. And then we have the COE with Board Member Gillum. I will get busy on working her travel arrangements out. So that's about it.

Chair Hanell (02:24:45):

All right, thank you, Susan. Any other items, action items, that weren't captured that the board would like to speak to at this point? Very good. We'll move to item number 11, our final item today, which is adjournment. So the time is now 12:26 and this meeting is adjourned. Thanks, everyone.

Sydney Muhle (02:25:15):

Thank you, all.

Susan (02:25:16):

Thank you.

Member Struthers (02:25:16):

Hey, thanks, everybody.

Vice Chair Brock (02:25:17):

Thanks, everybody.

Susan (02:25:18):

Happy New Year.

PART 5 OF 5 ENDS [02:25:19]