



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
GEOLOGIST LICENSING BOARD
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: December 7, 2023
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

BOARD MEMBERS: **Casey Hanell**, LG/EG, State Geologist, Chair
Carla Brock, LG/HG, Vice Chair
Thomas Tebb, LG/EG/HG, Secretary
Carrie Gillum, LG, Board Member
James Struthers, LG/EG, Board Member
Eileen Webb, LG, Board Member

STAFF MEMBERS: **Debra Allen-Bâ**, Assistant Administrator
Jason Lenn, Program Specialist
Susan Nieves, Program Specialist
Sydney Muhle, Program Specialist

1. Call to Order

Chair Casey Hanell called the meeting to order at **10:01 a.m.**

2. Roll Call

Program Specialist Susan Nieves conducted roll call. All Board Members were present.

3. Approval of Agenda

Secretary Thomas Tebb made a **MOTION** to approve the agenda as presented. Board Member James Struthers **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Special Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2023

Vice Chair Carla Brock made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as presented.

Secretary Tebb **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6-0.

5. Awards/Recognition

5.1. Introduction to new Boards, Commissions and Outreach team member

Program Specialist Jason Lenn was hired on September 16, 2023, as the Military and Military Spouse Engagement Coordinator.

Mr. Lenn spoke briefly about his background and his new role as the Department of Licensing's (DOL) Military and Military Spouse Engagement Coordinator.

Mr. Lenn reminded the Board to take the Military Spouse Cultural Competency training that had been sent out via email.

6. Old Business

6.1. Outreach Update and Discussion

Board members and staff will provide an update regarding outreach activities.

Program Specialist Sydney Muhle said the University of Washington requested a Board member to attend a class and Vice Chair Brock agreed to attend.

Ms. Muhle said staff was working on updating the college/university contact information spreadsheet that was requested during the September 14, 2023, meeting.

Secretary Tebb asked about upcoming outreach events in 2024. Ms. Muhle said staff was working with the universities and would inform the Board when future events become available.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to finalize outreach contact information and send it to Board members.

6.2. Discussion About Professional License for Geomorphology and Fluvial Geomorphology

The Board has requested a discussion regarding geomorphology and fluvial geomorphology in relation to Washington State Geologist licensing.

Ms. Muhle provided a summary of the historical discussion on this topic to date. She read two public comments that had been provided to staff regarding the subject.

A member of the public, Jeff Phillips, addressed the Board and provided historical context of their experience doing fluvial geomorphology work in several states, including Washington. Jeff Phillips provided information to Board staff that included around 40 responses from geomorphologists indicating several academic paths to geomorphology and a list of US universities where geomorphology is in a non-geology program. They also shared challenges they faced in Washington, and that most states do not require fluvial geomorphologists to be licensed.

A member of the public, Dan Scott, addressed the Board and said Colorado does not have geologist licensure and employers are finding it very difficult to find employees who have the knowledge, the ability, and are a licensed geologist to do fluvial geomorphic work.

Chair Hanell clarified that licensees are required to practice within their scope of knowledge and training. A licensed geologist would not automatically be qualified to practice fluvial geomorphology without relevant education and experience.

Ms. Muhle read the definitions of “practice of geology” and the “practice of engineering geology” from the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 18.220.010.

The Board discussed the list of programs that Jeff Phillips had provided, educational requirements, and how the Board can support people in the situations described by the public members.

The Board focused on three parts of the subject: fluvial geomorphologists with an engineering education not being able to acquire licensure, licensed geologists not being able to do fluvial geomorphology work or not having fluvial geomorphology training, and employers needing to hire fluvial geomorphologist having difficulty finding someone qualified for the position. The Board determined that geomorphology, including fluvial geomorphology, met the definition for the “practice of geology” under RCW 18.220.010 and that geomorphologists need to be licensed geologists in Washington state.

6.3. Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) Annual Meeting Report

Board and staff members that attended ASBOG’s annual meeting will give a report.

Chair Hanell, Vice Chair Brock, and Ms. Muhle shared their experiences and lessons learned from attending the ASBOG Annual Meeting in person.

Board Member Carrie Gillum reported on the experience of attending virtually.

7. New Business

7.1. Licensed Hydrogeologist Stamping Discussion

Board Member Webb has requested a discussion item regarding stamping requirements for licensed Hydrogeologists.

Board Member Webb said there were a lot of discussion points on this topic and could not remember which led to this request.

7.2. Fall Exam and Score Release Update

Staff will provide exam statistics for the fall exam session.

Assistant Administrator Debra Allen-Bâ reviewed the exam statistics and pass rates for 2020 through 2023.

Ms. Muhle said staff was aware there had been a technology related issue at an exam administration facility at Western Washington University which impacted some examinees. She said staff is working with ASBOG to ensure that spring testing would go smoothly.

The Board discussed pass rate trends and the difference in scores between the state and national exams.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to provide the ASBOG Task Analysis Survey to the Board members.

7.3. Non-Licensed Experience Verifiers

Staff will discuss concerns regarding non-licensed experience verifiers and present options to the Board for processing these applications, including setting up a review committee.

The Board discussed creating a Non-Licensed Experience Verifier Committee to meet monthly.

Secretary Tebb made a **MOTION** to establish a Non-Licensed Experience Verifier Committee to review applications with Secretary Tebb, Board Member Gillum, and Board Member Struthers as the Committee members. Vice Chair Brock **SECONDED** the motion, and it was approved by a vote of 6-0.

7.4. 2024 Meeting Schedule

Board staff will present proposed board meeting dates for 2024 to the Board.

Ms. Nieves presented the proposed 2024 meeting dates to the Board.

Board Member Webb made a **MOTION** to approve the meeting dates as presented. Board Member Struthers **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6-0.

7.5. 2024 Board Goals

The Board will review its established priorities and set goals for 2024.

Ms. Nieves presented the 2023 Board goals and asked the Board if they would like to make any changes going into the new year.

The Board discussed the priority of establishing a clear policy statement on the use of the titles of Geologist, Hydrogeologist, and Engineering Geologist by non-licensed individuals; specifically, that state agencies that used the titles in job descriptions and job classes should be aligned with the law.

Ms. Muhle provided historical context to the item and said staff would continue to work with Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Elizabeth Lagerberg on it.

AGENDA ITEM: Request information from AAG Lagerberg regarding a Board policy statement on the position titles of Geologist, Hydrogeologist, and Engineering Geologist.

7.6. 2024 ASBOG Spring Council of Examiners (COE) Workshop

The 2024 Spring COE Workshop will be held in Dallas, Texas April 5-7, 2024. The Board may take action to designate a delegate to attend.

Ms. Muhle informed the Board that the budget had the capacity to cover one Board member attending the ASBOG Spring COE. She advised, due to the upcoming eclipse, the hotels were booking up fast.

Chair Hanell nominated Board Member Gillum to attend.

Board Member Webb made a **MOTION** for Board Member Gillum to attend the 2024 Spring COE Workshop as Board delegate, funded by the budget. Board Member Tebb **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6-0.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to coordinate travel and workshop attendance with Board Member Gillum.

8. Reports

8.1. Committee/Task Force Reports

8.1.1. Engineering-Geologist Exam Review Committee Update

Ms. Muhle and Ms. Nieves shared that Chair Hanell and Board Member Struthers were scheduled to continue their review of the exam as part of the committee's process. Ms. Muhle said once data has been compiled from the exam review, the committee would discuss any necessary changes to the exam with the state of Oregon.

8.1.2. Hydrogeologist Exam Review Committee Update

Ms. Muhle said the Hydrogeologist (HG) exam had been reviewed by Vice Chair Brock and Secretary Tebb. She said she was consolidating their notes and examinee comments, and that staff would schedule a meeting with the committee to discuss next steps and determine what changes were needed.

8.2. Central Investigations and Audits Unit Reports

8.2.1. Complaint Status Report

Ms. Muhle provided a summary of the Complaint Status Report data.

8.3. Licensing Customer Services Reports

8.3.1. Licensee Count Report

Ms. Muhle provided a summary of the Licensee Count Report data.

8.3.2. Department of Licensing's (DOL) Professions Report

A Board Member requested to see where the Geologist license base falls among the other Department of Licensing's professions.

Ms. Muhle provided a comparison of licensees across all DOL licensing programs.

Chair Hanell asked how the data is reflected in budget in terms of pooled licensee fees for shared services which Ms. Muhle provided additional information regarding.

AGENDA ITEM: The Board requested that staff provide a budget report.

8.3.3. Verifying Candidates for Licensure Based on Curriculum

Ms. Muhle shared that for applications from candidates who have not followed a traditional path to licensure, DOL program staff would reach out to individual universities to get relevant curriculum information. Staff would then review and compare the data to licensure requirements, before sending it to the newly established Review Committee for a determination.

8.4. Boards, Commissions and Outreach Reports

8.4.1. Review of Master Action Item List

Board Member Tebb left the meeting at 12:17 p.m. just prior to the Master Action Item report.

Ms. Nieves provided updates on items on the Master Action Items List.

9. Public Comments

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 three-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". 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.

There were no written or verbal comments other than those provided to the Board under item 6.2.

10. Conclusion

10.1. Announcements

None.

10.2. Requests for future agenda items

Vice Chair Brock requested a discussion regarding Board participation in the Washington State Hydrogeology Symposium.

10.3. Review of action items and items for next meeting

Ms. Nieves reviewed the agenda and action items she captured from the meeting.

Agenda Items:

- Budget report
- Board Attendance at the Washington State Hydrogeology Symposium

Action Items:

- Staff to finalize outreach contact information and send it to Board members.
- Ms. Nieves to schedule monthly meetings for the new Non-Licensed Experience Verifier Committee.
- Ms. Nieves to make travel arrangements for Board Member Gillum's attendance at the spring COE conference.
- Staff to work with AAG Largerberg and Board members regarding a policy statement on the working/position titles of Geologist, Hydrogeologist, and Engineering Geologist
- Ms. Nieves to schedule a HG Exam Review Committee meeting to review and discuss compiled data.

11. Adjournment

Chair Hanell adjourned the meeting at **12:26 p.m.**

Next Board Meeting:

March 7, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Virtual via Teams

Submitted by: 
Debra J. Allen-Bâ, Assistant Administrator

March 7, 2024
Date

Approved by: 
Casey R. Hanell, Board Chair

March 7, 2024
Date