

SOLID WASTE LICENSING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES August 15, 2024

A regular meeting of the Solid Waste Licensing Committee was held on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the Arkansas River Valley conference room of the Arkansas Department of Environment and Energy Headquarters at 5301 Northshore Drive, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

The meeting was called to order by Randy Harper, Chairman. Members present in person: Jennifer Parslow, Randy Harper, Joe Hopper, Angela Sparks, Jeff Barfield, Christal Baker, Shane Ellis, John Dyson. Members absent but represented by proxy Joseph Pence (Jennifer Parslow acting as a proxy). Guests at the meeting were Alan Spangler, representing the Arkansas Environmental Training Academy.

Jeff Barfield made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Joe Hopper seconded the motion. Angela Sparks mentioned a small typo in the minutes, which will be corrected. The motion carried, and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved upon correction of the typo.

Jennifer Parslow gave the DEQ report: Melody Walker's new role was introduced. New members were welcomed and it was confirmed that they received the by-laws and powers and duties of the committee. ACA Code 25-19-106 Freedom of Information Act was discussed as it pertains to public meetings and the impact that has on the committee's meeting schedule. Proxy form use was discussed. The new metric reporting by the agency regarding solid waste licensing expectations and performance was discussed. The success of ePortal was discussed and the contributing factors regarding the positive outcome of implementing the use of ePortal. 1 year into implementing the use of ePortal, the current usage is that 67% of applications are now received that way vs 35% at the end of 2023. The upcoming rollout of SEEK was discussed and the timing of the impact of that on solid waste licensing. Currently, there are 906 active operators expiring on December 31st, 2024. 12 provisional licenses are active. 52% of all licensed operators are at a Master level, 24% at a Journeyman level, and 24% are at an Apprentice level. 166 tests have been given this year, with a 95% passing rate. A legislative update was given outlining code changes that were due in July. The committee asked that DEQ address the timing of turnover on the committee by creating staggered terms or resetting the term limits, to preserve board continuity. Renewals were discussed. Renewals will be sent early in the month to give facilities more time to pay, the training period encompasses July 2022 to December 2024. A training report has been created by IT and the information has been shared with the training academy so they can target individuals or facilities lacking training hours. 622 operators have adequate training hours to renew, 177 have some training but not enough, and 100 have zero hours. Historically solid waste has a renewal rate of 80%.

A discussion was had about how facilities manage operators to ensure they get training. Tools and methods of managing that information were discussed and it was agreed that it is the facility

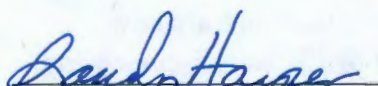
and operator's responsibility to manage their update hours. A discussion was held about the number of potentially inactive operators in DEQ's system and how to get facilities to communicate with DEQ when turnover occurs. A discussion about operators with insufficient training took place and the committee recommended to DEQ that if communication to operators was deemed necessary, that it be done via e-mail merge and not by incurring the expense of postage by mailing letters. A question was raised if DEQ knew how many people stayed at the apprentice level and if we knew how many apprentices were staying at that level.

Randy gave an update about a software change at SAU Tech that has affected students' ability to enroll in Internet classes.

Alan Spangler gave the Academy report: He compared January through June 2023 against the same time frame in 2024. Apprentice, 45 students in 2024 vs 83 in 2023. Some discussion was had about the decrease in students. Journeyman, 34 students in 2024 vs 21 in 2023. Master, 17 students in 2024 vs 7 in 2023. Update classes had 331 students in 2024 vs 310 students in 2023. A total of 40 classes with 437 students in 2024 compared to 39 classes with 436 students in 2023. Alan announced 2 new adjunct instructors, Starla Wallace in Jonesboro and Alessa Thomason in Hot Springs. A question was asked if the academy was considering changing its online classes to recorded in-person classes instead of PowerPoint classes.

The committee discussed the next meeting date of November 21st, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. at DEQ. Meeting dates for next year were decided on, February 13, May 15, August 14, and November 13, 2025.

With no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting.


Randy Harper, Chairperson