

MINUTES

STATE BOARD OF EXAMINING WATER WELL DRILLING CONTRACTORS AND WATER WELL PUMP INSTALLATION CONTRACTORS

August 25, 2025

10:00 A.M.

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:

Aaron Wilson- Vice-Chairman, Pump Installation Contractor

Wes Moody, Drilling Contractor (Domestic, Stock)

Michelle Christopher, Public Well Owner

Nick Jones, Drilling Contractor (At Large)

Christy Hutchinson- DEQ Designee

Ryan Cox-SEO Designee

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Parker Blakely- WGWA Board Member

PARTICIPATING PROFESSIONAL STAFF:

Patrick Kent, Assistant Attorney General

Kristin Baker, State Engineer's Principal Accountant

Jimmy Gordon, Executive Director, WWCB

Adam Johnson-State Engineers Office

Wesley Frain- State Engineers Office

Markus Malessa- State Engineers Office

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chairman Wilson called the State Board of Examining Water Well Drilling Contractors and Water Well Pump Installation Contractors (WWCB) meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Executive Director (ED) Gordon took a roll call and established that a quorum of members was in attendance.

Introduction of New Board Member

ED Gordon introduced Nick Jones as the newly appointed Driller At-Large member of the Board, and thanked him for volunteering for the role.

Election of Board Chairman

Aaron Wilson nominated Michelle Christopher as Board Chairman; Wes Moody seconded. Michelle Christopher accepted the nomination. The Board voted and the nomination was confirmed by majority vote. Chairman Christopher took over running the meeting.

REVIEW & APPROVE AGENDA

During the Board review of the meeting agenda ED Gordon asked if he could add one more license to be ratified under new business, as the applicant had completed his tests after the agenda was distributed. The Board agreed to add the one additional license for ratification. Business section of the meeting agenda. Aaron Wilson motioned to approve the agenda with the one change. Wes Moody seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REVIEW & APPROVE April 4th MEETING MINUTES

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes. Aaron Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes. Nick Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Online Licensing Software Progress Update-

ED Gordon provided an update on the work he is doing in conjunction with the State of Wyoming ETS development team on the Board's online licensing platform. He also provided an update letter from the ETS team who is developing the software platform. The update included acknowledgment of a delay from the original timeframe of a roll-out in fall 2025, to now estimated summer 2026. This was due to the staff learning a new system and what steps would be necessary to complete a project like this. ED Gordon concluded that the work is slow, but progress is being made. He feels that the team is doing a very good job given the circumstances of the program, and feels it best to continue the work. There were no other questions or discussion

Discussion of Board Rules & Regulations Review

Director Gordon introduced the topic for discussion including several handouts that detail both the tracking of completion forms by SEO staff, and a complete review of all 50 states and how they address rule violations and license discipline. He then asked Ryan Cox to speak on what his division staff had provided with the reporting metrics, and common issues they are seeing. He pointed out that several items seen on the deficiency tracking report fell under a "communication issue" where with a quick phone call to the SEO to discuss a variance, or issues with timely submission of forms. In his opinion they fell on the more minor, and easier to correct issues they see. The other items were viewed as larger issues, unlicensed contractor, not meeting permit conditions, and drilling without a valid permit. Director Gordon added that according to current Board rules, every violation represented on the tracking form constituted a violation of Board rules. There is currently no difference from a "minor" to a "major" violation, all must be investigated and deliberated if an official complaint is received. He pointed out that if the Engineer's office chose to, they could submit an official complaint for every violation found, which would put a tremendous strain on all Board members and resources. Vice-Chairmen Wilson asked Ryan as the representative for the Engineer's office serving on the Board if he had any recommendation on how to deal with this problem. Ryan responded with his support for some type of point system to deal with each differing severity of violation without the need for complaints and investigations for each instance. Discussion was had on what members thought caused the minor communication issues. Was it lack of education, procrastination, busy schedules, etc. Ryan felt it was a little bit of all of those reasons. He also highlighted the lack of communication with the Engineer's office when they reach out for clarification or missing information on forms. Other topics included the possibility of the Engineer's office "refreshing" the statement of completion form, to attempt to make it more user friendly. Ryan felt that was a possibility, and recognized the form could stand to be updated. He also mentioned that the Engineer's office new online system is under development, and hoped that would help alleviate some issues. A Board sponsored education offering was also discussed, and generally agreed upon as a good idea. It would center around form completion, well construction, and other common issues being observed as a way to educate the license holders so the "problems" could be corrected, or at least everyone can be educated on what is expected and common issues so that if violations continued contractors could not argue they did not know what the correct methods

and expectations where. Engineers' office staff also presented their work towards a Drillers Handbook, a reference item that can be distributed to all contractors with helpful appendixes and documents including instructions on how to complete forms, etc. They will share their final draft with the Board when it is completed. Other discussion was had on how the Engineers' office staff handles wells that appear to not meet construction standards, and what is required to be done about "non-compliant" wells in use. Other topics were briefly discussed on the current requirements for contractors, and suggestions that would make it easier to comply while not reducing protections of aquifers, wells, etc. It was discussed and generally agreed upon that the current process could be utilized, with assistance from the Engineers' office staff to educate and deal with the more serious or egregious offenses and offenders. Aaron Wilson made a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. Wes Moody seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Director Compensation Adjustment

Director Gordon introduced the agenda item and given his obvious conflict of interest he asked Kristin Baker to take over leading the discussion and presentation of the specifics of the agenda item. She informed the Board that Engineers' office staff member Adam Johnson had created a PowerPoint presentation on the research on the executive Directors pay, and position classification. Mr. Johnson presented the slides, and explained all the details on Board revenues, projections and historical information of permit and license fee revenue. Ms. Baker explained the two possible avenues the Board could choose to take to increase the Directors salary. One is to increase the pay within the current job classification, and the other is to request to reclassify the position to a higher level, which would result in a higher salary. the reclassification would require the Administration & Information Department to research and interview the Director on the job duties and responsibilities. If they determine a reclassification is justified, the Board would not have the option to not accept A & I's decision. Wes Moody recalled previous Directors receiving pay increases from the Board, and he asked Kristin to research how that was done, and if the Board had more freedom to decide pay for the Director position in the past. Wes Moody motioned to table the discussion until the next meeting. Ryan Cox seconded. Motion carried.

Clarification of the Executive Director Role

Director Gordon presented his research on the role of the Executive Director as it was created in legislation. Ultimately it is a relatively unique position within state government. The director reports to and takes ultimate direction from the Board, that is very clear. The position is also considered within the State engineer's office, as it relates to human resources, fiscal department, and other shared resources. Timesheets, leave requests, performance reviews, etc. are handled within the engineer's office.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fiscal Update-

Kristin Baker provided an update on the Boards current budget position including revenue and expenses. She expressed that she has no concerns with the health of the Boards budget. She explained a change to the 100 series account from an increase in insurance through open enrollment. She asked for any questions or if any clarifications were needed, which there were none. Wes Moody made a motion to accept the fiscal update. Ryan Cox seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ratification of New Licenses

Wes Moody made a motion to ratify all licenses presented by director Gordon. Ryan Cox seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Continuing education Approval Policy

Director Gordon discussed the current Board rules on required continuing education credits. He explained the current education course approval form that is used to review and approve proposed courses, and that both the National Groundwater Association and Wyoming groundwater Association classes were typically approved as an event rather than a course-by-course process. The topic of accepting Board meeting attendance or verification of reading meeting minutes as acceptable continuing education was discussed. Director Gordon explained that that type of “education” did not fit into any of the approved course classification types. If the Board wished to accept those actions as continuing education, it would need to update its rules to allow them to be used for credit. Aaron Wilson motioned to table discussion on revising Board rules on continuing education until a future meeting. Wes Moody seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Executive Director Update

Director Gordon provided the Board with an update of his office since the April 4th meeting. 13 exams were given to 8 applicants. 8 new licenses had been issued since the last Board meeting. He also shared a breakdown of the current license count of 293 active licenses. There are 115 licensees up for renewal at the end of 2025, and currently 19 approved applications waiting to take exams. He explained that he has received confirmation of continuing education credits and first reporting period from the Board settlement agreement resulting from docket #24-001. Currently working 3 separate complaint investigations. He reminded all Board members that they will be asked to serve as an investigative board member at some point when official complaints are received. His intent was to rotate the requests to ensure all members have served before a member is asked a second time, however a conflict of interest could prevent that. He suggested the Board review the current license exams for possible edits or updates. The license exams have not changed since his time with the Board, and felt it was in the Board's best interest to do so at a future meeting. As was discussed earlier in the meeting, he asked the Board for approval to work with the Engineer's office to develop a continuing education presentation outline for contractors and well owners. The goal of the presentation would be to educate contractors on the most common “violations” seen and the correct way to deal with those situations. His plan was to collaborate with Engineer's office staff and present an outline to the Board at the next meeting and discuss options for hosting contractors and well owners to present the information both in person and virtually. The approval to work up an outline and present to the Board at the next meeting was approved. Lastly, he informed the Board that he and the Engineer's office along with legal staff were creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would outline how the two agencies would work together when it came to complaint investigations and other joint work. Once a draft is prepared, it would be presented to the Board for approval.

Miscellaneous/ Public Comment

Parker Blackely represented the Wyoming groundwater Association and welcomed all Board members to attend their meetings, and convention in January. The date is tentatively scheduled for January 14-16th in Casper. No other public comment was heard.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in Casper WY at the Thyra Thompson State Building on January 13, 2025, time 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Christopher adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.