

Minutes
For the
**OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
INTERNAL REVIEW**
Division of Municipal Facilities (DMF)
Environmental Health Section
North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality
October 02, 2023

The annual Operator Certification Program Internal Review by the DMF was held at the Normandy Building, 4201 Normandy Street, Bismarck, ND at 9:00 a.m. October 2, 2023. The following individuals were in attendance:

- David Bruschwein, Director of Division of Municipal Facilities
- Greg Wavra, Drinking Water Program Administrator
- Marlon Bell, Environmental Scientist
- Jacob Schafer, Secretary of Operator Certification Advisory Committee
- Craig Bartholomay, Operator Certification Officer
- LeeAnn Tillotson, Operator Reimbursement Coordinator
- Vance Wingerter, Capacity Development Coordinator
- Shawn Heinle, OTCFI Administrator/Manager

Vance Wingerter opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. by welcoming those in attendance.

The first item of business was approval of the minutes from the September 28, 2022, Operator Certification Program Internal Review. Jacob Schafer made the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by LeeAnn Tillotson. Motion carried.

Jacob Schafer noted the North Dakota Operator Certification Advisory Committee will hold the annual external review on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at the NWPC conference in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

LeeAnn Tillotson provided an update on Operator Expense Reimbursement for the 2021-2023 biennium. LeeAnn did indicate that the 2021-2023 biennium funding started at \$125,000 with \$2153.00 of general funds used. This shows that \$127,153.00 was spent in total. There was a total of 312 requests.

There were four in-house trainings in the year of 2023 given. No online classes were given. 262 Exams were given and 161 passed. The passing rate on the exams of 61%. In the September through December, we anticipate that 132 operators will take 160 tests.

David Bruschwein submitted the SFY23 Annual Operator Certification Submittal Report, on July 30th, 2023, to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 8. EPA has changed the format for this report, it now has a very in-depth template with specific items required. The report still indicates proper certification with large systems, while certification with smaller systems is still low.

Vance Wingerter provided an update on the DWSRF contract with North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) and Midwest Assistance Program (MAP) for operator certification. This contract provides hands-on technical assistance to PWSs not meeting SDWA operator certification requirements. Assistance was provided to 22 systems through (MAP) and assistance has been provided to 41 systems through (NDRWSA).

No items of old business.

New business. David Bruschwein started a conversation on the possibility of remote operator testing events.

Shawn Heinle moved to adjourn, and Jacob Schafer seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.