

**LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS**

9643 Brookline Ave., Ste. 101, Baton Rouge, LA 70809



**REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG**

Thursday, November 12, 2024, 1:00 P.M.

Physical meeting at

Engineering Center Conference Room

9643 Brookline Avenue

Baton Rouge, LA 70809

and

Virtual Public Meeting Hosted on Zoom

**MINUTES**

Chair David Ray Williamson called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m., Tuesday, November 12, 2024, and commenced roll call.

Present: David Ray Williamson, William Finley, Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, Kaycee Garrett, Elizabeth McDade, and William Schramm, Board Members; Sadé Dennis, Project Coordinator; David Peterson, Legal Counsel; and Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary.

Absent: Michael Simms and Lloyd Hoover, Board Members; Seija Meaux, Project Coordinator, and Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary.

Guest: Sam Bentley, LSU Department of Geology and Geophysics; Chase Cromwell, LEAAF Environmental and New Orleans Geological Society.

Quorum was established.

**Public Comment Period**

No comments were forthcoming.

**Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the September 19, 2024, regular board meeting were reviewed, and Williamson called for discussion. Finley moved to accept the minutes, and McDade seconded the motion. Williamson called for a vote; the motion passed.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Finley reminded board members that several changes have been made, with the closure of the Capital One savings account, initiation of three CD accounts, and payment of several large bills. He pointed out that the cycle of income that regularly occurs in fall and winter, when the majority of renewal payments are received, has begun, but the influx of funds did not fully offset expenses for the period September through October. He said the current fiscal situation follows the normal trend for the board's revenue and expenses. Williamson asked if Finley had any concerns about the current situation. Finley said that, while the deficit was concerning, he believed the situation would right itself. He reminded board members that the deficit in the operating expenses was more than offset by the CD account balances, and he was confident that the ongoing increase in revenue would balance out the deficit in the budget by mid-March. He cited as example the same trend in the 2023-2024 fiscal year and pointed out the high yield on the CD accounts. Discussion ensued. Williamson then called for a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Schramm moved to accept the report as presented; Stiegler seconded the motion. Williamson called for a vote; the motion passed.

## **Standing Committees**

Application Review Committee: Stiegler reported that the committee reviewed applications for two licenses and three testing (ASBOG) requests. She said the committee members are requesting more information on the two license applications, and they are requesting approval of applications 1, 2, and 3 for examination. Schramm asked if the reviewers have had issues with the changes in course names and content as they evaluate degree hours. Schramm pointed out that the Louisiana statute lists specific courses and asked if the name changes run afoul of the statute. Discussion ensued, with the understanding that the statute will eventually need to be changed to reflect changes in the curriculum. Stiegler moved to accept these recommendations; Schramm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that scores for the ASBOG exams taken in October have not yet been received. He then asked Macon to provide background information on the proposal by LDENR employee Madison Avery that Louisiana agencies (specifically LDENR) reimburse ASBOG testing costs to successful testing candidates and pay for training materials for the exams. Macon reported that Avery has been approved by the board to take the ASBOG FG exam and works for the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR). She has several colleagues who would like to take the exam as well, but the fees to the board and to ASBOG for the exam is prohibitive for some employees. She has approached the top administrators with LDENR to defray these costs by offering financial incentives, including payment of the application fee and reimbursement of the examination fees, once the candidate passes the exam. She also would like to have LDENR offer all eligible employees access to training materials, such as those offered by ASBOG, so candidates can adequately prepare for the exams. Macon reported that she had asked ASBOG administrators, on behalf of Avery, if an institutional or governmental arrangement is possible for providing the study materials to LDENR. The ASBOG administrators responded favorably to the idea, and Macon had provided Avery with contact information for ASBOG's administrator to begin communication between LDENR and ASBOG. Discussion ensued.

Compliance Committee: Schramm asked Dennis to report on the effect of the audit on retention of licensees. Dennis reported that one more auditee's continuing education documentation from the 2024 audit was approved, bringing the total of approved to 18, with four retired, deceased, or relinquishing licenses and four in noncompliance. For 2025, seven sets of documents were reviewed for this meeting; 3

passed, and four needed more documentation. Schramm noted that the numbers get better every year, but he explained that issues still arise. Discussion ensued.

Outreach Committee: Culpepper reported that he and Chase Cromwell are working with UNO to incorporate a training presentation for students and that he is planning to meet with Tulane faculty as well. He then asked Cromwell to talk with the board about his plans. Cromwell explained that he graduated from the University of Mississippi, and that the geology program there required seniors to take the ASBOG FG before they graduated. He said wanted to see other universities offer the same opportunity to their students. He reported that he and Culpepper presented the idea to Mark Kulp at the University of New Orleans, and Kulp was receptive to it. Kulp intends to include a segment on taking the ASBOG FG in his Senior Seminar in Spring 2025, so he needs to have Cromwell's presentation materials by the first of January 2025 to be incorporated into the seminar syllabus. Kulp also intends to reimburse students who pass the exam for the exam costs. Cromwell asked for the board's support in developing the presentation and attending the seminar session to assist in passing out information and answering questions. He also intends to talk with students about networking opportunities in the profession. Board members asked him questions, and general discussion ensued.

Schramm mentioned that Chris McLindon, with the LSU Center of Energy Studies, offered to help with continuing education sessions for state agencies.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: McDade presented information about the committee's plans to develop the five-year plan. She said the state has guidelines for the five-year plan that include the vision statement, the mission statement, value statement, and goals. She set up what the board already has to take the first statement in the mission statement as the vision statement and the succeeding statements in the mission statement as the new mission statement. She then took the elaboration on the mission statement as the value statement, and the work of each of the board's established committees as the goals of the board. She wants each committee to look at its work and develop its own concept of the goals for that committee. Williamson suggested that McDade send each committee an outline of the plan and provide them with a deadline for developing its goals. Discussion ensued, with the question of whether the Ad Hoc committee should become a regular meeting. McDade then addressed the difficulty of scheduling committee meetings that meet the Sunshine Law's requirements. She said, to facilitate the ability to meet and remain in compliance with the law, her committee has decided to meet regularly before the regular board meeting. She also mentioned that Legal Counsel David Peterson had explained that the board must present a formal resolution at a full board meeting to allow the number of virtual meetings with formal rules for conducting a virtual meeting before the board can legally hold a virtual meeting. She further noted that virtual meetings allow the board to provide access to anyone in the public who chooses to attend. She proposed that the board give her committee permission to work with Peterson to develop such a resolution. Board members agreed that such a resolution should be written and agreed upon at an upcoming board meeting. Peterson agreed to work with the board to develop the resolution. Schramm asked Peterson if he has the statute and rules changes that the previous legal counsel had already created; Peterson said he knows the documents exist, but he has not had time to find them. Williamson asked Macon and Schramm, who attended the ASBOG Annual Meeting, if they recalled anything in the discussion of ASBOG strategic planning that could be helpful to McDade's committee. Macon said, as she was taking notes at the ASBOG meeting, their strategic planning committee chair mentioned a book, *Playing to Win* by Roger Martin, that caught her attention, and she wrote McDade's name next to her note about the book to remind her to tell McDade about it. She said McDade's outline tracked all the points the ASBOG committee chair had made.

Office Committee: Macon reported that she, Schramm, and Williamson had created a document on what they had learned and experienced at the ASBOG meeting, and copies of that document were in the packet.

She reminded board members that the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Engineering Societies Conference (JESC) will be held in Lafayette, Louisiana, February 5 and 6, 2025 and that the board will once again have a booth at the conference. As has been the case for the last two years, the conference will include a session dedicated to geology topics.

She reported that the Office of Facility Planning sent back the office space lease for additional signatures. Once that document is completed, she said, she will get it back to them to be processed and filed.

She also mentioned that the contract with the Office of the Attorney General is still in queue to be processed on their side.

She reported that, as of July 1, 2024, EVO International began charging 35 cents per transaction for “network processing.” This charge has caused the costs of providing online payment services to rise significantly. Discussion ensued.

Williamson announced that Macon needs the help of board members in getting requested information promptly. He suggested that board members should respond well before the meeting date. He also suggested that board members prepare short reports on what they have done before each meeting for the board. He asked board members to think about the committees they serve on and decide if they want to continue on those committees. He also announced that Board Member Lloyd Hoover is in poor health and has informally resigned. Discussion ensued.

### **Old Business: Advisory Committee to the Board**

Board members discussed an informal and independent entity that would advise board members on issues of importance to licensees, to geoscience, and to citizens of the State of Louisiana.

### **New Business**

Sam Bentley presented information on a new project in which he is involved. He said that funding agencies require research institutions to include educational outreach components and professional ethics in proposed research. Bentley and Mead Allison at Tulane are currently working on a project that is ultimately to predict changes in the Mississippi River Bird’s Foot Delta, which is rapidly retreating, over the next 100 years, to anticipate the socio-economic aspects of that change, and to suggest ways to forestall, or at least mitigate, the negative consequences of that change. This \$22 million project involves a consortium of 14 institutions, at least three of which have geology programs. The project has as one of its major components to provide training to students in engineering and geoscience, particularly minority students. He said he wanted to get the board involved in some way, and he asked board members to think about the project and how the board can work with the consortium. Board members asked questions, and discussion ensued.

Finley requested funding to attend an energy conference at Tulane in New Orleans. Board members discussed the conference topics and voted to approve funding for Finley’s attendance at the meeting.

Regarding a letter from the Office of the Attorney General about the change in required participation in the Occupational Licensing Review Program (OLRP) sent to board members October 7, 2024, the board decided to table a decision pending additional information.

**Announcement of the Next Meeting and Adjournment**

Williamson encouraged board members to attend the ASBOG Annual Meeting and to participate in the Council of Examiners. The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 1:00 pm in the Engineering Center conference room at 9643 Brookline Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA. Schramm moved to adjourn; Stiegler seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.