

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

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



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 1:00 P.M.

Physical meeting at

Louisiana Engineering Center

9643 Brookline Avenue

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

and

Virtual Public Meeting Hosted on Zoom

MINUTES

Chair William Schramm called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m., Tuesday, July 12, 2022, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm, William Finley (Zoom), Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, Lloyd Hoover, Elizabeth McDade, and Michael Simms, Board Members; Mabelle Hall, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; and Maria Mata de Leder, Administrative Coordinator.

Absent: Todd Perry and David Williamson, Board Members; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary; Mallory Pilié, Project Coordinator.

Guests: None

Quorum was established.

Public Comment Period

No comments from guests were recorded.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the May 10, 2022, regular board meeting were reviewed. McDade moved to accept the minutes; Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Finley presented the treasurer's report for May and June 2022 and reminded members that the packet of materials includes a draft budget for the new (2022- 2023) fiscal year. He pointed out that the board is

experiencing a shortfall in its expenses, having lost nearly \$3,000 in the last two months. He said the two expenses that occurred to create the shortfall is board member per diem and legal services. He said he would be reviewing the accounts to determine a plan for the future. He also mentioned that the savings accounts are generating about \$21 per month in interest.

He then reported on the online payment expenses. He reminded the board that a \$5 convenience fee (per transaction) had been approved originally to offset these expenses; however, he provided a spreadsheet to show that, despite the fee, costs for providing this service still exceed the revenue generated. He proposed increasing the convenience fee to \$6 per transaction to attempt to cover these costs fully.

He then submitted the report as complete and moved to accept it. Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote; the motion passed. Stiegler then moved to increase the online transaction fee from \$5 to \$6; McDade seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion passed.

Finley then brought the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget to the attention of the board. He first pointed out that the board had a \$14,073.22 shortfall, explaining that increasing staff salaries and paying for a three-year contract all in the final year of the contract accounted for most of the shortfall. Discussion ensued regarding specific areas of revenue and expense. Macon reported that, during her research for a report on board member mileage, she noticed a trend during the last two years: At the beginning of the pandemic, board members were not traveling, so the board had no expenses for mileage. However, when in-person meetings resumed, rental vehicles were not available, so more board members were forced to use their own vehicles for travel, resulting in more expenses for mileage. She expressed optimism that rental vehicles will be more readily available in the future, which will ultimately save the board travel expense money. Finley moved to accept the budget as presented; Stiegler seconded the motion. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion passed.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Stiegler reported that the three license applications reviewed by the committee – 1, 2, and 3 – are recommended for approval. She also reported that the 14 ASBOG examination candidates – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 – are all recommended for approval. Those applying to take the ASBOG FG exam are 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13; those applying for the ASBOG PG exam are 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 14. Stiegler moved to approve these candidates; McDade seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote; the motion passed.

Stiegler then responded to agenda item 6.a.ii: Request from ASBOG PG examination candidate: “Please consider allowing GITs who are close to the five-year work experience requirement to take the exam even if that requirement is not yet met on the date of the exam. Then, the candidate will wait after passing the PG exam to be considered for full license. Because the ASBOG exams are only given twice each year, GITs who will have fulfilled the five-year work experience requirement shortly before or after the exam date currently must wait as long as an additional year after fulfilling the requirement to take the exam, get the exam results, and then be considered for license. By allowing them to get the examination out of the way, the wait can be significantly shortened.” Stiegler pointed out that the reviewers already do allow GITs to take the PG prior to meeting the full five years of work experience. She added that reviewers look at the applications at every step of the process: first, for eligibility to take the Fundamentals of Geology exam; then, for eligibility to receive GIT certification; then, when the requisite

number of years of work experience is reached, the applicant's eligibility to take the Practice of Geology exam; and finally, after the applicant passes the Practice of Geology exam, the reviewers look at the application one last time to make sure that all other requirements for licensure are met before they recommend the candidate for a license. Because each step is independent, each application is evaluated by separate criteria at each point in the process. Therefore, even if a candidate does not yet have the requisite number of work experience years for full licensure, that candidate can still be allowed to take the Practice of Geology exam because the candidate is not being evaluated for licensure, but rather for eligibility to take the exam. Discussion ensued, with Finley pointing out that the rules state that candidates applying to take the Practice of Geology exam must be concurrently applying for a license and meet all the requirements for licensure. He added, however, that he sees no reason to make candidates wait to take this exam. Hall suggested changing the rules to accommodate the policy of allowing candidates to take the exam prior to meeting the five years of work experience. Additional discussion ensued.

License Examination Committee: In Williamson's (chair) absence, Macon reported that, with the 14 candidates approved during the current meeting, a total of 23 candidates would be taking ASBOG exams on October 7, 2022: 10 FG only; 7 PG only; and 6 both FG and PG.

Compliance Committee: Mata de Leder reported that the continuing education audit is in progress. So far, of the 24 licensees randomly selected to participate in the audit, 14 have passed; four retired and four others have allowed their licenses to lapse rather than complete the audit process. Two others have not yet responded and have been sent reminders. Discussion ensued, with Schramm recommending that the board needs to send communications to licensees more frequently so licensees are reminded of the importance of these audits.

Macon reported that, in response to discussions at previous board meetings, a letter has been drafted to other state agencies to provide information on the board and its mission and to request assistance from those agencies in identifying instances in which geoscience work is either not performed in a professional manner or is performed by practitioners who are not qualified. Prior to this letter having been completed, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality sent a letter to the "Louisiana Response Action Contractors" reminding these contractors that all geoscience work performed in Louisiana must be under the supervision of licensed Professional Geoscientists and must be sealed accordingly. Hall asked for suggestions from the board. Simms wondered how such a letter would be received, if this letter would reach the people who would need to see it. Hall explained that the board has no control over how the letter is disseminated but that the letter has the potential to provide information. Discussion ensued, with the future intent to send a similar letter to licensees and contractors.

Outreach Committee: Finley had no formal report but advocated for providing continuing education opportunities whenever possible for licensees. Schramm added that Clare Falcon, the director of the Louisiana Geological Survey, has expressed willingness to work with the board on continuing education opportunities.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: Simms pointed out that the letter previously discussed speaks to the issue of coordinating with other state agencies. Finley provided a page from his work to revise the board's rules and discussed redefining terms to make them better align with the statute. He also mentioned that the statute gives the board authority to create bylaws, rules, and "rules for

procurement of geoscientific services.” He asked how far the board should push that part of the board’s authority and asked the rest of the board to think about how to approach this area of the statute.

Simms pointed out that, as the previously discussed draft letter indicates, the board works in union with other state agencies to fulfill its mission. He suggested that the board may request that other agencies add language to its contracts to indicate that work must be performed by qualified, licensed geoscientists. Schramm said he thinks that language is already in most state contracts and RFPs. Discussion ensued.

Simms reported on work on the board’s five-year plan, including updating the mission statement and expanding on topics such as continuing education. Finley added that he is working on eliminating areas of redundancy in the rules but has not yet completed the revision. Hall mentioned that her office has created a document that aligns each rule with the item in the statute that supports that rule. Schramm added that the rules should incorporate flexibility to allow for easy changes in the future.

Office Committee: Macon reported that the journal issue is in the works; the test email was not adequately delivered to the list, so she and the staff at Dovetail are investigating to try to understand why.

She reminded the board that the board and staff profile page is under construction, and a photographer had taken photos prior to the board meeting to provide images for that page.

She also reminded board members that the state mileage rate has increased to .625 cents per mile.

Macon then explained to the board the current process for ASBOG testing and the proposed changes that will take place once the computer-based testing (CBT) is implemented.

New Business

Schramm reported that he has been asked to serve on the ASBOG Ethics Committee, explaining that ASBOG will pay for his travel expenses. He asked if it would be appropriate for the board to pay his per diem. Simms said the committee participation would seem to be part of the board’s business. Hall said she was not sure but would check.

Schramm, Macon, and Mata de Leder attended the virtual ASBOG CBT meeting on May 18. Schramm mentioned that the Task Analysis Survey was to be sent to member boards but has apparently not been sent. Mata de Leder explained that ASBOG staff is still working to resolve the conflicts that some states are having.

Adjourn

The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 1:00 pm. Culpepper moved to adjourn; Simms seconded; the motion passed. Schramm adjourned the meeting at 3:20 pm.