

# LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

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



## REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Thursday, May 22, 2025, 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 1:04 p.m., Thursday, May 22, 2025, and commenced roll call.

Present: David Ray Williamson, David Culpepper, Elizabeth McDade, William Schramm, Michael Simms, and Melanie Stiegler, Board Members; David Peterson, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; and Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary.

Absent: William Finley and Kaycee Garrett, Board Members; Sadé Dennis and Seija Meaux, Project Coordinators.

Guest: Emily Welch, a geologist with GEC, Inc. (Baton Rouge) and a Louisiana Professional Geoscientist license candidate.

Quorum was established.

### Public Comment Period

No comments were forthcoming.

### Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the March 11, 2025, regular board meeting were reviewed, and Williamson called for discussion. McDade requested an amendment to the minutes: She asked that, under the description of the Compliance Committee Report discussion on page 2 of the original minutes, the statement, "The board agreed, and new licensees going forward will be asked to send copies of their seals as proof of compliance" be changed to "The board continued to discuss the possibility of requiring licensees to send copies of their seals as proof of compliance." She then moved to accept the minutes with the amended

statement, and Stiegler seconded the motion. Williamson called for additional discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote, and the motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report**

In Treasurer William Finley's absence, Assistant Executive Secretary Chantel McCreary presented the Treasurer's report, mentioning that revenue exceeded expenses in both March and April. Culpepper moved to accept the report; Stiegler seconded. Williamson called for discussion and a vote. The motion passed.

Executive Secretary Brenda Macon then presented the proposed budget for FY 2025-2026. The board discussed the proposed office space lease with the Louisiana Engineering Society, and the increased revenue from the August 2024 implementation of 2024 Act 475, which increased fees paid to the board. Schramm moved to accept the proposed budget, and Simms seconded the motion. Williamson called for discussion and a vote; the motion passed.

### **Standing Committees**

Application Review Committee: Committee Chair Melanie Stiegler reported on the committee's work. She said eleven applications for licenses, three applications of Geoscientist in Training (GIT) certification, and five ASBOG testing requests had been reviewed. On behalf of the committee, Stiegler recommended license applications 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 be approved. She further recommended that GIT certification applications 1, 2, and 3 be approved. Finally, she recommended that testing requests 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 be approved. Simms moved to accept the recommendations; McDade seconded; and the motion passed.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that, of the nine candidates who took the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam in March 2025, four passed and five did not. He explained that scores ranged from a low of 48 to a high of 84. Of the eight candidates who took the ASBOG Practice of Geology exam, five passed and three did not. Scores ranged from a low of 52 to a high of 80. Discussion of ways to help candidates succeed in future examination sessions ensued, with Schramm and Williamson offering to invite candidates to an online presentation well before the examination dates and perhaps to have multiple voluntary meeting opportunities for candidates.

Compliance Committee: Schramm reported first on developments that have arisen from previous audit periods (one each from 2021 and 2024). Discussion of these developments rendered solutions to handle each situation individually, one of which will require assistance from legal counsel.

Schramm then reported on the progress of the 2025 continuing education audit. He said that, of those who have been under review, nine have been approved, one has been asked to provide additional hours and documentation, and another has been provisionally passed.

Discussion ensued regarding ways to help make the audit process less burdensome to both reviewers and auditees. Schramm reported that he and Williamson have developed a PowerPoint presentation to be posted on the board's website and to provide information at invited talks with geological society meetings and conferences. At this point, the board began discussing content for a potential email to all active licensees with information that will facilitate several aspects of licensure responsibilities. This discussion led into the Outreach committee report.

Outreach Committee: Culpepper continued the discussion regarding ways to keep licensees better informed in areas such as continuing education, audit requirements, and seal use. He and Macon agreed to collaborate on a message to licensees that will lead them to existing web pages with the information on these topics and to new information that is to be developed.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: McDade alluded to a previous discussion during her committee meeting earlier in the day of the issue of requiring all licensees to submit copies of their signed and dated seals to the board as proof of compliance with the statute (R.S. 37:711.22) and the rules (Title 46, Part LXII, Chapter 15.B(1)). She argued that such a requirement would put undue pressure on licensees, some of whom may never use seals in their work. When discussion turned to the requirement in the statute and rules, she reminded the board that the profession is constantly evolving, requiring periodic review of the statute and the rules to ensure that both are in step with current needs in the workplace. She said that her committee is now working on changes to the statute and rules that she hopes will bring those documents into better alignment with current professional standards. She asked Macon to resend the draft of changes made by previous legal counsel, Machel Hall, as a starting point for her committee's work in revamping the statute and the rules. She plans to have amended documents ready to submit to the legislature by November 2025.

#### Office Committee:

##### *Executive Orders*

Macon reminded board members that Governor Jeff Landry has issued a few executive orders since the first of the year that may have an impact on board operations. The first is a call to review all occupational licensing boards, next is a hiring freeze that could affect the board's ability to fill upcoming open WAE positions, and another is a freeze on lease extensions.

##### *Online Payment Costs*

She then reported that, as mentioned at January's board meeting, the cost of services to offer online payments had gone up dramatically. In response to these increases, she said contacted the board's financial guarantor, EVO International, about reducing these costs. As a result, she reported that the board should be seeing a significant decrease in those costs with the next quarterly statement.

##### *Comit Developers and Database Software Costs*

She informed the board that, because of the extensive use of the database system that was developed for applications, licensee accounts, and multiple additional uses, the board had recently outgrown the software that supports the system. She said Comit Developers, the company that provides the board's IT support, had to upgrade to a higher level that costs about \$100 more per month. She said the upgrade has already delivered significant improvements in the system's performance.

##### *New Email Provider*

She reported that, as of March 14, the board's new email provider is GoDaddy. As mentioned at the March board meeting, the administrative needs of the board are better served with only the apply@lbopg.org email. However, she said, if any board member needs an email address specifically tied to the board's account, the board has the option to pay for additional email addresses as the need arises. The cost is \$7.99 per additional address per month. She cautioned, however, that to keep costs down, it would be best to add addresses only for those board members who routinely use board email to correspond.

For the price Zoho was charging for a single year of email service, she explained, the board has three years of service with GoDaddy, and the method for logging into the account is much more intuitive and streamlined. Also, the interface is Outlook, so navigating in the system is much easier.

### *Building Sale*

As already reported by email throughout April, the Louisiana Engineering Foundation (LEF) is selling the Engineering Center building and is moving out. The plan is to have a lease on a new office suite by July 1, and LEF Director Mary Claire Ruckert has already submitted a letter of intent on a property at 1800 City Farm Drive in Baton Rouge. As previously reported, the board will need to submit a packet of documents to the Louisiana Office of Facility Planning before office space can be sublet from the Louisiana Engineering Society (LES), and if all goes according to plan, the board's address as of July 1, 2025, will be Building 5, Suite B at 1800 City Farm Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70809. Ruckert is working closely with LBOPG staff to send the required documents to Facility Planning and to get the sublease agreement completed as soon as possible.

Ruckert's discussions with the Office of Facility Planning yielded the information that state leases are usually required to include the cost of utilities in the amount requested for rent. However, neither Macon nor Ruckert have a firm idea regarding how much those utilities will cost in the new space. Therefore, they were both of the opinion that, at least for the period of the first lease agreement, the agreement should include **only** the cost of the rent on the space. Macon then explained that the Office of Facility Planning requires the board to pass an official board motion to accept the lease agreement that does not include utilities and other costs. Schramm moved to enter into a lease agreement with the Louisiana Engineering Society for the rental cost **only** for office space in Building 5 Suite B at 1800 City Farm Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70809; the cost of utilities will be separate from that lease agreement. Stiegler seconded the motion. Williamson called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

### *Contracts: Legal*

Finally, Macon reported that the contract with the Louisiana Department of Justice (DOJ) has been approved – just in time to start working on the contract for FY 2025-2026. The new contract is uploaded into the state contract system and approved but expires on June 30, 2025. Macon said she had already sent a draft contract for the new fiscal year to the board's legal counsel to be forwarded to the responsible parties at DOJ for their review and edits.

### **Old Business**

#### *Occupational Licensing Review Program*

After a brief discussion of whether to participate in the Occupational Licensing Review Program (OLRP) as presented at previous board meetings since January and after questions from board members and answers from Legal Counsel David Peterson, Williamson suggested tabling the issue until later in the year. Board members agreed.

*Board Member Resolution:* The board reviewed and discussed the final draft resolution of appreciation for Lloyd G. Hoover, one of the original members of the board who retired from the board in late October 2024 and passed away on January 2, 2025. Schramm moved to accept the final draft resolution and to move forward on the plan to create a plaque to present to Hoover's family, as well as one to be displayed in the board's office. McDade seconded the motion. Williamson called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

Schramm then presented a draft document to create an annual public service award in Hoover's memory to be presented to someone in the profession who exhibits a similar dedication to service. The document was discussed, with editing suggested and details for providing publicity. Stiegler moved to accept the draft document with edits, and Simms seconded the motion. Williamson called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at 1:00 pm in the Louisiana Engineering Center conference room at 9643 Brookline Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA. McDade then moved to adjourn; Schramm seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.