LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

1800 City Farm Drive, Building 5B, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Thursday, September 17, 2026, 1:00 P.M.
Physical meeting at
1800 City Farm Drive, Building 5B
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
and
Virtual Public Meeting Hosted on Zoom

MINUTES

Chair Michael Simms called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m., Thursday, September 17, 2026, and commenced roll call.

Present: Michael Simms, William Schramm, Melanie Stiegler, David Culpepper, William Finley, Elizabeth McDade, and David Ray Williamson, Board Members; and Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary.

Absent: Sadé Dennis, Project Coordinator; Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary; and Richelle Moore, Legal Counsel.

Guests: Amy Easley, attorney, LA Office of the Attorney General; Deborah LeBlanc, Executive Secretary candidate.

Quorum was established.

Public Comment Period
None.

Meeting Minutes
Minutes of the August 6, 2026, regular board meeting were reviewed. Williamson moved to accept the minutes as presented; Culpepper seconded the motion. Simms called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Minutes of the August 27, 2026, special board meeting were reviewed. Williamson moved to accept the minutes as presented; McDade seconded the motion. Simms called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer William R. Finley reported that the board had significant, though legitimate, expenses in the early months of the new fiscal year amid the usual slowdown in license renewals. He said he was expecting the annual revenue increase to begin soon; Macon confirmed that the trend began at the end of August. Schramm moved to accept the treasurer's report; Culpepper seconded the motion. Simms called for discussion; none was forthcoming. He then called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Committee Chair Melanie Stiegler reported that the committee reviewed three applications for Louisiana Professional Geoscientist licenses and recommended all of them – 1,2, and 3 – for approval by the board. She also reported that the committee reviewed three testing candidate applications – one to take the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam only, and two to take the ASBOG Practice of Geology (PG) exam only. The committee recommended applications 1, 2, and 3 for approval to take the exams. Stiegler moved to approve the applications for licenses and testing; Finley seconded the motion. Simms called for discussion. With no discussion following, he called for a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

License Examination Committee: Committee Chair David Ray Williamson reported that, as of September 17, 25 candidates have registered for exams: 17 for the ASBOG FG and eight for the ASBOG PG. Williamson asked Macon how many people are in the pipeline to take the exams; she said that about 100 people are in various stages of exam preparation. Some have already applied and been approved but have yet to take the exams; some have taken the ASBOG FG, have become GITs, and are waiting to take the ASBOG PG; some have expressed interest in taking the exams but have not yet applied; and some have been approved but have not yet passed the exams and are taking their time to retry. McDade asked if a deadline is being applied to the applications; Macon pointed out that the board established policy several years ago to allow those who are approved to take the exams to stay approved until they finally pass the exams. Discussion ensued regarding whether this policy is in keeping with the statute; McDade said she will research that question.

Williamson also reported that he presented information on ASBOG testing and licensure at the University of Mississippi. He mentioned that the university is part of the Southern Regional Academic Common Market. Discussion ensued, with board members asking for additional information on the Academic Common Market.

Schramm asked Williamson if they should offer the ASBOG Prep presentation to testing candidates; Williamson agreed that they should. They agreed to send an announcement to the candidates to offer the presentation at 6 pm on Tuesday, September 22.

Compliance Committee: Committee Chair William H. Schramm reported on the annual audit, noting a high compliance rate but also several non-compliant licensees. He said that 26 of 34 licensees audited have passed the audit, and seven others have either retired, relinquished their licenses, or were dropped for non-response. He pointed out that losing seven licensees out of 34 in one year is not a good sign, and he then mentioned that the office staff had prepared a demographic report that shows the impact of those losses. Macon said that the report was prepared by Board Special Projects Coordinator Sadé Dennis; since Dennis could not attend, she asked Macon to present the report. Macon indicated on the presentation that the number of licensees is declining. She said out of a total of 1486 licenses granted, the total licensees within the three-year window of expiration is 961, but the total number of active licensees is 771. She

also presented additional demographic information, including the increase of younger licensees. Discussion ensued.

Schramm also raised significant concerns about the board's ability to handle complaints due to lack of funding and adequate staffing. He pointed out that the executive secretary is currently the only person outlined in the standard operating procedures on complaints who administers all steps in the enforcement process until a determination is made regarding whether to proceed with hearings or penalties. He also mentioned that the board will need dependable legal counsel to pursue complaints. Extensive discussion ensued.

Outreach Committee: Committee Chair David B. Culpepper presented information from the American Geosciences Institute (AGI) 2026 Leadership Forum. He asked Macon to add the key takeaways and discussion summary to the board website and then pointed out the highlights of the AGI discussion. He then asked board members to be thinking about target audiences so that the committee can focus on those audiences for outreach.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: Committee Chair Elizabeth C. McDade reported that her committee had met earlier in the day and had made significant progress. She said the document has been organized by a new outline and is now in a format that will accommodate sweeping changes. She asked Macon to share the new document with the entire board membership. Discussion ensued.

Office Report: Macon had previously sent the board her report describing the following developments and progress:

Online Payment Fees

After the discussion at the August board meeting, Macon began researching solutions to the astronomical fees the board has been paying for the convenience of online payments for its users. Macon spoke with a representative from Global Payments International. The representative confirmed that the board is currently paying 8.72% in fees and offered to have someone higher up in the organization contact her about lowering that rate. Macon made clear that, if the board could not get a better rate, then they would be finding a new provider. On August 27, the second representative at Global Payments International called and offered to refund the fees from the previous three months (a total of $1646.45) and to lower the fees going forward from 8.72% + 30 cents per transaction to 3% + 15 cents per transaction. The lower fees began with the August transactions. The refund was applied to the August statement, and the difference between the fees due in August and the amount of the refund was deposited into the board's account in September. Going forward, Macon suggested, the board should review the statements and the fees charged to keep up to date on any changes to the new fee structure.

Application Security Gap Closed

As reported at the August board meeting, a security gap was identified in the online application. That gap has now been closed, and the reference responses can no longer be viewed when the record is in pending status.

QuickBooks Payroll Changes

Intuit, the owner of QuickBooks, recently (in July 2026) made a change to their operations requirements for its product Workforce Premium. The board staff had been using Workforce Premium to process payroll and per diem, but effective September 15, 2026, the company would not allow users to process payroll with the software unless the user also allows Intuit to process the users' taxes. Because L.A.

Champagne both processes the board's taxes and prepares the state-required Annual Financial Report, which requires access to all tax information, Macon felt that it would be illogical to allow an automated system to process the board's taxes when the board already has an agreement with an accounting firm to do that work. Additionally, the cost of the software is more expensive overall than the cost of having L.A. Champagne prepare the taxes. Macon assured board members that they would be keeping QuickBooks Online Plus but Workforce Premium has been cancelled. L.A. Champagne will be helping with payroll and per diem effective immediately.

Old Business: Hiring a new executive secretary

Simms reported that the search committee had identified an appropriate candidate for the position of executive secretary and introduced that candidate, Deborah LeBlanc. He then explained that legal counsel had drafted a resolution and an employment agreement to be executed at this meeting. Discussion ensued. Simms moved to accept the resolution and agreement; Williamson seconded the motion. Discussion continued. Simms called for a roll call vote, and the results were:

Schramm: Aye
Finley: Aye
Williamson: Aye
Stiegler: Aye
Culpepper: Aye
McDade: Aye
Simms: Aye

Adjournment

The date of the next regular meeting of the board was scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2026, at 1:00 pm to accommodate schedule conflicts. The meeting will be held at the Board office (1800 City Farm Drive, Building 5B, Baton Rouge). Meetings of the Compliance Committee, Ad Hoc Rules Committee, and Outreach Committee were also scheduled for that date at 10 am, 11 am, and 12 pm, respectively. Finley then moved to adjourn; Culpepper seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 3.39 pm.