

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS
9643 Brookline Ave., Ste. 101, Baton Rouge, LA 70809



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 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 1:07 p.m., Tuesday, May 9, 2023, and commenced roll call.

Present: William Schramm, William Finley, David Culpepper, Elizabeth McDade, and David Williamson, Board Members; Kaycee Garrett, Board Member (awaiting legislative confirmation); Machel Hall, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; Maria Mata de Leder, Administrative Coordinator; and Seija Meaux, Project Coordinator.

Absent: Michael Simms, Melanie Stiegler, and Lloyd Hoover, Board Members; and Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary.

Guests: Christopher Guidry, independent geologist, and Ryan McKay, Tetra Tech, both Louisiana PG license candidates.

Quorum was established.

Public Comment Period

No comments from guests were recorded.

Civil Law Training

The initial item on the agenda was a special training session that covered public records law and public records requests, which was provided by Louisiana Assistant Attorney General Les Theriot.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the March 14, 2023, regular board meeting were reviewed. Schramm called for discussion; none was forthcoming. Williamson moved to accept the minutes; McDade seconded the motion. Schramm called for a vote, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Finley reported that expenses exceeded income during both March and April, and he said the increasing expenses represent funds required for board members and staff to learn and to promote the mission of the board. He explained that the increased spending is an investment in the future viability of the board.

He further explained that the rising / falling revenue trend follows an annual pattern. He pointed out that the pattern is shifting over time, with peaks in revenue occurring later in the year than previously. He said no peak has yet occurred in 2023 and suggested waiting another month to see if revenue peaks, as it has in the past.

Discussion ensued about ways to increase funding for the activities required to further the mission of the board. Garrett suggested asking the state agencies (DNR and DEQ) that require reports to be sealed by licensed geoscientists to include a link to the board's website on their site. She also suggested having a presence at conferences that are regularly attended by geoscientists.

Finley moved to accept the treasurer's report; Culpepper seconded the report. The motion passed.

Schramm pointed out that the budget must be approved at the July meeting. Macon reminded board members that a draft budget has been sent to them. Finley suggested waiting to see what happens in the next month and revisit the budget then.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: In Stiegler's absence, Williamson presented the slate of candidates. He said the committee recommended license applications 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 for board approval. He said the committee also recommended GIT applications 1, 2, and 3, and testing application 1 for board approval. Williamson pointed out that one of the approved license applicants had overcome significant issues to pass the ASBOG exams and to qualify for license and suggested sending this person a letter of commendation; McDade agreed. Schramm asked Williamson to draft a letter to this person. Williamson said he would work with Macon on the letter. Williamson moved to accept the committee's recommendations; Finley seconded the motion. The motion passed.

License Examination Committee: Williamson reported that, of the six candidates who took the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam on March 17, five passed; of the six candidates

who took the ASBOG Practice of Geology exam, all passed. He said the pass rate for Louisiana (83.3% for FG and 100% for PG) exceeded ASBOG's national average (65.7% for FG and 80.3% for PG). He also pointed out that ASBOG has published a report with additional information on testing; this report is available at ASBOG.org. Discussion ensued.

Williamson then presented a draft outline for a presentation to help ASBOG testing candidates. This presentation would be part of a late summer Zoom meeting for these candidates. Williamson and Schramm asked for feedback and for suggested dates for the meeting. Schramm pointed out that other organizations offer webinars with tips for studying for the exam. He said he would rather focus on the types of knowledge required to perform well on the exams. Discussion ensued. No date was selected, but the consensus was to schedule the meeting for a date in August.

Compliance Committee: Schramm, the committee chair asked Mata de Leder to present the update on the 2023 continuing education audit. Mata de Leder reported that so far, of the 29 licensees selected for audit, 14 (48%) have already passed the audit; one retired and one is deceased (7%); four (14%) are in progress; and four (14%) have not yet responded. Schramm added that, as of a meeting earlier this same day, two more have passed the audit. McDade asked how many of those who have not responded are among those who became licensed during the grandfather period as a hedge on future opportunities but have never actually used it. Discussion ensued.

Outreach Committee: Finley presented a draft of a paper that will be published by a professional organization, SIPES, using historical data to show the futility of preventing the loss of Louisiana coastal land. He pointed out that professional geoscientists must be prepared to use a multi-disciplinary approach to solving problems and interpreting data. Board members expressed appreciation for his work; discussion ensued.

Strategic Five-year Plan & Rules Review Ad Hoc: In Simms' absence, Schramm asked Culpepper about the Texas strategic plan he had previously sent to the other members of the committee; Culpepper said the committee has not yet had an opportunity to meet to discuss it. No further report was available.

Office Committee: Macon reminded board members once again to complete the state's required online ethics training and send her their certificates of completion for the record. She also reminded them that their financial disclosure statements are due to the state in May.

She further reported that, as requested by the board at the March meeting, she had sent Louisiana universities with geoscience programs a letter and brochure with information about the board and ASBOG testing and had requested their assistance in reaching students in their programs. She said she also sent Louisiana Geological Survey Director Clare Falcon

a similar letter with the new brochure in case she and her staff encounter contacts who are interested in becoming licensed.

Also, at the invitation of the LSU Geology Club, through Seija Meaux, Schramm, Mata de Leder, and Macon attended their meeting on Thursday, April 20, at 6 pm and provided a presentation on Professional Geoscientist licensing in Louisiana and on ASBOG testing. At the end of the meeting, the club's faculty advisor, Assistant Professor Matthew Loocke, asked if the board would be interested in working toward having LSU geology students take the ASBOG FG exam during or at the end of their degree program, and this possibility was discussed.

Additionally, on Friday, April 28, Macon attended the LSU Geology and Geophysics Department's 2023 Rock Star Poster Competition. She said winners were chosen in three categories: Ph.D, Master's, and Undergraduate. In the Undergraduate category, which included about 25 competitors, Seija Meaux, the board's project coordinator, took third place, with work she will be continuing in graduate school at LSU this fall. Macon asked Meaux to provide board members with details about her work. Meaux explained her work, and board members asked questions and congratulated her.

Macon alluded to the need for an online system for the continuing education audits and reminded board members that she and Schramm had talked with Dovetail Digital Marketing staff member Jacob Gibson and co-owners Shannon Lynd and Allison Alesi about three years ago when the board was undergoing a change in database platforms about several upgrades the board wanted. Macon reported that Lynd and Gibson have been working on those projects and waiting for the board to let them know they are ready for implementation. One of those projects is for a comprehensive audit review module. As of the date of this meeting, they already had several components of that module in draft form. They are currently working on adding the online log sheet so licensees will be able to put their continuing education activities into their online accounts. This system will ultimately include an online process for notifying those who are being audited so they can be sure their accounts are up to date and for those who are chosen for audit to respond. The team at Dovetail are willing to work with board members to create a system that will meet the needs of both the licensees and the audit reviewers.

Macon reported that, in addition to talking with Dovetail about updates to the existing online system to accommodate continuing education documentation and auditing, she and Schramm recently attended a Zoom meeting with representatives of InLumon, a company that specializes in designing and maintaining regulatory databases for boards like LBOPG. For example, one of their clients is the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. The company's presentation was impressive and addressed the board's current needs; however, the company has not yet submitted a cost estimate to Macon. Garrett had also attended the Zoom meeting and offered her perspective on the database. Discussion ensued.

Macon then reported on the statistical data collected in the new demographic spreadsheet. These data reveal that, of a total 1397 licenses granted, 1078 of those licenses are currently active. The number of deceased, retired, and inactive licensees is 319. The latest update to the age data indicates that the largest group of licensees is between the ages of 60 and 69, at 383. A total of 481 (\$48,100 in potential revenue) licensees are 60 years or older; 597 (\$89,550 in potential revenue) are under 60; potentially, revenue from renewals could be as high as \$137,650. The average age of a Louisiana licensee is 56 years. Macon pointed out that this information, collectively, is vital to the board's ability to project revenue from renewals.

Macon reminded board members that they had asked at the March meeting about sending licensees bumper stickers. She said she investigated the cost of creating, printing, and offering 3" x 5" bumper stickers to new licensees. The estimate from a local (Baton Rouge) printer lists costs for quantities of 1000 (\$913), 1500 (\$1,108.40), and 2000 (\$1,376.60) stickers. These are printing costs ONLY; an additional \$75 per hour design and set up charge has always been no more than \$75. The same type of sticker from an out of state company that specializes in marketing materials would cost \$390 for 1000, \$570 for 1500, and \$680 for 2000, roughly a third of the cost of printing locally. McDade offered another Internet company option for obtaining bumper stickers. Macon agreed to continue working on the cost estimate.

Macon reported that the issues with the heating and cooling systems in the Louisiana Engineering Center (9643 Brookline Avenue) have been resolved. On a related topic, she told board members that the 5-year office lease is expiring in April 2024, and the Louisiana Office of Facility Planning has sent her a reminder. She has already contacted Mary Claire Ruckert, the director of LES, to begin the process of negotiating a new lease. However, because rent has not increased since the board first became a tenant in 2015 and because the building needs repairs and maintenance, the Louisiana Engineering Foundation, from whom the board leases office space, will be increasing the rental amount beginning with the 2024 lease agreement. Ruckert is in the process of determining how large the increase in rent will be. She and Macon have been researching similar office space in the same geographical area to get an idea of rental cost (per square foot) trends.

Macon reminded board members that other office-related expenses will also be increasing in the new fiscal year.

Finally, Macon announced that she has received an invoice for 2023 FARB membership, but she said, since some board members have expressed dissatisfaction with the organization, she wanted the board to decide whether to renew the membership. After a brief discussion, board members decided not to renew the membership.

Other Business

Finley asked about the discussion of the draft rules he had submitted prior to the March meeting, which he missed. Hall addressed his question and explained the remarks from the

March meeting. Hall also suggested that, when the Ad Hoc Committee meets, the rules and regulations would be discussed in detail. Finley then asked about this section of the March minutes: “[Stielger] reported that two members of the committee had encountered issues related to marginal or unusual degree programs and asked that the board discuss these issues, so the committee has a clearer understanding of its mission; board members complied with this request and ultimately agreed that more detailed descriptions of coursework with vague titles be requested from applicants. In addition, Hall suggested continuing the discussion at the May meeting after board members have more time to consider the role of education in assessing the competence of applicants.” Other board members explained the issue of vague course descriptions that prevent one from determining whether the content of the course is geological in nature and pointed out that the board member who called for the discussion was not present at the current meeting.

Announcement of the Next Meeting and Adjournment

Finley read the mission statement of the board into the record. Schramm reminded board members to participate in their committees and to make progress toward goals. The date of the next regular meeting of the board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at 1:00 pm. Williamson moved to adjourn; Culpepper seconded; the motion passed. Schramm adjourned the meeting at 5:06 pm.