

**KWWOA State Board Meeting Minutes**  
**9/26/18**  
**Submitted by Julie Duncan**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Robin Strader at 9:09 a.m. at Falls of the Rough Golf Course. Les Rogers led us in prayer.

Those in attendance included:

Robin Strader, Chair  
Don Compton, Vice Chair (absent)  
Julie Duncan, Treasurer  
Lori Simpson, Secretary (absent)  
Lisa Detherage, Member Services Director  
Alan Todd, Western Chapter  
Roy Gray, Eastern Chapter  
Matthew Chancellor, North Central Chapter  
Amanda Spalding, KLA  
Jeremy Woosley, Central Chapter  
James Poindexter, Eastern Chapter  
Bradley Johnston, Central Chapter (absent)  
Leslie Rogers, Western Chapter  
Brian Bourne, North Central Chapter  
Darran Rankin, Conference Chair  
Forrest Pollock, IT Rep  
Shaun Youravich, Hardin County Water District #2  
James (JJ) Jeffries, Hardin County Water District #2  
Kevin Shaw, Grayson County Water District

**Guest Speaker: JJ Jeffries, General Manager, Hardin County Water District #2 (HCWD2)**

KWWOA's training is very beneficial to HCWD#2 and we applaud what KWWOA does. We are a member of the AWWA and I am here representing the Water Utility Subcommittee. We are here to discuss the certified operators' issues: shortages, recruitment, training and how to maintain operators. Ultimately, the Subcommittee is formulating a position on these issues, and would like KWWOA's support on this position.

HCWD2 has done a wage survey for their area, has 5 trainees and just hired two more. In our experience it is difficult to keep staff at the water plant. We feel with changes to Chapter 8 and Chapter 11 this could be beneficial to all plants. The changes proposed include:

1. Changes to the degree requirement to allow any type of degree, and
2. Allowing systems to weigh in on when an operator is ready to operate a plant on their own by granting a "Provisional" license which is just for that specific plant. This provision would still require that they have a mentor to work alongside until they gain the 5 years' experience.

Robin Strader stated the certification board is 50/50 on the issue that any degree should count, the Board's educational representative agrees that certain degrees should not count. The reason for this is that many degree programs are reducing their math and science requirements.

Robin spoke with Amanda Lefever from DCA. DCA is looking to restructure the Operator In (OIT) Training certificate to make it more user friendly and beneficial to the facilities. This will be similar to what JJ is proposing as a provisional license. EPA seemed agreeable to allowing OIT to be in responsible charge.

The Operator-In-Training: mentor signs a letter to say they will train the operator. They can only mentor one operator at a time. This would keep them obligated to one plant during the training period. This could give the OIT permission to run a plant, as long as the mentor is available. To gain the OIT title they would have to test for a Class operator license. The operator would still be required to have 1 year experience in a plant before testing. (which doesn't qualify a Class IV any sooner who just has a degree)

Lisa Detherage stated DCA will keep the "OIT" name instead of changing it to "Provisional" as this would throw up a red flag to EPA, which is not needed. OIT language did not come out on paper like it was envisioned.

The Division of Water (DOW) has also created an Alternative Staffing Workgroup. This was due to the lack of guidance within the regulations and the fact that the DOW staff (many of whom are new) were not comfortable approving these documents. The workgroup discussed with DOW that they needed information about the whole system including: current operators, status of trainees, and number of shifts at all plants, rate structure, etc. and by creating a draft application. DOW feels the system will be held required to submit status reports every 6 months and will be a part of an Agreed Order which will include stipulated penalties. Mr. Jeffries is not in agreement with alternate staffing.

Les Rogers stated he sees what JJ is trying to accomplish from a manager's point, but as an operator, he sees issues with this position. There could be problems with employment when operator transfers to another plant. They would have to re-test for the new plant. He likes the approach HCWD#2 is taking. Alternative staffing would be a better fit instead of changing the regulations. Mr. Rogers' applauds HCWD#2 for the steps they are taking. Reducing the quality of the regulations could reduce the quality of the operators.

Mr. Jeffries stated no way do we want to de-credit the operator. If an operator jumps ship they should have to recertify because plant went out on a limb to train them.

Les Rogers stated as long as they are certified completely, then they can go wherever they want with tenure.

Robin Strader stated change is going to happen. We need to be a part of it and come to a common ground on this issue.

Roy Gray asked Mr. Jeffries how he sees this working in Southeastern KY. In general southeastern KY operators are more rooted to their inner community and do not relocate as much as operators in other areas of the state. One of the only things the operators has is the time experience it takes to become certified, if you take that away there is no reason for the systems to pay them that high salary.

Shaun Youravich said that DCA is not administering the regulation correctly as it relates to the Sacramento classes.

Problems are occurring with an individual retiring and no time to train individuals being replaced. Again, Les stated there are issues with all: provisional license, alternative staffing and OIT. We have to find some common ground. Again, growing pains.

Jeremy Woosley stated he feels many systems are not even trying to obtain operators until the previous operator is gone which isn't responsible.

Mr. Jeffries stated we need to stop the abuse of OIT of current operators. We are requesting a common ground and get something down for the language. Thank you for allowing us to come speak with you today.

Mandy Spaulding stated there needs to be cooperation of the operator and the systems when it comes to using their certification/being a mentor.

James Poindexter asked what is more important, experience or education?

Robin Strader: How does KWWOA proceed? Les Rogers stated we work together to come to a common ground. Will HCDW#2 provide us with a draft of their language if we

go in with them? Robin will contact Mr. Jeffries to get a draft copy of their language for the board to review.

#### **Old Minutes:**

- The meeting minutes from the July 2018 were distributed and reviewed.

***Motion was made by Les Rogers to approve the July 2018 meeting minutes with corrections to be made, second by Jeremy Woosley. All in favor, motion carried.***

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

- Julie Duncan presented the Treasurer's report. Ending balance as of September 22, 2018 was \$113,897.63.

***Motion was made by Les Rogers to approve the treasurer's report, second by Roy Gray. All in favor, motion carried.***

Lisa distributed her Accomplishments for the past quarter as an FYI for the Board.

#### **Old Business:**

Strategic Planning: Julie will make the corrections suggested.

Website Status: Lisa Detherage informed Crosby to proceed with updates. The contract has been submitted to her, we will owe them 30% of the cost once we sign the contract. Total cost, \$15,700. Board vote was conducted by email and approved.

Only one exhibit hall design will be uploaded (allows for 3 large vehicle spaces) because Crosby said the revision to allow smaller booths, if the large ones do not sell, can be revised within a week of notification. This will save us money, if the programming is not needed.

Constant Contact: Lisa Detherage signed up and will perform a test to allow for mass emailing. The fee is \$65 a month, this could possibly go down as it is based on the number of contacts uploaded each month. If we do not reach the number of contacts we bought for each month, the fee carries over. If we use more, the fee is increased and uses our balance. There is a discount for the upfront payment of 6 and 12 month memberships. Lisa Detherage thinks we can suspend our account after 6 months given that our membership, annual conference, large classes all fall within this period. Lisa Detherage is in the training process.

Wind Jacket: Quotes on the Halloway wind shirts from Prestonsburg are \$62.95 a shirt. Lisa Detherage found the same jacket for \$34.40 from Varsity Teamwear. 4-Imprint

costs for buying a similar jacket (117288) are \$31.95 for 12, 27.95 each for 24, and the more you buy the lower the price. Also found a Columbia vest that Hopkinsville suggested for \$29.00, plus cost of embroidery, at Bass Pro.

2019 Training Information: Please get information to Lisa Detherage on the spreadsheet she furnished to each chapter, no later than November 15<sup>th</sup> and preferably earlier. If you go ahead and start sending her class information as completed, please add any new information to the spreadsheet and resubmit it.

### **New Business:**

Online Training: Ruth Lancaster was unavailable to attend the meeting to discuss her willingness to prepare training for KWWOA. At this point Ruth's online software is not compatible with WordPress. Lisa Detherage requested Ruth review some online software that is compatible with WordPress. Forrest, Lisa and Ruth like LearnDash as it is compatible and appears to have all the components we want. Ruth would prefer to be paid a flat fee or on a commission basis.

There will be a specific window of time that the online training will be posted on the website. The Board discussed having it posted, perhaps the last few months before the renewal deadline.

Other concerns are Ruth's re-use of the training. The board position is if she has prepared something specific for KWWOA, then KWWOA owns the training. Given her general operator knowledge, it isn't fair to not allow her to teach the material, but she cannot use our class verbatim nor any of our quiz questions. If KWWOA pays her to prepare the training, again it is owned by KWWOA.

Crosby will make it compatible for IPAD, phones, etc. We will need to make sure that it meets all of DCA's requirements.

James Poindexter suggested we look at the areas where certification attendees are having trouble passing (i.e. math) and have Ruth do a hands-on class as this will help operators pass the test.

Lisa Detherage talked with Dan Miklos and he is willing to do wastewater online courses for us and he feels he can easily adapt any of the classes he has done over the years for us.

At this point, the plan is for Lisa Detherage to talk with Ruth about doing a live one/two day class for pre-certification training. And get a quote from Crosby on incorporating LearnDash into the website. Lisa will contact Ruth Lancaster to see if she is interested in doing a live regional training.

Lisa will also ask Crosby for a quote to incorporate LearnDash into our existing website as a product.

### **Kevin Shaw on Chapter Training**

Kevin Shaw was in attendance and wanted to discuss with the Board their decision to reduce the amount of Chapter training, in an effort to increase attendance at the Annual Conference Training.

He gave a little history of the formation of KWWOA. The conference has struggled before and KWWOA changed things up at that point and it did fine and again things have slacked off. You made a hotel change and things leveled out and then KWWOA moved to Northern Kentucky and DCA cancelled on the conference. Kevin is not sure what the solution is, but he doesn't think it is changing the amount of the training the Chapters do each year. Kevin stated the trainings will still occur without the support of KWWOA and they will not get the benefits. Lowering the Chapter trainings will not help the conference attendance. Kevin stated you can't make people come to the conference. Facilities cannot always afford to send staff, or have enough staff to cover the jobs when attending conferences, therefore they rely on the Chapter trainings.

Lisa stated we were looking to reduce general topics to see if it helps. Roy suggested perhaps that they do not reduce the training's conducted, but look at more process control and/or specialty classes.

Kevin stated KWWOA provides the best training for the operators.

**KMUA** – This association has asked KWWOA to consider joining the two organizations together to reduce each group's administrative expenses and/or perhaps a joint conference. Robin Strader will meet with them to hear them out on their plan. She will present findings at the November meeting.

**Central/Eastern Election Year** – Eastern published that it is an election year in in their Lexington School Brochure and will hold elections at the training. Central will have their election in December.

### **Committee Reports:**

1. Awards Committee:
  - Nominations need to be sent into Don Compton by December 31 or they will not be accepted. The information must be detailed and legible.
2. KLA:
  - Nothing to announce.

3. Budget Committee:

- Julie Duncan will be updating the budget to-date and present at the next meeting for the Board and Lisa.

4. Conference Committee:

- The conference committee visited Owensboro. The convention center is really nice and their prices are lower than other venues. They hope to have another hotel in 2021 with 100-115 rooms. Darren Rankin stated we need to consider moving to Owensboro. Individuals can walk downtown and they have a free trolley system is available. The convention center has applied for an entertainment permit for open containers.
- The Galt House prices have increased significantly but this is where everyone wants to go.
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- Bottom line cost comparison (see attached sheet) – If we go to the Galt House, registration fees will need to be increased.
- No decision has been made at this time on where to go. Lisa Detherage is requesting more information from Owensboro and The Galt House.
- Lisa Detherage stated artwork for the conference is complete.

5. Technical Committee:

- Lisa Detherage, Julie Duncan and Robin Strader received their new computers.
- Forrest is working to lock down our email to stop the bogus invoices.

6. Water/Wastewater Board Meeting:

- North Central/Eastern Lexington Training was approved. Central Rough River training was approved. Lisa Detherage had speaker changes for Rough River, so it will delay the entry of the operator's credits until this is reviewed in October.
- Jason Hurt – Is the new Division of Water Representative, replacing Tom Gabbard. He works in the KPDES Branch.

7. Water and Wastewater Advisory Committees

- KWWOA needs to come up with a stand on the proposed regulations and move forward.

8. Nominations Committee

- Roy Gray has approached several people but has not received any nominations for Vice Chair. Roy feels anyone is capable of doing the job and hopes someone is willing to step up. We need at least 2 people on the ballot which will go out in February 2019. Would like to promote them in the January newsletter.

9. Alternative Staffing Workgroup

- The committee held 3 meetings and provided DOW with guidance on the information they feel should be considered when a system requires an Alternative Staffing Plan and KWWOA provided a sample application based on the items discussed. The Division of Water advised that they will probably require these systems to be put under an Agreed Order with stipulated penalties and 6 month reporting. Joe Uliasz feels the group has presented the information he needs and this may be the last meeting.

10. Education Outreach Workgroup

- Nothing to report

11. Compliance Committee Workgroup

- Nothing to report

12. Procedures Committee

- Nothing to report

**Open for discussion:**

Nothing to report

**Adjourn:**

***Motion to adjourn made by Roy Gray, second by Brian Bourne. All in favor, motion carried.***

**NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 14, 2018, 11:00 A.M. AT THE MOREHEAD WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, MOREHEAD, KY**