



Granite State Onsite Wastewater Association – October 31, 2023

Attending: (All on Zoom) Chris Albert, Bruce Fillmore, Tom Canfield, Larry Maznek, Kevin Kent, Carl Hagstrom, Jim Hanna, Micah Denner **Absent:** Aaron Wechsler **Guests:** Anthony Jones, Scott Hazelton **Staff:** Matt Gatzke, Mike Dennehy (on phone).

Meeting started at 4:30 p.m.

Introduction of Guests and Updates from SSB: Admin. Scott Hazelton joined the meeting to give an update on open staff positions (design review, outreach and inspectors) and addressed rulemaking activity. Matt offered to post open jobs. Rules are 99% done in his section but they will next head to legal. Public comment period either end of this year or early 2024. Applies only to sections changed due to law changes. Well radius the major focus. David Eiten, compliance for designers and installers, looking to create education programs to help with meeting ceu needs. NHTI class is underway. Discussed do-not-backfill and construction approvals. Carl mentioned a program possibly in the Monadnock Region, trench safety, etc. Matt asked Scott about homeowner install of systems without a permit. He had not seen it yet. None of the bills so far are DES-sponsored. Matt sought clarity on how outside groups seek approval of a training program.

Minutes of September 26, 2023 Board Meeting: Carl made a motion to approve and Chris seconded. Bruce provided corrections to be made. Motion was approved.

Second Guest Arrived on Zoom: Mark McConkey was admitted to the meeting and addressed several LSRs he has put forward. Three bills asked for by the department. Remedy for commercial property sales when the loading today does not meet requirements. Asking realtors to report upfront what the loading is on the lot. Also applies to residential setting where load has changed. Easier to know up front what is happening with a property at time of sale. Increasing loads on systems too. Requirement for experience before taking the designers or installers exam due to high failure rate on state exams. Homeowners to be allowed to install their own septic under a licensed installer (bed bottom, elevations, etc.) Currently, homeowners install then call the state for inspection and often they are not done correctly and therefore not approved easily. It would require a permitted installer. Looking to change that a new stone and pipe or chamber system change from 48" to SHWT to 24" SHWT.

Review of September 30 Financial Reports: Matt reported a balance of \$79,203.53. Matt commented that the dues notices will be set to go in another month. Tom made a motion to approve both reports with Bruce offering a second. No further discussion. Motion was approved.

Education/Conference Recap: Office will help promote Carl's planned program now moved to January. Matt will update state outreach person about who from the LRM section we expect to take part in the conference. Matt continuing to send emails out to possible speakers. Working on a draft of an exhibitor promo.

Legislative and Rules: All known LSRs of interest were addressed during Scott's earlier presentation. No further updates.

Old Business: 6" civil engineering rule was discussed. 400 rules with scales would run about \$2339 inclusive. One type of ruler is rigid, white with woodgrain in the center. Board and staff dress shirts to be ordered. \$41 each. Matt will request all sizes. \$455 estimate for 10 shirts. On hats, adjustable with Velcro, full cap with logo only, no wording as it is too fine of a print. \$12-\$15 per hat. 400 hats estimated at \$4,800. Will work with vendor to firm things up and see what options are available. Scales though maybe should be the flexible type and not hard. A concern was raised about accuracy of flexible scales. Chris made a motion to order shirts with Tom providing the second. Motion carried.

Chris has a call into Gunstock for January-February to try to pull together a GSOWA Ski Event. Would like to have sponsors. Matt asked if there would be any education program affiliated with the event.

Discussion returned to topic of state not providing education and that is perhaps where the idea of an apprenticeship program is coming from. Some concerns though about how DES would manage that vs. OPLC.

New Business: Need to recruit more board members. Keep in mind for December-January meeting timeframe for election in April. Need committee chairs to be more active and provide staff with programming ideas. Tom commented that the requirements of the state for advance class approval makes it hard to offer "pop-up" classes based on site installation program. Look into getting back to a meeting with a dinner or program around a topic followed by dinner. People used to attend out of interest. Now that we have to CEUS, people will only attend if they need credits. Still hearing reports of 6-hour programs by vendors on topics not exactly related to septic work. Too challenging to get program approved. State historically has not approved a one-hour program. Kevin asked about self-reporting of programs members attend on their own. State has approved some and we may need to remind members that they can try that if they attend something they felt benefitted their knowledge and their practice.

Bruce brought up his question sent around the week prior about lot loading. Well radius should not be deducted when doing lot loading calculations. Other spoke of reverting to old tax cards if they exist to satisfy state inspector. Have had to get other verification as to what the original structure was built to be. Looking for more of a paper trail. Loading is often dependent on the configuration of the lot. Have had to have architects and home inspectors tour a house and give a professional opinion as to what it was built as originally.

Issues related to New Durham and Merrymeeting Lake shore were aired. A new town rule via selectboard is asking all lakefront homeowners to get a septic evaluation (or copy of plans created). They mention both evaluators and then also designers. How do you determine failure with components of system without test pits? You would need a designer for that. Town put a list of suggested people to do the determinations, which is also a potential issue. Form calls for a variety of things to be checked. Also, drawings of where test pits were done. If over 20 years or older or a previously approved system. Which is it? What the ordinance says and what town staff are telling people do not match up. Anthony raised concern that the letter people are receiving give the impression that our industry is benefitting from this new requirement. Is this something local people should push against. Chris suggested it falls under public health. This effort is akin to a growth restriction.

Kevin mentioned that inspection licenses are available by way of class and exam or by doing 25 inspections and then taking the exam.

Vice Chairman Reports (Designers): Carl hearing that there are not enough people out there to do wetland crossings. Very hard to book wetland scientists and soil scientists right now.

Vice Chairman Report (Installers): Jim spoke about a landscaper with personnel who had an interest in shadowing an installer as a form of an apprenticeship. Hard to accommodate a non-employee really slows you down. Has concerns about the time it would take to properly mentor someone. An employee would essentially be learning on the job. Larry commented that same issue is happening with getting CDL driver licenses. Used to be able to train someone yourself, but now you have to do it via a costly program through the state. Concerns about the investment in training only to have them get licensed then leave you for a higher wage. Currently, the state requires you to certify that you have completed a certain number of designs and installations. Questioned that DES can make rules without letting industry know beforehand. Comments offered on how badly structured the two exams are...questions are hard to read, charts and graphs are hard to use and they are poorly copied. Need to accommodate all kinds of learning disabilities or other challenges to take an exam. Further discussion needs to be held with SSB about the exam situation, including problems with the questions. People getting different answers from different SSB staff on more technical questions.

Vice Chairman Report (Pumpers): Larry did not have any new updates.

Vice Chairman Report (Evaluators): Nothing new to report at this time.

Meeting Adjournment: Motion was made by Larry and Tom seconded to adjourn meeting at 6:10 p.m.