



## **Granite State Onsite Wastewater Association – February 26, 2024**

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

**Meeting started at 4:33 p.m.**

**Guest Scott Hazelton:** One more meeting to complete rules update, then on to legal review. Update to be available soon. Meeting continuing with House Committees about bills, including bill concerning reduction in separation between EDA and high seasonal water table. In committee presently and voted ought to pass. Bill about two years of work experience to take exams (two years for designers and one for installers) was deemed to be ought to pass with amendment. Chris and Gary to meet on March 25 with Phil and David about that bill. Inspections have been slow due to slower construction season. Number of system applications are up from last year at this time. Dave Aiton is working on presentations for the conference. Five positions still open, two designer reviews, outreach, inspector supervisor's position and an admin post that may have been filled. Preparing a digital platform application for designer and installer renewals. Dave will discuss at the conference. Online form to submit with electronic payment and way to attach CEUs. Goal is to be more efficient and paperless when possible. Roll it out between June-Aug if no tech issues. Will take two or three years to fine tune it. Unknown if it will "talk" to e-permitting system. His conference presentation will likely highlight issues he sees or hears about from the reviewers and from the field. Inspectors have questioned the stone size in an EDA and have asked for a sieve analysis. Have found that sieve analysis is not being done when it should be. Some suppliers did not have an analysis to offer to the installer. Need to remind installers to ask for them. State will review what rules as for in terms of specifications. Can installers get bank-run material in NH? Are there other suitable stone materials? Bruce added the stone spec is not hard to meet. Finding C-33 sand for 6" under the bed to meet the new closer proximity to the seasonal high-water table could be an issue. Will require higher vigilance to ensure they are using the correct sand if the law passes. State only looking at superficial issues only, though some inspectors are still looking deeper. Bed-bottom prep is not often seen during inspections. That is a common area for failure if not installed correctly. Tom asked if any progress on changing of e-permitting system? E-permitting is not going to change at this point, but he is looking to make improvements to it with staff. Looking at an overall change to the database they use as it does not always work well with e-permitting. Need one digital platform for the LRM group.

**Minutes of December 19, 2023 Board Meeting:** Bruce made the motion seconded by Jim. Motion was approved.

**Review of December 31, 2023 and January 31, 2024 Financial Reports:** Matt commented that dues notices have gone out for this year and will begin to be reflected in next month's report. Dues went out in December. January AR shows we still have about \$7,000 of dues still outstanding and other balances related to the vendors for the conference. Matt highlighted a few on the AR report that will not be renewing due to retirement. Motion was made to accept both months reports. Ski trip made a few dollars. Larry made a motion to approve with Bruce offering a second. No further discussion. Motion was approved.

**Legislative and Rules:** All bills GSOWA is tracking had hearings back in January. Gary submitted comments and concerns about **HB1142** (prior work experience bill) from his perspective, not that of GSOWA. No one was able to go to exec. comm. meeting.

Rep. McConkey made an amendment but we need to the language. It is going to Interim Study, but one legislator indicated that it should be voted Ought to Pass but things could be worked out with meetings with stakeholders. Chirs will email the chair to confirm what is next for it.

**HB1140** regarding homeowner install went to the Senate with an amendment. Still must follow DES rules and process not without oversight. Larry voiced concern about homeowners not able to run equipment, but the intention is that is the owner or a licensed installer to do the work.

**HB1139** about seasonal high-water table passed and heads to the Senate Resources Committee with first meeting in early April

**HB1291** (ADUs) is with a House committee with further hearings in March.

We really need to have better representation at all such meetings. Could be a regular member if a board member is not available. Maybe ask Joe Wichert? Always good to have someone in the industry in a committee meeting to provide answers if a committee member were to ask a question.

**Old Business:** Matt reported that Delilah Smith from program offering to create apprenticeship program was asking about our interest. Comment was made by a few that we need to wait until we see if HB1142 passes. Some concerns over the 5-year commitment and reporting requirements. Question was asked how you make an employee agree to stick around after you spend your money? Liens against cost of training in the case of a CDL. Anti-competition clauses could work. The aim of the apprenticeship program as presented is to provide basic training to be able to move on to pass the exams. Difficult to prevent people from leaving after training is offered. Can we at least offer a link to the program and let members decide on their own.

Ski event recap. People who attended had a good time. Looks like we made about \$600. Other said they want to sponsor next years. We really need more septic professionals to attend.

NOWRA membership issue was raised again. Members should be made aware of it if you choose to go that way. \$2,500 affiliate membership. At least 100 people in NH have taken NOWRA classes. Chris feels they are good options for those who need credits. Chris asked for a motion to join NOWRA for \$2,500 (yearly) as a supporting state affiliate. Board of directors plus 20 additional members. This is different option than the proposed \$8,000 option to make all members eligible to go enroll in NOWRA programming. This cost is not yet a line item expense, but you have the funds to try it out. What if we get more people than 20 members who are interested? Chris to ask NOWRA if we can just have it be 20 members, regardless of board status or not. NOWRA does have direct member/individual options. Chris encouraged board to think about it further, but he will talk to him more.

**New Business:** Kevin commented about CDL training. A company is sending people to a program in Wisconsin that offers the option to test out of full-training program. Kevin to send Matt the link. North Andover, MA is only option to do it locally. It is usually five-weeks (3 or 4 days a week) or six weekends. They take the Federal test in WI since it is the same exam.

**Vice Chairman Reports (Designers):** Carl was not at meeting, so no report.

**Vice Chairman Report (Installers):** Jim mentioned Eljen class in North Country at Arrow Central. March 12 for 100 ppl. It has been well shared to designers and installers. Inspectors what to see white tags on tubes. On Presby units, the labels are not consistently placed. Can't tag be located in the middle of the tube to avoid challenges when installers arrive? Jim asked if he can say he is representing GSOWA or just from himself. Board members have no issues with such a letter. Person from Rochester called him about issues related to failure of installers test. Person has years of experience and believes that the state staff creating the exam does not know how to do the work or how things work in the field.

Matt commented that this is what Gary and Chris will be speaking to the state about. He also shared Gary's letter to DES about the situation. He also voiced concerns about time and ability to properly apprentice someone as it will slow down the process.

Jim commented on the sieve test and that it should be conducted with each load or every 400-500 yards of material. Materials providers seem not to be doing their jobs.

**Vice Chairman Report (Evaluators):** Larry commented that Anthony Drouin is working to get treatment plants to accept more septage because they are getting stricter on field applications and lagoons are closing down. He suggested that Kevin checks the NHASH website to see that his company is properly listed and get back to NHASH if wrong. Larry has also had issues with person who let permit lapse and that it seems that the test has become harder. The soils part continues to be the toughest portion of the exam. Chris offered that this is why he and others were offering their prep courses. If the failure rate is nearly 100% then there is something wrong with the exam.

**Vice Chairman Report (Evaluators):** Chris mentioned upcoming hearing at OPLC in March about reciprocity with evaluators from out of state. Hoping to prevent this action because evaluation is based on specific state law. Larry is willing to instruct and hold it at Kent Clean Septic location for both classroom and field. Tom agreed to do it one more year as Micah is on military duty. Matt mentioned more recent version of rules need to be put in the manual. Matt will look into IBEW Hall or new Army Reserve center on 106.

**Education/Conference Recap:** Matt still looking for speakers to fill a few holes in the program. Richelle from LRM has confirmed Aiton and others to present. Chris and Matt met with John Buchanan and confirmed his topics as keynote speaker. Matt walked board through the entire program schedule and pointed out program speaker and topics we need and reported on leads from others to find speakers. Expo hall is nearly sold out. Sold lanyard and totebag sponsorships. Several event sponsorships too are sold.

Final discussion about ability to hold the training session at Kevin's location. Tom suggested mixing field and classroom sessions. Possibly swap sessions based on the weather.

**Meeting Adjournment:** Motion was made by Larry and seconded by Tom to adjourn meeting at 6:20 p.m.