

LOUISIANA BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

9643 Brookline Ave., Ste. 101, Baton Rouge, LA 70809



REGULAR MEETING OF LBOPG

Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 1:00 P.M.

Louisiana Engineering Society Building Conference Room
9643 Brookline Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809

MINUTES

Chairman William Finley called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m., Tuesday, June 13, 2017. He then commenced roll call.

Present: William Finley, Lloyd Hoover, Art Johnson, John Johnston, Thomas Klekamp, Daisy Pate, and L. Todd Perry, Board Members; Harry Vorhoff, Legal Counsel; Brenda Macon, Executive Secretary; and Chantel McCreary, Assistant Executive Secretary.

Guests: Donna Sentell, Executive Director, and Richard Savoie, Deputy Executive Director, LAPELS; the Honorable Michael Merritt, Member, Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – West. Absent: William Meaney, Board Member.

Quorum established. Roll Call sheet was circulated for signatures.

Public Comment Opportunity

Finley invited those visitors to address the board with comments, suggestions, and announcements. Michael Merritt, deferred to speak later.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes of April 11, 2017 were reviewed. Johnson moved to accept the minutes, and Perry seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Johnson presented the April 2017 / May 2017 Treasurer's Report. In being late, he explained he had not reviewed the bank reconciliation statements prior to the meeting but would conduct that review as soon as the meeting was over. He reported an error was made when a May deposit intended for the bank account was erroneously credited to the credit card account. Johnson explained at no time were funds missing; they were simply placed in the wrong account. The corrected account balance will appear on the June statement. A graph was presented that shows the account balance is stable. Perry moved to accept the treasurer's report; Johnston seconded; the motion carried.

Finley asked about the budget for 2017 – 2018; Johnson explained that he and the office staff are still working on it. He explained that, because the board is relatively new, he and other members have limited history to determine what expenses and revenues can be reasonably expected. He called attention to the line item for “enforcement / legal proceedings” that had been given a \$60,000 budget line in past years but had never been used. He also explained renewal income had been heavily overestimated in past years and that figure had been brought in line with actual revenue. He also explained the current demographics of those who are renewing (an older population) and projected that demographic would change over time to a younger population that needs the license for work. Johnson described the draft budget as a good, working document with reasonable expectations.

Standing Committees

Application Review Committee: Pate reported that twenty-two candidates for licensure were reviewed; nineteen are recommended for approval. She reported one correction – number 4 – from the original list that was distributed with the meeting materials. She read the numbers of applicants recommended by the Licensing Application Review Committee for a Louisiana Professional Geoscientist license as follows: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 of the Licensing Review Committee List for June 13, 2017. Johnston moved to accept these candidates; Johnson seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Pate recommended the two ASBOG testing candidates on the list be approved. Johnston moved to accept; Johnson seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Pate announced she is working on a flowchart to share with the other committee members to streamline the application review process.

She further mentioned that some licensees have not renewed for more than a year. Some of those who are not renewing cannot be reached because the board no longer has valid email, phone numbers, or physical mailing addresses on these lapsed licensees. Of these, several may still be practicing geoscience in Louisiana; an investigation of those practicing with an expired license may be one of the first actions of the Complaint Review Committee. Johnston suggested sending a message to the state geological societies to ask them to announce at meetings that the board is having difficulty reaching these licensees. Finley pointed out that this issue was on the agenda to be discussed later in the meeting. Johnson said that he appreciated Macon’s efforts to assist applicants with only one or two steps to complete their applications. He also expressed gratitude for receiving the applications for review throughout the month so that the applicants had time to respond when the reviewers needed additional information. He also expressed appreciation for Pate’s efforts to keep the process on track.

License Examination Committee: Committee member Perry reported that, of the seven people who took the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam on Friday, March 17, 2017, one passed. Both candidates who took the ASBOG Practice of Geology exam passed. The one candidate who passed the Fundamentals of Geology exam is an experienced geoscientist, and he also passed the Practice of Geology exam on the same day. Those candidates who did not pass have been invited to take it again in October, as was the one candidate who had been unable to take the exam because of a work conflict. The LBOPG deadline for applications to take the ASBOG exams on Friday, October 6, 2017, is July 21, 2017; the cutoff date for ordering exams from ASBOG is August 22, 2017.

Complaint Review Committee: Perry reported that a meeting would be held with the guests from LAPELS immediately after the board meeting to discuss future ad hoc committee meetings. He also reported that the flowchart has been updated. Finley requested a change in wording on one of the decision points to improve clarity; Perry agreed to make that change. Klekamp mentioned that he had a recent discussion with a former Texas geoscience board member regarding the number of complaints that board handles, which is significant, around two dozen at any time.

Office Committee: Johnston was taking a letter to the Campus Federal Credit Union to have M.B. Kumar removed as a signatory from the LBOPG account. He was also planning to meet with a bank vice president to complain that two errors on the part of bank staff were unacceptable – the first, in putting funds intended to be deposited into the checking account instead into the credit card account; the second in not sending Macon a letter to show that the first error had been corrected.

Johnston reported that the office staff is researching more efficient ways to back up the office computers. He asked Macon for her preference; she mentioned that Crashplan.com offers benefits beyond simply storage, though it would be more expensive than purchasing a single external hard drive. She explained that the office has two computers – one primarily for administrative files and the other for financial files – and both need to be backed up. Johnston proposed purchasing two external hard drives for local storage and subscribing to Crashplan.com for cloud storage. Johnson moved to accept to Johnston’s proposal; Klekamp seconded it. The motion carried.

Johnston then introduced discussion of the LBOPG contract with L.A. Champagne, LLP, CPAs, for financial services. The discussion focused on the need to update and streamline the contract, which has been in place in its present form since 2014. Finley mentioned that the contract must be in place by July 1, but he proposed making changes to the contract for the following fiscal year beginning now. Johnston moved to sign the contract in its current form immediately and to work toward updating the contract to more accurately reflect the board’s current needs before the next meeting. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Addressing Vorhoff, Johnston mentioned that the three-year contract with the Louisiana Department of Justice is due to be renewed by July 1, 2017. Vorhoff verified that the contract is in process.

Johnston mentioned that Macon had renegotiated the three-year contract with Adobe International for digital signature capture technology. The original contract allowed for 3,000 transactions, or signatures, per year at a cost of \$1 per transaction; however, the board was using fewer than 300 each year. The new contract allows for 300 transactions per year, and the cost is \$360 per year.

The office phone has been upgraded from a Samsung S3 to the newest version of that phone, the Samsung S8. This upgrade will cost \$25 per month for 24 months, raising the AT&T bill from just over \$65 to \$90.

The staff of the Medical Training College (MTC) has agreed to allow LBOPG to use one of their classrooms for the Friday, October 6, 2017, ASBOG testing day. Johnston thanked Chantel McCreary for her assistance in making the room available at no charge to the board and asked her to find some tangible way to thank the MTC staff.

Macon has been working with Usable Creative to create an online payment page. Johnston said the cost of creating, operating, and maintaining the online payment system would be offset by a convenience fee charged per online transaction. He called attention to a spreadsheet created by Finley that provides

examples of transactions and the percentage that would be charged to cover the cost of those transactions. Finley explained that a 3.4% charge would cover that cost. While questions remain, a draft contract has been included in the meeting packet for discussion and tentative approval.

Macon attended the Saturday, April 29, 2017, field trip sponsored by the New Orleans Geological Society. A brief report on the trip was included in the meeting packets. She attends records management training at the State Archives for two days in June.

The last item in the Office Committee report regarded an investigation into how best to certify that renewing licensees have completed the required continuing education and ethics training hours. On the proposed online payment page, or shopping cart, the designer suggested adding a check box that, when checked, signifies that the payee/licensee has completed all of the requirements for license renewal. Johnston suggested making the box statement read, "I hereby certify that I have participated in at least 14 hours of continuing education and at least one hour of ethics training during the previous year." The point was emphasized that this check box must be checked to move forward with the online payment process, and that checking the box is as good as a digital signature.

Legal Counsel's Comments

Vorhoff mentioned that the board's current three-year contract with the Louisiana Department of Justice expires at the end of June 2017. He called for a board resolution if the board wanted to extend the contract for another three years. Discussion ensued regarding the terms of the contract, the monitoring process, the maximum cost, and what to do if legal services costing beyond the contract maximum amount are required in the future. Renewal process is underway. Johnston moved to sign the contract; Johnson seconded; the motion carried.

Other Business

License plate: Perry and Macon reported that the license plate is currently in production for future availability. Perry explained that, as soon as notification has been received that the plates are available, licensees can purchase them from the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV). From past experience, he believes that each OMV office will receive a small number of the plates for distribution, and the sooner one purchases a plate, the lower the plate number will be. He said licensees will not be able to choose their own number. Discussion about this issue ensued; Perry offered to check with his local state legislator to see if at least the first 100 plates could be reserved for specific numbers.

SLFPA-W / Michael Merritt Discussion: Finley, Johnson, Johnston, and Klekamp met with Merritt on April 27, 2017, about issues stemming from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' lack of geologic analysis conducted in the construction of flood protection systems in the SLFPA-W jurisdiction. Johnston mentioned that the concerns Merritt has presented are warranted. Johnston and Perry expressed the desire to take this discussion into executive session; Vorhoff advised that the topic should be discussed in an open meeting. Johnston then suggested ending the discussion immediately and taking it up on an individual basis after the board meeting. Hoover asked for clarification of the problem. In response to Hoover's call for clarity, Merritt paraphrased 6th District Congressman Garret Graves: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is undertaking a series of projects throughout the state of Louisiana with dated technology. Merritt cited work performed by his agency ten years ago that used more advanced technology with better results. As an example of the work documented by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, he cited a project with 62 four-inch, overstuffed binders that included a single half-page of geologic description that was itself subpar. In one parish within the SLFPA-W jurisdiction, none of the

more than 100 faults have been mapped as geohazards. The response from the Corps of Engineers has been that they have no need to study the geology of the region. He said he and his colleagues are concerned about the ring defense: if the ring levee breaches anywhere, it floods everywhere. After Katrina, he said, the weakest links were discovered and repaired; his challenge is to find the next-weakest links and repair them *before* the next flood by using solid, detailed work by qualified, licensed professional geologists. Pate added that monitoring is equally important. Discussion ensued. Johnston mentioned that the upcoming symposium on Louisiana coastal geology at LSU on July 26, 2017, is a start in getting the word out about the need for better geologic studies in coastal Louisiana. He said the best way to go is with education. Hoover suggested that the local geological societies should be supporting Merritt's efforts, but he maintained that the board could not intervene. More discussion ensued. Finley called the discussion to a close.

"Official" ethics course (suggested by Bill Schramm): Johnston commented that many ethics courses are available, most at no charge. He recommended not having an "official" course authorized by the board. Several board members concurred.

Questions for Discussion: Several questions arose prior to the board meeting that required board discussion and responses. These questions and discussions follow:

An e-mail campaign was created on May 1, 2017, and sent to all licensed Professional Geoscientists on May 5, 2017, to announce the planned continuing education audit. Mailing this same announcement to the same 1129 recipients will cost over \$800 in postage and supplies. One alternative would be to mail the announcements only to those licensees for whom we have a hard bounce back from the e-mail campaign. However, the likelihood that we have correct physical addresses for those licensees for whom we do not have correct e-mail addresses is not good. What is the consensus of the board on this matter?

Yet another issue that arose after the email announcement is that, currently, licensees can opt to "unsubscribe" to our online mailing system, which means they will not receive our messages if they are sent through the website. At a time when we are attempting to become more efficient by using technology to reach the licensees, should we disable this "unsubscribe" feature?

Finley suggested that the announcement should be mailed to those licensees for whom we have a "hard bounce back." Discussion ensued regarding how to reach licensees for whom the board no longer has any valid contact information (no physical address, no phone number, and no email address). Johnston moved to require all licensees to maintain a valid email address and to not allow licensees to "opt out" through the online system; Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. The motion carried, with Hoover dissenting.

On a related matter, the suggestion has been made that the office staff contact area professional [geological] societies in the hope of finding these lost licensees. In the last round of past due renewal notices, we found that fewer than 100 licensees have failed to renew after 60 days or more, but these licensees have not yet been located. What is the protocol for these professional [geological] organizations in regard to sharing members' addresses and other contact information? Is that information considered private or proprietary?

Finley suggested sending the geological societies a request to contact their members and let them know that the board is looking for them. Both Klekamp and Pate suggested checking the license rosters of neighboring states; Perry suggested searching LinkedIn for professional information on missing licensees.

New Business

- a. Board library/resource system (Klekamp): tabled by Klekamp for future discussion
- b. Finley announced the upcoming election of LBOPG officers for 2017-2018 to be held during the August 8, 2017 meeting and called for nominations. Johnston nominated all of the current officers: Finley for chair; Johnston for vice-chair; Johnson for treasurer; and Pate for secretary. Klekamp concurred, and Hoover seconded the nomination. Johnson said that he is willing to serve again as treasurer. Johnston said he should stay on the executive committee because he is the only board member in Baton Rouge. Perry nominated Johnston for secretary and Pate for vice-chair. Johnston declined the nomination for secretary; Pate accepted the nomination for vice-chair. Perry stood by his nomination; Hoover seconded it. Klekamp asked about the duties of the secretary; Pate explained that the secretary serves as a member of the executive committee and assures that the minutes are accurate, which, she added, are now taken care of by the executive secretary. Klekamp then offered to run for the office of secretary. Pate seconded his nomination. Johnson moved to close the nominations; Klekamp seconded; the motion carried, with Johnston dissenting.
- c. Pate asked Finley to call a special meeting to consider ASBOG testing candidates who submit applications between June 13 and July 21. She explained that only five board members need to attend. Discussion ensued, with Johnston suggesting that the meeting be held at 8 am on Wednesday, July 26, 2017, at LSU. Johnson, Klekamp, Johnston, Pate, and Finley volunteered to meet prior to the LSU symposium on Louisiana coastal geology at the Energy, Coast, and Environment Building on the LSU campus.

Adjourn

The next regular meeting of the board will be held on Tuesday, August 8, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. in the conference room at the Brookline Avenue building. Johnston moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried unanimously. Finley adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.