

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS REGISTRATION

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Professional Foresters Examining Committee Meeting Minutes

Held: February 28, 2022

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

Members Present:

- Frank Mulhair, Chair
- Dan Sendek
- Bill Snyder
- Jason Poburko
- Christian Eggleton
- James Hawkins
- Yana Valachovic

Staff Participating:

- Dan Stapleton, Assistant Executive Officer, Licensing
- Robert “Bob” Roth, Attorney
- Deniele Cade, Staff Services Analyst, Licensing
- “Y.G.” George Gentry, Contracted Expert Examiner

Approval of Open Session Minutes for December 1, 2021 and January 17, 2022

Member Poburko motions to approve the January minutes. Member Snyder seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Dan Sendek	Aye
Bill Snyder	Aye
Jason Poburko	Aye
Christian Eggleton	Aye
James Hawkins	Aye
Yana Valachovic	Aye
Frank Mulhair, Chair	Aye

The motion passes unanimously.

Member Poburko motions to approve the December minutes. Member Sendek seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Dan Sendek	Aye
Bill Snyder	Aye
Jason Poburko	Aye
Christian Eggleton	Aye
James Hawkins	Aye
Yana Valachovic	Aye
Frank Mulhair, Chair	Aye

The motion passes unanimously.

Report of Executive Officer

E.O. Stapleton reported on the current status of RPFs and CRMs. Currently, they have 1116 valid RPFs and 82 valid CRMs. They are down about 5 CRMs and about 16 RPFs. He clarified that the drop is most likely due to the amount of older license holders, and that this is after both renewal cycles. He stated that despite the drop, it was only 16 on average so that is good. He explained that the \$100 discount on the 30-year did what was expected and kept people with their license.

E.O. Stapleton reported that financially, licensing is still in the black. However, it is still expected to go into the red as costs increase. He explained that the goal was to try to get into the fiscal black and conduct outreach to bring in more RPFs. This is still the strategy. E.O. Stapleton stated that \$202,285 was brought in compared to about \$130,000 a couple of years ago. He stated while this is excellent news, it still needs to be watched.

E.O. Stapleton reported that there is a waterfall of people; about 47%, that are in the 30-year category. This could pose a problem as they are going to be retiring. He revealed that licensing does have a current outreach contract with Forestry Educators Incorporated, and Executive Director Diane Dealey Neill is leading the effort along with Bob Little. However, they are running into problems with conducting in-person outreach due to COVID restrictions. They are currently conducting Zoom meetings and are hoping to get the ball rolling later this Spring or Fall this year.

Update from ad hoc committee on Apprentice Professional Forester (APF) program by YG Gentry, RPF 1526

Y.G. reported on the ad hoc committee for the APF program. He stated that he has been conducting classes for perspective RPFs to help prepare them for the exam. He currently has 59 people signed up for the class. Of that total, 47 regularly attended. Y.G. explained that while there are a few on the outside that haven't attended, he knows they are engaged in other study groups. He explained that there is a pool of 59 people already interested, and Y.G continues to get more requests from people wishing to participate.

Y.G. revealed that students coming out of college often lack basic core fundamental knowledge. Y.G. revealed that he has been putting together a way to reward people for being an APF. He feels that the simplest way would be to administer an exam that covers basic forest knowledge. Y.G. explained that once enrolled, students would progress towards their RPF license. The reward would be when students take the RPF exam, they would receive a more abbreviated version.

Y.G. reported that currently, he has a 10-month outline that he has been working on. He explains that students would meet twice a month during those 10 months, and each month will be devoted to a different topic. Students would be required to do research on the given topic, report on their research, and be present for lectures. He has not decided on whether impromptu examinations are appropriate or not. Y.G. explained that he is currently trying to gauge levels of interest as well as what the knowledge base is coming into the class. He stated that currently there is a high degree of interest in this approach, but the knowledge base is lacking.

Introduction of Proposed Alternative Pathway for RPF Examination and Licensing by Robert Little, RPF 2651

E.O. Stapleton introduced a proposal that Bob Little put together, along with a corresponding flow chart. He explained that it can be combined with the Apprentice Professional Forester program. He revealed that originally the pathway to an RPF required 7 years, with the last 3 working under an RPF supervisor. In the new flow chart, Y.G.'s class is included as an option for the 2nd year of RPF supervision, which is completing a core competency program while still completing the last year under RPF supervision. E.O. Stapleton feels that this program will provide the opportunity to get people focused on completing a core competency exam equivalent to half of the RPF exam. They would then take the remainder of the exam upon completion of the 7th year.

Bob Little reported on his proposal. He explained that his model is inspired by the teaching credential, where prospective teachers get a job and teach in a school prior to obtaining their full teaching license. He stated that he was also inspired by what Y.G. is setting up, which is a state approved mentorship program that prepares individuals to take and pass an exam. He feels this would help solve the problems occurring with colleges. Bob clarified that the program he is proposing is not to abandon the current pathway, but to get people committed to becoming a licensed professional forester. He proposed that in order to do this, the test will be given more upfront so that the people are more committed to finishing the last three years. Bob also suggested creating a certified specialty.

Member Snyder suggested using the AB 1492 funding for the universities in order to get them engaged.

Member Piirto pointed out that people may shy away from getting an RPF license because there is a greater interest in fire management.

Y.G. responded that he is not certain that AB 1492 can support an educational program under its current structure.

Member Hawkins suggested looking at some flexibility for testing.

Update on Potential Computer Examination Opportunities

E.O. Stapleton reported on the status of computer examinations. He explained that he was investigating Prometric, which is an organization that has examination rooms throughout the world, with several in California. However, he can no longer get ahold of them, and was unable to get a quote. He has since moved on and contacted people from CAL FIRE. They have looked into the possibility of renting out computers. E.O. Stapleton reported that CAL FIRE has Chromebooks, keyboards, and mice to rent. He explained that this could allow access to computers at exam locations for those who wish to use them. He clarified that licensing would have to have some sort of control over the Wi-Fi network, where a proctor may sit behind the examinees rather than in front of them.

E.O. Stapleton feels that this is the most realistic way to access computers for the exam. He brought up the question of cost as well as a rental timeline. He also brought up potentially using a computer room in the new Natural Resources building. E.O. Stapleton is unsure about requiring a fee for the use of a computer. Ultimately, he will find out more about the requirements and go from there. E.O. Stapleton clarified that the benefits of utilizing computers would assist with grading the exams.

Member Valachovic expressed her concerns with possible tech issues and the power supply.

Public Forum

Jeff Dowling commented that he has been working as a Retired Annuitant for Truckee Fire, and it has been brought to his attention that there are quite a few unlicensed professionals working in local government as forestry experts. He stated that he is interested in everything that has been portrayed in terms of giving people a more rapid way to become an RPF. He questions if there is a remedy outside of making the licensing procedure shorter while allowing people to become an PRF more quickly.

E.O. Stapleton informed Jeff that if he is aware of unlicensed practice, he can send an email to him along with the names so that the Board can send a forceful letter requesting them to stop.

Meeting Adjourned to Close Session

Meeting Reconvened from Close Session

Announcement of actions taken in Closed Session

Chair Mulhair reported on the closed session meeting. The committee approved the April 2022 exam. The meeting minutes from the previous closed session was also approved. The committee approved applicants to sit for the April 2022 exam. The committee discussed case 343, but no action was taken at this time.

Meeting Adjourned

DRAFT