

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
ILLINOIS STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING BOARD MINUTES

Open Minutes

Structural Engineering Board

Date: September 27, 2023
Convened: 10:15 am
Adjourned: 1:14 pm
Location: Springfield/Chicago/WEBEX

Members Present: Chad Hodel, Chair
Christine Freisinger, Vice-Chair
Salvatore Di Bernardo, Member
Dan Lutz, Member

Member(s) Absent: David J. Carroll, Member

Staff Present: Kyle Lazell, Design Licensing Manager
Ron Almiron, IDFPR General Counsel
Oscar Pina, IDFPR Prosecuting Attorney

Guests Present: Stephanie Crain, SEAIOI
Jan Block, SEAIOI
John McLean, SEAIOI
Rund Al-Masri, SEAIOI

Open Session: The Meeting was called to order at 10:15 am.
Roll Call: The Board Members present constituted a quorum of the Board.

I. Board Member Announcements, comments

Mr. Hodel welcomed everyone for attending and asked if any member had an announcement or comment to share. Hearing none, he welcomed Mr. Lutz to the Board and asked if would introduce himself.

Mr. Lutz shared that he graduated from the University of Missouri – Rolla with a BS and MS in engineering. He started his career with Oates Associates, Inc. and has been there ever since. Currently, he oversees the Bridge group.

II. Guest Announcements, comments

Ms. Crain shared that SEAIOI has opened registration for the SE Exam refresher course and is hosting a free webinar on recruitment and retention.

III. Licensing Manager Report

- A. SB 2368
Mr. Lazell shared that he received notice that a bill was circulated during the 2023 Spring legislative session and passed in the house and senate. The bill sets a minimum requirement for structural design in local building codes within the Capital Development Board Act. It was signed by the Governor in August.
- B. IDFPR Staff Changes
Mr. Lazell shared that Cecilia Abundis, Division Director for professional regulation is resigning as of Friday, September 22, 2023, to pursue a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

He also shared that Eduardo Fernandez, DPR Prosecuting Attorney for design professions, is resigning as of Friday, September 22, 2023, and will be working in a position in Cook County.
- C. NCEES Zone Award Nominations
Mr. Lazell shared he received notice from Jan Bostleman, NCEES CZ vice-president that the Central Zone is accepting nominations for the Zone Distinguished Service Award.

IV. Review of Open Minutes

The Board reviewed the open minutes of the May 10, 2023, 2023, meeting. Motion was made, seconded (Freisinger/Hodel) to approve the open minutes of the meeting as presented. Motion passed with a quorum of members.

V. Ongoing Business

- A. Continued discussion of approved coursework

The committee will continue working on compiling list of approved courses and have a report at the next meeting.

VI. Report from Subcommittees

- A. Complaint Review Committee/Subcommittee

Mr. Hodel reported on the September 20, 2023, meeting. Complaint Statistics based on recommendations from the July 2023 meetings for each profession:

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Architect: Opened 3, Closed 12, Referred to prosecutions 1
SE: Opened 9, Closed 6, Referred to prosecutions 0
PE: Opened 8, Closed 2, Referred to prosecutions 1
LS: Opened 0, Closed 1, Referred to prosecutions 0

Complaints currently under investigation:

Architect – 24

SE – 9

PE – 22

LS – 8

Cases currently being prosecuted:

Architect - 26

Land Surveyor - 4

Professional Engineer -17

Structural Engineer - 5

VII. New Business

A. NCEES Annual Meeting – report

Ms. Freisinger reported on the NCEES Annual Meeting, held August 15-17, 2023, in Boston, Massachusetts. The main takeaways/discussion items were:

- SE exam “five-year cap” removal
- FE/FS cords for use at college graduation
- NCEES Foundation
- Board of Directors discrepancy for the PS exam module
- NCEES encouraging members and associations to get more involved in the community

Mr. Lazell shared a few items from the member board administrator meetings:

- NCEES encouraged boards and associations to become more involved with incoming legislators, meeting with them, sharing knowledge about the profession and being available as a resource for any future needs/bills.
- He inquired with the other members boards who still utilized the TOEFL-iBT exam to test the English speaking and reading abilities of foreign educated applicants. After hearing none and confirming with NCEES, it was made apparent that the Illinois

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jurisdiction is the only jurisdiction that still utilizes this exam.

The reasons given by other jurisdictions for the discontinuation of the exam were that the required license examinations are administered in English, and licensure requires experience gained within the U.S. These were deemed sufficient items to assess that an applicant is at least minimally competent to read and speak English, which was the intent of the TOEFL exam. Additionally, the applicant's ability to effectively communicate with coworkers, clients, etc., would ultimately be determined by employers and if unable to satisfy the requirements, the person would not be able to gain the necessary experience.

Upon discussion with DPR staff, continuing to require the TOEFL-iBT exam was deemed no longer defensible and was recommended to be removed from the Rules for the administration of the SE Act.

B. Review of draft Rule revisions

Mr. Lazell shared a revised version of the proposed Rule changes including the removal of the TOEFL-iBT exam requirement.

The Board reviewed the draft.

Mr. Di Bernardo said he is in favor of lowering any added barriers for foreign applicants, but said with the TOEFL-iBT exam removal, that would mean foreign applicants could technically become licensed with all experience being gained outside the U.S.

Mr. Lazell reminded the Board of Section 1480.130 (a)(7) of the Rules, which states that foreign experience may be accepted and a maximum of two years of experience can be credited under this subsection. Meaning that at least two years of experience toward licensure must be gained under the supervision of a U.S. engineer legally practicing structural engineering.

Regarding the proposed language change for Section 1480.150 (g), Mr. Hodel stated he felt it would make sense to change the language, so it refers back to NCEES policy, as had been done for the SE exam "five-year clock" policy.

Mr. Lazell modified the wording to read, "Post-administration

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access to, or review of, examination materials by an examinee or an examinee's representative shall be in accordance with the NCEES exam policy.

Motion to move into Closed Session:

Motion was made, seconded (Freisinger/Di Bernardo) to move into Closed Session pursuant to Section 2c (4) & (15) of the Open Meetings Act at 12:38 pm. Motion passed with a quorum of members.

VIII. Closed Session:

A. Review of Closed Minutes

The Board reviewed the closed minutes of the May 10, 2023, 2023, meeting.

B. Application Review/discussion

The Board reviewed no applications pursuant to Sections 1480.140, 1480.170 and 1480.185 of the Rules for the Administration of the Illinois Structural Engineering Practice Act of 1989.

Moved back into Open Session:

Board Chair adjourned the Closed Session and moved the meeting back into Open Session at 1:12 pm.

IX. Motions:

Review closed minutes:

Motion was made, seconded (Di Bernardo/Freisinger) to approve the May 10, 2023, closed minutes as presented. Motion passed with a quorum of members.

Keep closed minutes closed:

Motion was made, seconded (Lutz/ Freisinger) to keep the closed minutes closed. Motion passed with a quorum of members.

X. Reminders & Signatures

A. Reminder

Mr. Lazell reminded the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2023.

B. Action Sheets

No Action Sheets signed.

XI. Adjournment

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:14 pm.