

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees

From: Virgil Farnen

Date: February 9, 2024

Subject: Impacts of Lead Operator's part-time work, and the void created by his resignation

While the Lead Operator (LO) was on light duty, his responsibilities included: performing the required lab testing; service call data entry; connection inspections; and treatment plant and control troubleshooting. The LO's work day varied from 2 hrs to 6 hrs, depending on how he felt. Over time, his health declined to the point we would not let him drive a District vehicle. This limited his activities further and confined him to office or lab work.

One of the impacts on the Operations staff were added on-call duties. Instead of being on-call 1 week in 4 weeks, the schedule was 2 weeks in 7 weeks.

The LO's absence also created staffing short falls while co-workers were on vacations, sick leave or a scheduled day off (SDO). At times during this period, it was necessary to have an employee who was due a SDO to work overtime instead to get routine tasks and service calls completed. This caused an increase in Operations overtime paid. The LO's absence was most evident at Rocky Fork due to his knowledge of the intricacies of that system.

When the LO was absent for the initial surgery and recovery period, I moved a certified Wastewater/Equipment operator up to actually operate treatment plants and lift stations. The certified operators were also reassigned to areas more fitting for their experience. This left 2 employees to process and haul sludge, conduct line maintenance, clear rights-of-way, lift station services, sewer line repairs and the many other tasks that arose.

Current District Operations staff has four "A" and two "D" level Certified Operators, and one Senior Equipment Operator. The largest gap caused by the LO's absence is experience and organizational and industry knowledge. Those skills were learned from years of service at the District, which has numerous types of treatment, controls, collections and pressure systems. In addition to education gleaned from certification and recertification training, a majority of a crew member's skill set is acquired through on the job training with co-workers who currently hold that knowledge.

The plan going forward to fill the LO position is to promote from within. We will then advertise for an entry level Equipment Operator and fill that vacancy. We typically have to get the new hire CDL qualified. After the probationary period, we will encourage them to advance their careers by attaining the "D" level Operators Certification.

Current Staff's position, certification level and years if experience.

Position	Certification Level	# of Years as Certified Operator	Years Employed by District
Operations Manager	A	32	34
Senior Wastewater Operator	A	25	21
Senior WW/EQ Operator	A	16	11
Senior WW/EQ Operator	A	11	8
WW/EQ Operator	D	1	3
WW/EQ Operator	D	.1	1.2
Senior Equipment Operator	Not Certified		30