

**SEWAGE, WASTEWATER, AND SANITATION (SWS)  
HEARING ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Members**

Matthew Buehler, Chair  
Kenneth Lund  
John Adams  
Chad Carnes, P.E.  
Robert Sweeney, REHS  
Matt Smith- Alternate  
Julianne Zotter, P.E.- Alternate

**Thursday, September 4, 2025**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Washoe County Administration Complex,  
Building B  
Health District South Conference Room**

**1001 East Ninth Street  
Reno, NV**

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**5:30 p.m.**

**1. \*Roll Call and Determination of Quorum**

The following members and staff were present:

Members present: Matthew Buehler  
Kenneth Lund  
John Adams  
Julianne Zotter, P.E.- Alternate  
Robert Sweeney  
Chad Carnes, P.E.- Recused

Staff present: David Kelly  
Latricia Lord  
DDA Herb Kaplan

Members absent: Matt Smith – Alternate

**2. \*Pledge of Allegiance**

Those present pledged allegiance to the flag.

**3. \*Public Comment**

As no public comment was presented, the public comment period was closed.

**4. Approval of Agenda – September 4, 2025**

Mr. Adams moved to approve the agenda of the September 4, 2025, Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation (SWS) Board regular meeting. Second by Mr. Lund, motion approved unanimously.

## 5. Approval of Draft Minutes – January 20, 2025

Mr. Lund moved to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2025, Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation Board regular meeting. Second by Mr. Adams. Motion approved by all members except for Mr. Sweeney, who abstained.

## 6. Election of New Board Chair – (For possible action)

Mr. Buehler asked the rest of the Board if there was anyone interested in being chair. When no other Board members responded, he indicated that he felt that Mr. Lund would be a good chair and he would like to nominate him. Mr. Lund asked if anyone else was interested in the position and when none responded, accepted the nomination. The Board voted unanimously to make Mr. Lund the chair. DDA Mr. Kaplan indicated that the change would be effective next Board meeting.

7. **Public Hearing** – to determine whether to recommend an amended approval to the District Board of Health for a variance for APN 087-044-17, from sections 100.025, Table 3 and 100.100, Table 4 of the Northern Nevada Public Health Regulations Governing Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation. A variance was previously granted, with conditions, by the Board of Health on March 27, 2025, based on the recommendation of the SWS Board, to allow installation of a Mode 3 Orenco AX20 treatment system with an Orenco GeoFlow subsurface drip. The variance also included reduced setbacks from impervious soils and high seasonal ground water. Subsequent to the approval of the Board of Health, representatives requested the following modifications to the approved variance: 1) Reduce cover over the top of drip line to 1' from 2', 2) changing the pea gravel bedding for the drip line to crushed rock, and 3) reducing the size of the system from 4,428 square feet to 1,488 square feet. – (For possible action)

Staff Representative: David Kelly

Mr. Kelly reviewed the staff report, indicating that staff felt the amendments were not an issue and gave a short review of the request and how it had come about. He indicated that the primary reason that staff felt it important to require an amendment process was due to the fact that actual septic design had already been approved as part of the variance process. He acknowledged that minor changes to a design during construction would not necessarily trigger this process, but with the large change in how the system was sized, staff felt that it was appropriate to have the Board review the amendment request.

Mr. Buehler asked that if in general there would be any impact to public health based on the requested changes. Mr. Kelly said no, the treatment system was the same, which means that the quality of effluent and potential impact to groundwater would be the same.

Mr. Adams asked to go through each of the amendment requests. Mr. Kelly explained each request. The 2/3 size reduction was similar to what was allowed for a sand filter, and while this was not a sand filter, the effluent was considered as clean or cleaner than that coming from a filter so it was felt that the system did not need to be oversized despite slow percolation rates. This had been confirmed by Orenco representatives and the design engineer was in agreement. The drip line being placed into crushed rock versus pea gravel was requested and Orenco had also indicated that was not an issue. Lastly, that cover over the drop line be reduced from 2' to 1' – Mr. Kelly explained that he believed that design feature had come about from a concern with regards to freezing, but again, Orenco representatives had claimed it was non-issue and the system had been used in much colder climates without problems. Mr. Adams commented that in his experience, 1' of soil is plenty and crushed rock is normal.

Mr. Adams did note the dramatic change in the sizing and Mr. Lund asked what had changed in the analysis to account for that. Mr. Carnes (design engineer) came up to answer questions. He reviewed each of the three amendment requests. First, that the reduced cover was not only because of other situations where it had been used and also because the system drained out after dosing and so no water stayed in the piping. He was comfortable that 1' was sufficient cover. The second amendment was the crushed rock versus pea gravel. Mr. Carnes said that he had originally thought that drip line was similar to irrigation line and very fragile but upon inspection of actual product, realized how strong it was and was no longer concerned with using crushed rock – the pea gravel would just be an extra non-needed expense. In relation to the sizing, Mr. Carnes stated that he had not incorporated a 2/3 reduction as allowed for sand filters but when they calculated the cost of all fill needed at the larger size, it turned out to be prohibitive. The property owner had found some very good fill at a reasonable price, and after discussion with Orenco and NNPH, he had calculated that even with the 2/3 reduction the system could take 2,800 gallons a day. Mr. Lund asked if the bottom line was that the effluent would stay where it should and Mr. Carnes said yes, 2,800 gallons a day was a safety margin of 2.8 over the design volume of 1,000 gallons a day.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the value of drip is creating unsaturated flow and if there was timed dosing. Mr. Carnes said that the timing can be adjusted at the panel. Mr. Sweeney asked if the lines could be flushed and Mr. Carnes, after confirming with Orenco, responded in the positive. Mr. Sweeney asked if they were using Geoflow and Mr. Carnes confirmed.

Ms. Zotter asked if any testing had been done on the fill material that the owners had found. After Mr. Carnes said no, she asked if was going to in order to make sure that it was suitable and Mr. Carnes said yes.

Mr. Sweeney opined to the board that variances such as this were important to help bring in new technologies to the jurisdiction.

Mr. Lund to approve the amendments to the variance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Adams. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Buehler closed the public hearing.

### **Motion**

Motion made by Mr. Lund “Move to present to the District Board of Health a recommendation for approval of amendments to Variance Case # H25-0001VARI (Benedickt) to allow the reduction in dispersal field sizing, the reduction in cover over the drip line from 2' to 1', and the change of pea gravel drip line bedding material to crushed rock.”

Second by Mr. Adams. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Buehler closed the public hearing.

### **9. \*Public Comment**

As there were no public comment requests, closed the public comment period.

### **10. Adjournment –**

At 6:40 p.m., Mr. Buehler adjourned the meeting.