

TNI PT Board Meeting Summary October 15, 2009

1) Roll call and approval of minutes:

Chairman Eric Smith called the TNI PT Board to order on October 15, 2009, at 1:00 PM EST. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A. Associate members, Chuck Wibby and Jeff Lowry, were also present. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm EST (Motion: Carl. Second: Curtis. Unanimously approved.)

The minutes from the last meeting (September 17th) were reviewed. Gary motioned that the minutes be accepted and Svetlana seconded the motion. They were unanimously approved and the final minutes will be forwarded to the webmaster.

2) Results of E-Mail Vote: Second Board Terms for Carl, Eric and Curtis

All Board members voted unanimously to maintain Carl, Eric and Curtis on the PT Board for a second term.

3) Final Draft of SOP 4-001 R 3.0 (Limit Updates)

Eric made the changes requested during the last meeting and sent the revised SOP out for Board review yesterday evening. Curtis motioned that SOP 4-001 R 3.0 be accepted and forwarded to the Policy Committee. The motion was seconded by Gary and the Board unanimously approved the motion. Eric will send the SOP to the Policy Committee with an effective date of October 15, 2009. A copy will also be sent to the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.

4) Update on Experimental PT Tables & NELAP Board Comments

When Eric forwarded the Board's questions to the NELAP Board, they sent back some questions that we had already discussed. He attended their conference call on October 5th and answered the questions they had sent. A few days later he received the following e-mail from Brian Boling (Oregon – AB and Co-Chair of the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee):

The Chem FoPT subcommittee met on Tuesday and discussed the removal of the experimental PT tables from the website. The group recommends that we proceed in this manner; the group would review the experiment PT over the next 3-4 meeting and give to the PT board new tables with the experimental analytes that made the cut for a vote in December. The new tables would go into effect July 1,

2010. The group did not think that the experimental tables could be pulled from the website any sooner due to the fact that PT providers are to have a 6 month lead time anyway. Most PT providers have already ordered and planned for the experimental PTs to be purchased for the next 6 months. I think this meets the NELAP boards desire to have the experimental tables gone, the analytes will be moved after review and agreement on the limits and it occurs in a reasonable time frame. If all went as planned the PT group would be in a position to present the new tables in Chicago. Once the experimental analytes are complete we would then finish the remainder of the analytes. I don't believe we need to bring LASP in at this point.

Aaren Alger (NELAP Board Chair) will get something official in writing to the PT Board by the end of October.

Carl asked if there were any objections to the mean +/- 3 standard deviations limits for the DW analytes. He also asked about their view on removing any analytes from the tables. Eric commented that they do not want to see the group use a default to move all experimental analytes – they want each to be technically reviewed. They were open to the idea of removing some analytes from the table.

Chuck commented that FoPT Tables have always been independent of the dates of the standard.

The previous directive to the Chem FoPT Subcommittee needs to be revised. The Chem FoPT Subcommittee should focus on updating the Experimental Analytes based on a technical review. Beginning next week, the Chem FoPT Subcommittee will begin meeting weekly. Eric will prepare a directive after the call today and copy the PT Board and Chem FoPT Subcommittee. The PT Board would like to see the DW/WW update by the November 19th meeting and the Solids by the December 17th meeting. If waste water isn't done by 11/19, it will be looked at December 17th.

Curtis emphasized that if there is some delay in approval of the tables (not more than a month or so) the PT providers should still be able to meet the July 1, 2009 implementation date. Carl suggested that we look at contacting all PT Providers with a heads-up so they can begin planning now. Eric suggested that we reassess this timing at the November 19th meeting and then determine if a heads-up is needed.

5) DW Table Micro Total Coliform Rule Request

This was a request made by Jeff. The following message from Jeff Lowry was distributed to the PT Board via e-mail on 10/14/09:

(8/27/09) As I was working on updating the DW TNI FoPT table I noticed the criteria for microbiology concerning the Total Coliform Rule (presence/absence analytes). In March 2008, the TNI FoPT Subcommittee suggested that the acceptance criteria be changed from nine out of ten with no false negatives to ten out of ten. The subcommittee did a survey of Accreditation Authorities and the AA's where supportive of this change. The subcommittee also studied the possible failure rate change which would change from 2% to 4-5% on average. This information is contained in a report sent to the PT Board entitled, "Report on the Recommendation of the Microbiology Subcommittee to the TNI Proficiency Testing Board" dated March 7, 2008. The PT Board did not implement the recommendation because the NELAC 2003 standard actually contains the nine out of ten criteria in an appendix. Now that the TNI PT Board has moved to the TNI 2008 standard, couldn't this recommendation be reconsidered and added to the DW TNI FoPT while we are working on it?

Eric added:

For reference during our meeting, I've attached the documents that Jeff refers to. I did a little digging in last year's meeting minutes to recall last year's decision process. We approved the recommendation in April of last year, but we subsequently revised the FOPT table again in May of last year after receiving a request from the NELAP Board to keep it at 9 out of 10 because that criterion is specifically listed in the NELAC standard.

Steve commented that the NELAP Board would have an issue with 10 out of 10, because they are still working with the 2003 NELAC standard. Based on this information, Jeff retracted his request and the request will be resubmitted after the new TNI Standard is implemented.

6) WS/WP pH FOPT Acceptance Limits Request for Review

This was a request from Jeff Lowry. The following e-mail information was provided to the Board on 10/14/09:

Jeff Lowry: *I am writing you based on a call I received today about the TNI Non-Potable Water Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) table. One of our clients participated in DMR-QA Study 29 and feels the acceptance limits for the TNI FoPT table is too tight for the analyte pH at ± 0.2 pH units around the assigned value. Our client states that ± 0.5 pH units would be sufficient for waste water. I investigated the data received by the TNI FoPT Subcommittee for any failure rate problems. The data received incorporates four PT Providers from January 2005 to December 2008. I found that at a pH above 8 S.I units the failure rate trends upward (see attached EXCEL spread sheet) for both the Non-potable (WP and DMRQA) and Potable (WS/DW) water studies. The TNI Subcommittee is presently reviewing both the non-Potable and Potable water FoPT tables and should*

consider this data and any other information when reviewing this analyte.

At ERA we have found a similar trend in our WP and DMRQA studies. This problem may be related to a documented problem with the degradation of the pH buffer at 10 S.I. units used to calibrate the pH meter. I will let more educated inorganic chemists explain this before the review of this analyte continues.

Please pass this along to both the TNI PT Board and the TNI FoPT Subcommittee for their consideration.

Dan Dickenson: *I have also noticed poorer performance on the part of laboratories in both PW and WP/DMRQA studies when the AV for pH is >8. Failing labs were visited by ELAP Assessors for focused assessments of pH including challenges with blind high pH reference samples. Based on these corrective action assessments, ELAP is convinced that the issue is not with the sample formulation but rather with the calibration and/or electrode performance at the labs under test.*

We typically found that labs were not properly calibrating for high pH and the electrode maintenance was not adequate. After correcting these problems labs performed within +/- 0.2 pH units for the blind reference samples (AV>8) and subsequent PTs(AV>8). In fact, ELAP fail rates for pH>8 dropped from 15-20% to 0-4 % after these focused assessments.

Real world pH data is often >8 and common for drinking water and wastewater. Accurate pH measurement is essential and also a higher challenge for labs at high pH. Based on ELAP's experience, I am not in favor of changing the acceptance limits for pH. Labs just need to rise to the challenge, and they can as ELAP has demonstrated.

Jeff suggested that the PT Board provide an answer to the client that originally asked this question and that this information be passed along to the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee. As a whole, labs do appear to have a problem with pH PTs above 8. Gary asked if we are looking at changing the limits on the PT due to a technical issue or is there a real problem with the PT? Stacie feels that labs need to look at how they are handling this analysis – she thinks this is a corrective action issue. This is consistent with Dan Dickenson's comment above. Curtis commented that the data should be looked at and then limits should be determined from the data. Eric's comment was that he thought most of the PTs they get are below or at 8. He read some guidance his lab's technical director gave about a bias for electrodes to read high at a pH above 8. He suggested that maybe 0.3 pH units may be reasonable. This should be reviewed by the Chem FoPT Subcommittee. Eric will prepare a letter to the subcommittee and a copy of the letter can be forwarded by Jeff to his client.

7) Discuss A2LA Draft Documents Associated with the SSAS Program

The documents could not be distributed to the Board until yesterday evening. The Board needs more time to review this information. It will be discussed at the November 5, 2009 meeting.

Eric mentioned that the R303 General Requirements document does not appear to reference to the Statement of Work the PT Board recently reviewed. Need to get a copy of the SSAS standard to send to the PT Board so they can consider this information when doing their review. Ilona will follow-up on this.

8) Discuss Standard Interpretation Requests 72, 75, 80, 91, and Oct 13th Request

The Board decided to review each of these requests and possibly assign someone to prepare an initial response. Stacie will work on the October 13th request. Eric encouraged everyone to think about the answer and open a dialogue on e-mail. These will be looked at in more detail at the November 5th meeting.

9) New Items

- Is there an agenda for the Chicago meeting? There will be a PT Caucus. Eric said to let him know if anyone wants to present anything at the Caucus meeting. We will want A2LA to do a presentation. Carl volunteered to do the presentation for the Chem FoPT Subcommittee. This presentation should include the new Chemistry FoPT tables.

10) Open Action Items

The Action Items table was reviewed and updates were made directly into the table.

11) Next Meeting

The next meeting of the PT Board will be Thursday, November 5, 2009, at 1pm EST. This is in addition to the regular November 19th meeting.

Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

Attachment A

**Participants
TNI
Proficiency Testing Board**

| Members | Affiliation | Contact Information |
|---|---|--|
| Eric Smith, Chair (2009) Present | TestAmerica | 615-726-0177 x1238 eric.smith@testamericainc.com |
| Ilona Taunton, Program Administrator Present | TNI | 828-712-9242 tauntoni@msn.com |
| Gary Dechant Present | Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. | 970-434-4875 gldechant@aol.com |
| Amy Doupe Absent | Lancaster Laboratories, Inc. | 717-656-2300 x1812 aldoupe@lancasterlabs.com |
| Steve Gibson Present | Texas Comm. on Env. Quality | 512-239-1518 jgibson@tceq.state.tx.us |
| Svetlana Isozamova Present | Accutest Laboratories – Southeast Division | 407-425-6700 svetlani@accutest.com |
| Michella Karapondo Absent | USEPA | 513-569-7141 karapondo.michella@epa.gov |
| Carl Kircher Present | Florida DOH | 904-791-1574 carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us |
| Stacie Metzler Present | HRSD | 757-460-4217 smetzler@hrsd.com |
| Matt Sica Absent | State of Maine | 207-287-1929 matthew.sica@maine.gov |
| Curtis Wood Present | Environmental Resource Associates | 303-431-8454 cwood@eraqc.com |

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI PT Board

| | Action Item | Who | Expected Completion | Actual Completion |
|-----|--|--------------|---|--|
| 10. | Let the new Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee know that information is available from NY regarding extraction/prep methods and PT results. | Carl / Ilona | When Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is formed. | Describe what this is. Soil in metals too? SVOA. |
| 17. | Work on language for new TNI policy based on NELAC Policy #16 and EPA Criteria Document. | Chuck | Eric will follow-up with Chuck to determine a date. | Looking for volunteer to help Chuck. |
| 42 | Submit modified footnote based on the micro discussion during the 3/19/09 meeting. | Eric | Before tables are finalized. | |
| 60 | Post SOP 4-001 on the PT Board's website when finalized. | Ilona | When finalized. | |
| 62 | Request new A2LA Checklist. | Eric | 9/30/09 | Open |
| 64 | Fix typo in WS Table. | Eric | 10/19/09 | Open |
| 65 | Is PT Board membership limited to 10 or 15. PT Board's operational SOP 4-003 states 15, but document Ilona saw stated 5-10. | Ilona | 10-15-09 | Out before end of week. |
| 66 | Review SSAS documents forwarded by Randy Querry. Must be prepared to vote in October 15 th meeting. | All | 10-15-09 | To be completed 11/5/09. |
| 67 | Distribute e-mail vote for PT Board Membership. Members must vote by 9-28-09. | Ilona | 9-28-09 | Complete |
| 68 | Update "Limit Update SOP" and forward to PT Board for review and possible e-mail vote. | Eric | 10-15-09 | Complete |
| 69 | Prepare directive to Chem FoPT Subcommittee to focus on Experimental Analytes. | Eric | 10-16-09 | Complete |

| | Action Item | Who | Expected Completion | Actual Completion |
|----|--|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 70 | Reassess need to contact PT Providers to give them a heads-up on the FoPT table updates. | Eric | 11/19/09 | |
| 71 | Prepare letter to Chem FoPT Subcommittee regarding the need to look at pH studies above 8. | Eric | 10/19/09 | |
| 72 | Distribute current copy of SSAS standard. | Ilona | 10/26/09 | |
| 73 | Forward SOP 4-001 R 3.0 to the Policy Committee and Chem FoPT Subcommittee. | Eric | 10/16/09 | |
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Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – TNI PT Board

| | Item | Meeting Reference | Comments |
|---|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3 | Send A2LA a formal request to ask PT Providers if PT data can be shared with the Board. Needs to be done before 8/09. | 1/14/09 | |
| 5 | Update PTPA Review SOP. | n/a | |
| 6 | DW Table Micro Total Coliform Rule Request | 10/15/09 | 9 out of 10 vs. 10 out of 10 |
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