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BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF
REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

MAY 06 2019

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WV PE BOARD

IN RE: BLACKWELL ENGINEERING, PLC

MAY 23 2019 C2019-18

CONSENT ORDER

WV PE BOARD

Comes now the West Virginia State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers by Bhajan S. Saluja, P.E., its President, (hereinafter “the Board”) for the purpose of agreeing to resolve a Complaint seeking disciplinary action against Blackwell Engineering, PLC (hereinafter “Respondent Firm”). As reflected in this document, the parties have reached an agreement concerning the proper disposition of this matter, and the Board, upon approval of this agreement, does hereby **FIND** the following:

1. The matters set forth herein are within the jurisdiction of the Board, which is the state entity with the power and duty to regulate the practice of engineering in the State of West Virginia.
2. Respondent Firm is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Virginia with its principal place of business in Harrisonburg, Virginia.
3. Respondent Firm’s Certificate of Authorization (COA# C01385) was activated on March 13, 2003.
4. Respondent Firm submitted an inactive request on 12/23/2015 due to the death of its then current Engineer in Responsible Charge. As a direct result of the submission, Respondent Firm’s COA was placed on inactive status as of 12/23/2015.
5. Respondent Firm self-reported that it had offered engineering services in the State of West Virginia on its application for reinstatement of its COA. This resulted in a Board-initiated investigation, which disclosed the allegation that Respondent Firm had made an offer of engineering services for a project located in the State of West Virginia during the time period when Respondent Firm’s COA was inactive.

6. The Board initiated Complaint Number C2019-18 at its regular meeting on January 30, 2019, which was filed and served on or about February 6, 2019.
7. Respondent Firm filed a timely response to the complaint stating its position. Respondent Firm admitted that it offered engineering services in the State of West Virginia when it did not possess an active COA.
8. Thereafter, the Respondent Firm and the Board agreed to settle this matter in lieu of the Respondent Firm going forward to a formal hearing before the Board.
9. The Board has considered the following factors in reaching this settlement: Respondent Firm employed a professional engineer licensed in West Virginia at the time the engineering work was done; Respondent Firm applied for and received a COA and it was in good standing with the Board prior to the service of this Complaint upon the Respondent Firm; Respondent Firm cooperated in the resolution of this Complaint; and there was no risk of harm to the public.
10. The Board, in its discretion, will not assess administrative costs although it is within its power to assess such costs and administrative costs were incurred in the investigation, initiation and resolution of this complaint.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

11. The Board is the state entity with the power and duty to regulate the practice of engineering in the State of West Virginia, and matters related to such practice are within the jurisdiction of the Board. W. Va. Code § 30-13-1 *et seq.*
12. Mr. Edmond Blackwell, as a Member of Respondent Firm, has the power and authority to make admissions and otherwise act on behalf of Respondent Firm.
13. West Virginia engineering law allows a firm to practice or offer to practice engineering only upon the issuance of a Certificate of Authorization by the Board. W. Va. Code § 30-13-17.

14. West Virginia engineering law states that a firm desiring to reinstate a COA shall submit a completed application on forms prescribed by the Board, along with such non-refundable fees as required. W. Va. Code R. § 7-1-11.6.
15. It is unlawful for any firm to practice or offer to practice engineering, as defined by West Virginia Code §30-13-3(e), in the State of West Virginia unless that firm has obtained a COA under the provisions of West Virginia engineering law. W. Va. Code §30-13-17.
16. The Board may suspend or revoke or refuse to issue, restore or renew a certificate of registration, or place on probation, impose a civil penalty or reprimand any professional engineer who has failed to comply with any of the provisions of this article or any of the rules promulgated under it. W. Va. Code § 30-13-21(a)(4).
17. The provisions of W. Va. Code §30-13-21(a) are applicable as appropriate to unlicensed persons and firms. W. Va. Code §30-13-21(b) and (d).
18. Based on the findings of fact set forth above, and the legal citations set forth herein, Respondent Firm admits that it violated W. Va. Code §30-13-17 when it offered engineering services without the required COA.
19. Practicing engineering, and/or offering to practice engineering as defined by W. Va. Code §30-13-3(e), without an active Certificate of Authorization is an action that may subject a firm to discipline by the Board, including a civil penalty up to Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each offense. W.Va. Code R. §7-1-15.1.
20. In determining the amount of a civil penalty to be assessed, the Board may consider such factors as the circumstances leading to the violation; the nature and severity of the violation and the risk of harm to the public; the extent to which the cited person or firm has cooperated with the Board and the Board's investigation; and other matters as may be appropriate. W. Va. Code R. §7-1-15.4.
21. The assessment of administrative costs is within the Board's sole discretion. W. Va. Code §30-13-21(d)(4) and W. Va. Code R. §7-1-14.4.

CONSENT OF RESPONDENT

Mr. Edmond Blackwell, Member of Respondent Firm, by affixing his signature hereon, agrees to the following on behalf of Blackwell Engineering, PLC:

22. Respondent Firm is aware of its rights to be represented by counsel in this matter and to pursue this matter through appropriate administrative and/or court procedures, including its right to a formal hearing before the Board, and Respondent Firm intelligently and voluntarily waives these rights provided the Board accepts the terms and conditions set forth in this Consent Order.
23. Respondent Firm admits it did not have an active Certificate of Authorization at the time it offered engineering services in West Virginia, in violation of West Virginia engineering law.
24. Respondent Firm accepts the findings set forth above and consents to the entry of this Consent Order freely and voluntarily and not under duress, restraint or compulsion.
25. Respondent Firm acknowledges that this Consent Order is being executed for the purpose of avoiding further administrative action with respect to the above-styled matter. In this regard, Respondent Firm authorizes the Board to review and examine all investigative file materials concerning Respondent Firm's activities in West Virginia in consideration of this Consent Order.
26. Should the Board not approve this Consent Order, Respondent Firm waives any objections to the Board or any of its members participating in the adjudication of this matter. This paragraph is binding on Respondent Firm even if the Board does not approve this Consent Order.
27. Respondent Firm acknowledges that the Board may reject this proposal, notice and hold a hearing, and, upon adjudication, impose such sanctions of a disciplinary nature as it deems appropriate.
28. Respondent Firm understands that this Consent Order constitutes a full and final settlement of this matter, and nothing in this Consent Order or the circumstances giving rise to the

same may be the subject of any appeal or other civil or administrative actions except an action by the Board to enforce the terms of this Consent Order, but that nothing in this Consent Order prohibits the Board from considering this disciplinary action or the circumstances giving rise to same with regard to any future disciplinary matter involving Respondent Firm which may be before this Board.

29. Respondent Firm understands that the Complaint and this Consent Order are public records which, together with other public documents in the file, must be made available upon legal request in accordance with the State's Freedom of Information Act.
30. Respondent Firm agrees that the sum and substance of the Complaint and this agreement in part or in their entirety will be set forth in Board publications and on the Board's website, as well as other appropriate placements, including the non-public enforcement exchange database administered by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES).
31. Respondent Firm acknowledges that non-compliance with this Consent Order may result in the rescission of this agreement, the reinstatement of the Complaint, the summary revocation, non-renewal or non-reinstatement of any Certificate of Authorization issued to Respondent Firm by the Board, the addition of any other charges which may arise or ensue from Respondent Firm's non-compliance with this Consent Order.
32. Respondent Firm acknowledges that proof of any material misstatement or misrepresentation made in connection with this matter will result in the rescission of this agreement, the reinstatement of the Complaint, the summary revocation, non-renewal or non-reinstatement of any Certificate of Authorization issued to Respondent Firm by the Board, and the addition of any other charges which may arise or ensue from providing false information to the Board in violation of West Virginia engineering law.

ORDER

1. On the basis of the foregoing, and upon entry of this Consent Order, the Board hereby **ORDERS** that this Consent Order shall serve as settlement of Complaint Number C2019-18 pursuant to West Virginia Code § 30-13-22(b).
2. The Board **ORDERS** Respondent Firm to pay a civil penalty in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) for offering to practice engineering without a Certificate of Authorization.
3. The civil penalty imposed herein totaling Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) must be paid within thirty (30) days of the date of entry set forth below, such amount to be made payable to the “W. Va. P.E. Board” for transfer to the general fund of the State of West Virginia upon receipt.
4. The sum and substance of the Complaint and this agreement in part or in their entirety shall be set forth in Board publications and on the Board’s website, as well as other appropriate placements, including the non-public enforcement exchange database administered by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES).
5. Any violation of the terms of this Consent Order shall be immediate cause for further disciplinary action by the Board.
6. If the civil penalty imposed herein is not paid within thirty (30) days of the date of entry set forth below, then the Respondent Firm’s COA is hereby **ORDERED REVOKED**. Said revoked COA may be restored once the civil penalty is paid, and the Respondent Firm pays the appropriate fees, and is otherwise in good standing with the Board. West Virginia Code § 30-13-21(d)(1).
7. This Consent Order may be summarily enforced in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County, West Virginia, without further notice to Respondent Firm upon application by the Board for the entry of a Judgment Order for the total amount of payment agreed to herein of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00), together with pre-judgment interest from the date of the President’s signature hereon, post-judgment interest from the date of entry of the Judgment

Order, and all costs of any enforcement action(s), which judgment shall be fully executable in accordance with applicable law.

8. This matter shall be closed upon execution of this Consent Order by both parties and the full payment of the civil penalty agreed to herein, except as to the provisions set forth in paragraph 6, above, regarding revocation of the Respondent Firm's COA, and its affects shall survive the closure of this Consent Order.
9. This Consent Order constitutes a full and final settlement of this matter, and nothing in this Consent Order or the circumstances giving rise to the same may be the subject of any appeal or other civil or administrative actions except an action by the Board to enforce the terms of this Consent Order. This shall not prohibit the Board from considering this disciplinary action or the circumstances giving rise to the same with regard to any future disciplinary matter involving Respondent Firm which may come before this Board.
10. This Consent Order relates solely to matters set forth in West Virginia engineering law and does not evidence compliance with any other laws of the State of West Virginia or its political subdivisions, nor should any such compliance be implied.

(Signature line appears on next page.)

AGREED TO BY:




BLACKWELL ENGINEERING, PLC
By: Edmond Blackwell, Member

5-1-19

DATE

ENTERED into the records of the West Virginia State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers this 21 day of May, 2019.

**WEST VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF REGISTRATION
FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

By: 

BHAJAN S. SALUJA, P.E.
BOARD PRESIDENT