

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF
REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

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SEP 08 2021

IN RE: STEPHEN D. HEATH

WV PE BOARD

CONSENT ORDER

Comes now the West Virginia State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers (hereinafter "the Board") by Garth E. Thomas, Jr., P.E., its President, for the purpose of agreeing to resolve a Complaint seeking disciplinary action against Stephen D. Heath, (hereinafter "Respondent"). 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 is a licensed professional engineer in Virginia, and other states.
3. Respondent's Certificate of Registration (a.k.a. "license") number 14792 was initially activated on April 9, 2001.
4. In 2010, Respondent did not renew his retired license for the licensure period of July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011. As a result of the non-renewal of his retired license, Respondent's license was deemed "Lapsed" as of July 1, 2010, and has remained "Lapsed" to the present.
5. State law requires a provider of engineering services to possess an active license in order to practice engineering or to offer to practice engineering in West Virginia.
6. In June 2021, the Board received information that Respondent, in 2021, while his license was in the "Lapsed" status, allegedly provided engineering services for an engineering project in Harrison County, West Virginia. Specifically, that he sealed and submitted mechanical and plumbing drawings for said project. The drawings were dated June 1, 2021.

7. These facts resulted in a Board-initiated investigation, which was the basis of the Board's Complaint which set forth allegations that Respondent had practiced engineering by sealing and submitting the aforesaid mechanical and plumbing drawings at a time when his license had "Lapsed."
8. The Board initiated Complaint Number C2022-03 at its regular meeting on July 21, 2021, which was received and filed by the Board on said date.
9. Thereafter, Respondent, in lieu of filing a verified response, agreed to settle this matter through the entry of this Consent Order, wherein, Respondent would forego his right to an administrative hearing, and his right to appeal, by making a certain admission set forth herein.
10. Respondent agreed to the entry of a Consent Order in which Respondent would admit that he sealed and submitting the aforesaid mechanical and plumbing drawings at a time when his license was in the "Lapsed" status.
11. The Board has considered the following factors in reaching this settlement: there was no risk of harm to the public; the violation did not pose harm to the public; and Respondent cooperated in the resolution of this Complaint.
12. 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

13. 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.*
14. Stephen D. Heath, Respondent, has the power and authority to make admissions and otherwise act on his own behalf, and he makes such admissions, knowingly, freely, voluntarily, and without any threat of harm or act of coercion.

15. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of W. Va. Code §30-13-1 *et seq.*, or any of the rules promulgated under West Virginia Code Chapter 30, Article 13, is a basis for disciplinary action by the Board. W. Va. Code §30-13-21(a)(4).
16. The Board is authorized to “assess civil penalties against any person who violates any provision of this article or any rule promulgated by the board for each offense in an amount determined by the board.” W. Va. Code §30-13-21(b); see also W. Va. Code §30-13-21(d)(4), and W.Va. Code R. §7-1-15.
17. The Board may reprimand, suspend or revoke or refuse to issue, restore or renew a certificate of registration or authorization, or place on probation, impose a civil penalty or reprimand any professional engineer or firm, 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), (b) and (d), and §30-13-22(d).
18. West Virginia engineering law allows a person to practice or offer to practice engineering only upon the issuance of a license by the Board. W. Va. Code §30-13-16.
19. It is unlawful for any person 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 person has an active license under the provisions of West Virginia engineering law. W. Va. Code §30-13-16 and §30-13-21(a)(4).
20. It is unlawful for a professional engineer to use his / her West Virginia P.E. seal or practice engineering while his / her license is suspended, revoked, nonrenewed or inactive. W. Va. Code §30-13-21(a)(9), and W.V. Code R. §7-1-6.6.(b).
21. Practicing engineering, as defined by W. Va. Code § 30-13-3(e), without a license is an action that may subject a person 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.
22. 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.

23. 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 THE RESPONDENT

Stephen D. Heath, Respondent, by affixing his signature hereon, agrees to the following:

24. Respondent acknowledges his right to consult an attorney of his choosing, at his sole expense, and he knowingly, freely, voluntarily, and without any threat of harm or act of coercion waives his right to consult counsel, and will proceed pro se. Further, Respondent is aware of his rights to pursue this matter through appropriate administrative and/or court proceedings, including his right to a formal hearing before the Board, and Respondent knowingly, freely and voluntarily waives these rights provided the Board accepts the terms and conditions set forth in this Consent Order.
25. Respondent admits his Certificate of Registration had "Lapsed" for non-renewal when he sealed and submitted mechanical and plumbing drawings for an engineering project in Harrison County, West Virginia, in violation of West Virginia engineering law.
26. Respondent accepts the findings set forth above and consents to the entry of this Consent Order, knowingly, freely and voluntarily, and not under duress, restraint or compulsion.
27. Respondent 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 authorizes the Board to review and examine all investigative file materials concerning Respondent's activities in West Virginia in consideration of this Consent Order.
28. Should the Board not approve this Consent Order, Respondent waives any objections to the Board or any of its members participating in the adjudication of this matter. This paragraph is binding on Respondent even if the Board does not approve this Consent Order.
29. Respondent 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.

30. If the Board does reject this proposal, any admissions made herein by Respondent are deemed null and void.
31. Respondent 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, which may be before this Board.
32. Respondent 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.
33. Respondent 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).
34. Respondent 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 Registration issued to Respondent by the Board, and the addition of any other charges which may arise or ensue from Respondent's non-compliance with this Consent Order.
35. Respondent 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 Registration issued to Respondent 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 C2022-03 pursuant to West Virginia Code § 30-13-22(b).
2. The Board **ORDERS** Respondent to pay a civil penalty in the amount of Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) for practicing engineering without an active Certificate of Registration in violation of West Virginia engineering law.
3. The civil penalty imposed against Respondent totals Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$250.00), and 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 Respondent’s license is hereby **ORDERED REVOKED**. Said revoked license may be restored once the civil penalty is paid, and Respondent 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 upon application by the Board for the entry of a Judgment Order for the total amount of payment agreed to herein of Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$250.00), together with pre-judgment interest from the date of the Board 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 Respondent's license, 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 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:



STEPHEN D. HEATH

3 SEPTEMBER 2021
DATE

ENTERED into the records of the West Virginia State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers this 15th day of September, 2021.

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

By:


GARTH E. THOMAS, JR., P.E.
PRESIDENT BOARD