

**LOUISIANA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING
AND LAND SURVEYING BOARD
8550 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 903
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-2296
(225) 925-6291**

IN THE MATTER OF

CASE NO. 2024-23

WALTER F. ZEHNER, III, P.E.

RESPONDENT

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
AND BOARD ORDER**

This matter came on for hearing, pursuant to notice, on the merits in Baton Rouge, Louisiana at the Board office, 8550 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 903, on November 17, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

Board Members Present Were:

Chair Linda H. Bergeron, P.E.
Vice Chair Byron Racca, P.E.
Secretary James H. Chutz, Jr., P.L.S.
Susan H. Richard, P.E.
Byron E. Trust, P.E.
Robert L. Wolf, Jr., P.E., P.L.S.
Reginald L. Jeter, P.E.

Also Present:

Donna D. Sentell, Board Executive Director
D. Scott Landry, Prosecuting Attorney
Celia R. Cangelosi, Board Counsel
Morgan Georgetown, Board Director of Enforcement

The Respondent, Walter F. Zehner, III, P.E., failed to appear.

Pursuant to the provisions of La. R.S. 37:598G, the board elected to proceed to hear and determine the validity of the charges in the Respondent's absence.

At the hearing, the Prosecuting Attorney presented evidence and the testimony of three witnesses: Morgan Georgetown, Board Director of Enforcement, Lawrence Joe Delaune, Jr., Chief Architect, Louisiana Fire Marshall office, and David Sanderson, Architect and project manager for Surfrider III apartment complex.

After hearing the arguments of counsel and upon due consideration of the testimony and other evidence presented, the Louisiana Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board (sometimes referred to as LAPELS or the Board) makes the following Final Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and issues the following Board Order by unanimous vote.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1.

Waltzer Zehner, was originally licensed a professional engineer in Louisiana on October 16, 1974, P.E. No. 14623.

2.

Walter Zehner has disciplinary history with the Board:

a. In October of 2010, Walter Zehner signed a Consent Order agreeing that his P.E. license expired in April of 2002 and that he continued to practice or offer to practice engineering in Louisiana with an expired license in violation of La. R.S. 37:698A(9) and (16); and ordered to pay a fine of \$5,000, reimburse costs of \$413.88, to cease and desist practice of engineering in Louisiana, to pay past renewals, to get up to date on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours and to pass the Laws and Rules and the Ethics exams.

b. Respondent signed a second Consent Order on July 16, 2019, admitting that from April 1, 2017 through March 23, 2019, he offered to practice engineering on 64 projects in

Louisiana with a license that expired on April 1, 2017; and admitted that he never responded to inquiries from the Board or to a subpoena requesting documentation, in violation of La. R.S. 37:698A(9) and (16), and La. R.S. 37:698A(10). His license was suspended if he failed to provide the documents requested by the letters and subpoena within 15 days. Respondent was ordered to pay a fine of \$4,500, reimburse the Board costs of \$2,833.63 and to pay \$120 in unpaid renewals, as well as pass the Laws and Rules and the Ethics exams.

3.

Respondent's license expired on September 30, 2021, and has never been renewed.

4.

An investigation was opened based upon the Board's receipt of information and/or documents which suggested that Respondent may have committed violations of the Board's laws and/or rules.

5.

The evidence shows that since October 1, 2021 Respondent has offered to provide engineering services in Louisiana and provided engineering services on numerous projects in Louisiana with an expired license. See Ex. Nos. MG-11, MG-12A and MG-12B for projects in New Orleans and with an expired license. See Ex. JD-1 for a New Orleans project presented to the fire marshal for approval.

6.

At as late as 2022 through 2025, Respondent practiced or offered to practice engineering on a project called Surfrider III in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. See Ex. No. DS-1. On most if not all of the projects, Respondent signed the engineering drawings and applied his professional seal.

7.

The evidence also disclosed that on or about October 15, 2021, and May 11, 2022, Respondent prepared, sealed and issued to his client completed engineering documents for projects in Louisiana which did not contain Respondent's signature adjacent to or across his Louisiana professional engineer's seal.

8.

The evidence also disclosed that on or about March 20, 2024, May 1, 2024, May 21, 2024 and August 29, 2024 the Board sent letters to Respondent by certified mail (return receipt requested) advising him of these matters and of possible violations of the Board's laws and/or rules and requesting that he provide to the Board certain information and/or documents related thereto; however, Respondent has failed to respond to any of the letters.

9.

La. R.S. 37:698(A)(9) and (16) have prohibited licensees from practicing and/or offering to practice engineering in Louisiana with an expired licensed. The charges for violations of La. R.S. 37:698(A)(9) and (16) are SUSTAINED.

10.

La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC Title 46:LXI§2701(A)(2)(f) and (A)(4)(a), have required licensees to affix their Louisiana professional engineer's seal, sign their name and place

the date of execution on all engineering documents that have been issued by the licensee to a client or any public or governmental agency as completed work and require the licensee's signature and date to be placed adjacent to or across the seal. The charges against Respondent for violations of La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC Title 46:LXI§2701(A)(2)(f) and (A)(4)(a), are SUSTAINED.

11.

La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC Title 46:LXI§2501(E), have required licensees to timely respond to all inquiries and correspondence from the Board. The charges against Respondent for violations of La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC 46:LXI§2501(E) are SUSTAINED.

12.

La. R.S. 37:698(A)(10) has required licensees to provide, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of notice by certified mail, information or documents requested by the Board relating to any alleged violation of the Board's laws. The charges against Respondent for violations of La. R.S. 37:698(A)(10) are SUSTAINED.

13.

By letter dated January 8, 2025, Respondent was notified by certified mail, return receipt requested, and by email that a complaint review committee of the Board was considering the preferral of charges against Respondent on the grounds that he may have committed the violations described above, but Respondent was first offered informal resolution through an informal conference and a proposed Consent Order.

14.

Respondent has failed to respond to the January 8, 2025 letter, has not requested an informal conference and has not accepted the proposed Consent Order.

15.

Pursuant to La. R.S. 37:698(D)(1), by a minimum of two-thirds vote on March 31, 2025, the complaint review committee (a) preferred charges against Respondent on the grounds that he may have violated (i) La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC Title 46:LXI§2501(E), relative to the failure to timely respond to inquiries and correspondence from the Board, (ii) La. R.S. 37:698(A)(6), *to wit* LAC Title 46:LXI§2701(A)(2)(f) and (A)(4)(a), relative to sealing, signing and placing the date of execution on all engineering documents that have been issued by the licensee to a client or any public or governmental agency as completed work and placing the signature and date adjacent to or across the seal, (iii) La. R.S. 37:698(A)(9) and (16), relative to practicing and/or offering to practice engineering with an expired license and (iv) La. R.S. 37:698(A)(10), relative to the failure to provide, within thirty calendar days of receipt of notice by certified mail, information or documents requested by the Board relating to any alleged violation of the Board's laws, and (b) directed that a disciplinary hearing be held on November 17, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. at the Board's offices at 8550 United Plaza Boulevard, Suite 903, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in order that the Board may determine whether or not Respondent was in fact guilty of violating the above cited laws and/or rules and what, if any, disciplinary action would appropriate.

16.

Respondent failed to appear for the November 17, 2025 disciplinary hearing. The hearing was conducted in his absence.

FINAL BOARD ORDER

For violations of the above statutes and rules, the following sanctions are imposed:

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that the license of Respondent to practice as an engineer in the State of Louisiana, P.E. No. 14623, is PERMANENTLY REVOKED;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Respondent is ordered to pay a fine of Fifteen Thousand and No/100 (\$15,000.00) Dollars, which shall be tendered to the Board by certified check payable to the Board, due immediately;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Respondent is ordered to reimburse the Board administrative costs in an amount to be determined based on supplemental evidence submitted within thirty days of November 17, 2025, which shall be tendered to the Board by certified check payable to the Board, due when calculated;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Respondent shall immediately CEASE AND DESIST practicing and/or offering to practice engineering in Louisiana; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that this Final Board Order shall be published on the Board's website and a summary of this matter shall be printed in the official journal of the Board, the *Louisiana Engineer and Surveyor Journal*, and reported to the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), identifying Respondent by name.

ORDER RENDERED in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on November 17, 2025; **ORDER** signed on November 28, 2025.

LOUISIANA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING
AND LAND SURVEYING BOARD

By: 
Linda H. Bergeron, P.E., Chair

SERVICE INFORMATION:

Please serve via certified mail, return receipt requested and via regular mail:

- 1) Walter F. Zehner, III, P.E.
4702 Toulouse Street
New Orleans, LA 70119-4439
- 2) Walter F. Zehner, III, P.E.
319 Iona Street
Metairie, LA 70005-4139
- 3) Please also email Walter F. Zehner, III, P.E., at: walterzehner@msn.com

Please provide a copy to:

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LandryS@chaffe.com

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