



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Licensed Operator Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes for December 13, 2023
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Approved by the Committee on August 29, 2024

Committee Members Present: Kristin Tedesco, David Fields, Kirit Amin, Jill Plesnarski, Keith Vaughn, Richard Eustace, Ronald Suto, Carol Broccoli, Pam Carolan, Robert Fullagar

There were 10 committee members present, constituting a quorum.

Committee Members Absent: Joe Bonaccorso, William Mitchell

Committee Legal Representatives Present: DAG Kevin DeCristofer, NJ Division of Law

NJDEP Staff Present: Joseph duRocher, Malathi Prabhu, Tyler Rowe

Members of the Public Present: Mike Furrey, Keith Smith

1. Call to Order

J. Plesnarski presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:06 am, noting there were enough committee members present to constitute a quorum.

K. DeCristofer read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement (OPMA).

This meeting was held virtually through Microsoft Teams. Notice of the meeting and instructions on how to participate by phone were provided by public notice in advance of the meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes from the August 23, 2023 meeting

J. Plesnarski asked if there were any questions or amendments regarding the minutes and hearing none, asked for a motion to accept the minutes as is. R. Suto motioned to accept the minutes as is, R. Fullager seconded the motion. J. Plesnarski and P. Carolan abstained due to a prior absence.

3. Program/NJDEP Updates

J. duRocher went over three new IT program initiatives that the Department is working on. The first initiative is an online portal for accepting examination applications. This would enable examination applicants to electronically submit their applications and payment information in a safe and encrypted manner. The second IT initiative is the development of an online portal for training course providers to submit their course rosters to the Department. The third IT initiative is an online calendar that will post and schedule trainings that are available to operators and members of the community.

J. duRocher noted that there have been some small focus groups created for the upcoming potential rule changes for the Licensed Operator Rules and Regulations, and that there will be more information on them soon. Some identified subjects were examination applications, TCH schedules, operator roles & responsibilities, workforce development, and roles and responsibilities for water supply compliance companies.

J. duRocher also noted that the Department will be meeting with WPI (formerly ABC) regarding the examination contract. K. Tedesco added that there will be inquiries regarding a New Jersey-specific regulatory section on the examination.

J. Plesnarski asked if the Department has received the nominations and supporting documentation for the Committee's vacancies and upcoming expiring terms. J. duRocher confirmed that several have been received by the Department, and that 5 of 8 groups have provided responses so far.

4. Required Course Provider Approvals

Atlantic Cape Community College

J. Plesnarski asked if the instructors included in the application were correctly licensed. J. duRocher confirmed that the credentials for all applications on the agenda were already vetted by the Department. J. Plesnarski asked if there were any other comments, of which there were none. R. Fullagar motioned to approve the application and C. Broccoli seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mercer County Community College

J. Plesnarski asked if there were any comments; there were none. R. Fullagar motioned to approve the application and P. Carolan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Monmouth County VOTECH

J. duRocher stated that Monmouth has reached out to him in the past and explained that they had trouble finding an instructor, but that problem was recently solved with the pre-approved instructor list. He asked the Committee to provide him with any advice they may have on ordering instructor manual booklets. J. Plesnarski called for a motion regarding the approval of this request. R. Fullagar motioned to approve, and R.

Eustace seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

5. TCH Approval Requests

AGRA Environmental

- Walking Working Surfaces / Slip & Fall

- Lockout Tagout Safety

- HAZOM Training

- Confined Space Entry Training

J. duRocher noted that they requested approval for four (4) TCH courses and that Michael Furrey, the instructor/course coordinator, was on the call. R. Fullagar noted that his only concern was that the AGRA programs did not indicate a start and a stop time and made a motion to approve the four (4) applications after they are amended to show the start and stop times corresponding to the requested TCHs. P. Carolan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

RCAP Solutions

- Septic System Operation & Management

R. Fullagar motioned to accept the application as is and K. Vaughn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

XYLEM Solutions

- Flygt Product Education Class

J. Plesnarski asked if there were any comments. R. Fullagar stated he had a hard time with it being an all-day class, noting that the requested six (6) hours on the application may not be appropriate when compared to other all-day seminars that cover more subject matter and also yield 6 TCH hours. After some discussion, the Committee decided that four (4) TCH hours would be more appropriate based on the provided information. R. Fullagar motioned to approve for four (4) hours and K. Vaughn seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

William Mitchell arrived at the meeting.

6. New Business

New Jersey Water Environment Association (NJWEA) Training Reimbursement

J. duRocher stated that the two (2) prior reimbursements from the last Committee meeting were paid in full for a total of \$25,645.99, and that there now is a current balance of \$13,204.59 in the account for training reimbursements.

NJWEA's March 2023 Tech Transfer requested a reimbursement of \$39,315.01. J. Plesnarski noted that there

was not enough monies to cover that amount in the current balance, so she asked for a motion to approve the reimbursement request and have the payment made when the funds are available. C. Broccoli motioned to approve and P. Carolan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. All were in favor with the exception of K. Tedesco and J. Bonaccorso, who were absent and did not vote, and R. Eustace and J. Plesnarski abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

NJWEA's June 2023 Mini Workshop requested a reimbursement of \$5,747.74. J. Plesnarski noted this reimbursement request could be paid in full with the available balance. W. Mitchell motioned to approve and P. Carolan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. All were in favor with the exception of K. Tedesco and J. Bonaccorso, who were absent and did not vote, and R. Eustace and J. Plesnarski abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

R. Eustace asked for clarification on the reimbursement request that was approved at the last Committee meeting as he was not aware of that check being received. J. Plesnarski noted that there is a problem with the address the Department has on file, as items are still being sent to the former Executive Director's address and needs to be updated to the current Executive Director James DeBlock. J. duRocher noted he will follow up with R. Eustace after the meeting to try to resolve this issue.

2024 Workplan Items

K. Tedesco stated that one of the reasons for sending the letter that requested nominees for the Advisory Committee was to address the existing vacancies and to have a full committee for 2024. K. Tedesco also noted that online training for operators is an important item to be addressed, and that the 2024 meeting schedule is being determined and will be sent out soon. K. Tedesco also stressed the importance of conducting a joint meeting with members of the both the Board and the Committee. Any availability issues should be sent to T. Rowe.

7. Board of Examiners and Subcommittee Update

J. duRocher gave a brief update on the various subcommittee tasks that the Board of Examiners have been working on and included that the Department is currently working a statistical analysis regarding operator pass and fail rates, any differences between remotely proctored and in-person examinations, correspondence courses versus in-person trainings, and the efficacy of refresher courses with repeat test takers. J. duRocher also noted that WPI can potentially break down information into subcategories and show how examinees are performing in each subcategory.

J. duRocher also stated that the Department had received an inquiry from an educational institution looking to hold a refresher course, but he could not find any information on the credentials required for approving a refresher course. Asked the Committee to send him any information they may have. After some additional discussion, C. Broccoli stated that she would look for more information.

P. Carolan asked if there were dates and lists of invitees for the Licensed Operator Rules and Regulations focus groups. D. Fields stated that they have been outlined but the dates have yet to be finalized. K. Tedesco responded that the focus group meetings will be invitation only, but any topic suggestions or requests to attend can be emailed to T. Rowe and will be taken into consideration.

8. Public Comment

J. Plesnarski moved on to the public comment section. There were none.

9. Adjournment

J. Plesnarski asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. W. Mitchell motioned to adjourn, and R. Eustace seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:59 AM

