



# State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF WATER SUPPLY & GEOSCIENCE

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
**Licensed Operator Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes for August 10, 2022**  
**Meeting held via Microsoft Teams**

*Approved by the Committee on November 9, 2022*

**Committee Members Present:** Carol Broccoli, Joseph Bonaccorso, William Mitchell, Keith Vaughn, Richard Eustace, Robert Fullager, Ronald Suto, Pam Carolan, Keith Vaughn, Patricia Gardner

There were 10 committee members present, constituting a quorum.

**Committee Members Absent:** Kristin Tedesco, Eugene Chebra, Richard Kunze

**Committee Legal Representatives Present:** DAG Stephanie Carney, NJ Division of Law

**NJDEP Staff Present:** Patricia Gardner, Joe duRocher, Malathi Prabhu, Tyler Rowe, Casey Lippincott, Keith Vaughn, Patricia Ingelido

**Members of the Public Present:** Paul Schorr, Rick Howlett, Roger Budd

## **1. Call to Order**

J. Bonaccorso presided over the telephonic meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m., noting there were enough committee members present to constitute a quorum.

J. duRocher read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement (OPMA).

This meeting was held via conference call due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 May 25, 2022 meeting**

J. Bonaccorso noted that the meeting notes were included in the Advisory Committee Shared Drive and asked if there were any comments. P. Gardner requested an amendment to the notes that would list her

as a Committee member, as she was only included as a NJDEP staff member in the meeting minutes. J. Bonaccorso asked for a motion to approve minutes with the above-noted amendment, C. Broccoli motioned to approve with amendment as stated and R. Suto seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously and the amended minutes were adopted.

### **3. Program/NJDEP Updates**

- *Training Funds*

J. Bonaccorso stated that he had asked K. Tedesco for a status update on the training funds. J. duRocher replied that K. Tedesco acknowledged in an email that NJWEA submitted a request for reimbursement in March 2022 and is currently being processed. For FY2023, \$61,324.55 has been budgeted for training reimbursement.

J. Bonaccorso was advised by NJWEA that their budget planning for training is being held up and are concerned that they have not received anything yet. Asked J. duRocher to follow up with that.

R. Eustace asked J. Bonaccorso for clarification and if the reimbursement funds came from fines.

J. Bonaccorso stated that without those funds, NJWEA would have to increase what they charge for sessions. The reimbursement would keep sessions affordable. Added that 10% of the delegated industrial pretreatment programs fines get sent to NJDEP for training funds.

R. Eustace asked for the full number that is in the "pot." J. duRocher restated that there was \$61,324.55 recognized for FY2023. J. Bonaccorso stated that it is not a budget but rather a number that may increase or decrease depending on what comes in from the treatment plants.

- *Reappointment Status*

J. Bonaccorso asked about the status of [Committee] reappointments. J. duRocher stated that the NJDEP is continuing to follow up with this but there are no updates at this time. Added that the NJDEP can confirm that the nominations from NJWEA have been received.

R. Eustace asked about the nominations from AEA. J. duRocher said he did not have any information on that but could follow up with that.

C. Broccoli asked if the reappointments were for all members and not just new people. J. Bonaccorso stated that there are no new people, the entire Committee is a holdover. It was subsequently clarified that R. Fullager (AWWA), P. Carolan (AEA) and K. Tedesco (NJDEP) are new members of the Committee.

J. Bonaccorso asked if there were any more updates or questions on Program/NJDEP updates. Hearing none, moved onto the next agenda item.



#### 4. Course Approvals

J. Bonaccorso asked J. duRocher if he wanted to utilize the course list spreadsheet that was supplied to the Committee. J. duRocher agreed.

W. Mitchell asked J. Bonaccorso if he could jump in with an overview comment. Stated he saw a lot of inconsistencies with various applications and the criteria for passing. Was under the impression that exam and attendance percentages should add up to 100%, and some did not properly add up. Would like to see a clarification added to the application. Added that there was no reference on the application to the maximum number of days permitted to be missed. It is currently based on a percentage of the class.

J. Bonaccorso stated that in the past, the number of hours was the basis of the percentage but agrees it should be clarified.

J. Plesnarski asked if the bylaws state only 10% of the class can be missed. J. Bonaccorso stated he did not think so and that it was never defined. Instead, instructors were permitted to define their own criteria for attendance.

P. Gardner stated that one of the applications is a fifty-fifty split between attendance and testing, does not think that is right. J. Bonaccorso stated that the Committee has looked into this a few times previously, and each time have fallen to the protocols from the institutions. Their course criteria is their criteria, and the only thing the Committee can impose is who they can use as instructors and their curriculum.

J. Bonaccorso began the discussion on course approvals.

- *Institute for Contemporary Careers (ICC)*

J. Bonaccorso began the discussion by stating that ICC was a “spin-off” of Hudson County, and that the instructors are affiliated with Passaic Valley and have S-4 licenses. Asked if there were any questions. There were none. Noted that this is where there was a 50/50 split, wants to ask Dr. McFadden to clarify that.

C. Broccoli asked if ICC is taking over these classes for Hudson County as a division of Hudson County? J. Bonaccorso explained that ICC is an independent certified education provider.

There were no further comments.

- *Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC)*



J. Bonaccorso stated that all three instructors are appropriately licensed, and the form had an understandable breakout of percentages and exams. Asked if there were any questions, there were none.

- *Bergen County Technical Institute of Technology*

J. Bonaccorso stated that the instructors are Nick Fabricator, and Rob Genetelli, who is on the Licensing Board.

C. Broccoli stated that she was under the impression Nick and Rob were not teaching for Bergen anymore and were teaching for her now due to dissatisfaction with Bergen. C. Broccoli stated she would ask them. J. Bonaccorso asked J. duRocher if he would follow up with that.

W. Mitchell added that the 80%/100% attendance and exam percentages should be clarified as well.

- *Burlington County Institute of Technology*

J. Bonaccorso stated that the instructors were all appropriately licensed and noted that the percentage of grade allocated to exams is 100%, and minimum of 85% attendance must be met.

Several Committee members discussed and agreed that they liked the “fail due to absence protocol” as it was submitted in this application.

K. Vaughn commented that Bergen County may have been referring to a minimum of 80% attendance on their application but did not write it that way. There was no further discussion.

- *Caldwell – West Caldwell*

J. Bonaccorso stated that the instructors were all appropriately licensed. Noted that there was also a mismatch to the balance, they are totaling 100% and attendance is 25%.

J. Bonaccorso stated that he would like to see the form rewritten to address this issue moving forward. There was no further discussion.

- *Hudson County School of Technology*

J. duRocher clarified that for this application [of three courses], they are still looking for an instructor for the advanced course, but the other two courses are good to go. J. Bonaccorso agreed that they cannot grant approval for the advanced course yet.

- *Hunterdon County*



J. Plesnarski stated that the protocol for attendance and exam percentages was a 10% criteria on attendance, attendees will fail if they miss more than 10% of classes. The rest would be based on examination.

J. Bonaccorso approved the course and there was no further discussion.

- *Mercer County Technical School*

J. duRocher stated that for Mercer and Monmouth, they were contacted but did not receive a response or any renewal forms. J. Bonaccorso asked if this meant that no action could be taken presently. J. duRocher agreed but stated that he expects a response shortly.

J. Bonaccorso instructed J. duRocher to send any conditional approval material that comes in after the meeting to the Executive Committee.

C. Broccoli stated that there used to be a reminder sent to all schools that were approved previously, stating when the renewals were due. Asked about the feasibility of doing that again.

J. duRocher confirmed that schools had indicated that it was done in the past and would look into reinstating that reminder, most likely as an email blast.

- *New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)*

J. Bonaccorso stated that they did not include Paul Schorr's resume. J. duRocher clarified that it was a last minute submittal and was not sure if the resume was included.

J. Bonaccorso stated that there should be something included that indicates his water and wastewater experience. Added that it is required by bylaws and asked if there was any objection. There was none.

J. duRocher confirmed that the Department would follow up with Mr. Schorr.

- *Ocean County Vocational Technical School (OCVTS)*

J. Bonaccorso stated that Clifford Keen has a T-3, C-3, and W-3 license, and he is okay according to a bylaw requirement where a level 3 license in water and wastewater can qualify as an instructor. Raised concern with the other instructors, which had insufficient licensure.

J. duRocher asked if the Department should reach out and have it amended that only Mr. Keen can instruct.



J. Bonaccorso stated that he thinks they are doing this to have the other people instruct when Mr. Keen cannot be there, but there is no information on the other three instructors.

J. duRocher clarified that according to the May 25, 2022 meeting minutes, the Committee wanted a statement from the instructors that they were previously approved. Added that the list stated them as an approved provider but was unsure about instructors. The new principal at OCVTS confirmed they were previously approved but offered to reach out for firmer confirmation.

J. Bonaccorso asked if there was a record of previous instructors. J. duRocher explained that between the complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and the transfer of Exams & Licensing duties to his section, certain things were just carried over and are difficult to locate. Is unsure on where to look for that information.

J. Bonaccorso stated that he has been scanning all the Advisory Committee meeting minutes going back to the 1980's for archival purposes but will look up OCVTS.

W. Mitchell added that Chrissy's name should come off the application since she is no longer associated with the Committee anymore. J. duRocher responded that he requested a contact update previously and stated that the [WWW@dep.nj.gov](mailto:WWW@dep.nj.gov) email box is the new place to submit.

J. duRocher asked J. Bonaccorso if the letters sent to schools are supposed to mention the approvals of individual instructors for approved courses. J. Bonaccorso stated that he felt it was a good idea.

- *Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ)*

J. Bonaccorso asked the Committee if anyone had a problem with Rowan. Stated that they submitted their resume, and the instructors are appropriately licensed. There were no objections.

- *Rutgers*

J. Bonaccorso stated that this requires discussion, relating to the request to split their water and wastewater courses.

C. Broccoli stated that this was approved last year for Bergen County Technical School, it is how it is done at that school. J. Bonaccorso clarified that he did not think it was a bad idea.

C. Broccoli stated she asked for a copy of the previous letter of approval, and while Rutgers did not submit the letter, Rutgers stated they have it.



P. Carolan asked for clarification on the splitting of courses. C. Broccoli stated that applicants would not have to sit through both water and wastewater course components and could opt to take the course that is most relevant to them.

J. Bonaccorso asked if there were any questions or comments.

J. duRocher asked for clarification on the statuses of Bergen, ICC and Hunterdon. J. Bonaccorso explained that ICC and Hunterdon are approved but some clarification on attendance from the providers is still needed, and that Bergen and NJIT are conditionally approved pending further information from those providers.

J. Bonaccorso entertained a motion that the courses are to be approved as noted. K. Vaughn motioned and R. Fullager seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

- **TCH Courses**

J. Bonaccorso began the discussion by stating that Mercer and Monmouth were not included on the agenda, and that there is a problem with Ocean County Vocational Technical School's course.

- *Jacob's Engineering*

J. Bonaccorso noted there were three courses included. J. duRocher stated that one course was a follow up from a previous meeting that provided an amended course schedule, reflecting a missing fifteen-minute discussion window and the other two are course requests that were not reviewed by Committee at previous meeting.

J. Bonaccorso stated that the 5.5-hour course is broad enough. J. duRocher stated that Phase 1 Compliance and Reporting is 8.5 hours.

R. Fullager noted that in the course syllabus, there were five subjects denoted, and felt that several of the subjects, including "Business Growth" and "Market Leadership" have no relevance to licensed operators. J. Bonaccorso stated that as a public service, there are components of the water and wastewater industry that require a "business model."

- *Environmental Finance Center (EFCN)*

J. duRocher stated that the application was a follow-up item. Originally asked for 6.5 hours, but only wanted 5.5 hours and amended the application to reflect that change.

J. Bonaccorso asked if the provider had anything for wastewater. J. duRocher responded, stating the provider only asked for water but that it could apply to wastewater as well.



J. Bonaccorso stated that he would prefer approving both, in order to provide more opportunity for licensed operators. Stated he had no problem with the application and asked if there were any comments. There were none.

- *Nezat*

J. Bonaccorso stated that he did not have a problem with the application or the presentation.

J. Plesnarski stated that their overall timing may be off. Explained that there are multiple breaks that add up to an hour and 45 minutes out of an 8 hour and 15-minute total and are requesting 7 TCHs.

J. duRocher noted that the application could be slightly confusing, they were asking for 7 hours for a field training course, 7 hours for an online version of the same course, and 4 hours for a refresher course.

After some discussion, the Committee agreed to adjust the total hours of the field training and the online course to 7 hours and retain the 4-hour request for the refresher course.

- *Rutgers*

J. duRocher explained that the provider was looking for 10 hours for a full two days of the conference but would accept it broken up as separate seminars. J. duRocher noted that it does not quite add up to 10 hours, but it is close and would probably be better to break it out.

J. Bonaccorso stated that it was a problem in the past and they stopped breaking them out.

C. Broccoli noted that not all of the topics appeared relevant, such as cannabis. J. Bonaccorso asked what the cannabis course looked like. J. duRocher replied that it looked like a managerial or HR course on how to deal with the recent legalization of cannabis as an employer. J. Bonaccorso stated that as a management topic, he would not have a problem with that.

J. Bonaccorso thanked J. duRocher for breaking the seminar out and proposed accepting them as such.

J. Bonaccorso entertained a motion to approve in bulk all the TCH courses as presented. J. Plesnarski motioned and Rick Eustace seconded. All were in favor and there were no objections.

## 5. New Business





J. Bonaccorso asked if there were any new business items. Hearing none, he moved on to the next agenda item.

## **6. 2022 Workplan Items**

J. duRocher noted that K. Tedesco would like to ask the Committee if there were any ideas for the formation of subcommittees and would like to propose two ideas for subcommittees. One idea was to continue discussions on whether “training on demand” based on discussions with NJAWWA and would also ensure consistency of virtual training. The second idea was to identify options of evaluating candidates’ knowledge of New Jersey regulations since there are currently none on the examinations.

J. Bonaccorso stated there should not be any more questions added to the exams, as he is still trying to address the ten “crazy questions” or to increase the time for the exam. Felt the suggestions were reasonable and would like to have volunteers come forward.

J. Bonaccorso added that there is a place on Division of Water Supply and Geoscience under “useful links.” He noted that there are missing items, and that the Committee has representatives of the AEA and the NJWEA, neither of which are linked. Also noted that a DataMiner link for licensing certification is needed. J. duRocher stated that he could look into those items if the links are supplied.

R. Eustace asked about the status on the subcommittee on reviewing courses before the meeting. Felt that the subcommittee should be reinstated in order to expedite the process. J. Bonaccorso agreed that it mad the meetings go a lot faster and would like to see another subcommittee on the pre-approval of courses.

## **7. Board of Examiners Update**

- *Examination Statistics*

J. Bonaccorso asked J. duRocher if he provided that information. J. duRocher stated that yes, he did, and that he has access to PSI’s information and compiles the data. The Board of Examiners asked to be given quarterly updates, and a new tab will be added to the spreadsheet for every quarter.

J. Bonaccorso stated that it looks like things are improving based on the statistics. W. Mitchell replied, stating that he is not sure it can be regarded as a success. Added that instructors, students, and examinations are all part of the process. J. Bonaccorso agreed and recognized that there are some problems with the testing process.



J. duRocher added that additional examination options are to be available soon, currently waiting a launch date. It is primarily for applicants that have compatibility issues and that complaints have been logged by the Department. Looking to provide exam candidates having technical issues with remote testing access to remote testing centers with a proctored examination, and will follow up with K. Tedesco when she returns to the office.

J. Bonaccorso asked if there was anything else on the licensing window.

P. Carolan asked that regarding the statistics, does the Department have where the individuals took their classes so the Committee can see what scores are associated with particular classes? J. duRocher responded that statistical analysis was done about twenty years ago and found that there were no statistically significant variances amongst the classes.

P. Gardner added that this is an ongoing discussion and process and that the Board of Examiners have looked at matching the statistics to the education facilities as well as the set of questions. The Department is unable to secure a breakdown by question but can get a breakdown by category. Working to develop a report with that level of detail.

The Committee discussed further and identified mathematics as a significant issue amongst those taking the examinations.

## **8. Public Comment**

Rick Howlett from NJ Water asked in the chat when are the Water and Wastewater operator licensing regulations due for review/comment/readoption?

P. Gardner responded, stating that the Department has an internal rule team, plans on having focus group type stakeholdering in the fall. Will start with smaller focus groups similar to Lead and Copper Rule and then move to larger sessions. Understands there are a lot of items to be considered within the rule.

There were no other public comments.

## **9. Adjournment**

J. Bonaccorso asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. R. Fullager motioned and W. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 AM.

