



State of New Jersey

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Department of Environmental Protection

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Division of Water Supply & Geoscience

Water System Operations Element

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Licensed Operator Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for May 1, 2025

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Approved by the Committee on July 24, 2025

Committee Members Present: David Fields, Joseph Bonaccorso, Jill Plesnarski, Ronald Suto, William Mitchell, Robert Fullagar, Richard Eustace, Kristin Tedesco, Keith Vaughn, Kirit Amin

There were 10 committee members present, constituting a quorum.

Committee Members Absent: Pam Carolan

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

NJDEP Staff Present: Joseph duRocher, Tyler Rowe, Anthony Pipolo

Members of the Public Present: None

1. Call to Order

J. Bonaccorso presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:04 am, noting there were enough committee members present to constitute a quorum and confirmed with a roll-call.

2. Notice of Public Meeting

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.

3. Membership Updates

Reorganization of Officers

J. Bonaccorso called for a motion to take nominations for the position of Chair:

R. Eustace nominated Joe Bonaccorso; J. Plesnarski seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

J. Bonaccorso called for a motion to take nominations for the position of Vice Chair for Instructors:

R. Eustace nominated Jill Plesnarski; B. Mitchell seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

J. Bonaccorso called for a motion to take nominations for the position of Vice Chair for Operators:

J. Plesnarski nominated Richard Eustace; B. Mitchell seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of the minutes from the December 12, 2024 meeting

J. Bonaccorso noted that the meeting notes were included in the Advisory Committee Shared Drive and asked if there were any comments, suggestions, or amendments to the minutes. After hearing none, J. Bonaccorso asked for a motion to accept the minutes. R. Fullagar I motioned, R. Suto seconded, with R. Eustace abstaining due to absence. There were no objections.

5. Required Course Requests

1) Institute for Contemporary Careers

J. Bonaccorso noted that the requests were for renewals and not new requests. J. Bonaccorso called for a motion to approve the requests. R. Fullagar motioned, R. Suto seconded. There were no objections.

2) Ocean County Vocational Technical School (OCVTS)

B. Mitchell noted concern that two of the requested instructors do not hold water or wastewater licenses. Two of the requested instructors hold Professional Engineer (PE) licenses, and the third requested instructor has a PhD and water licenses.

Discussion ensued. J. duRocher noted the instructor requests are renewal requests. The requests were approved by the Committee for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years.

Members directed the Department to reach out to OCVTS for additional information for their instructor requests. Members directed the Department to forward this information to the Executive Committee upon receipt.

6. TCH Course Requests

1) At Your Pace Online (AYOP) (two courses requested)

Course One: Water Distribution Systems. Requested course to be categorized as water and wastewater technical credits for 2 TCHs.

B. Mitchell suggested the course request should be approved as water technical credits and that justification for wastewater technical credit categorization was not provided.

Members direct the Department to reach out to AYPO to provide further information as to why the course should have a wastewater technical credit designation. Members directed the Department to forward this information to the Executive Committee upon receipt. R. Eustace made a motion to table this request for Executive Committee review pending AYPO expanding on the description of the applicability of this course to wastewater systems, R. Fullagar seconded. There were no objections.

Course Two: Water Utility Management. Requested course to be categorized as water and wastewater technical credits for 5 TCHs.

B. Mitchell noted some of the time allotted in the course outline is for safety topics.

Members discussed how the course should be approved. J. Bonaccorso noted that safety and water and wastewater technical credits can't be approved together.

R. Fullagar made a motion to approve as two courses —one course to be a safety course and the second course to be for water and wastewater technical credits, B. Mitchell seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

2) Sommers Valley Associates, LLC (one course requested)

The course is titled, 'Integrating AI and Machine Learning in Modern Water and Wastewater Treatment Systems,' and is requested to be 2 TCHs for water and wastewater technical credits.

B. Mitchell motions for the course to be approved, R. Fullagar seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

3) RCAP Solutions (two courses requested)

Course One: Assessment Management and Succession Planning. Requested course to be categorized as water and wastewater credits for 3 TCHs.

Members discuss the course outline.

R. Fullagar motions to approve the course, R. Eustace seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

Course Two: Management and Finances for Small Water Utilities. Requested course to be categorized as water and wastewater technical credits for 4 TCHs.

Members state they cannot open the attachments of course materials. Members direct the Department to have the provider resubmit their request, and for the Department to forward this information to the Executive Committee upon receipt.

4) Rutgers University Center for Government Service (one event requested)

The provider requested a total of 10 TCHs for a continuing education conference for public works employees. The event is titled, '20th Annual Public Works Continuing Education Conference.'

Members discuss the provider's request. J. Bonaccorso notes that the Committee has previously approved individual conference sessions for TCHs.

The following conference sessions were approved for TCHs—

- Navigating Ethics in Public Service: Part 1
- Navigating Ethics in Public Service: Part 2
- What's New in the 11th Edition of the MUTCD?
- Purchasing in Public Works: Requirements and Best Practices
- PEOSH – What's New?
- Leveraging New Energy Efficiency and Electrification Programs for Facility Upgrades
- Safety First: The Supervisor's Ongoing Role in Maintaining a Safe Environment
- Overcoming Demotivators: Reignite Motivation and Boost Performance

The following conference sessions were not approved for TCHs—

- Supporting Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders: A Guide for DPWs
- Transitioning to Electric Fleets: Strategies for Adopting Medium and Heavy-Duty EVs in Public Works
- What's New in Electric Mower Technology?
- Legislative Updates – 2025 Edition
- Protecting Municipal Landscapes: Managing Invasive Pests in Public Works

R. Suto motions to approve individual courses as indicated above, B. Mitchell seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

5) Certified Health & Safety Services (two courses requested)

Course One: Lockout/Tagout – Refresher. Requested course to be categorized safety credits for 2 TCHs.

Course Two: Confined Space Entry Operations – Initial. Requested course to be categorized as safety credits for 6 TCHs.

B. Mitchell notes the course outline does not have a satisfactory

breakdown of time. Members discuss. Members direct the Department to reach out to the provider for additional information and to forward this information to the Executive Committee upon receipt.

B. Mitchell motions to approve both courses, with the Lockout/Tagout course approved for 2 TCHs, and with the Confined Space Entry course approved pending Executive Committee review of expanded course outline for 6 TCHs, R. Eustace seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

6) ILM Services (one course requested)

The course is titled, 'Incident Command Course'. R. Fullagar noted that the outline is for 8 hours but the form only requests 4 TCHs. J. duRocher indicated that the provider has since clarified that was a mistake and they are requesting 8 TCHs. Members discuss. R. Fullagar motions for the course to be approved for water and wastewater technical credits for 8 TCHs, B. Mitchell seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

7) Core & Main (one course requested)

The course is titled, 'Building Smarter Utilities Key Phases of AMI Implementation,' and is requested to be 1 TCH categorized as water technical credits.

Members discuss. R. Fullagar motions for the course to be approved, R. Eustace seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

8) J.A. Montgomery (two events requested)

Course One: MEL Educational Seminar: Day One, and Day Two. The event is requested to be a total of 6 TCHs to be categorized as water and wastewater technical credits.

J. Bonaccorso notes the Committee has previously approved this each day of this event as separate courses for TCHs.

Course Two: Stormwater and the Tier A Municipal Stormwater Permit. Requested course to be categorized as water and wastewater technical credits for 1.5 TCHs.

Members discuss. R. Eustace motions to approve Day One of the MEL Conference for 2 TCHs, not the 3 TCHs requested, and to not approve Day Two of the MEL Conference, and to not approve the Stormwater course, B. Mitchell seconds. Hearing no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Program Updates

- Wastewater Operator Training Fund

J. duRocher noted that the current balance of the Wastewater Operator Training Account is \$86,075.59, as of April 22, 2025.

- LO Rule Changes

J. duRocher noted that the forthcoming rule changes for the Licensed Operator Rules and Regulations are currently going through internal review. More information will be available soon. Some previously identified subjects considered were exam applications, TCH cycles, operator roles and responsibilities, workforce development, and water supply compliance companies.

- LO IT Projects

J. duRocher summarized four current IT program initiatives that are anticipated to going live soon:

The first initiative is an online portal for accepting examination applications. This project will facilitate electronic submission of exam applications and will allow applicants to pay associated exam fees online. The Department also anticipates rolling out the Activity Tracking initiative with the online portal. The Activity Tracking initiative will notify applicants via email the progression of their application status as it advances through the review process.

The second IT initiative is the Training Catalog, that will allow for training course providers to post upcoming courses to a public-facing website so that licensees may then view, filter, and sort postings to search for courses for TCHs. Training providers can include registration links for licensees to register for courses.

The third IT initiative is an online portal that will allow DEP 065 forms to be electronically submitted for faster processing.

The fourth IT initiative is very early in development, the TCH import tool, which allows for approved training providers to submit their course rosters for direct migration of licensees' TCH records into the NJDEP database.

- Board of Examiners Update

D. Fields noted that the last meeting of the Board of Examiners was held on February 20. Items noted include: status of Board member handbook, update on Board subcommittee's efforts to identify applications for further review by the subcommittee and set up meetings with applicants to ask questions and gather information, and the approval of one reciprocity request..

7. Miscellaneous

B. Mitchell described his experience in getting a Florida license through reciprocity based on his NJ license. A Board discussion followed regarding license reciprocity.

J. Bonaccorso raised two concerns about WPI: 1) the contact info for NJ Board needs to be updated, and 2) Two books on WPI's list are out of print WEF manuals. A Board discussion followed regarding the reference materials for exam content and study materials. J. Bonaccorso called for a motion for the Committee to authorize him to write a letter to WPI explaining that out-of-print materials should

not be included as references for any exam content and that this needs to be updated. R. Fullagar motions, J. Plesnarski seconds. With no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

10. Adjournment

J. Bonaccorso asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. B. Mitchell motioned to adjourn, and R. Suto seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:11 am