



1 **MEETING OF THE UTILITY OPERATOR CERTIFICATION ADVISORY BOARD**
2 **THURSDAY October 12, 2023**
3 **9:04 A.M.**
4 **HELD VIRTUALLY VIA CISCO WEBEX MEETING**

6 **AGENDA ITEM 1. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

7 **Members present:** **Cathie Eisen, Chair**
8 **Ivan (Michael) Abell, Vice Chair**
9 **Dale Graham**
10 **Maria Gilvarry**
11 **Sydney Hoke**
12 **Craig Byers**
13 **Rick Mitchell**

15 **Absent:** **Bobby Towle**
16 **Filiberto Aguirre, Jr.**

18 **Guests:** **Eric Hall, NMED-UOCP Team Leader**
19 **Anita Valdez, NMED-DWB UOCP**
20 **Nile Carver, NMED-DWB UOCP**
21 **Avery Young, NMED-GWQB**
22 **Lorenzo Sanchez, President New Mexico Water and Wastewater Association**
23 **Art Garcia**
24 **Cherie**

27 **ACTION:** Roll was called, a quorum was present

29 **AGENDA ITEM 2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL: MEETING AGENDA**

31 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen stated that Mr. Hall had requested that due to the length of time that will be
32 involved with Agenda Item 5, "Review UOCP Regulations and Statement of Reasons", Mr. Hall requested
33 Item 5 be moved to after Agenda Item 9, "NM Ground Water Quality Bureau-Domestic Waste Team
34 Update". Chair Eisen asked the Board if anyone else has any changes. Chair Eisen asked for a motion to
35 approve the agenda as amended with Item 5 being moved to after Item 9.

37 **ACTION:** Member Gilvarry made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Member Byers
38 seconded the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

40 **AGENDA ITEM 3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL: JUNE 22, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

42 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen stated that she has one change on line 105 of the June 22, 2023 meeting
43 minutes where it references that she, (Chair Eisen), said that she asked Dominick to study the utility
44 operator regulations and the Chair wants it to specifically mention the Code of Conduct to be added to
45 that sentence. The Chair asked the Board for any other changes. There were none. The Chair asked for
46 someone to make a motion to accept the June 22 meeting minutes as amended.

48 **ACTION:** Vice Chair Abell made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as amended. Member Mitchell
49 seconded the motion. The Chair took a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

51 **AGENDA ITEM 4. WELCOME NEW ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

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53 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen congratulated Rick Mitchell for being moved up to a Regular Advisory Board
54 member and Craig Byers for being the new Alternate Advisory Board member. Member Mitchell and
55 Member Byers thanked the Chair and the Board. Chair Eisen stated that everyone has an equal voice
56 and opinion and encouraged them to feel free to offer their ideas and opinions.

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58 **AGENDA ITEM 6. NEW MEXICO WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION**

59

60 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen asked Lorenzo Sanchez if he was ready. Mr. Sanchez stated that he needed to
61 get his notes pulled-up. Chair Eisen asked Mr. Hall if the Board should wait or move to the next agenda
62 item. Mr. Hall stated that Tanya, (Trujillo, Drinking Water Bureau, Sustainable Water Infrastructure
63 Group manager), is not available so the Board should move to the next agenda item. Chair Eisen asked if
64 the representatives for the Surface Water Quality Bureau were present. Mr. Hall replied that they were
65 not present. Chair Eisen stated that she could see Avery Young of the NM Ground Water Quality
66 Bureau-Domestic Waste Team and suggested that the discussion should jump to that Agenda item.

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68 **AGENDA ITEM 9. NM GROUND WATER QUALITY BUREAU-DOMESTIC WASTE TEAM UPDATE**

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70 **DISCUSSION:** Avery Young stated that their Bureau had hired a few people from the rapid hire event in
71 September, filling a few positions from 150 unassigned sites. Avery brought up that there is a lot of
72 funding available through the Bi-partisan Infrastructure law especially for technical assistance for
73 facilities and municipalities. Avery asked that if anyone knows of anyone that would know a system that
74 would like to request some help she would post the link in the chat of how to go onto the EPA website
75 to get the short form to fill-out. They will be connected to a Technical Assistance Provider with the goal
76 to get infrastructure funding to perform upgrades or replacement of their system. She requested that if
77 anyone has any specific questions or wants to meet with her to discuss funding needs as related to their
78 ground water discharge permit Avery would be more than happy to meet with them. Just to clarify,
79 Chair Eisen asked Avery if anyone would go to the website or the link in the chat box of the meeting they
80 could get the information. Avery responded by saying the link is to the form to fill-out for the EPA to get
81 connected to a technical assistance provider. She went on to state that this is not only for wastewater
82 but drinking water, storm water and other topics so the available funding is very broad. Chair Eisen said
83 that is some very good information since there is always small systems that need the help.

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85 **AGENDA ITEM 6. NEW MEXICO WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION**

86

87 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen asked if Lorenzo Sanchez was ready. Lorenzo stated that he was and began by
88 thanking the New Mexico Environment Department and stated that the exam pass rate had risen quite a
89 bit. Lorenzo asked Mr. Hall what the past pass rate was and is now. Mr. Hall stated that prior to
90 computer-based testing the pass rate was in the low 20th percentile and now it averages around 42%.
91 Mr. Sanchez thanked the UOCP for the work they perform. He went on to say that there has been some
92 discussion on the Need-to-Know Criteria with Mr. Hall. Lorenzo said that Mr. Hall said that it is still
93 being updated. Anita Valdez wanted to add that it has been a team effort to raise the exam pass rates
94 along with the efforts of the Department of Workforce Connection Testing Centers.

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96 **AGENDA ITEM 5. REVIEW UOCP REGULATIONS AND STATEMENT OF REASONS**

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98 **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Hall stated that the regulations and the Statement of Reasons that are being reviewed
99 today needed to have a few more updates to be done, mainly dates and fees. He said that this is the
100 final version and there are not any other additions until after the stakeholder’s meetings. Any changes
101 and additions will be worked on in the future. Mr. Hall read the Statement of Reasons with the
102 corresponding regulation citation being presented in split-screen of the two documents. On the
103 Statement of Reasons, number 33, 20.7.4.21 B, Chair Eisen suggested striking the verbiage;
104 “Examination papers will not be returned to the applicant.”, since there are no papers involved with the
105 computer-based testing. Mr. Hall stated that this is the final version that had already been submitted
106 for approval and any additional strike-throughs would have to be addressed on the next regulation
107 revision. Upon completion of reading the Statement of Reasons in comparison to the cited regulations
108 Member Gilvarry suggested for the next set of regulation revisions to include certifications and guidance
109 for indirect potable reuse and reverse osmosis. Chair Eisen asked Mr. Hall if the next step would be the
110 stakeholders meetings? Mr. Hall replied that the next steps are to prepare the LEP, (Limited English
111 Proficiency), and the PIP, (Public Involvement Plan), and arrange for the stakeholder meetings. Chair
112 Eisen said she is looking forward to the Operator-in-Training certification
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114 **AGENDA ITEM 10: NM OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATE**

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116 **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Hall stated that the regulation revisions is what has been worked on most lately. He
117 went on to say that the final version is with the attorney and we are waiting on the approval. Once we
118 get the approval we will start working on the LEP and PIP and get the process started. He went on to
119 explain that operators have 6 months to get their exam applications submitted before their testing
120 window expires. Doing this makes it easier for the operator to schedule their exam directly after a short
121 school or conference. Mr. Hall said we are getting closer to having a new operator database. He stated
122 that Rio Rancho Testing center is now open and Los Lunas is working on getting opened-up. Chair Eisen
123 thanked the UOCP for all of their hard work.
124

125 **AGENDA ITEM 11: OTHER BUSINESS (INCLUDING NEXT MEETING DATE)**

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127 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen asked if anyone had any other business. Eric Hall stated that he does. Mr. Hall
128 asked the Board Members to look at their contact information on the list of members and make sure we
129 have the correct information. Chair Eisen asked Nile if the updated list will be sent to the Members.
130 Nile replied that he will have the list to all members before the next meeting. Nile then asked Craig
131 Byers to email his information to him. Chair Eisen stated that she and Maria Gilvarry will be speaking at
132 the New Mexico Infrastructure Conference next Thursday October 19th. Chair Eisen said she will be
133 speaking on Program updates and general overview of where the Program is. Maria will be presenting
134 the challenges of running a municipal water and wastewater system. Chair Eisen asked Mr. Hall what
135 the next meeting date will be. Mr. Hall replied that at the end of January is the New Mexico Water and
136 Wastewater Association’s Annual School. Mr. Hall suggested the second Thursday in January on the
137 11th. Chair Eisen asked if the meeting would be held in-person at the Annual School. Mr. Hall said that
138 the Program’s Team splits-up what days are covered during the school and all are not there at the same
139 time. For now it would work easier to have the meeting on January 11th virtually. Chair Eisen asked if
140 there is any other business to discuss. There was no other business to discuss.
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142 **AGENDA ITEM 12: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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144 **DISCUSSION:** The Chair asked if there is any public comments. There were none.
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146 **AGENDA ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT BY ROLE CALL**

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148 **DISCUSSION:** Chair Eisen asked for a motion to adjourn this Advisory Board meeting at 10:15 am on
149 Thursday October 12th, 2023.

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151 **ACTION:** Member Graham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Hoke seconded the
152 motion. Chair Eisen asked all in favor state "aye". The motion carried unanimously. Cathie Eisen stated
153 'present'. Maria Gilvary: 'here'. Ivan Abell: 'yes'. Craig Byers: 'here'. Dale Graham: 'yes'. Rick
154 Mitchell: 'yes'. Sydney Hoke: 'yes'.

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156 **ADJOURNMENT:** October 12, 2023 at 10:15 am