

Iowa Joint Operator Certification and Training Coordination Committee

Friday, January 21, 2005 – IAMU Office, Ankeny, Iowa

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jon Martens at 10:00 a.m.

Present were:

• Dale Acheson	• Brad Robbins
• Alan Borden	• Harris Seidel
• Eric Halligan	• Laurie Sharp
• Marty Hoffert	• Jill Soenen
• Steve Hopkins	• Jim Stricker
• Rhonda Guy	• Larry Trout
• Steve Jones	• Jim Utter
• Jon Martens	• Randy VanDyke
• Jim McElvogue	• Mike Wildung
• Steve Mrtstik	• Joe Zerfas
• Karen Nachtman	

Visitors: Linda Kinman
Steve Moehlmann
John North

2. Approval of November 19, 2004 Minutes

Laurie Sharp provided one correction. On page 3, item 5f, second paragraph, the second sentence should have read: "The IDNR is actively considering using wallet cards in addition to operator certificates." Jim Utter then moved approval of the corrected minutes; seconded by Marty Hoffert.. Motion carried.

3. Public Comments

John North, General Manager of the Cedar Rapids Water Department, presented two issues to the Joint Committee. First is the problem of succession or employee recruitment and development. Where are our future water utility operators coming from? A survey is being undertaken to assess the current situation.

The second was the application of the Iowa Association of Water Agencies (IAWA) for full membership on the Joint Committee which had first been submitted more than a year ago. He and Linda Kinman were here to answer questions and concerns that Joint Committee members might have. One comment noted the resulting overlap in representation. IAWA members are already represented through the larger utilities' memberships in IAWWA and IRWA. In response, John encouraged the Joint Committee to be inclusive, not exclusive; to welcome into its membership all those with similar interests.

4.. Unfinished Business/Assignments

a. Vote on Full Membership for IAWA

At this point, the Joint Committee went into closed session for further discussion and vote. John and Linda were soon invited to return to join the discussion. It was pointed out that three of Iowa Section's four representatives on the Joint Committee were from utilities which were also members of the IAWA. Was not the IAWA well represented through this link? The response was that the issues and needs of the IAWA are different; for example, the need for management training and the ability to issue CEUs for training. The vote was called for on approving full membership for the IAWA on the Joint Committee. The results were as follows:

IAMU – Abstain	ISU - Yes
IAWWA – Abstain	IWPCA - No
IRWA – Yes	KCC – Abstain

Having failed to receive the required four yes votes, the application was not approved.

After the vote, Jim Stricker suggested that the IAWA could, if it wished, request that Iowa Section and IRWA always include someone representing the IAWA as one of their four representatives on the Joint Committee.

b. Grade IV Education Requirements and Opportunities

Larry Trout distributed outlines of all the courses Kirkwood is currently offering over the Internet. These include the following:

Water Treatment I	Wastewater Treatment I
Water Treatment II	Wastewater Treatment II
Water Distribution Systems	Wastewater Collection Systems
Water Analysis	Wastewater Analysis
Permits and Administration	Wastewater Treatment—Industrial

Kirkwood is now also offering separate "chapters" for individual CEU credit which is a great advantage for the operator who wants training in one or several specific topics, not the whole course.

c. Grant from the IDNR for Update of Five-Year Strategic Plan

Steve Hopkins and Laurie Sharp described the procedure which is being following. There can be no more sole-source contracts. For this grant, the IDNR will use a short sequence in which the RFP will be posted Monday, January 24; three possible vendors will be contacted and given 10 days to respond; then the IDNR will select one and award the contract.

d. Annual Operator Certification Report

Laurie Sharp distributed copies of the Operator Certification Drinking Water Program 2004 Annual Report. According to the report, 2,481 drinking water operators hold a total of 4,199 certificates.

Shock! There was no mention of wastewater operators! Has that program disappeared into cyberspace? Will EPA notice? If so, what will they do to Iowa?

e. Cost of Cards for Scanners

Laurie Sharp reported that the cards themselves loaded with the necessary data will cost slightly under \$1 each. The major cost will be the scanners. Who will purchase these? In practice, the operator's card would be scanned at the training site, then the scanner "roster" would be downloaded directly into the IDNR database to record the CEUs earned. There will always be a need for a paper backup on site for those who do not yet have cards, have lost their cards, etc.

f. IDNR Rule Changes

1. Fees. Steve Hopkins noted that the operator certification program is currently assigned 1.5 FTEs, and the IDNR hopes to raise this to 2.0. EPA grants are now subsidizing some training, especially for small systems; but these grants will expire, and eventually operator certification will have to become entirely self-supporting. Steve expects to have a fee proposal for the March meeting.

2. Mandatory Electronic Reporting of CEUs. The IDNR has given this more consideration but has nothing to propose at this time.

3. Grade IV Requirements. Rather than just throwing words around, Diane Moles is working on language which we hope will come out matching the carefully crafted sub-committee proposal:

"Two years of direct responsible charge experience in a Grade III or higher position may be substituted for one year of directly related post-high school education for Grade IV certification up to three-quarters of the post-high school education requirement."

g. Laboratory Presence on Joint Committee

Informal discussions began last summer on inviting someone to serve as a resource for the Joint Committee in the area of laboratory practice, an area which is now without representation. Steve Jones mentioned that Maryann Ryan, Chair of the IWPCA Laboratory Practices Committee, gave a presentation to the IWPCA Officers/Committees Retreat last weekend. Iowa certifies laboratories and their procedures but has never considered certifying lab personnel as such; some states do. In Iowa, lab personnel can become certified but only as "operators." Should there be some recognition of competence in what they actually do? Steve Jones moved that we invite a member of a Laboratory Practices Committee to our March meeting to discuss the need for presence and input by a lab representative. Seconded by Steve Mrstik; motion carried. Steve will convey the invitation.

5. New Business

a. Letter Received With Regard to Grade IV Wastewater Exam Requirements. Jon Martens and Jim McElvogue received a letter from an individual who is requesting DRC credit for managing an industrial pretreatment program. IDNR's response was that this experience did not fit the requirement of accountability for "active, daily, on-site operation of the plant or . . . of a major segment of the plant" In the letter, the individual appealed to the Joint Committee for reconsideration. Comments by Joint Committee members were, first, in complete support of IDNR's decision; second, recognizing that the Joint Committee has zero jurisdiction in the matter; and third, that the Joint Committee is limited to an advisory role—if and when asked.

b. Armed Services Personnel Assigned to Active Duty. Laurie Sharp noted that a few, only a few, operators called up for active duty in the Middle East will not have earned enough CEUs for their 2005 renewal. Laurie has created a new training course called "Active Military Duty" which has just the number of CEUs they need, and she has already credited their CEU records. Case closed. 2007 may be a different story.

c. Karen Nachtman distributed copies of the flyer for IWPCA's 8th Annual Maintenance Conference at DMACC February 1 and 2. According to the flyer, the Conference is "for water and wastewater operator and maintenance professionals" which implies that CEUs are available for WT, WD, and WWT personnel. Is this what was intended? Clarification is needed. In any case, the IWPCA needs to exercise control over training sponsored under its banner.

6. Representative Comments

a. IDNR

Joe Zervas reported that the IDNR now has an agreement with ABC and is conducting online electronic testing at its office on SW 7th Street in Des Moines. This is a pilot for both organizations and is working well. So far, one test each for WTI, WDI, and A are available online. Up to four people can take a test at one time; it is necessary to call ahead to schedule a test which must be proctored. Costs are higher, but this is a new frontier.

Steve Hopkins noted that the IDNR web page has been redesigned with a new link to drinking water rather than water quality as before. More work has yet to be done on this site.

b. IAMU

Karen Nachtman reported that Safety Coordinator Workshops will be held at the IAMU on January 27 and 28. IAMU's Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 16-18 at the University Park Holiday Inn in West Des Moines. Advanced Water Treatment and Water Distribution Workshops will be held at the IAMU on March 3 and 4, respectively.

c. IAWWA

Dale Acheson provided a schedule for the IAWWA/IDNR Security Workshops as follows:

Region 1, March 2 – Dubuque	Region 4, March 23 – Creston
Region 2, April 7 – Mason City	Region 5, March 9 – Newton
Region 3, March 22 – Storm Lake	Region 6, March 16 – Burlington

The Joint Spring Short Course will be held April 26 and 27.

d. IRWA

Brad Robbins announced that IRWA's Annual Conference will be held in Pella February 8-10. Water Distribution Workshops will be held in Centerville on February 15 and 16. Additional workshops are scheduled as follows:

<u>Water Treatment – March</u>	<u>Water Distribution – March</u>
3 – Clarinda	1 – Newton
10 – Fairfield	8 – Iowa Falls
17 – Algona	15 – Chariton
24 – Charles City	22 – Vinton
31 – Newton	29 – Denison

e. ISU

Steve Jones is working on additional courses.

f. IWPCA

Jim Utter noted the Maintenance Conference at DMACC on February 1 and 2. The Collection Systems Conference will be held at Marshalltown on March 3 and 4. The Biosolids Conference will be held March 16 at DMACC, and the Region V meeting is on March 30 in Centerville.

g. KCC

Steve Mrstik reported that a new training catalog will soon be coming out. He and Larry Trout will be teaching Water and Wastewater Basic Training Courses in March.

7. Assignments

Steve Hopkins – Report on fee adjustment proposal if appropriate.
 Diane Moles – Produce carefully crafted language for the Grade IV requirement.
 Steve Jones – Convey an invitation to a member of a Laboratory Practices Committee to attend the Joint Committee meeting on March 18.

8. Next Meeting

Friday, March 18, 2005, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the IAMU office in Ankeny.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Steve Mrstik; seconded by Karen Nachtman; motion carried. The Joint Committee adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Harris F. Seidel, Secretary