

North Carolina Code Officials Qualification Board Education and Research Committee Minutes



September 19, 2023, 1:30-3:30 P.M.

This meeting was held via WebEx.

Introduction Welcome/Roll Call

Chairman Danny Couch called the meeting to order. Beth Williams made the roll call. Couch read the Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder. Couch asked the committee members if any of them have any known conflict of interest or the potential of conflict with respect to matters on the agenda coming before the Research and Education Committee today. None was noted.

Committee members present by roll call vote:

- 1) Danny Couch, Chairman
- 2) Jeff Griffin, Code Official
- 3) Montrena Hadley, Elected Official
- 4) Kenny Weatherington, NC Community College System

Attendees:

Bill Thunberg, NCCOQ Board Chair
Todd Neal, Board legal counsel, NCDOJ
Faye Edwards, College of the Albemarle
Mike Hejduk
Beth Williams

Discussion Items

2024 Update Planning Sessions

Couch asked Mike Hejduk to go over the Board Course 2024 Code updates slide. Mike Hejduk stated that he has been holding a monthly planning session the fourth Thursday of each month. Hejduk is having these monthly meetings through December. Course development meetings are scheduled for the next six months from January through December 2024. Committee members are invited to attend. Hejduk is seeking general input regarding what the new course content will offer. Hejduk stated that there should be an online pre-class or after class component that people could take prior to taking the state exam. Suggested comments included the training should be more oriented toward inspector-in-the-field or plan review.

Couch questioned could be done about not enough classroom time to go through the materials. Hejduk said that the guidelines state the minimum number of hours for the Board courses but not a maximum number of hours. Kenny Weatherington offered clarification. Weatherington stated that those recommended hours are posted in course libraries as recommended hours. Colleges can exceed that by 20% without having state board approval and action. We would allow that 40-hour class to be run at a

maximum of 48-hour course without having to have state board approval. State board approval would require us to adjust the recommended hours to whatever the group would deem fit. Chairman Couch thanked Weatherington for the clarification.

Law and Administration Course

Hejduk held a meeting on August 22, 2023, with the Law and Administration course instructors who are attorneys. Instructors agreed the curriculum needs to be updated due to statutory changes. Hejduk and Williams attended a meeting September 14, 2023, with North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) Tracy Mcpherson and Andrew Gardener. Andrew Gardner is new Associate Vice President for NC Workforce Continuing Education. Discussion included possible funding and development of a Virtual Learning Center (VLC) course. Griffin suggested developing a timeline for such a project.

Residential Code Council- separate Commercial/Residential

Hejduk explained that since the last meeting, Session Law 2023-108 was enacted to create a new Residential Code Council separate from the Building Code Council. Staff is currently exploring the option of separating out residential from commercial in the Board rules. The longest course is a 48-hour minimum course which is Building Level I. This is essentially a 6-day course minimum. If you blast through it, you're going through two, 3-inch-thick books in 3 days each. Then students are given a test. There has been a lot of discussion on separating the Building Code instruction from the Residential Code. If the rules change to separate Level I Residential and Level II Commercial this would have to happen for all the trades. It would align North Carolina certifications more with the way the International Code Council (ICC) testing is. There would definitely be a ripple effect. The mechanical and plumbing books have less material. There is a minimum required course hour list. If you look at mechanical level I and plumbing level I, each is a 32-hour minimum. If you took the commercial component out of that, and only talked about residential, it would become a much shorter class. Then maybe your 24-hour level II for commercial then is going to come up to a 32-hour course. The committee is going to have to keep in mind about this division and the new classification of the levels.

Jeff Griffin suggested a breakdown of the course hours and number of days. Griffin asked if it could be written up by levels. Griffin recommended to have a template on how to break out residential versus commercial.

Board Chair Bill Thunberg recommended that we have an instructional format that addresses the separation of residential and commercial. Griffin recommended implementing pre-course modules for residential and commercial. Pre-course modules will have to be developed.

College of Albemarle – Classroom Instructors versus Distance Learning

Couch talked about the College of the Albemarle (COA). COA offers higher learning opportunities for six to nine counties. Currently, COA has three experienced instructors. Couch thanked Beth for taking the initiative on this. However, one instructor, who was certified in all three standard building trades, is no longer interested in teaching Standard courses. Another instructor recently retired and is no

longer interested in teaching. William Talmadge Jones, a Hatteras native, his certificates are expired. Beth Williams asked Couch what options are currently available for distance learning with the College of Albemarle. Faye Edwards, College of the Albemarle discussed options for distance learning. Edwards stated that the college is fully equipped to go implement online learning. COA would need to identify instructors that would be experienced in doing distance learning. In doing distance learning, just set up the classes. Williams stated that she has been teaching the instructor course for standard instructor course online since 2019. As of today's date, we have fifty-two instructors who's been through the course and taking it all online. Instructors are responsible for delivering a presentation to demonstrate two things, one that they can write test questions and use presentation materials effectively which is important.

Board Course Guidelines Update

Hejduk discussed the board course guidelines update. The document has been out since 2006 and needs to be updated.

Recommendations included:

- 1) Outsourcing of exam administration and associated fees
- 2) Creation of an online course instructor application process
- 3) Online scheduling of Board courses and web portal to search for classes.
- 4) North Carolina Energy Conservation Code
- 5) Additional Residential Changeout Inspector (RCI) certificate course
- 6) Addition of appendices with course curriculum timelines
- 7) Splitting Building Level, I into separate Residential and Commercial courses and increasing the course duration from six to ten days for both modules.

NC General Assembly updates.

Hejduk reviewed the N.C. General Assembly updates:

- 1) H850 Licensing Board/Contractors & Inspectors
- 2) G.S. 143-151.13 Architects, Engineers, Licensed Contractors: General, Plumbing, Heating, Electrical pass state exam, no Board short course required.
- 3) G.S. 143-151.13 voluntary apprenticeship program
- 4) G.S. 143-151.16 Professional development program course fees
- 5) S463 Home Inspectors Lic. Mods./Code Qual. Bd.
- 6) G.S. 143-151.13 Architects, Engineers, Licensed Contractors: General, Plumbing, Heating, Electrical pass state exam, no Board short course required.
- 7) G.S. 143-151.13A Professional development program course fees
- 8) G.S. 143-138.1 DOI may develop an apprenticeship program and fees.
- 9) H320 = S712 Create Bldg. Code Permit Tech Cert.
- 10) H893 Private Commercial Inspections
- 11) G.S. 143-151.12 and G.S. 143-15.14A, 14B, 19A

Adjournment

Danny Couch adjourned the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Roegner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Rob Roegner
Secretary, N.C. Code Officials Qualification Board