

# NC COQB Executive Committee Minutes

May 20, 2022, 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

The meeting was held via Webex

## 1. **Introduction Welcome/Roll Call/Conflict of Interest/**

Committee positions and members present by roll call vote:

Board Chairman, Bill Thunberg  
Board Vice-Chairman, Fleming El-Amin  
Board Secretary, Rob Roegner  
Qualification & Evaluation Chair, Tom Bender  
Policies & Procedures Chair, Richard White  
Education & Research Chair, Karen Tikkanen, (Tracy McPherson proxy)

Chairman Thunberg read the conflict-of-interest reminder. Members who have been cited by the Ethics Commission as having the potential for conflict should refrain from participating in items where they may have a conflict. Thunberg asked members if any agenda items posed a potential conflict. None stated a conflict.

Attendees:

Tom Felling, Board legal counsel  
Mike Hejduk  
Beth Williams  
Rich Hall  
Terri Tart  
Jennifer Hollyfield  
Shandy Padgett  
Paul Padgett

## 2. **Strategic Plan FY 2022-2023**

### **A. Pool of qualified code officials, 1) Veterans, Inmates**

Chairman Thunberg asked Mike Hejduk to open the discussion on a strategic plan for next year. Hejduk provided an overview to fulfill the mission statement “provide a pool of qualified code officials.” Hejduk noted statutory requirements related to both applicants with criminal history and military service. Hejduk then asked Tom Bender and Karen Tikkanen to address the agenda items of veterans and inmates.

Bender discussed potential outreach to military at bases Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune as well as the Veterans Administration (VA) and USO Pathfinder Program with offices in Fayetteville, Morrisville, and Fort Bragg.

Hejduk discussed the statutory requirements of NC Gen. Stat. [§ 93B-15.1 Licensure for individuals with military training and experience and spouses](#), [§ 93B-8.1 Use of criminal history records](#) related to applications and [§ 93B-2 annual reporting requirements](#) by state agency licensing boards. Hejduk discussed the Home Inspector Licensure Board pre-licensing program avenue for military service members who lack specialized construction industry experience and contrasted the lack of a similar pre-qualification program for code officials. Hejduk explained initial efforts undertaken to establish an apprenticeship program through the community colleges and jurisdictions.

Thunberg stated that helping jurisdictions access a pool of qualified candidates is well-documented in surveys. Thunberg posed the question how to make a career as a code official an attractive choice for a veteran. Fleming El-Amin asked about staff's experience with military applicants. Terri Tart mentioned a specific individual and Level III Building application. Thunberg asked Hejduk what the role of the Board and staff could be to facilitate hiring of veterans as code officials. Hejduk said to identify some jurisdictions that are near bases. Thunberg asked Bender and he offered to visit bases accompanied by a code official. Richard White stated he has experience with the employment of code officials and asked how as the city/town manager appointee to the Board he could assist. Shandy Padgett stated that she paid ICC to do specific outreach to veterans, but this did not result in many applicants. Karen Tikkanen said she was involved in some outreach efforts already.

Thunberg asked Bender to take responsibility for contacting the USO in the Raleigh area and then meet with Tikkanen and White to see what the opportunity is there and how to work together. This would provide the Executive Committee a basis for moving forward. Thunberg also noted Paul Padgett's service as a Marine would likely be helpful.

Hejduk demonstrated the [CEO Job Board](#) job board where jurisdiction openings are posted. Bender noted the potential to work with the NC Fire Marshals Association. Rich Hall demonstrated what military or fire station personnel could do as a self-study while still employed prior to transition to civilian or local government service. Terri Tart explained the pre-qualification process for persons not already employed by jurisdictions. Thunberg noted that candidates may need some sort of "navigator" to assist these individuals who may not be familiar with the application process and education requirements – they are not trying to climb Mount Everest but Mount Airy.

Thunberg asked Hejduk to discuss inmates. Hejduk explained the statute related to use of criminal history records, specifically the provisions for predetermination. Tikkanen stated that outreach to Department of Corrections construction programs and inmates should include employment by local government. Previously, checking the "felony conviction" box would deter many applicants from even considering employment. Thunberg asked White whether local governments would seriously consider hiring candidates with a criminal record of convictions. Bender explained that his service in the Qualification & Evaluation Committee has shown that such candidates are thoroughly vetted by the Board and jurisdictions should have some level of assurance for predeterminations.

Thunberg asked if there were any further thoughts whether the Board was fulfilling its responsibilities about these groups. Tikkanen stated that she continues to work with Betsy Bailey and contractors. Thunberg asked Tikkanen and Bender to include these efforts in regular reports at the Board meeting.

**B. Goals, 1) Rules Review 2) KPIs 3) Joint meeting BCC – remote inspections, marketplace**

Thunberg asked Hejduk to address Goals. Hejduk stated that the preceding discussion was evidence of how productive small working groups can be. Hejduk then shared the staff organization chart and possible metrics or targets to track progress. Hejduk noted there are about 1,200 fire departments and over 200 building jurisdictions to make the case for addressing Fire and Building, Mechanical, Plumbing and Electrical by separate measures.

Thunberg stressed that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be “Key” to measure progress and noted that the staff organization chart perhaps showed too many. Hejduk agreed to start small and showed statistics shared in a weekly “Open Mic” meeting that have less inspectors today (4,137) than last year (4,210). Hejduk explained how the new Residential Changeout Inspector statute and certification program has only resulted in about two dozen inspectors. Hejduk reviewed how remote virtual inspections may decrease the need for more inspectors in the future. Thunberg stated that he would meet with Hejduk before the next Board meeting to discuss KPIs further and make a presentation to the Board at the next meeting. Hejduk asked Carl Martin to remark on remote inspections because DOI previously issued a guidance paper but a new statute requires development of rules to mandate that all jurisdictions provide remote inspections. Martin stated this is an unfunded mandate at this time with little progress.

Thunberg summarized issues discussed for Rob Roegner. Roegner noted that a joint meeting by the chairmen and staff of both the Building Code Council (BCC) and Code Officials Qualification Board (COQB) was needed to address remote inspections. Roegner stated that he would coordinate staff.

Thunberg asked Hejduk to address any remaining issues. Hejduk mentioned that staff efforts on Rules Review continue but legislative initiatives from the short session may impact priorities. Hejduk stated that more Board training may be needed with appointment of new members. This may be an additional agenda item. Hejduk asked for Tom Felling’s assistance.

Roegner stated that staff is in discussion with the Home Builders Association about the two day turnaround on field inspections and the plan to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get inspectors or companies under contract. Thunberg viewed this as an “on call” contract.

White stated that Carrboro is using the inspector marketplace now and asked if this would be in addition.

El-Amin stated his experience with the Urban League and that this organization is available for outreach.

Thunberg thanked the attendees for their time, attention, and contributions.

### **3. Adjournment**