

# MUNICIPAL EXCESS LIABILITY JOINT INSURANCE FUND

## OPEN MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

### DOUBLETREE BY HILTON, MONROE TWP– 10:30AM

Chairman Commissioner Tomasko called the meeting to order, the Assistant Secretary to read the statement of compliance open public meeting act and the pledge of allegiance was conducted.

#### ROLL CALL OF 2025 BOARD OF FUND COMMISSIONERS

Paul Tomasko	Borough of Alpine – Bergen JIF	Present
John Clarke	Princeton Housing Authority- PHA JIF	Absent
Greg Franz	Edgewater – South Bergen JIF	Present
Thomas Nolan	Borough of Brielle - Monmouth JIF	Present
Bernard Rutkowski	NJUA JIF – Toms River MUA	Present
Veronica Laureigh	Township of Lacey – Ocean JIF	Present
Megan Champney Kwesela	City of Summit- Suburban Municipal JIF	Present
Meghan Jack	Riverside Twp- Burlco JIF	Present
Adam Brewer	Pequannock Township – Morris JIF	Present
James Ulrich	Twp. of Clark - NJMSI JIF	Present
Michael Razze	Pitman Borough - TRICO JIF	Present
Robert MacFarland	Bordentown Fire District #2 FRESP JIF	Absent
Joy Tozzi	East Windsor Twp - Mid-Jersey JIF	Absent
Susan Danson	Maple Shade Twp- PMM JIF	Absent
Joseph Criscuolo	East Brunswick – Central JIF	Present
Frank Elenio	Ridgefield - PAIC JIF Representative	Absent
James Pacanowski	Atlantic JIF Representative	Present
Vincent Quatrone	Township of Little Falls – Sub Metro JIF	Present
Michael Mevoli	Borough of Brooklawn – Camden JIF	Absent

#### APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Executive Director/Adm	PERMA Risk Management Services <b>Joseph Hrubash, Cate Kiernan, Nancy A. Ghani</b>
Attorney	Dorsey & Semrau <b>Fred Semrau, Esq.</b>
Producer	Risk Program Administrators <b>Paul Forlenza, Kamini Patel</b>
Actuary	The Actuarial Advantage <b>Jamie Shooks</b>
Ex Worker's Comp & Property Claims Administrator	Qual-Lynx <b>Kathy Kissane, Chris Healey</b>
Safety Director	JA Montgomery Risk Control Services <b>Paul Shives, Brian Maitland</b>
Treasurer	Laracy Associates LLC <b>Matt Laracy</b>
Excess Liability Claims Administrator	CB Claims LLC <b>Christopher Botta</b>

Lobbyist Pathways

**Paul Bent**

Underwriting Manager	Conner Strong & Buckelew <b>Edward Cooney, Jonathon Tavares</b>
Managed Care	QualCare <b>Lisa Gallo</b>
Marketing Manager	Princeton Strategic Communications <b>Stacey Ehling</b>
Marketing Consultant	Acrisure <b>Amy Pieroni</b>
Southern NJ Marketing Consultant	PJM Consultants <b>Paul Miola</b>
Qualified Purchasing Agent	Laracy Associates LLC <b>Matthew Cavallo</b>

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Tom Merchel, Conner Strong & Buckelew  
Alison Kelly, Danskin Insurance Agency  
Chuck Casagrande, Danskin Insurance Agency  
John Casagrande, Danskin Insurance Agency  
Barbara Murphy, Risk & Loss Managers LLC  
Matt McArow Jr., GJEM Otterstedt Agency  
Patti Fahy, Acrisure  
Melissa Smith, Conner Strong & Buckelew  
Pauline Kontomanolis, Perma Risk Management Services  
David Grubb, Executive Director (Emeritus)  
Brad Stokes, Perma Risk Management Services  
Steve Sacco, Perma Risk Management Services  
Jen Conicella, Perma Risk Management Services  
Zareena Majeed, Perma Risk Management Services  
Sandra Cantwell, Perma Risk Management Services  
Charles Cuccia, RCF & EJIF Treasurer

**MINUTES:** Included in the agenda were the open minutes of June 9, 2025 and July 8, 2025; there was no closed session held on June 9, 2025 and copies of the closed session minutes from July 8, 2025 were distributed to the Board.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 9, 2025 AND JULY 8, 2025 OPEN MINUTES AND THE JULY 8, 2025 CLOSED SESSION MINUTES AS PRESENTED:**

Moved:	Commissioner Laureigh
Second:	Commissioner Franz
Vote:	Unanimous – 1 Abstention (Commissioner Rutkowski)

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

NONE

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMMISSIONER JOSEPH WOLK:** Executive Director requested a moment of silence, which was observed by all meeting attendees, to honor Camden JIF Commissioner Joseph Wolk who passed away on June 10, 2025.

Mr. Grubb said Mr. Wolk was a founding commissioner of the Camden JIF and served on the MEL Board of Fund Commissioners for 33 years. Mr. Grubb said Mr. Wolk served the public for more than half of his life and was always willing to assist when called upon. In closing, Mr. Grubb said Mr. Wolk was instrumental in the formation of and served as the first Chair of the Municipal Reinsurance Health Insurance Fund. Executive Director said a resolution was prepared to honor Commissioner Wolk, which would be mounted and presented to Mr. Wolk's family.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 28-25 HONORING COMMISSIONER JOSEPH WOLK:**

Moved:	Commissioner Nolan
Second:	Commissioner Laureigh
Vote:	Unanimous

Executive Director said Camden JIF Chairman Michael Mevoli will serve as the Camden JIF representative for the balance of year.

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:** Executive Director said the committee met on August 28, 2025; minutes of the meeting were included in the agenda.

Executive Director said the Management Committee discussed the following items and made the recommendations for action at today's meeting:

**2026 RATE TABLE AND PRELIMINARY BUDGET:** Included in the agenda was the proposed 2026 rate table and preliminary budget. Rate table is provided by the actuary for loss funding and the underwriting manager for excess insurance. Preliminary budget is based on expiring underwriting data and experience modifications and did not include the non-municipal JIFs. Budget introduction will be the October 15<sup>th</sup> Board of Commissioner's meeting.

**LEGAL SERVICES:** In October of 2024, the MEL board adopted a resolution awarding a professional services contract to Anderson Kill, P.C. to serve as special counsel regarding a coverage dispute with General Reinsurance Corporation. Fund Attorney said additional services are needed to resolve the matter expeditiously and collect significant recoveries from prior excess workers' compensation carrier. Included in the agenda was a resolution to award a professional service agreement for the period of October 2025 through October 2026 for a fee not to exceed \$250,000 per the recommendation of the Management Committee.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 29-25 AWARDING CONTRACT TO ANDERSON KILL:**

Moved:	Commissioner Brewer
Second:	Commissioner Champney
Vote:	13 Ayes – 0 Nays

**AMICUS BRIEF:** Executive Director said the Warren Hills Board of Education is appealing the Appellate Division's published opinion in the matter of *J.H. v Warren Hills*. The decision would expand the scope of the Child Sexual Assault Act (amended in 2019) to extend the statute of limitations for common law claims that are related to sexual abuse of a minor. Executive Director said if this decision stands, it could lead to greater exposure for our members.

Fund Attorney said the process of filing amicus briefs is really meaningful and as a result, the Management Committee recommends appointing Brown & Connery to prepare an Amicus Brief in support on behalf of MEL members. Included in the agenda was a resolution authorizing an hourly rate of \$190 "not to exceed" \$20,000 annually per the recommendation of the Management Committee.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 30-25 AWARDING CONTRACT TO BROWN & CONNERY:**

Moved: Commissioner Franz  
Second: Commissioner Nolan  
Vote: 13 Ayes – 0 Nays

**BYLAW AMENDMENT:** In March 21, 2025, the Board adopted a resolution introducing proposed amendments to the MEL Bylaws and held the public meeting on June 9, 2025. Following the public meeting, the proposed amendments were distributed to all nineteen (19) MEL joint insurance funds (JIFs).

According to the bylaw amendment procedure, the amendment is adopted by the Fund when the governing bodies of three fourths (3/4) of the members approve the amendment within six (6) months of the hearing on the amendment. Executive Director said the JIFs were asked to submit a resolution by December 9<sup>th</sup>; to date, currently on file are thirteen (13) resolutions in support of the amendment. The remaining JIFs have a meeting scheduled for mid-September.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:** Executive Director said the majority of the professional services agreements expire at year-end; last procured via the competitive contract process for the 2021-2023 contract term with two 1-year renewals.

The Fund office, MEL Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) and Fund Attorney at the direction of the appropriate subcommittee will be working together to issue the CCRFP documents for the next contract period; the MEL QPA has recommended limiting the terms to three years. Executive Director said the Fund office is working with the QPA to add language adding a requirement for professionals to commit to securing cyber liability insurance as well commit to certain cyber risk control.

**MEL SAFETY INSTITUTE:** Fund Attorney received and reviewed memorandum (included in the agenda) from J.A. Montgomery outlining a proposed process to address Law Enforcement Training. Fund Attorney said the Management Committee recommended that the Law Enforcement training be incorporated into the Safety Director scope of services in the Competitive Contract RFP so as to be effective in January of 2026.

**FUND PROFESSIONAL PROCUREMENTS:** Fund Attorney submitted a memo on alternate procedures in the event of a conflict of interest in the procurement of professional services. The memo outlined general responsibilities of MEL fund professionals, potential scenarios of conflicts of interest as well as identified the MEL sub-committees responsible for the evaluation of a submitted bid(s).

Fund Attorney said the MEL has historically taken steps to avoid potential or appearance of conflict of interest and this memo documents and memorializes the process. Fund Attorney said the procedure was reviewed with the committee and they recommended its memorialization. Commissioners Razze and Jack thanked the MEL Fund Attorney, MEL Executive Director and Mr. Forlenza, local JIF Executive Director of Burlco and Trico JIFs for their collective efforts on this. Included in the agenda was a copy of the proposed procedures along with a resolution to memorialize the process.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 31-25 FORMALIZING PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES.**

Moved: Commissioner Franz  
Second: Commissioner Nolan  
Vote: 13 Ayes – 0 Nays

**RCF TASK FORCE:** Executive Director said the development of claims that have been transferred to the Residual Claims Fund continues to deteriorate for reasons previously discussed such as the change in pension offset, fireman's presumptive as well as an increase in workers compensation claim re-openings. The Audit Committee discussions included a suggestion that the RCF consider forming a Residual Claims Fund Task Force to include staff from the RCF Executive Director's and the Deputy Executive Director's office to find ways to stabilize this development. Executive Director said this was reported at the RCF's June Board meeting and the recommendation is to alter the scope of services for both fund professionals to address this recommendation. The Management Committee supports the Audit Committee's suggestion to form an RCF Task Force. The RCF is meeting after the MEL and this item will be on the RCF agenda.

**ACCESS TO MEL SAFETY INSTITUTE-SOMERSET JIF:** Executive Director said J.A. Montgomery sent the MEL Fund Attorney a memorandum in response to an inquiry they received from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund requesting consideration to participate in the MEL Safety Institute. Included in the agenda was a copy of the request. The Management Committee recommends extending the MEL Safety Institute to the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund effective immediately at an annual fee of \$50,000 annually.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 32-25 EXTENDING MEL SAFETY INSTITUTE ACCESS TO THE SOMERSET COUNTY JIF:**

Moved:	Commissioner Ulrich
Second:	Commissioner Brewer
Vote:	12 Ayes – 1 Abstention (Commissioner Quatrone)

**STORMWATER PROGRAM:** Executive Director reminded the Committee that the MEL distributed to its members in May 2025 an announcement on the Stormwater/Flood Risk Control Program where MEL members are eligible for specialized legal and engineering consultation. Executive Director said approximately 35 members have signed up for this service and the Management Committee recommended extending access to the program from 7/31/25 to 12/31/25. Executive Director said although participation has been slow, we will continue to be proactive in encouraging Member participation. Fund Attorney said members that have accessed the consultation have reported positive feedback on the guidance provided.

**MOTION TO EXTEND THE STORMWATER/FLOOD RISK CONTROL PROGRAM THROUGH 12/31/25:**

Moved:	Commissioner Jack
Second:	Commissioner Nolan
Vote:	Unanimous

**HEALTH INSURANCE CRISIS:** Executive Director said as everyone may be aware, there is a health insurance crisis here in New Jersey, including NJ public entities. Executive Director said the State Health Benefits Plan has projected a 37% increase. It is expected that all health insurers and health insurance funds (HIFs) will also have large increases. In addition, health insurance programs are experiencing a period of heavy cash outlays. Mr. said some of the HIFs in NJ may have cash flow issues soon and noted that there is common membership among MEL member JIFs and NJ HIFs (approximately 163 members). Executive Director said Dave Grubb has been working with the HIFs and the state on this matter. Included in the agenda was a memorandum summarizing a recent meeting Mr. Grubb and others had with DCA to discuss the current situation and the potential role of the JCMI to address cash flow shortfalls for HIFs if needed who have investments in JCMI program. Executive Director said the Management Committee referred the matter to the JCMI Operating Committee to consider and to draft parameters

and a process for the board to further consider. Chairman Tomasko thanked and acknowledged the time and effort of Mr. Grubb on this initiative.

**COVERAGE COMMITTEE:** Committee met on August 18<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>; included in the agenda were the minutes of the August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and copies of the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting minutes were distributed. Executive Director said the committee made the following coverage recommendations effective January 1, 2026:

1. Risk Control Requirement for Crime – to address the frequency of cyber-crime like social engineering and fraudulent wire claims, members will be asked to adopt the JCMi Banking Best Practices procedures. In the event of a claim, members will be responsible for a co-insurance provision capped at 20% of \$500,000 subject to the member JIF deductible.
2. Interim Administrators – Additional language was added to the definition of public official to provide coverage to Interim Administrators whether they are an employee or independent contractor.
3. Land Use & Abandoned Property – Under the Public Officials Liability policy, the recommendation is to provide defense-only costs limited to \$150,000 for claims related to land use or abandoned properties.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COVERAGE COMMITTEE:**

Moved:	Commissioner Razze
Second:	Commissioner Jack
Vote:	Unanimous

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Committee met on July 11<sup>th</sup>; minutes of the meeting were included in the agenda. Committee is scheduled to meet next on September 19, 2025.

**MARKETING COMMITTEE:** Executive Director said a sub-group of this committee met on September 5<sup>th</sup> with the Marketing Manager to develop infographics to assist and educate members on available MEL resources.

**SAFETY & EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Committee met on August 22<sup>nd</sup>; minutes of the meeting were included in the agenda.

**CLAIMS COMMITTEE:** This committee last met on June 9<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup>; minutes of these meetings are sent to the full MEL Board separately from the agenda.

Executive Director said in January, an additional \$250,000 was authorized to pay Qual-Lynx to add a property claims supervisor but terms between MEL and TPA were not reached. Enclosed in the agenda was resolution 33-25 to rescind the authorization for 2025.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 33-25 AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE PROPERTY ADJUSTER CONTRACT:**

Moved:	Commissioner Criscuolo
Second:	Commissioner Brewer
Vote:	Unanimous

**PURCHASING THRESHOLDS:** Executive Director said the QPA has notified the Fund that the state has increased its minimum bid and quote thresholds. Enclosed in the agenda was a Resolution to adopt the change.

**MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 34-25 INCREASING THE BID THRESHOLD.**

Moved:	Commissioner Criscuolo
Second:	Commissioner Jack
Vote:	13 Ayes – 0 Nays

**EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES COMPLIANCE PROGRAM:** Executive Director said every two years, the MEL asks its members to update their Employment Practices Compliance Program consisting of personnel manual, employment manual and training program. Included in the agenda was a copy of the April 16<sup>th</sup> memorandum (*excluding the other attachments*) that was distributed to members. Commissioner Criscuolo suggested the MEL consider encouraging the volunteers members serving on various municipal committees and boards to complete training.

**BACKGROUND CHECKS:** Deputy Executive Director said the MEL's "Protecting Children from Abuse" model policy calls for increased background checks and members were looking for assistance in identifying vendors.

Deputy Executive Director said the Fund office worked with the QPA to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to obtain an updated list of service vendors. The deadline to respond to the RFQ is September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11AM.

The QPA submitted a memo identifying a list of qualifying responses as follows: 1)Trionaid Associates, Inc, 2)TruView BSI, LLC, 3)NJ Global Consulting Services, Inc., 4) The Griffin Collective LLC, 5)Hire Honest (Welliver & Associates), 6) Command Investigations and 7) SRA Screening.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE LIST OF QUALIFIED RESPONDERS TO BE POSTED TO WEBPAGE:**

Moved:	Commissioner Criscuolo
Second:	Commissioner Champney
Vote:	Unanimous

**2026 PRE-RENEWAL WEBINAR:** The MEL Underwriting Manager will be hosting a 2026 pre-renewal webinar on Monday September 29, 2025 at 10:00am to cover the current state of the market and anticipated program changes. Included in the agenda was a copy of the email with a registration link that was distributed to members and risk management consultants.

**RESIDUAL CLAIMS FUND (RCF):** Included in the agenda was a copy of Commissioner Clarke's report on the RCF June meeting. The RCF will meet after the MEL meeting.

**NJ CYBER JIF:** The NJ Cyber JIF met on July 17<sup>th</sup>; included in the agenda was the meeting report for information as well as a memorandum from the Underwriting Manager describing the differences between cyber incidents that are covered by the Cyber Policy and those covered in the Fund's Crime Policy. Cyber JIF is scheduled to meet next on September 18, 2025.

**MEL 2025 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:** Executive Director said all eleven (11) Joint Insurance Funds scheduled to renew their MEL membership effective July 1, 2025 have submitted executed agreements. There are no JIFs scheduled to renew membership January 1, 2026.

**MEL RISK MANAGER ACCREDITATION:** Executive Director said the MEL is holding its second Risk Manager Accreditation Program scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup> at the National Conference Center in East Windsor. Included in the agenda was a copy of the announcement distributed in August and the Fund office will be resending another copy to RMCs.

**POWER OF COLLABORATION:** Included in the agenda was the latest in a series of advertisements to appear in the League Magazine. The ad highlights that the MEL has generated almost \$4.2 billion in savings to its membership since inception.

**DUE DILIGENCE:** A copy of the Regulatory Compliance Checklist as of 9/4/25 was submitted for information. The report shows the status of regulatory filings and contract compliance.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the MEL JIF is scheduled for Wednesday October 15, 2025 at 10:30AM at the DoubleTree by Hilton located at 390 Forsgate Drive, Monroe Twp. NJ 08831.

**UNDERWRITING MANAGER:**

**2026 PRE-RENEWAL WEBINAR:** Underwriting Manager reported he will be hosting a 2026 pre-renewal webinar on Monday September 29, 2025 at 10:00am to cover the current state of the market and anticipated program changes. Underwriting Manager said marketing efforts have already begun on the 2026 renewal and would provide any additional information at the next meeting.

**TREASURER:** Included as part of the Treasurer's reports were the confirmation of payments from June 2025, June 2025 Supplemental, July 2025, July 2025 Supplemental, August 2025, Resolution 35-25 September 2025 Bills List and the Confirmation of Transfers to Claims Accounts for April, May and June 2025. Also included were copies of the May, June and July 2025 monthly reports of the Joint Cash Management & Investment Program (JCMI).

**CONFIRMATION OF PAYMENTS**

June 2025	\$2,162,803.45
June 2025 Supplemental #1	\$51,382.40
July 2025	\$778,468.14
July 2025 Supplemental	\$357,511.60
August 2025	\$1,023,034.24

**RESOLUTION 35-25 FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 VOUCHERS:**

September 2025	\$661,696.88
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**Confirmation Of April 2025 Claims Payments/Certification Of Claims Transfers:**

<b>SURPLUS TRIGGER</b>	0.00
<b>1988 WC</b>	67,775.78
<b>CLOSED</b>	0.00
<b>2021</b>	188,665.21
<b>2022</b>	883,019.76
<b>2023</b>	83,652.40
<b>2024</b>	564,013.02
<b>2025</b>	38,714.96
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,825,841.13</b>

**Confirmation Of May 2025 Claims Payments/Certification Of Claims Transfers:**

<b>SURPLUS TRIGGER</b>	0.00
<b>1988 WC</b>	22,949.98
<b>CLOSED</b>	0.00
<b>2021</b>	1,040,078.08

<b>2022</b>	3,752,265.90
<b>2023</b>	189,045.81
<b>2024</b>	1,774,947.69
<b>2025</b>	262,787.77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,042,075.23</b>

**Confirmation Of June 2025 Claims Payments/Certification Of Claims Transfers:**

<b>SURPLUS TRIGGER</b>	0.00
<b>1988 WC</b>	29,961.85
<b>CLOSED</b>	0.00
<b>2021</b>	384,998.50
<b>2022</b>	356,927.58
<b>2023</b>	123,242.59
<b>2024</b>	115,440.68
<b>2025</b>	1,492,992.39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,503,563.59</b>

**MOTION TO CONFIRM PAYMENTS OF JUNE 2025, JUNE 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL, JULY 2025, JULY 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL, AUGUST 2025, APPROVE BILLS LIST RESOLUTION 35-25 SEPTEMBER 2025 AND TO APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT; CURRENT AND CONFIRMING EXPENSES AS PRESENTED:**

Moved: Commissioner Brewer  
Second: Commissioner Champney  
Roll Call Vote: 13 Ayes – 0 Nays

**CLAIMS – EXCESS WORKERS COMPENSATION:**

**REPORT:** Claims Administrator said there was nothing additional to report.

**CLAIMS – EXCESS LIABILITY:**

**REPORT:** Claims Administrator said there was nothing additional to report.

**ATTORNEY:**

**REPORT:** Fund Attorney said there was nothing additional to report.

**MANAGED CARE:**

**REPORT:** A copy of the Savings and Penetration report as of July 2025 was included in the agenda for information. To date, the total billed was \$12,213,733.45 with approved bills of \$4,780,368.38 for a total savings of 61% and network penetration of 77%.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS:**

NONE

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

NONE

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

Moved:	Commissioner Champney
Second:	Commissioner Brewer
Vote:	Unanimous

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 11:13AM

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday October 15, 2025 – 10:30AM  
DoubleTree by Hilton, Monroe NJ.

Nancy A. Ghani, Assisting Secretary

For

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JOHN CLARKE, SECRETARY