

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) – East Tennessee Chapter

Date: September 17, 2026

Time: 9:11 AM – 10:12 AM EDT

Location: Roane State Campus, Knoxville, 9575 Sherrill Blvd, Room 1101 (with virtual attendance option)

1. Call to Order & Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 AM EDT by Chapter President Melissa McKenzie. A quorum of the Executive Committee and general membership was established with 11 voting members present (either in-person or online).

2. Roll Call & Attendance

Executive Committee (Elected Officers)

- **Melissa McKenzie, CSP, STS-C** (President) – Present
- **Bethany Knight, CSP** (President-Elect / Vice President) – Present
- **Aryn Gilenson, CSP, ASP, CHST, CIT** (Secretary) – Absent
- **Chris Schott, CSP, CIH** (Treasurer) – Absent

Chapter Committee Chairs & Support (Volunteer Roles)

- **Christopher "Jake" Lehman, GSP** (Membership Chair) – Present (Online)
- **Jay Hocutt, CSP** (Professional Development Chair) – Present
- **Ann Schubert, CSP, CIH, CHMM** (Nominations & Elections Chair) – Absent
- **Donald Elswick, M.S., CSP, CIH, CHMM, CIT, COSS** (Advisory Group Member) – Absent

Chapter Members Present

- **Gregg La** – Present
- **Cynthia Bullard** – Present
- **David Hixenbaugh** – Regional Director Present (Online)
- **Gary Schatz** – Present (Online)
- **Erin Miller** – Present (Online)

3. Agenda Overview & Committee Introductions

President Melissa McKenzie presented the meeting agenda. She officially introduced the 2026/2027 Executive Committee and outlined the critical roles and volunteer leadership structures supporting the chapter's operational health:

- **President (Melissa McKenzie):** Leads strategic direction and support to ensure a high-quality member experience (2-year term).
- **President-Elect/VP (Bethany Knight):** Assists the chapter President in providing leadership and administrative support (2-year term).
- **Secretary (Aryn Gilenson):** Restores organizational history and maintains the chapter's records and archives.

- **Treasurer (Chris Schott):** Oversees financial allocations, budgets, bank details, and compliance reports.
- **Nominations & Elections Chair (Ann Schubert):** Executes succession planning and recruits upcoming safety leaders.
- **Advisory Group Member (Donald Elswick):** Monitors workplace safety trends to deliver strategic recommendations to the ASSP Board of Directors.
- **Membership Chair (Jake Lehman):** Directs local recruitment campaigns, onboarding, and membership retention programs.
- **Professional Development Chair (Jay Hocutt):** Directs the logistical development and delivery of the chapter's Professional Development Conference (PDC).

4. Old Business

A. Secretary's Report

The minutes from the Executive Committee meeting held on **July 20, 2026**, were previously distributed to the Executive Committee and posted on the chapter website for review.

- **Motion:** Jay Hocutt moved to approve the July 20, 2026, meeting minutes as distributed.
- **Second:** Bethany Knight seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained).

B. Treasurer's Report

- **Account Balance:** As of September 8, 2026, the chapter's bank account balance stands at **\$30,395.68**.
- **Financial Transition:** Chris Schott continues working with Kris Thomasson to complete the formal transfer of all physical and digital chapter financials.
- **Motion:** Bethany Knight moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.
- **Second:** David Hixenbaugh seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained).

C. Formal Banking Resolution: Signatory Updates (ORNL FCU)

To complete the transition of administrative and banking access to the incoming leadership team, the board voted on a resolution to update bank credentials at Oak Ridge National Laboratory Federal Credit Union.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE OF BANKING SIGNATORIES

RESOLVED, that the ASSP East Tennessee Chapter Executive Committee hereby authorizes and directs Oak Ridge National Laboratory Federal Credit Union (ORNL FCU) to update the authorized signers on all checking and savings accounts associated with account number ending in **4400** (**#*******4400**).

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following current chapter officers are designated as the sole authorized signers on the account:

1. **Melissa McKenzie, CSP, STS-C** (Chapter President)
2. **Bethany Knight, CSP** (Chapter President-Elect / Vice President)
3. **Chris Schott, CSP, CIH** (Chapter Treasurer)

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all previous signers and outdated treasurers are to be immediately removed from the accounts and have their financial access revoked.

- **Motion to Approve:** Melissa McKenzie
- **Second:** Bethany Knight
- **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained).

D. Annual Operational Plan (AOP)

The committee reviewed the strategic goals and reporting schedule established for the fiscal year:

- **Goals:**
 1. *Goal 1:* Improve member engagement by hosting regular meetings and events (aiming for at least 10 chapter events annually, preferably on a monthly basis).
 2. *Goal 2:* Recognize excellence at the local chapter level and formally nominate an outstanding member for the Regional Safety Professional of the Year (SPY) award.
 3. *Goal 3:* Conduct a thorough regional financial audit for the chapter.
- **Required Reports Status:**
 - *Annual Planning Report (Due 08/15/2026):* Completed ahead of schedule on **August 13, 2026**.
 - *Leadership Report:* Due May 31, 2027.
 - *Financial Report:* Due May 31, 2027.

E. Other Old Business Items

- **Officer Training & Updates:** In progress across all newly appointed roles.
- **Letter of Support for ETSU EOHS Harwood Grant:** Formally drafted and sent out on **July 15, 2026**.
- **Regional Audit Update:** Operational records are being organized for review.
- **SafetyFest Update:** Ongoing planning for chapter participation and booth setup.

5. New Business

A. Upcoming Chapter Reports

- **Fall ROC Chapter Report:** The committee noted that the Chapter Report for the Fall Regional Operating Committee (ROC) is due on **October 5, 2026**.

B. Communication Enhancements

- **Committee Directory:** The chapter will share internal committee phone and email lists to facilitate faster collaborative decisions and project workflows.

C. Safety Professional of the Year (SPY) Award Program

The board evaluated the nomination timelines and established a local timeline for chapter award recognition:

- **Submission Deadlines:**
 - *National SPY Award:* Submissions are due through the ASSP online portal by November 1, 2026, for 2027 recognition.

- *Regional SPY Award*: Packet submissions are due to the Regional Award Committee by February 1, 2027.
- **Local Action Plan:**
 - Establish a dedicated chapter awards selection committee.
 - Utilize standard SPY nomination packets available directly on the national ASSP portal.
 - Procure a high-quality physical chapter award via *Paradise Awards* (estimated budget of \$199).
 - Set date for chapter SPY award applications to be due December 1.
 - Review local applications and select the chapter winner in **January 2027** to enable regional submission by the February 1 deadline.

D. Available Volunteer Positions & Recruitment Call

To ensure all chapter objectives are met, the President announced four open volunteer committee positions. Officers and members are urged to recruit qualified candidates:

- **Program Chair (OPEN)**: Ensures chapter program offerings meet members' needs and fulfill charter parameters (minimum of 4 technical meetings annually). Responsibilities include scheduling speakers/tours for the October, January, February, March, April, and May meetings.
- **Communications Chair (OPEN)**: Oversees the prompt sharing of local safety news, chapter events, and safety resources. Responsibilities include monthly updates to the chapter website and weekly updates to LinkedIn and Facebook.
- **Awards and Honors Chair (OPEN)**: Oversees recognition programs for outstanding local contributions. Responsibilities include building a chapter awards protocol aligned with regional and national SPY procedures.
- **Jobs Chair (OPEN)**: Connects safety practitioners with regional career growth options. Responsibilities include researching and presenting local safety job postings monthly during chapter meetings and updating the website board.

E. Suggestions from the floor

- Consider using available funds to purchase short and long term CDs to generate additional funds for the chapter.

6. Chapter Meeting Schedule (2026–2027)

- **October 15, 2026**: Nomination & Elections Committee Formation / Call for Officers if needed
 - **Will schedule a tour of Roane State's Sherrill Blvd Campus for October meeting**
- **November 4–5, 2026**: TVS/AIHA Fall Conference (Executive Committee Meeting on **November 5**)
 - Jay Hocutt (PDC Chair) will coordinate with TVS/AIHA event committee leads, for Chapter support and participation
- **December 3, 2026**: Holiday Social and Bike Helmet Collection
 - Holiday social recommendations, Karaoke, Bowling and Axe throwing
 - Bethany Knight volunteered to take lead on the Bike Helmet Collection
- **January 14, 2027**: Finalization of Regional SPY Nominations & Officer Candidates (Member notification on **January 17**)
- **February 18, 2027**: Chapter SPY Award Presentation Ceremony
- **March 18, 2027**: Chapter Officer Elections
- **April 15, 2027**: Chapter Event / Technical Meeting (Topic TBD)

- **May 20, 2027:** Finalization of the Chapter Leadership and Financial Reports
- **June 7-9, 2027:** ASSP Safety Conference & Exposition – New Orleans, LA (Executive Committee Meeting on **June 8**)
- **July 15, 2027:** Annual Chapter Planning Meeting & New Officer Installation

7. Future Activities & Travel Calendar

- **October 14-15, 2026:** Region VII Fall Regional Operating Committee (ROC) Meeting – Location: *FireFighter Safe, 450 Gargrave Rd, Dayton, OH 45449*
- **June 6, 2027:** ASSP Leadership Conference – New Orleans, LA
- **June 7-9, 2027:** ASSP Safety27 National Conference – New Orleans, LA

8. Adjournment

With no further business brought before the committee, the floor was opened for a motion to adjourn.

- **Motion:** Jay Hocutt moved to adjourn the meeting.
- **Second:** Bethany Knight seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained).

The meeting was officially adjourned at **10:12 AM EDT**.

Minutes Submitted By:

Jay Hocutt, Acting Secretary / Chapter Officer, ASSP East Tennessee Chapter

Minutes Approved By:

Melissa McKenzie / Chapter President, ASSP East Tennessee Chapter