
**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING
BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES**

Date: November 17, 2022

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Held Virtually via Google Meet

Joining Info: By Video Conference
meet.google.com/qks-niad-yfo
By Phone via Teleconference
1-414-909-7588 (PIN: 385820141)

Members Present:

Joseph Radtka, Chair
Michael Bowersox, Industry Member
Roland Mann Jr., Industry Member
Richard Small, Industry Member

Absent: Keith Horton, Vice Chair
Gregory Schott, Industry Member
Richard Bowers, Consumer Member

LABOR Officials & Staff Present:

John Bull, Executive Director
Sloane Fried Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General
LaKissha Thornton, Administrative Officer I
Johnston Brown, Administrative Specialist III
Sharon Harris-Friend, Complaint Manager, Dept. of Labor
Danielle Anderson, Web Coordinator and Outreach, Dept. of Labor

OTHERS PRESENT:

Diane Kastner, Maryland Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association
Wayne Fishpaw, Pipetrades Technology

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Mr. Joseph Radtka, called the Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:34 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Radtka asked that a Board member make a motion to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2022 Board meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2022 meeting by Mr. Mann, seconded by Mr. Bowersox, and carried unanimously by the Board.

PLUMBING COMPLAINTS

No Complaint Committee report was offered. Director Bull stated that there would be a Committee report at the December meeting and introduced Ms. Harris-Friend, the new Complaints Manager for the Mechanical Licensing Boards. Ms. Harris-Friend thanked the Board for welcoming her and expressed excitement for the new position. Director Bull further stated that Investigator Klausung is actively investigating open complaints and that he anticipates that several cases will be presenting next month. Director Bull explained that Ms. Harris-Friend would send an agenda and meeting invite to each of the Complaint Committee members one week in advance of the December Committee Meeting. Chairman Radtka asked if a summary of the cases would be sent to the Committee members for review before the meeting, to which Director Bull confirmed that Ms. Harris-Friend would send the summaries with the meeting invite.

REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for September 2022:

Plumber	Candidates Tested	Passed	Failed	Pass %
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Journey Natural Gas Fitter	1	1	0	100%
Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter	38	14	24	37%
Master Natural Gas Fitter	2	1	1	50%
Master Plumber/Gas Fitter	17	6	11	35%
TOTAL	58	22	36	38%

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for October 2022:

Plumber	Candidates Tested	Passed	Failed	Pass %
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Journey Natural Gas Fitter	2	1	1	50%
Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter	37	9	28	24%
Master Natural Gas Fitter	0	0	0	-

Master Plumber/Gas Fitter	14	4	10	29%
TOTAL	53	14	39	26%

Director Bull did not read the September PSI results at the meeting but advised that those results would be reported in the minutes. Director Bull reported the October PSI results. Director Bull also reported that, since January 2022, 567 candidates were tested, 214 candidates passed, 353 failed, for a pass rate of 38%. Since the inception of the test, 10281 candidates were tested, 3710 candidates passed, 6571 failed, for a pass rate of 36%. There are currently 12,903 active licensees.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to be considered.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Bull reminded the board of his earlier introduction of Ms. Harris-Friend and that he had no further comments regarding Ms. Harris-Friend’s addition to the team. Director Bull added that he expected to hire a temporary employee to assist with the duties of the Mechanical Licensing Boards in the near future.

Director Bull stated that the calendar of the 2023 Board meetings was being drafted. He informed the Board that the meeting schedule for 2023 would be emailed to the Board members when it was completed and reminded the Board that the February 2023 meeting would be held in-person.

COUNSEL’S REPORT

Counsel did not offer a report but advised the Board that a regulatory body must establish a committee during a public meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. Counsel advised the Board to move and vote to affirm the designated members of the Complaint Committee discussed earlier. Counsel Kinstler suggested that Director Bull reach out to Deputy Counsel, Kris King, to ensure that he could attend the December Complaint Committee meeting or assign another litigation attorney to attend if he cannot be available. Chairman Radtka stated that he and Mr. Schott are currently serving as members of the Complaint Committee and asked in any Board additional members would like to join the Committee. Mr. Bowersox volunteered to serve on the Committee. Mr. Bowersox moved to confirm Chairman Radtka, Mr. Schott, and Mr. Bowersox as the members of the Complaint Committee, which was seconded by Mr. Small, and carried unanimously by the Board.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Chairman Radtka reported that over the last month he attended a conference on electrification and decarbonation. Chairman Radtka also reminded the Board of HB 806, the Climate Solutions Now Act of the 2021 session (“Act”) and stated that several Maryland counties, including Montgomery

County, have expressed interest in promoting the initiatives of the Act, which was vetoed by Governor Hogan.

Chairman Radtka also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to be considered.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Radtka addressed the request from the local jurisdictions regarding guidance on House Bill 1052, as discussed at the September 15, 2022 Board meeting. Chairman Radtka stated that the counties would have to follow the provisions listed in the bill. He stated that local jurisdictions are in favor of using bonding on non-arc-resistant, also referred to as CSST piping, but that bonding wire from the grounding strip to the electrical box is still required.

Chairman Radtka asked Director Bull for comment regarding the proposal from Kruger Training Academy. Director Bull apologized stating that the correspondence from Kruger had not been sent to Board for review. Director Bull stated that Kruger Training Academy sought approval from the Board to allow for a new method of training instructors in backflow prevention. The new method would have a potential instructor take the backflow prevention course, assist with the instruction of the course, before teaching the course independently to a panel to become certified as an instructor. Chairman Radtka stated that instructors are to be certified by methods approved by the ASSE and TREEO. Counsel Kinstler confirmed, citing COMAR 09.20.04.02 entitled Approved Cross Connection/Backflow Prevention Certification Program. Director Bull stated that he would inform Kruger Training Academy that they must certify backflow instructors in compliance with the applicable regulation.

Chairman Radtka stated that House Bill 1268, regarding Prevailing Wage law, had passed.

Mr. Bowersox resumed the discussion on House Bill 1052 and its support from the local jurisdictions by bringing up a comparison of the efficiency of fossil fuels versus electricity. He further stated that when electricity is used, it is about 40% efficient when used to heat and power homes, but the use of fossil fuels used to power homes are about 90% efficient, questioning if the local jurisdictions had the same information. Chairman Radtka replied stating that he was aware of that statistic but that there was a large push to switch to more environmental sustainable energy sources. He further stated that many of the new changes were being made in accordance with Senate Bill 528, the Climate Solutions Act, which would make the State of Maryland emission free by 2024. Mr. Bowersox also posed a question regarding Senate Bill 259 and whether it was applicable to the plumbing industry. Chairman Radtka stated that the statute is applicable across the mechanical licensing units. Mr. Bowersox also discussed fossil fuel efficiency ratings, the necessity of electricity, and fittings requiring a one-time bond to ground a CSST flash field.

Counsel Kinstler clarified the names of the bills that had been discussed stating that Senate Bill 259 dealt with prevailing wage laws, and House Bill 1268 pertained to climate solutions.

Before Adjournment Mr. Fishpaw posed a question about the February in-person meeting, asking whether the public would be allowed to attend. Director Bull stated that staff and Board Members would attend the meeting in person and the public would be allowed to attend the meeting virtually, via Google Meet. Counsel Kinstler reminded the Board that while the Board Members were urged to attend the meeting in person, they could also attend virtually.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board did not convene in a closed session.

APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF CLOSED SESSION

None necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon Mr. Bowersox’s Motion, and Mr. Small’s second, and by a roll call vote, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Signature On File

12/15/22

John Bull
Executive Director

Date

Signed on behalf of the Board as voted and approved on 12/15/22