MARYLAND BOARD OF FORESTERS

 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

 **Monday, October 21, 2024**

**TIME:**  10:00 a.m.

**LOCATION:**  1100 N. Eutaw St.

5th Floor Conference Room

 Baltimore, MD 21201

 *(Teleconference via Google Meet and in person)*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Huneke – Chairman

 John Markovich – Vice Chair

 Jill Rhyne-Grey

Anthony DiPaolo

Brian Knox

Daniel Rider

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kala Fleming

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sharron McNeill, Office Supervisor

 Sloane Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General

**STAFF ABSENT:** Christopher Dorsey, Executive Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

**Call to Order**

Chairman, Michael Huneke, called the October 21, 2024 meeting of the Maryland Board of Foresters to order at 10:03 a.m. after confirming that a quorum of members was present.

Mr. DiPaolo mentioned a correction to a reference to the Allegheny Forester Society. Upon a motion by Ms. Rhyne-Grey and a second by Mr. Knox, the minutes of the July 22, 2024 Business Meeting of the Board of Foresters were unanimously approved with corrections.

**Chairman’s Report**

Chairman, Michael Huneke, informed the Board that the Allegheny Society of American Foresters is holding their meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at Allegheny College and it will be based on Fire Prescribed Fire and student engagement. Chairman, Huneke, also informed the Board that this would be an opportunity to obtain continuing education required to maintain a license.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Mrs. McNeill, Office Supervisor for the Forester Board, informed the Board that she would be filling in for Mr. Dorsey, in his absence. Mrs. McNeill provided the Board with an update regarding Labor’s move and that the move date had been delayed until sometime around the end of November. She also announced that a new consumer Board member, Ms. Kala Fleming, who unfortunately was not in attendance at the meeting.

**Old Business**

Correspondence Seeking Change in Education Requirements

The Board continued its discussion regarding amending forester license education requirements in response to a letter submitted by James Neutzel Forestry Services, asking the Board to consider waiving the four-year college degree requirement for individuals with an associate’s degree and additional years of field experience. Upon further discussion with the full Board being present, the Board decided that, under Business Occupations and Professions Article, § 7-304, Annotated Code of Maryland, an applicant shall have been graduated on completion of a 4-year curriculum in forestry from a college or university that is approved by the Board or accredited by the Society of American Foresters. The Board further acknowledged that applicable regulations require an applicant to have obtained a 4-year degree from a qualifying program at an accredited institution. The Board also conferred with Counsel about the timeframe for proposed legislation by the Department, for which the period to submit legislative proposals for Departmental support in the 2025 legislative session had passed, The Board acknowledged that proposed legislation could be pursued by a private citizen or industry organization for the 2025 session.

Upon a motion by Vice Chair, John Markovich, seconded by Ms. Rhyne-Grey the Board unanimously voted to direct staff to prepare a response in reference to their discussion regarding amending the 4-year degree requirement and send it to James Neutzel Forestry Services.

Urban Forestry

The Board continued its discussion regarding SAF (Society of American Foresters) determination to include urban and community forestry. After a lengthy discussion, in which the Board continued to further consider the statutory definition of forestry services, as well as other factors, the Board decided to table the discussion until the January 27, 2025 meeting, where they will continue discussion of this matter with the assistance of Counsel.

Upon a motion by Vice Chair, John Markovich, seconded by Mr. DiPaolo, the Board unanimously voted that a Committee be established and to work on drafting a revision to the law and to address the urban forestry accreditation and the requirement, to include Chairman, Michael Huneke and Anthony Dipaolo as members.

**New Business**

No New Business to consider.

**Closed Session**

Chairman, Michael Huneke advised that it was necessary for the Board to convene in a closed session to discuss one license application, in accordance with § 3-305(b)(2) and (7) of the Gen. Prov. Art., Md. Ann. Code, to protect the privacy and reputation of license applicants and to obtain advice provided by Counsel regarding license applications. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

Upon a motion by Mr. Markovich, seconded by Ms. Rhyne-Grey, and unanimously carried, the State Board of Foresters enter a closed session at 10:54 a.m., via Google Meets, pursuant to § 3-305(c) of the Gen. Prov. Art., Md. Ann. Code.

The Board reviewed one (1) license application in closed session:

OR-1

The Board considered the license application for an individual who obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Ecosystems Management in May 2017 from the accredited program at Pennsylvania State University. This individual documented several years of work experience. The Board discussed the applicant’s education, college transcript, and degree in forestry, which satisfied the educational requirements. The Board concluded that the applicant was 2 months short of work experience because their current employment includes duties that do not constitute forestry services. The Board also determined that the applicant’s references were not legible enough to ensure compliance with applicable requirements. The Board had no choice but to deny the application because the applicant had not met all requirements for licensure pursuant to Md. Ann. Code, Bus. Occ. & Prof. §§ 7-304(b) and (c), 7-305(1) (iii) and COMAR 09.29.01.02B.

OR-01: Upon a motion by Mr. DiPaolo and seconded by Ms. Rhyne-Grey, the Board unanimously voted to deny the license application.

**Return to Business Meeting**

The Board unanimously voted to reconvene the Business Meeting at 11:14 a.m. upon a motion made by Mr. Markovich, seconded by Mr. Rider, which was passed unanimously.

Upon the return to the Business Meeting, Ms. Rhyne-Grey moved that the Board approve its actions taken during the closed session. Mr. DiPaolo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, upon a motion by Mr. Markovich and seconded by Ms. Rhyne-Grey, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

NEXT MEETING

January 27, 2025—Board members are encouraged to attend the meeting in person and to notify staff of their intention to do so remotely or in person and whether they will require parking.

\_\_\_\_ with corrections \_\_x\_\_ without corrections

Signature on file February 11, 2025

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Signature of Board Chair Date