**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** February 20, 2025

**Time:**  10:30 a.m.

**Location:** 100 S. Charles Street, Tower 1

 Second Floor, Cherry Hill Conference Room

Baltimore, MD 21201

Held via Video Conference

meet.google.com/qks-niad-yfo

By Phone via Teleconference

1-414-909-7588 (PIN: 385820141)

**Members Present:** Joseph Radtka, Chairman

 Hayward Hinkhaus, Vice Chairman, Industry Member

 Gregory Schott, Industry Member

 Craig Stokes, Consumer Member

Robert Parker, Consumer Member

**Absent:** Keith Horton, Industry Member

 Richard Bowers, Consumer Member

 Leif Hancock, Industry Member

**LABOR Officials & Staff Present:** Charles Marquette, Executive Director, Mechanical Licensing

 Sloane Fried Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General

 LaKissha Thornton, Administrative Officer III

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Wayne Fishpaw, Pipe Trades Technologies

 Kathy Stradley, MDPHCC

 Jonathan Sargeant, Omega Plex

 Dustin Kruger, Kruger’s Training Academy

 Jessie Fields, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Radtka called the February 20, 2025, Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:33 a.m. after a quorum of Board members was established.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to adopt the January 16, 2025, Business Meeting minutes was made by Mr. Hinkhaus, seconded by Mr. Parker, and unanimously approved by the Board.

**PLUMBING COMPLAINT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Schott reported the following findings of the Complaint Committee:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Closed Complaint** | **Under Investigation** | **Sent for A.G. Pre-Charge** | **Criminally Charged** |
| 25-0028 | 24-0060 |  |  |
|  | 24-0061 |  |  |

A motion to accept the findings of the Complaint Committee was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Mr. Parker, and unanimously approved by the Board.

**REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS**

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for January 2025:

 **Candidates Passed Failed Pass %**

 **Tested**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey Natural Gas Fitter | 2 | 1 | 1 | 50% |
| Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter | 39 | 14 | 25 | 36% |
| Master Natural Gas Fitter | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0% |
| Master Plumber/Gas Fitter | 25 | 6 | 19 | 24% |
|  **TOTAL** | 69 | 21 | 48 | 30% |

Ms. Thornton further reported that since January 2025, 69 candidates were tested, 21 candidates passed, 48 failed, for a pass rate of 30%. Since the inception of the test, 12,007 candidates were tested, 4,349 candidates passed, 7,658 failed, for a pass rate of 36%. There are currently 13,566 active licensees.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Thornton read three (3) emails submitted as correspondence. An email was submitted by P. McAuliffe, asking the Board if a license was required for drain cleaning. Chairman Radtka stated that no license was required for drain cleaning provided that they did not access any piping or remove a toilet. Ms. Thornton presented an email submitted by W. McCracken, asking if a Propane Gas Fitter Certificate was required to service propane systems on recreational vehicles. The Board briefly discussed the matter and replied that the matter was out of the Board’s purview, stating that tagged vehicles fall under the jurisdiction of the MD Motor Vehicle Administration. Finally, Ms. Thornton read an email submitted by Mr. D. Hunt, asking if a MD Master Plumber/Gas Fitter license was required to perform roof drain work for stormwater. The Board confirmed that a Master Plumber/Gas Fitter license was required for such services.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Director Marquette began a discussion of HB501/SB431 (the RAISE Act), as requested by Chairman Radtka. Director Marquette stated that testimony had been presented at a February 19, 2025 legislative hearing, but the portion of the bill regarding plumbing apprenticeships had been removed. Director Marquette stated that the Secretary’s office intended to continue to work with the Board and the industry to propose legislation that would allow for approved plumbing apprenticeship programs to be available as a path to licensure with a possible exam waiver.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Radtka expressed concern that the Board had not been presented with much information on new legislation that may be relevant to the Board. He stated that, in the past, the Board had a legislative liaison to keep the Board abreast of new bills and asked if there was someone who could perform that task. Counsel Kinstler stated that she and Director Marquette were actively monitoring the current legislative session for bills that could be of concern or relevance to the plumbing industry of the Board. Director Marquette assured the Board that he would keep them apprised of any such legislation.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Marquette did not offer a report.

**COUNSEL’S REPORT**

Counsel did not offer a report.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chairman Radtka requested an update on House Bill 222. Jonathan Sargeant, Omega Plex, stated that he had some new information about the bi. The Chair recognized Mr. Sargeant who addressed the Board. He stated that there had been a hearing on the bill two weeks prior to the meeting, and that representatives from his organization had testified in opposition to the bill, and that the Department of Labor had done so as well. Mr. Sargeant concluded stating that no other action had been taken on the bill. Chairman Radtka thanked Mr. Sargeant for the information.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The State Board of Plumbing convened in a closed session to review license applications at 10:53a.m., via Google Meets, pursuant to § 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 the license applications.

**REVIEW OF LICENSE APPLICATION:**

Application .01

Counsel presented an application for an original Apprentice Plumber/Gas Fitter license. Counsel stated that the applicant was convicted in 2019 of felony armed robbery, a felony. The applicant was sentenced to incarceration for 20 years, with all but five (5) years suspended, and five (5) years of probation. The applicant submitted a statement regarding the conviction, which Counsel read to the Board. The applicant did not submit any other information as to his probation or employment status. Chairman Radtka stated that he would like to see a letter from his employer to confirm that he was currently employed. Counsel stated that the applicant had been released early on parole and was compliant with his probation and had no other subsequent offences. Mr. Stokes stated that he felt the application should be approved without a letter from his employer because it was unclear if the applicant was currently employed and because without a license, a person could have difficulty obtaining employment. Counsel advised that, generally, a probationer be employed or actively seeking employment bas a condition of probation.

A motion to request that the applicant provide a letter from the applicant’s current or most recent employer confirming their employment was made by Mr. Hinkhaus, seconded by Mr. Stokes and unanimously approved by the Board.

Application .02

Counsel presented an application for an original Apprentice Plumber/Gas Fitter license. The applicant was convicted of 1st degree burglary in 2009, a felony, for which he was sentenced to 90 days of incarceration and five (5) years of probation. The applicant was convicted of violating their probation and was sentenced to 18 months of incarceration and five (5) years of probation, which the applicant completed in 2018. The applicant submitted a statement to the Board, which was read by Counsel. The applicant stated that they were currently employed as a helper and wished to obtain an apprentice license to further their career.

A motion to approve the application was made by Mr. Schott, seconded by Mr. Parker, and unanimously approved by the Board.

Application .03

Counsel presented an application for an original Apprentice Plumber/Gas Fitter license. The applicant was convicted of robbery, a felony, in 2018. He was sentenced to incarceration for 15 years, with all but five (5) years suspended, and five (5) years of probation. The applicant provided a personal statement explaining the circumstances that led to the conviction, which was read by Counsel.

A motion to approve the application was made by Mr. Schott, seconded by Mr. Parker, and unanimously approved by the Board.

Application .04

Counsel presented an application for a reciprocal Master Plumber/Gas Fitter license. The applicant was convicted of misdemeanor theft in 2014, for which they were sentenced to incarceration for 18 months. The applicant was also convicted of first-degree burglary, a felony, for which they were sentenced to incarceration for six (6) years, with all but 18 months suspended, and two (2) years of probation. The applicant completed his probation in 2017 and had no other convictions. The applicant submitted a statement explaining the circumstances that led to their conviction, which Counsel read for the Board.

A motion to approve the application was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Mr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board.

A motion to return to the business meeting was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Hinkhaus, and unanimously approved by the Board at 11:17 a.m.

The Board resumed the open session of the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

A motion to approve the findings of the closed session was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Mr. Hinkhaus and unanimously approved by the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon Mr. Schott’s Motion, and Mr. Parker’s second, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 am.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Charles Marquette Date**

**Executive Director**

**Signed on behalf of the Board as voted and approved on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**