**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** June 12, 2025

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

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

 Conference Room 3309

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

 Leif Hancock, Industry Member

 Craig Stokes, Industry Member

Robert Parker, Consumer Member

Megan Klepsig, Industry Member

**Absent:** Keith Horton, Industry Member

 Richard Bowers, Consumer Member

**LABOR Officials & Staff Present:** John Dove, Commissioner, Occupational and Professional

 Licensing

Charles Marquette, Executive Director, Mechanical Licensing

Sloane Fried Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General

Matthew McKinney, Legislative Liaison, Occupational and

 Professional Licensing

LaKissha Thornton, Administrative Officer III

Ritchie Blymier, Investigator, Mechanical Licensing

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

 Kathy Stradley, MPHCC

 Jonathan Sargeant, Omega Plex

 William Sompayrac, Pipeline Training Institute

 Felicia Savage, Public

 James Parker, Public

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Hinkhaus called the June 12, 2025, Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:39 a.m.

Counsel Kinstler informed the members of the Board and meeting guests that staff had been notified of Mr. Parker’s (member of the public) intent to record the meeting, and that the meeting was being recorded.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

A motion to adopt the agenda for the June 12, 2025, Board meeting was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Mr. Hancock, and unanimously approved by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to adopt the April 17, 2025, Business Meeting minutes was made by Mr. Stokes seconded by Mr. Hancock and unanimously approved by the Board.

**PLUMBING COMPLAINT COMMITTEE**

Vice-Chairman Hinkhaus reported the following findings of the Complaint Committee:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Closed Complaint** | **Under Investigation** | **Sent for A.G. Pre-Charge** | **Criminally Charged** |
| 25-0015 |  | 25-0005 |  |
| 25-0016 |  | 25-0014 |  |

Vice-Chairman Hinkhaus also reported that the Committee was not able to discuss cases 25-0017, 25-0021 and 25-0025, and that the findings of those cases would be reported during the July meeting.

Chairman Radtka joined the meeting at 10:41 am.

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

**APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairman Radtka stated that due to Mr. Schott’s departure from the State Board of Plumbing, that the Application Review Committee needed to be reformed. He stated that the Committee’s purpose was to review applications submitted to PSI to sit for an exam that PSI could approve. The Committee members would review the documentation submitted by the applicant and determine if they should be approved to sit for an exam. Chairman Radtka asked if anyone would like to volunteer to join the committee. Mr. Stokes and Mr. Hancock volunteered to join the Committee.

A motion to reestablish the Application Review Committee comprised of Chairman Radtka, Mr. Stokes, and Mr. Hancock was made by Mr. Hinkhaus, seconded by Mr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board.

**REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS**

Ms. Thornton reported the following statistical summary submitted by PSI for April 2025:

  **Candidates Passed Failed Pass %**

 **Tested**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey Natural Gas Fitter | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0% |
| Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter | 48 | 19 | 29 | 40% |
| Master Natural Gas Fitter | 5 | 1 | 4 | 20% |
| Master Plumber/Gas Fitter | 42 | 15 | 27 | 36% |
|  **TOTAL** | 98 | 35 | 63 | 36% |

Ms. Thornton reported the following statistical summary submitted by PSI for May 2025:

 **Candidates Passed Failed Pass %**

 **Tested**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey Natural Gas Fitter | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40% |
| Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter | 62 | 31 | 31 | 50% |
| Master Natural Gas Fitter | 5 | 4 | 1 | 80% |
| Master Plumber/Gas Fitter | 37 | 13 | 24 | 35% |
|  **TOTAL** | 109 | 50 | 59 | 46% |

Ms. Thornton further reported that since January 2025, 446 candidates were tested, 171 candidates passed, 275 failed, for a pass rate of 38%. Since the inception of the test, 12,384 candidates were tested, 4,499 candidates passed, 7,885 failed, for a pass rate of 36%.There are currently 13,841 active licensees.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Radtka read an email submitted by E. Randesi asking if a plumbing license was required to install water softeners. Chairman Radtka replied that a Master Plumber is required to connect domestic water to and from water softeners. He clarified that a license is not required to set up the equipment, but the work must be performed by a licensed Master Plumber.

Chairman Radtka then read an email from E. Sappington Jr., an Anne Arundel County Plumbing and Mechanical Inspector, reporting that he has been instructed not to verify a mechanical contractor’s license status because the County is not authorized to do so.

Chairman Radtka asked Ms. Thornton whether she had received any other information from Mr. Sappington about his question because he was unsure of what he was asking the Board. Ms. Thornton replied that she had not. Counsel Kinstler advised the Board that it could not advise Mr. Sappington to disregard the instruction he was given from his employer or supervisor. She recommended that the Board advise Mr. Sappington that he should consult the Anne Arundel County Attorney’s office or the Anne Arundel County Permits office. Chairman Radtka agreed and instructed staff to advise Mr. Sappington that the Board could not advise him to ignore the instruction give to him at the County level, that he could consult County officials, and that if he had more questions to specify them and reach out to the Board again.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Discussion on Backflow Compliance Notification

Chairman Radtka requested that staff report the results of the request for backflow instructors to provide proof of their compliance with training and recertification requirements set out in COMAR 09.20.04.02. Ms. Thornton reported that all providers were to submit proof of compliance by May 4, 2025. She continued reporting that the following providers had been removed from the list for not providing proof of compliance:

1. Dustin Kruger- Kruger’s Training Academy
2. James Yacovissi- Chesapeake Cross Connection Institute
3. Charles Chalk- Chalk Instruction
4. James Mazzullo- Washington Suburban Master Plumbers Association

Chairman Radtka requested that staff provide him with a list of all the approved providers, to which Ms. Thornton stated she would provide for him

Commissioner Dove joined the meeting at 11:01 am.

Discussion on Licensing fee increase

Director Marquette reminded the Board and announced for the members of the public that the licensing fees for the State Board of Plumbing would increase on July 1, 2025. The Board voted to raise the licensing fees in 2023. Director Marquette continued, stating that a mass email would be sent to State Board of Plumbing licensees to remind them of the fee increase.

Discussion of Senate Bill 175/ House Bill 222 – Fuel Gas Piping and CSST

Director Marquette informed the Board that House Bill 222 had been passed and signed by the Governor. He stated that the legislation had been shared with the Board with the meeting materials. Chairman Radtka asked Director Marquette if the Board would be involved in the requirement to establish regulations, as set forth by the bill. Director Marquette acknowledged that the bill required a committee to be formed and that the Department of Labor’s role would be handled by the Division of Labor and Industry (“DLI”) and that he did not anticipate a need for the Board’s involvement. Director Marquette stated that he would provide the Board with details relating to the formation and action of the Committee as they became available.

Plumbing Code Update

Director Marquette reported he was still working through the incorporation by reference process to adopt the codes that had not been adopted by DLI. Chairman Radtka asked Director Marquette to confirm that all the code updates for the codes that had been adopted by the Board would be readopted. Director Marquette confirmed that they would be.

Discussion on Proposed Reciprocity Agreement with DC

Director Marquette reminded the Board of the discussion regarding establishing a reciprocity agreement with the District of Columbia (“DC”) that was held at the April meeting. He stated that the proposed language for the agreement was still being drafted. Director Marquette informed the Board that the DC Plumbing Board was currently using the 2012 IPC and IFGC Codes and asked if the Board members had any objection to pursing the agreement based on DC using the 2012 codes. The Board stated they did not have any issues regarding the matter and requested that Director Marquette continue with the process to establish a reciprocal agreement. Chairman Radtka asked if Director Marquette had spoken with the VA Board to attempt to establish a reciprocal agreement, to which Director Marquette confirmed he had not.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Introduction of New Board Member

Chairman Radtka officially introduced Megan Klepsig as a new member of the Board. He stated that Ms. Klepsig is an industry member representing the region including Harford County. Ms. Klepsig thanked the Board for welcoming her. She stated that he had been in the plumbing industry since 2008 and was currently running her family’s business. Chairman Radtka thanked Ms. Klepsig for her participation and welcomed her to the Board.

Reestablishment of the Complaint Committee

Chairman Radtka stated that as Mr. Schott was no longer on the Board that the Complaint Committee needed to be reestablished. He then explained that the function of the Committee was to review complaints submitted to the State Board of Plumbing for violations of the plumbing codes, statues, and or regulations and asked if anyone would like to volunteer to join the Committee. Mr. Stokes and Ms. Klepsig both volunteered to join. Chairman Radtka stated that he preferred to keep the number of committee members to three (3) and asked that only either Mr. Stokes or Ms. Klepsig join the Committee at this time. Mr. Stokes then withdrew himself from consideration.

A motion to reestablish the Complaint Committee comprising of Chairman Radtka, Mr. Hinkhaus, and Ms. Klepsig was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Ms. Klepsig and unanimously approved by the Board.

Ms. Savage requested permission to ask a question. Chairman Radtka allowed her to proceed. Ms. Savage asked if a licensed VA Master would be accepted for licensure by Maryland. Chairman Radtka stated that provided an applicant meets the requirements to sit for the license exam (hours requirement and backflow certification), the person would be allowed to sit for the exam. Ms. Savage thanked the Board for answering her question.

Discussion on Proposing Legislation to Remove Apprentice License Renewal Limits

Chairman Radtka stated that Business and Professions Articles §12-308.1, imposes limits on the number of times an apprentice license can be renewed. He stated that the law went into effect in 2012 and allows a person to renew an apprentice license for two (2) consecutive times after it was originally issued, after which renewal requires the individual to apply to take the journeyman license exam to renew. Counsel Kinstler provided some historical knowledge of the law, stating that, at the time it was proposed and passed, the Board was under the impression that employers may have been discouraging or holding back individuals from obtaining a journeyman license. The Board pursued legislation that restricts an apprentice from renewing after two renewals without having to apply to take the journeyman license exam.

The law was intended to encourage applicants to progress in the industry. Counsel also stated that, at the time, the law was created against the advice of Counsel, and that, since its passage, Board staff have encountered many licensed apprentices who do not wish to pursue a journeyman license and that the law has created problems for apprentices in the industry. Chairman Radtka asked staff to confirm that you could hold a license for six (6) consecutive years, which Ms. Thornton confirmed.

Director Marquette commented the law creates a hardship for those apprentices who are not prepared to sit for the exam after six (6) years or who do not wish to advance to the journeyman level. Counsel asked whether draft language for proposed legislation was required at this time. Mr. McKinney stated that there was no need to draft legislation until the Secretary determined that it could proceed.

Mr. Stokes commented that he felt the law should remain in place, as it would help to discourage apprentice level licensees from working above the scope of their license because they had been in the industry for so long. Mr. Stokes questioned what was being done to combat individuals working above and outside of the scope of their license. Counsel replied that, as the Board was complaint driven, the Board rely on a complaint containing an allegation of someone working outside of the scope of their license; otherwise, that there was little that could be done in the way of enforcement without a complaint. Mr. Stokes stated that he felt that keeping this law in place would help to combat that, as individuals are required to advance to continue working in the industry. Counsel stated that she understood Mr. Stokes’ concerns but reiterated that the Board had little enforcement authority unless an allegation of a potential violation was brought to them, but that several licensed apprentices have been burdened by the requirement to sit for a license exam they did not wish to pursue to renew a license necessary to continue working.

Chairman Radtka stated that he would like the Board members to review the original bill submitted in 2012 that became law. He asked staff to distribute the original bill for discussion at the July meeting. Director Marquette commented in reference to Mr. Stokes’ concern over apprentices working outside of the scope of their license, that the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing was aggressively working to broaden awareness of the need to be properly licensed to work in industry, to include understanding the scope of each class of licensure. Chairman Radtka mentioned that a notice that had been put out by the Mechanical Licensing Unit in the past to promote awareness of the penalties for working without or outside of the scope of a license and that he would send that notice to Director Marquette for review and possible redistribution.

Wayne Fishpaw, Pipe Trades Technologies, requested to be allowed to address the Board before the meeting. Chairman Radtka introduced Mr. Fishpaw. Mr. Fishpaw expressed concerns over PSI not accepting the 8-hour backflow recertification certificate to qualify them to sit for a Plumber/Gas Fitter exam. He stated that PSI was only accepting the original 32-hour certification. Chairman Radtka stated that Director Marquette had spoken about the issued and that both agreed that the 8-hour recertification should be accepted by PSI to sit for an exam. Counsel advised that if PSI was not accepting the 8-hour recertification, they should be instructed to immediately accept it moving forward. Director Marquette stated that he would contact PSI and address the issue.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Marquette did not offer a report.

**COUNSEL’S REPORT**

Counsel did not offer a report, but did remind the Board that she had two applications to present in a Closed Session.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chairman Radtka thanked the Board for their participation in the meeting and on the Board Committees. He apologized for having had computer issues causing him to be delayed to the meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The State Board of Plumbing convened in a closed session to review two (2) license applications at 11:40 a.m., via Google Meet, 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 submitted by an applicant for the renewal of their Journeyman Plumber/Gas Fitter license. The applicant was convicted in Delaware in 2024 of misdemeanor assault. They were sentenced to one (1) year of incarceration, suspended, and probation for one (1) year. They were also convicted of misdemeanor endangerment of a child to which they were sentenced to incarceration for one (1) year, suspended. They were also convicted of misdemeanor possession of a controlled substance to which they were sentenced to six (6) months incarceration, which was suspended. The applicant violated their probation and was sentenced to incarceration for seven (7) months. Counsel stated that the applicant did not provide any information regarding their probation status, nor did they provide a letter from their employer. The applicant did submit a personal statement which Counsel read for the Board. The applicant also submitted proof of completion of the Road to Recovery Program from Delaware.

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

Application .02

Counsel presented an application submitted by an applicant for an original Apprentice Plumber/Gas Fitter license. The applicant was convicted of home invasion in 2019, a felony. They were sentenced to 25 years’ incarceration with all but five (5) years suspended. They were also convicted of felony use of a handgun in the commission of a crime and sentenced to 15 years’ incarceration, all suspended, and five (5) years of probation. The applicant provided a personal statement, which Counsel read for the Board, as well as transcripts of the plumbing courses they completed while incarcerated.

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

A motion to return to the business meeting was made by Mr. Hinkhaus, seconded by Mr. Hancock, and unanimously approved by the Board at 11:56 a.m.

The Board resumed the business meeting at 11:56 a.m.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon Mr. Stokes’ Motion, and Mr. Hinkhaus’ second, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

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

**Charles Marquette Date**

**Executive Director**

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