**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** November 21, 2024

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

**Location:** 1100 N. Eutaw Street

First Floor Conference Room

Baltimore, MD 21201

Held via Video Conference

[meet.google.com/qks-niad-yfo](about:blank)

By Phone via Teleconference

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

**Members Present:** Joseph Radtka, Chairman

Leif Hancock, Industry Member

Hayward Hinkhaus, Industry Member

Craig Stokes, Industry Member

Robert Parker, Consumer Member

**Absent:** Gregory Schott, Industry Member

Keith Horton, Vice-Chairman, Industry Member

Richard Bowers, Consumer Member

**LABOR Officials & Staff Present:** Todd Blackistone, Interim Executive Director

Sloane Fried Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General

LaKissha Thornton, Administrative Officer III

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

Kathy Stradley, MDPHCC

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Radtka called the November 21, 2024, Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:37 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

A motion to adopt the agenda of the November 21, 2024 business meeting was made by Mr. Hinkhaus, seconded by Mr. Parker, and unanimously approved by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The ratification of the September 19, 2024 and October 17, 2024 meeting minutes was deferred until the December meeting. Counsel reminded staff of the duty to post the Board’s meeting minutes to the Board’s website in timely manner in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Counsel suggested that staff distribute the September and October meeting minutes to the Board members prior to the December meeting. She advised that the Board members could review and approve the minutes, via email, for posting to the Board’s website and then ratify the meeting minutes at the December meeting. Counsel reminded the Board that, when responding to staff regarding any correspondence sent in reference to the minutes, that they only reply to staff to ensure that an “electronic quorum” of the Board would not be established.

**PLUMBING COMPLAINT COMMITTEE**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Closed Complaint** | **Under Investigation** | **Sent for A.G. Pre-Charge** | **Criminally Charged** |
| 25-0013 |  | 230-0019 |  |
| 25-0020 |  |  |  |
| 25-0022 |  |  |  |

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

**REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS**

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for November 2024:

**Candidates Passed Failed Pass %**

**Tested**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey Natural Gas Fitter | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0% |
| Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter | 33 | 7 | 26 | 21% |
| Master Natural Gas Fitter | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100% |
| Master Plumber/Gas Fitter | 24 | 10 | 14 | 42% |
| **TOTAL** | 64 | 18 | 46 | 28% |

Ms. Thornton further reported that since January 2024, 663 candidates were tested, 253 candidates passed, 410 failed, for a pass rate of 38%. Since the inception of the test, 11,838 candidates were tested, 4,293 candidates passed, 7,545 failed, for a pass rate of 36%. There are currently 13,703 active licensees.

Chairman Radtka made a statement regarding the cumulative PSI statistic report. He stated that the number of applicants who had passed and/or failed did include those who had retested for the exam.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to be discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Code Adoption:

Counsel stated that she believed that former Executive Director Bull had submitted a concept proposal to the Secretary’s office regarding the proposed adoption of updated plumbing codes. She requested that Interim Executive Director Blackistone confirm whether it had been submitted or, in the alternative, to prepare and submit a concept proposal on behalf of the Board.

Addition of a Backflow Instructor for Local 5

Ms. Thornton advised the Board that Local 5 requested approval to add a backflow instructor to their program and was seeking instruction on how to do so. Chairman Radtka advised that they should send the individuals qualifications to staff to be forward to the Board for review.

**NEW BUSINESS**

TREEO

Chairman Radtka informed the Board that Rob Wolf of TREEO had been inspecting backflow programs in the state on TREEO’s behalf. He expressed that he felt that the Board should be responsible for conducting inspections of backflow programs for compliance. Counsel reminded the Board that TREEO had informed the Board some months ago that they intended to begin onsite inspections of TREEO certified programs to ensure compliance and that she did not feel the Board could prohibit them from doing so. She confirmed that while TREEO has the right to perform its own inspections, it did not usurp the Board’s authority to consider the method of inspections as well.

MATC Update

Interim Director Todd Blackistone introduced himself to the Board and stated that Christopher Maclarion intended to have an update for the Board regarding his request that the Board consider approving an apprenticeship program that would qualify an applicant for a journeyman license without examination but prior to the Board meeting, had requested that he appear at the next Board meeting. Mr. Blackistone stated that he would work with Mr. Maclarion to update the Board as information became available.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Interim Executive Director Todd Blackistone reintroduced himself to the Board. He continued stating that he was not sure he would act as Interim Executive Director, as the Department has begun the recruitment process to hire a new Executive Director for Mechanical Licensing. He asked that the Board reach out to him if they needed anything before the new Director was hired.

**COUNSEL’S REPORT**

Counsel did not offer a report but did wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chairman Radtka welcomed Mr. Blackistone, thanked everyone for their continued participation on the Board, and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Board did not convene in a Closed Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon Mr. Hinkhaus’ Motion, and Mr. Parker’s second, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

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

**Todd Blackistone Date**

**Interim Executive Director**

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