**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** March 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

Matt McKinney, Director of Legislative Affairs, Occupational

 and Professional Licensing

LaKissha Thornton, Administrative Officer III

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Wayne Fishpaw, Pipe Trades Technologies

Jessie Fields, Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades

Christopher Barnes, Pen Air and Hydraulics

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Radtka called the March 20, 2025, Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:35 a.m. after a quorum of Board members was established.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to adopt the February 20, 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** |
| 24-0065 | 24-0061 | 23-0020 |  |
| 24-0066 | 24-0062 | 24-0060 |  |
| 25-0030 | 24-0064 |  |  |

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.

**REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS**

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for February 2025:

 **Candidates Passed Failed Pass %**

 **Tested**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey Natural Gas Fitter | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter | 28 | 8 | 20 | 29% |
| Master Natural Gas Fitter | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0% |
| Master Plumber/Gas Fitter | 31 | 8 | 23 | 26% |
|  **TOTAL** | 65 | 18 | 47 | 28% |

Ms. Thornton further reported that since January 2025, 134 candidates were tested, 39 candidates passed, 95 failed, for a pass rate of 29%. Since the inception of the test, 12,072 candidates were tested, 4,367 candidates passed, 7,705 failed, for a pass rate of 36%. There are currently 13,589 active licensees.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Radtka stated that three (3) items had been submitted as correspondence.

An email was submitted by C. Barnes, asking the Board if a license was required for compressed air piping installation. The Board agreed that a plumbing license was not required. Chairman Radtka suggested that the question also be asked of the HVACR Board to give Mr. Barnes a more complete answer. Director Marquette stated that the question would be discussed at the next meeting of the Board of HVACR Contractors.

Chairman Radtka read an email submitted by W. Brandau, asking the Board has adopted any standards regarding C3H6 propylene gas. After a brief discussion the Board determined that they did not regulate C3H6 gas, and had not adopted any standards regarding sale, use or transport. Mr. Schott suggested that he be advised to consult the HVACR Board in cases in which the gas was used for refrigeration. Director Marquette stated he would present the questions to the HVACR Board as well.

Ms. Thornton stated that she would provide a response to both Mr. Barnes and Mr. Brandau on behalf of the Board.

Chairman Radtka informed the Board that the Maryland Plumbing & Mechanical Inspectors Association would be holding its annual training on April 4th and 5th. He then asked the Board if they would vote to approve the MPMIA training to provide eight (8) hours of CE Training for Inspectors.

A motion to approve the MPMIA training was made by Mr. Schott, seconded by Mr. Hinkhaus and unanimously approved by the Board.

Counsel Kinstler asked the members of the Board to notify staff or Chairman Radtka if they planned to attend the training to ensure that a quorum of the Board was not constituted or, in the alternative, that notice of a potential “meeting” could be provided in advance on the Board’s website.

**OLD BUSINESS**

HB501/SB431—Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy

Director Marquette continued the discussion on HB501/SB431 (the RAISE Act), reminding the Board that proposed language pertaining to a plumbing apprenticeship had been removed from the bill. Counsel confirmed that the remaining language in the bills did not pertain to the plumbing trade or Board.

HB222/SB175—Fuel Gas Systems and CSST

Director Marquette stated that House Bill 222/Senate Bill 175 had been sent to the Board for review. He pointed out that some of the language in the proposed bills had been changed per the suggestions of the Board, removing the vendor specific language and using language based upon the current code standards. Chairman Radtka stated that it appeared that the new language called for a study to be conducted by the MD Dept. of Labor, Fire Prevention Commission and some local inspectors. He questions whether a committee to conduct the study had or would be formed and when. Director Marquette that he believed the intent of the study was to define where the Maryland Department of Labor (“MD Labor”) and Board stood on the issue, and that the Board and MD Labor would have to wait for guidance and instruction from the Office of the Secretary before moving forward with forming a committee. Chairman Radtka expressed concern over obtaining approval before the end of the legislative session, to which Director Marquette replied that he would reach out to the Office of the Secretary after the meeting and keep the Board abreast.

Chairman Radtka also pointed out that there was currently a code standard regarding CSST and that the standard required that it be arc resistant. He stated that the current bill states that CSST must be non-conductive, which is not the same. He also noted that the bill says that the tubing must be grounded, but the code standard requires that it be bonded. Director requested that Chairman Radtka provide him with the specific code standard so he could make the Secretary and the Commissioner of O&P licensing aware. Chairman Radtka stated that he would provide it after the meeting.

Chairman Radtka then questioned whether notification requiring that all approved backflow providers to provide proof that they have complied with the training requirements set forth by COMAR 09.20.04.02. Director Marquette stated that the language for the letter was still being approved by the Commissioner and Secretary. He stated the letters would be sent once the draft had been approved. Director Marquette asked the Board if there was a preferred timeline for providers to respond to the Board. The Board decided that 30 days would be sufficient. Director Marquette thanked the Board for their input and stated that he anticipated the letters being sent out in the next week.

**NEW BUSINESS**

PEX\_AL-PEX Gas Pipe System

Chairman Radtka stated that he had distributed information to the Board on the Jones Stephens PEX\_AL-PEX Gas Pipe Fitting System. He asked that the Board members review the item and that it be placed on the April agenda for discussion under New Business.

Reciprocal Licensing Update

Director Marquette informed the Board that he and Ms. Thornton met with two members of the District of Columbia (“DC”) Board of Industrial Trades (“DC Board") to discuss a potential reciprocal agreement between Maryland and DC. He stated the key points from the discussion were:

1. The difference in the number of hours required to obtain a license in each jurisdiction. He stated that DC requires 8000 hours to become Journeyman Plumber/Gas Fitter and 16000 hours to become a Master Plumber/Gas Fitter. Maryland requires 7500 hours to become a Journeyman and 11,250 hours to become a Master Plumber.
2. Maryland requires a backflow certification to obtain a Master or Journeyman Plumber/Gas Fitter license, while DC does not.
3. There is no separate Natural Gas Fitter license issued in DC.
4. The DC Board of Industrial Trades is currently using the 2012 IPGC and IFC. Maryland is currently using the 2018 codes.

Director Marquette stated that, despite the differences, it seemed possible to form an agreement to the benefit of licensed individuals and consumers. He noted that DC would not object to the Board requiring DC licensees to obtain a backflow certification to qualify for a Maryland license. The DC Board also indicated that they were looking to adopt newer versions of applicable codes and that a reciprocity agreement may speed the process of code adoption for them. Chairman Radtka expressed support for forming a reciprocal licensing agreement with DC and requested that the Board take a vote to allow Director Marquette to begin drafting a reciprocity agreement with DC.

A motion to allow Director Marquette to draft a reciprocal licensing agreement with DC was made by Mr. Stokes, seconded by Mr. Schott and unanimously approved by the Board.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Marquette reported that the code adoption process was still moving forward and that he would apprise the Board of any new information.

**COUNSEL’S REPORT**

Counsel did not offer a report.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Chairman Radtka stated that he was pleased that the Board was pursuing reciprocity with DC and that he hoped an agreement could be reached with both DC and Virginia in the future. He thanked the Board for their participation in the meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Board did not convene in a Closed Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon Mr. Hinkhaus’ Motion, and Mr. Stokes’ second, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:14 am.

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

**Charles Marquette Date**

**Executive Director**

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