



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
ADVISORY BOARD OF PLUMBERS

*Mail correspondence to: PO Box 44470 □ Olympia, Washington 98504-4470*

Meeting Minutes January 21, 2014

**Board Members**

Steve Menne, Journey Level Plumber, Chairman  
Dave Weisbeck, Public Member  
Linda Houser, Plumbing Business  
Evan Conklin, Plumbing Business  
Dave Weickum, Specialty Plumber  
Jake Tapani, Journey Level Plumber  
Mike Brewer, Specialty Plumbing Business

**Department of Labor & Industries**

Dean Simpson, Chief, Contractor Registration/Plumber Certification//FAS  
Bruce Springer, Plumbing Technical Specialist  
Jesse Jameson, Contractor Technical Specialist  
Jackie Lemons, Plumber Certification Supervisor

**Guests**

Jeff Lippert, UA Local 26  
Charly Mitchel, Mitchel Plumbing, PHCCWA  
Krista Braaksma, State Building Code Council  
Dick Dixon, Gold Seal Mechanical Inc.  
Matthew Lemert, CE Made Simple LLC  
Scott Lemert, Montana Plumbing Board, Vice Chairman  
Vitaliy Russ, Plumber Trainee  
Wendy Burnett, West Sound Pipe Trades

**Call to Order**

The Advisory Board of Plumber's meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. on January 21, 2014.

## **Approve Minutes**

The October 15, 2013 meeting minutes were approved as written.

## **Plumbing Infractions**

Bruce reported there were 99 infractions written for a total of \$29,000.00 for the fourth quarter of 2013.

Steve asked if there was a way to track how much is collected from infractions. Dean replied that Jesse is currently working on a process to find out what the associated costs are for infractions. He added that we don't have a clear answer on the costs of doing business when you include the costs from the Administrative Law Judge and the Attorney General's Office. He hopes to have these answers before the end of the year.

Evan suggested that we try to increase the infraction amounts through legislation. Dean said he is not opposed to that, but suggested adding an appeal bond also. Mike added that we should do something positive to encourage contractors to become compliant, such as; if they become registered we could waive or reduce the fine. Dean said that under Contractor Registration law, he has three options. He can reduce the penalty by \$500.00, ask for restitution and waive the penalty, or pay the penalty. He said he doesn't have the authority under the law to do anything else. He added that warnings are not an option.

Evan said that the fines under plumber certification are so low it doesn't make any difference to the people receiving them. He said when they get caught they are notified of the law and he sees no reason to be forgiving of these people. Mike said he believes forgiving a \$250.00 fine to become compliant is a fantastic investment.

Scott Lemert, Montana Plumbing Board, added that they have had the same issues in Montana. He said that when the fines were increased, the violations decreased. He said they are reaching out to other boards in the region that are experiencing the same problems they are.

Steve added that we need to increase the fines and we need legislation to solve this. Evan said we need to find the weak points, including the plumbing contractor license and generate enough revenue through fines to pay its way. Steve suggested that he would like to form a subcommittee and tackle these issues one step at a time. He added he would like to see the fines increased. Evan disagreed stating that we need to find an enforcement tool that actually does what you want it to do. He said we need to fix the disconnect with the plumbing contractor license. Evan added that if we don't fix the broken links, everything else we do is ineffective.

Evan asked what the inspectors would like to see changed with the laws. Jesse suggested that the plumbing contractor license should be a priority. He added that anyone owning a plumbing company should employ plumbers and plumber trainees. Bruce added that you have a better chance of increasing penalties than you will with the plumbing contractor legislation.

Scott commented that Montana has a master plumber license whereas; you have to be a master plumber to own a plumbing business. He said that they started seeking injunctions to stop unlicensed plumbers. He added it has been really effective. He offered to share all of the legislation they pursued as well as their rules.

Steve suggested we set a meeting date and commit to meeting every two weeks until we determine what legislation to pursue and who will sponsor the legislation.

Discussion followed.

### **Fiscal Update**

Dean reported the fund is healthy and growing. The fund balance as of November 2013 is \$317,000.00.

### **Underground Economy**

Dean referred to the Underground Economy handout. The handout includes the number of jobsites visited, the number of contractors checked on site, and the number of infractions issued by program. Dean added the plumbing infractions continue to grow.

### **Rainwater Catchment**

Bruce mentioned that he had attended a class on rainwater catchment. He said that it does fall under plumbing and mentioned that the board had discussed having a committee to look into it further. Steve suggested that we could discuss which direction we want to go at the upcoming legislation meetings.

### **WAC Rules**

Bruce said that we are in the process of reviewing WAC rules. He added that if anyone had any suggestions for rule changes, to submit their ideas. Dean stated that we are mostly just looking at clean up. He said we will share the changes with everyone and stakeholdering will play a major role.

Discussion followed.

### **Plumbing Legislation**

Dean mentioned that there are several bills that are active. He said that HB 2501 would require an individual pay \$200.00 or take a contractor training course before they are allowed to register as a contractor. Dean said HB 1760, which deals with like in kind replacement, has come back from last year. He added SHB 2146 involves a reduction in penalty amounts.

Discussion followed.

### **New Business**

Evan mentioned that Labor & Industries has made a few changes to their Protect My Home website which he believes are moves in the right direction. He added that the search engine for looking up businesses and tradespeople however, brings back too many results and there is no way to narrow your search.

Dean said that the Verify website is still being fine-tuned and it is not complete yet.

Scott extended an invitation to the Advisory Board to form an alliance with Montana. Evan agreed that it was a great idea.

Motion to adjourn.