



STATE OF WASHINGTON
ADVISORY BOARD OF PLUMBERS

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

Meeting Minutes January 20, 2015

Board Members

Steve Menne, Journey Level Plumber, Chair
Jake Tapani, Journey Level Plumber
Dave Weisbeck, Public Member
Evan Conklin, Plumbing Business
Linda Houser, Plumbing Business
Dave Weickum, Specialty 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
Eric Sackstein, Construction Compliance Inspector

Guests

Ed Holmes, United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 32
Brad Moore, Washington State Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters
Reuben Bautista, United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters
Randy Scott, Washington State Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters
Russell Thompson, Washington State Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters
Jed Scheuermann, International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO)

Call to Order

The Advisory Board of Plumber's meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. on January 20, 2015.

Approve Minutes

The October 21, 2014 meeting minutes were approved as written.

Advisory Board Appointments

Jackie reported that there are five board positions whose terms will be expiring on July 1, 2015. Dave Weisbeck, Dave Weickum, and Mike Brewer all agreed to serve another three year term. Steve Menne, representing a journey level plumber, will be retiring. Evan Conklin, representing a plumbing business, did not indicate whether he would agree to serve again.

Recruitment for upcoming vacancies will begin in April.

Dean mentioned he would like to bring his managers to the next board meeting and allow the board the opportunity to speak with them. Mike suggested that we schedule the next meeting in Tumwater so it would be more convenient for them to attend.

Plumbing Infractions

Bruce reported there were 100 infractions issued for a total of \$34,000.00 for the fourth quarter of 2014. Evan said he's been trying to find a certified plumber to hire because he is shorthanded. He said Work Source or Craig's List are the only places to find a certified plumber right now and there are none available. He added that most of the work is being done by unlicensed plumbers and he sees more people advertising plumbing without a contractor license. He said there is no regulatory mechanism in place to do anything about it. Evan said we need better enforcement and if we don't take a serious look at the advertising aspect of this business, nothing else we're doing will make a difference. He added 100 infractions in a quarter in this state doesn't put the slightest dent in what's really going on out there. Evan said if we're going to do anything, I'd like to do something that makes a difference.

Bruce stated that the plumber certification laws only deals with the individual and does not deal with the contractor. He said that if they are registered as a specialty plumbing contractor, they cannot subcontract the work out and we can write an infraction for advertising plumbing if they don't employ a plumber. If they are a general contractor, they can legitimately subcontract the work out to a plumbing contractor or hire a certified plumber to work for them.

Dean commented that there are 53,000 registered contractors and about one third are specialty contractors. We have 20 or 21 inspectors in the field and last month they issued about 189 infractions. He said they are an awesome team, but they're a drop in the bucket. Dean said with the way business is done now, we do more for plumbers than has ever been done in the past. He said the inspectors have a large scope of work. They check plumbing, electrical, and contractors, and they also make referrals to industrial insurance and collections. Dean said he also has the Detection Tracking Unit that reviews advertising. Steve said the board will support whatever tools the department needs for enforcement. Evan commented we need more people on every level.

Jake asked why the plumbing inspectors aren't doing anything about compliance. Bruce reported that there is nothing that says you have to be a certified plumber to be a plumbing inspector. Dave Weisbeck replied that he's the only one on the eastside that is a journey level plumber and an inspector. He said he does ask to see plumbing licenses when people apply for permits. He said the other inspectors don't ask for licenses. Dave commented that plumbing is on the back burner when it comes to inspectors on the eastside. He added that Labor & Industries does the best they can with the people they have. He said every time he calls a compliance inspector they are there immediately. Evan commented that the compliance inspectors are very responsive to a lead.

Fiscal Update

Dean reported the fund balance is \$315,470.00 as of December 2014. He added the fund is stable, but we've had a few hits lately with legal costs. Evan said the fund seems stable but not particularly growing.

Evan asked what the cost of an inspector is and Dean replied it's about \$115,000. He said there are 21 inspectors and three supervisors. Evan said they generate more revenue than they cost. Dean said the biggest return from inspectors is industrial insurance referrals. Evan said if we have a need for more inspectors and more inspectors generate more revenue, what is the justification for not hiring more of them? Dean said he can only spend what is allotted. He said he would like to have support for additional FTE's under the Fraud Program but it doesn't make sense to hire five more inspectors and not have the staff to process the additional work that they generate.

Evan asked if there is anything the board can do. Dean suggested that it would be good for the board to meet with his managers to tell their story.

Brad mentioned that we've discussed legislation over the years. He added, has the board ever written a letter to the department to discuss proposing legislation? He asked where is the resistance to making these changes coming from. If the purpose of the Advisory Board is to advise the department of issues relevant to the trade and we give advice and it's not taken, what is the purpose of the board?

Dean said that he's more than willing to take this back to his management and talk to them about it.

Ed suggested that it seems to him that we should put together a step by step plan of what we're going to do and who is going to do it so there is a way to measure progress and provide results. He said that's the only way we'll effectively make changes.

Discussion followed.

Plumbing Legislation/WAC Rules

Randy mentioned that Senate Bill 5139 has been introduced regarding a plumbing code interpretation. He added a city inspector in Bellingham has determined that for buildings over 4 stories in height in Class B occupancy, per the 1984 Uniform Building Code, they can use the International Plumbing Code as the code. Randy said it is an obscure clause that was put in the building code council's enabling legislation back in the 70's to allow the City of Seattle to continue in a high rise building boom that they were experiencing without being hammered by the Building Code Council at the time. The inspector is using the obscure clause to implement two plumbing codes in Bellingham. SB 5139 removes that exemption. Randy encouraged the group to weigh in on the legislation and let the legislators know that we don't need two plumbing codes in the State of Washington.

Dean said we met with Jim King and he's going to propose some language that would allow the EL06 and EL07B to perform like in kind replacement on plumbing fixtures.

Bruce reported that we are following the process for WAC rule changes. He added the process is lengthy. We have to send the changes out to stakeholders and allow them time to comment. We have to track the comments to find out who opposes the changes and who supports them. We have to provide a communication plan to show that we've followed the process. Dean said the CR101 would probably be filed in April. He added after the CR101 is filed, it doesn't take too long.

Bruce added that a lot of the changes to the WAC rules are housekeeping. Visible licensing was added to the rules at stakeholder request. There are a few new definitions added due to court decisions. He said we are limited as to what we can do because of the statute.

Discussion followed.

New Business

Jed reported that Senate Bill 5185 has been introduced and it changes the minimum length of time for code cycles from three years to six years. He added that this is a public health and safety issue and not about selling code books. The codes currently change on a three year cycle, and embrace all of the changes and innovations in our industry. If the code cycle is changed to six years, none of the new technologies are embraced on a regular basis and the industry and consumer are left languishing far behind. He encouraged the group to speak out against extending code cycles to six years.

Motion to adjourn.