



STATE OF WASHINGTON
ADVISORY BOARD OF PLUMBERS

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Meeting Minutes October 21, 2014

Board Members

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

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
Joaquim Perez, Construction Compliance Inspector
Eric Sackstein, Construction Compliance Inspector

Guests

Krista Braaksma, WA State Building Code Council
Richard Dixon, Gold Seal Mechanical
Brad Moore, WSA of UA
Dale Wilcox, Seattle Area Pipe Trades Education Center
Ryan Santeford, NW WA Pipe Trades Training Council
Wendy Brady, Roto Rooter
Bill Buckingham, South West Plumbing
Connie Buckingham, South West Plumbing
Randy Scott, WSA of UA
Larry Stevens, MCA

Call to Order

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

Approve Minutes

The July 15, 2014 meeting minutes were approved as written.

Plumbing Infractions

Bruce reported there were 66 infractions issued for a total of \$22,750.00 for the third quarter of 2014. Evan mentioned Washington Energy Service has a long list of infractions that goes way back. He said they are really pushing plumbing and the infractions don't seem to affect their business model. He said they seem to have built in the cost of the infractions into their overhead. He asked if there was any way to get more incentive for them to comply. Bruce said there isn't any way to get there under Chapter 18.106. He added that we can deny renewal of a plumber or trainee that doesn't pay the infractions, but we have no way to do anything to the contractor. Steve said that it would take legislation to require a plumbing contractor register under this chapter. Evan asked if there was any way to tweak the rules. Bruce explained that he has talked with the AG's office several times regarding this issue, and there is no way to get there with the current laws.

Further discussion followed under Plumbing Legislation/WAC Rules.

Fiscal Update

Dean reported the fund balance is \$315,571.00 as of September 2014. The balance is still healthy and there are no fee increases on the horizon. Steve mentioned we talked about fees at the last meeting and we haven't increased them for a while. Dean said currently the agency has not looked at fee increases, but that may change depending on what happens this session. He said he would look at it and do some projections. Steve suggested that he bring the projections back to the next meeting and maybe the board could make a recommendation for a fee increase.

Plumbing Legislation/WAC Rules

Evan said the way licensing is structured; it has completely left the residential service industry out of the matrix of regulation. It is primarily controlled by advertising and marketing. He said we've allowed access to anyone who puts up a small bond and liability insurance. He said it is a complete disconnect and the laws are built to evade any real regulation on any level.

Evan asked about the possibility of trying to define the residential plumbing industry as something that is relevant and give us the capability of regulating it. Bruce said because Chapter 18.106 only deals with the certification and not the contractor, we can only write infractions to the individuals that aren't meeting the requirements. Evan said that if we can't deal with this issue, then he strongly suggests that we get a Plumbing Licensing Board so that we can deal with it. Steve said we agreed that we would try and change what we can through rules. He mentioned that visible licensing is a proposed rule change and there has been a lot of negativity from the industry about it. Many are afraid they will lose it. He added that they only need to take a color picture of it, put the original in your pocket, and display the copy. That way if it gets destroyed, they just need to take another color copy from the original. Steve said that it will help consumers identify who is a plumber and who isn't. He added that we have looked at legislation in the past that increases fines, limits how many fines you can get in a time frame, revoking a contractor's license, and repurposing the Advisory Board of Plumbers. Bruce added that visible licensing is a proposed rule change and doesn't require legislation. He said the law has already been passed by legislation. Steve said that the proposed rule changes are mostly housekeeping and grammatical and they don't change the intent of the law. He added visible licensing is probably the biggest change. Steve mentioned there will be hearings and a lot of people speaking against it. He said, I hope that we here are all in favor of it.

Evan added that what we have now is really broken and the energy and attempts that we have put into it have been completely ineffective because of the necessity of legislation. Evan suggested that only big money interests have a say in this when it's really a matter of public safety.

Mike asked about the status of visible licensing in regards to Electrical Licensing. He said from his perspective, no one is wearing the licenses and no one is enforcing it. Joaquim said that 80% to 90% of the electricians are wearing them. Mike said that his company has electricians, plumbers, crane operators, and signal men. He said if they had to wear every certification required of them, they would have a quilt for a uniform. They all carry the licenses, but do not visibly display them. He asked "What's the difference between carrying the license in your wallet as opposed to having it on your

sleeve?" He added that crawling under houses, up on ladders, and in attics can be a little cumbersome if you're tethered to a license.

Bruce mentioned that consumers are also interested in knowing who is on their jobsite. He added if the consumer can see their license and name that will help. If two trainees show up on a jobsite and the consumer notices that their licenses are red, the consumer will remember that. Evan added that will only work if there is a concerted effort to educate the consumers. Dean said there's a lot of different ways to market this.

Dave mentioned from an inspection standpoint, he thinks it will be great. He added that's one more thing the inspectors can look for.

Steve suggested that the group ask their employees how they feel about visible licensing because the comments are running negative. He added that the majority of the comments are regarding safety issues. Jake asked where we were with the trainees. Steve said that it was still going to be 75% supervision. Bruce added the statute defines supervision at 75%. You can't change that WAC rule to 100% without legislation. The WAC rules are the department's interpretation of the statute. Bruce said we just tried to clean the rules up and added a few more definitions.

Steve suggested that we go back and look at the legislation that was proposed and pull some pieces out and move forward with it. He added we should have subcommittee meetings, like before, and develop legislation, find a sponsor, and move forward. He suggested getting the plumbing contractor would be a good first step. Steve asked if this is the top priority. Evan said if the real value of being a plumbing contractor is put in place, absolutely it's a priority. Mike said if it could be achieved, and general contractors had to have a sub specialty of plumbing to perform plumbing work, it would help facilitate the enforcement. He said he sees more viability in achieving that than some of the other issues. Steve said from what he is hearing, that is the direction we should move in.

Discussion followed.

New Business

There was no new business.

Motion to adjourn.