



**STATE BOARD OF PLUMBING
BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES**

Date: January 19, 2023
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: Held Virtually via Google Meet
Joining Info: By Video Conference
meet.google.com/qks-niad-yfo
By Phone via Teleconference
1-414-909-7588 (PIN: 385820141)

Members Present:

Joseph Radtka, Chair
Michael Bowersox, Industry Member
Roland Mann Jr., Industry Member
Richard Small, Industry Member

Absent: Keith Horton, Industry Member
Gregory Schott, Industry Member
Richard Bowers, Consumer Member

LABOR Officials & Staff Present:

John Bull, Executive Director
Sloane Fried Kinstler, Assistant Attorney General
LaKisha Thornton, Administrative Officer I
Sharon Harris-Friend, Complaint Manger
Danielle Anderson,

OTHERS PRESENT:

Diane Kastner, MD Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joseph Radtka called the Business Meeting of the Maryland State Board of Plumbing to order, virtually, at 10:32 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Radtka asked that a Board member move to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2022 Board Meeting.

Chairman Radtka noted an error in the minutes of the December 15, 2022 minutes, stating that Mr. Schott was listed as in attendance twice in the minutes. Director Bull stated that staff would correct the error. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2022 Board meeting with corrections, by Mr. Mann, seconded by Mr. Bowersox, and by roll call, carried unanimously by the Board.

PLUMBING COMPLAINTS

Chairman Radtka reported the findings of the Complaint Committee in the absence of Mr. Schott as follows:

<u>Closed Complaint</u>	<u>Under Investigation</u>	<u>Sent for A.G. Pre-Charge</u>	<u>Criminally Charged</u>
22-0042	22-0043	22-0018	22-0047
22-0045	22-0044		
22-0046	22-0049		
22-0048	23-0015		

Upon a Motion by Mr. Bowersox, and a second by Mr. Mann, the Board voted unanimously, by a roll call vote, to approve the Complaint Committee’s report and recommendations.

REVIEW OF EXAMINATION STATISTICS AND LICENSE TOTALS

PSI Exams submitted the following statistical summaries for December 2022:

Plumber	Candidates Tested	Passed	Failed	Pass %
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Journey Natural Gas Fitter	4	0	4	0%
Journey Plumber/Gas Fitter	38	12	26	32%
Master Natural Gas Fitter	3	1	2	33%
Master Plumber/Gas Fitter	13	7	6	54%
TOTAL	58	20	38	34%

Director Bull also reported that since January 2022, 670 candidates were tested, 252 candidates passed, 418 failed, for a pass rate of 38%. Since the inception of the test, 10384 candidates were tested, 3784 candidates passed, 6636 failed, for a pass rate of 36%. There are currently 12,900 active licensees.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to be considered.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bull reminded the Board that the February 16, 2023 Board meeting would be held in person for Board Members and staff. He advised that the public and any Board members who were not able to attend the meeting in person would be able to attend the meeting virtually via Google Meet. He requested that those Board Members who will attend in person notify Board staff at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting to ensure parking and entrance into the building. Director Bull advised that, at the February Board meeting, he would like to discuss the various Board Committees and their functions. He also requested that if there were any items that the Board would like to discuss at the in-person meeting, that they email those items to Ms. LaKissha Thornton at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting so they may be placed on the agenda.

Director Bull reported to the Board that he completed the Board attendance report for 2022, as Board members are required, by the Governor's Office, to attend at least 50% of the meetings held during the calendar year.

Director Bull also advised the Board that he had begun a discussion with the other Mechanical licensing Boards regarding the overall pass rates for the mechanical licensing exams. Director Bull stated that several of the other Boards had expressed concern over the pass rate and proposed a review of the exam questions to promote a higher pass rate. Mr. Bowersox commented that he had had private conversations with Chairman Radtka regarding the low pass rate and that, in his opinion, test questions should be reviewed to ensure a higher pass rate, as we may be doing a disservice to the industry. He then asked Chairman Radtka to provide his input on the matter. Chairman Radtka stated that, in the past, the overall pass rate for the exam had been brought to the Board for discussion. He further stated that he had spoken with PSI and that the overall pass rate for the MD Plumber/Gas Fitter and Natural Gas Fitter exams was consistent with the surrounding jurisdictions and that he was advised by PSI not to revise the test. He stated that the item should be placed on the agenda for the February meeting for further discussion by the Board. Director Bull stated that he would reach out to PSI for any statistics in reference to the overall pass rate for the next meeting. Chairman Radtka stated that he stated it was unlikely that the Board would be provided with a copy of the exam questions, but any information that Director Bull could acquire from PSI would be welcomed at the meeting.

COUNSEL'S REPORT

Counsel did not offer a report.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Radtka stated that Maryland Department of the Environment ("MDE") has enacted a new requirement for plumbers working in the state of Maryland pertaining to on-site disposal systems. The new requirement requires that plumbers register with MDE for a fee of \$ 150.00/per year, per individual on the job. He stated that the new regulation has caused outrage throughout the local jurisdictions, as on-site disposal systems were regulated and allowed under the scope of a plumber/gas fitter license with no additional requirements. Chairman Radtka requested that a discussion of the topic be placed on the February agenda as an item for discussion under New Business. He stated that the issue is relevant as it raise the cost to operate in the state of Maryland, and that Maryland's cost to operate for plumbers has been one of the lowest in the country historically. Chairman Radtka then asked the Board if they were aware of the new requirement and for their opinion. Mr. Bowersox replied stating that he was not aware

of the new requirement, but also felt that the cost of licensure was higher in Maryland was higher than other jurisdictions and states based upon our requirement that licensees complete a backflow/cross-connection course before they are eligible to apply for a journeyman or master plumber gas fitter license. Chairman Ratdka agreed that the cost of the backflow/cross-connection course does add to the cost of licensure, but that based upon Maryland's overall fee schedule to maintain a license was lower than that of other jurisdictions, also citing that Maryland does not require continuing education courses. Director Bull agreed to place the MDE requirement on the February agenda for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to be considered.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Radtka requested again that the MDE on-site disposal issue be placed on the agenda for the February meeting.

Mr. Bowersox brought up a question posed to him by the Frederick County Plumbing Inspector regarding the regarding voltage requirements for lightning resistance. He asked for guidance from the Board. Chairman Radkta replied that the requirements were outline in House Bill 1052 (2022), regarding arc-resistance CSST bonding. Mr. Bowersox stated that he would gather more information regarding the specifics of the Plumbing Inspector's questions and place them on the agenda under New Business for the February meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board did not convene in a closed session.

APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF CLOSED SESSION

None necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon Mr. Bowersox's Motion, and Mr. Mann's second, and by a roll call vote, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn meeting at 10:52 a.m.

Signature on File

2/16/2023

John Bull
Executive Director

Date

Signed on behalf of the Board as voted and approved on 2/16/2023