

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE PLUMBING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

June 17, 2014

The North Dakota State Plumbing Board met on June 17, 2014 at 1:00 p.m., at the State Health Department Training Center, 2639 East Main Avenue, Bismarck, ND, President Lon Drevecky presided.

Board members present were Jason Dirk – Journeyman Plumber, Lon Drevecky – President/Mechanical Engineer, Heather Jones – Consumer Member and Howard Wrigley – Master Plumber.

Board member Wayne Kern – Vice President/State Health Department was absent.

Staff members present were Brent Beechie – Secretary/Chief Inspector, Kimberley Tomanek – Business Manager, Laurie Walcker – Administrative Assistant, Scott Samuelson – Plumbing Inspector, Dean Staska – Plumbing Inspector, Jack Skaley – Plumbing Inspector and Ken Dahl – Plumbing Inspector.

Others present were Lon Lessard – North Dakota State School of Science, Leonard Schwindt – City of Dickinson and Jim Thorpe – City of Dickinson.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

President Drevecky introduced the new Plumbing Inspector, Dean Staska. Mr. Staska will be handling the eastern part of North Dakota.

President Drevecky also took the opportunity to thank Ken Dahl for all his hard work and dedication to the North Dakota State Plumbing Board during the past three years.

**MINUTES**

President Drevecky called for the consideration of the minutes of the February 20, 2014 meeting.

**MOTION:** Heather Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2014 meeting as received. Jason Dirk seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with board members Dirk, Drevecky and Jones voting in favor.

Howard Wrigley arrived at the meeting.

## **YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BUDGET**

President Drevecky called on Ms. Tomanek to review the Financial Statements and Fiscal Year to Date Budget.

Ms. Tomanek presented the Financial Statements and Fiscal Year to Date Budget.

**MOTION:** Jason Dirk made a motion to approve the Financial Statements as presented. Howard Wrigley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with board members Dirk, Drevecky, Jones and Wrigley.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Radon Gas and Sump Pumps**

President Drevecky explained that he requested that this topic be added to the agenda after helping his daughter and her family search for a home in Bismarck. He went on to say that after finding a house, his daughter asked for a radon test as part of the home inspection and when the results came back, the radon levels were very high. President Drevecky noted that there was a sump in the basement without a gas tight cover on it. It has a partial cover that was open and not vented. The EPA standards for radon for a residence are a level of less than two picocuries per liter. If it is between two and four picocuries, the EPA recommends mitigation and if above four picocuries, then it is mandatory that something be done. The level in his daughter's home was 5.2 but had levels reported as high as 10. Radon is naturally occurring in the soil, especially in North Dakota and in the winter when everything else freezes, basements become a conduit for radon gas to escape to the atmosphere. President Drevecky said that he got to thinking about what is being done in regards to sumps because typically it is a grey area because the general contractor installs the drain tile in and drops the sump in and if there are water problems, then a plumber takes it from there, vents it and puts a cover on it. He stated that it is probably handled differently in different jurisdictions, but that is what he has seen. President Drevecky ended by saying it warrants discussion and he would like to hear from the different city inspectors what they have seen in terms of radon levels and whether or not it has been a concern.

Mr. Beechie said that all 52 counties in North Dakota are in the high category for radon gas and there are a few individuals in the state that specialize in radon abatement. He explained that if the floor is sealed well, the home is probably okay, but if there is a sump, there might be air from the drain tile from around the foundation coming right into that sump pit in the basement and it is one of the major causes of lung cancer.

President Drevecky said that plumbers get involved in it a lot of the time, but it seems to be more of a building code issue and it appears that some further investigation may need to be done. He doesn't know if it should be through the State Building Code



Review Committee that they add it as a supplement or the North Dakota State Plumbing Board get involved in it too because it is a significant issue.

Lon Lessard told the board that the ones he has seen, there was either an air to air heat exchanger installed or the sumps were sealed and a 240 cfm fan was piped out of the side wall of the house. He mentioned that Minnesota regulates it but he is not sure if it is a building code or if the Health Department enforces it.

Mr. Beechie commented that there is not a federal mandate yet and the only time you see radon mitigation in North Dakota is where it is required in homes that are federally financed.

There was some discussion amongst the attendees, board members and staff about different things they have seen done to mitigate radon.

President Drevecky requested that staff contact the Building Code Committee and Building Officials Association to address the radon issue in the state.

### **Roger Bommersbach and Ron Sorensen**

Mr. Beechie explained that there are two plumbers in southeastern North Dakota that are not following the rules and guidelines set forth by the North Dakota State Plumbing Board and State of North Dakota.

Mr. Dahl indicated that Ron Sorensen has a habit of not calling for an inspection until after the jobs are completed and he has been violating the Uniform Plumbing Code. He suggested a letter be sent to Mr. Sorensen to address the code violations and if he does not comply, then revoke his plumbing license. Mr. Dahl went on to say that the inspector for Valley City has agreed to start emailing Mr. Staska copies of all the building certificates. Mr. Staska will then follow up to see if all the plumbing was installed correctly. Mr. Dahl added that he does not know if Mr. Sorensen will start calling in for inspections before the job is finished or not.

Mr. Dahl stated that Roger Bommersbach has also called for an inspection after the concrete was poured so the underground inspection could not be completed properly. Also the sheet rock would be hung before the above ground inspection was completed. Mr. Dahl said that he found several code violations and informed Mr. Bommersbach of the issues and also called the homeowner to inform him that he could not move into the home until the issues were taken care of. Mr. Dahl indicated that there are still code violations so it will never be signed-off on as completed and the owner will never get a signed certificate.

Mr. Dahl said that another project that has issues is an elevator in Finley, ND. A certificate was never taken out and the bathroom was relocated from the main floor to the basement and now does not meet ADA requirements.

There was some discussion amongst the board members and staff about the different options the North Dakota Plumbing Board has in dealing with situations like these.

It was the general consensus of the board that letters will be sent to Roger Bommersbach and Ron Sorensen and the contractors and homeowners for each project. Staff will also contact the County States Attorney for their opinion with this matter and draft a failed certificate policy, a uniform process for handling issues with issue plumbers.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Reciprocity with Minnesota**

President Drevecky called on Mr. Beechie to explain the reciprocity agreement with Minnesota.

Mr. Beechie said that for many years, North Dakota and Minnesota have had reciprocity and all the while, Minnesota has not had any continuing education requirements and North Dakota honored their plumbers. Now, Minnesota requires eight hours per year of continuing education. He went on to say that the North Dakota State Plumbing Board would like to keep the agreement just as it is now, and as long as a plumber has a current license in Minnesota then we would honor reciprocity and vice-versa, without having to go through Minnesota's continuing education. Mr. Beechie explained that Minnesota has 14 board members and at their last board meeting set up a subcommittee consisting of six of the board members, just to discuss reciprocity with North Dakota. He was told that the committee was going to wait to see what the North Dakota State Plumbing Board was going to do before they made a decision. Mr. Beechie concluded by saying that it appears that Minnesota would like to drop reciprocity with North Dakota because of continuing education requirements.

Mr. Wrigley said that he heard that if North Dakota would require five hours of continuing education, then Minnesota would keep reciprocity with North Dakota.

**MOTION:** Howard Wrigley made a motion to not accept continuing education hours with States that do not accept North Dakota's continuing education hours. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Ms. Jones commented that she is someone who hires Minnesota plumbers because North Dakota is in need of employees and she wants qualified workers.



Mr. Wrigley suggested that if North Dakota plumbers have to complete Minnesota's continuing education, then any Minnesota plumbers must take North Dakota's continuing education in order to obtain a North Dakota license.

Mr. Beechie explained that North Dakota and South Dakota both honor each other's reciprocity and also how plumbers are licensed in the same way and the two states work very well together. He also said that Montana will honor North Dakota's continuing education hours, however, Montana will only give North Dakota Master plumbers, a Journeyman license in Montana. Mr. Beechie stated that North Dakota adopted the same policy. He added that there are approximately 362 North Dakota plumbers licensed in Minnesota and approximately 465 Minnesota plumbers that are licensed in North Dakota.

There was some discussion amongst board members and staff about what different states require for continuing education and other reciprocity agreements.

President Drevecky requested that reciprocity with Minnesota be on the agenda for the fall meeting for further discussion after the Minnesota subcommittee meets and decides if they are going to honor North Dakota's continuing education hours.

At 2:45 p.m., the Board recessed for a short break.

At 3:00 p.m., the Board reconvened.

### **Administrative Rules**

President Drevecky called on Mr. Beechie to discuss possible amendments to administrative rules.

Mr. Beechie said that he wants to amend the administrative rules to require dwelling units to have sewer and water, by adopting the fixture count table in the international residential code, which is the code that requires plumbing fixtures for one and two-family dwellings and to remove the North Dakota State Plumbing Board from having any administrative authority relating to septic tanks and drain fields. The board will also discuss bringing back the interpretative rules in full or in part at the request of Custer District Health and the State Health Department. Mr. Beechie indicated that the process of amending administrative rules can start after the October meeting.

### **REPORTS**

#### **Website/Content Management System**

President Drevecky called on Ms. Tomanek to provide an update about the Website/Content Management System.

Ms. Tomanek indicated that she continues to work with TodayMade on the website and the content management system. She said that the content management system should be operational after July 2014 and she will provide a report to the board members about the progress of the new system at the October meeting.

### **Inspectors from Local Jurisdictions**

President Drevecky called on attendees, Mr. Dahl – North Dakota State Plumbing Board, Mr. Samuelson – North Dakota State Plumbing Board, Mr. Staska – North Dakota State Plumbing Board, Jack Skaley – North Dakota State Plumbing Board, Leonard Schwindt – City of Dickinson, Jim Thorpe – City of Dickinson, and Lon Lessard – North Dakota State College of Science to report on plumbing issues and work within their jurisdictions. President Drevecky thanked the attendees.

### **APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL BUDGET FROM JULY 1, 2014 TO JUNE 30, 2015**

President Drevecky called on Ms. Tomanek to present Fiscal Budget from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Ms. Tomanek presented the Fiscal Year Budget from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 for approval. She indicated that the proposed salary increases are included in the budget for staff. Ms. Tomanek proposed a 4% salary increase for Jack Skaley, Scott Samuelson, Laurie Walcker and herself; and at his request, a 3% increase for Brent Beechie.

**MOTION:** Howard Wrigley made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year Budget from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 as presented. Heather Jones seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with board members Dirk, Drevecky, Jones and Wrigley voting in favor.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

