

North Dakota State Electrical Board Minutes
Wednesday January 26, 2022

The North Dakota State Electrical Board meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by President Rodney Mayer at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, 3319 N. 14th St. Bismarck, North Dakota. Members Present: Rodney Mayer, Paul Durbin, Christina Roemmich and Tom Paulson. Members absent: Mark Christopher. Also present: James Schmidt, Executive Director; Paula Glass, Office Manager; Scott Porsborg, Special Assistant Attorney General; Austin Lafferty, Special Assistant Attorney General; Curt Casper, NECA; Adam Kidwell, JATC; Clay Nagel; Jon Saylor, Board Information and Inspection Compliance Administrator.

Paul Durbin moved, and Christina Roemmich seconded, a motion to approve the consent agenda as read. The motion carried

James Schmidt added two items to the agenda: “IAEI article” and “Staff.” He also explained that Scott Halle and Doug Grinde will not be present at the meeting, due to work commitments. Items 3 and 4 were thus struck from the agenda.

Jon Saylor spoke to the board about the latest actions taken as information and inspection compliance administrator. Mr. Saylor wrote an article about fire stopping that will be published in the March and April edition of IAEI magazine. Mr. Saylor also attended a career fair in Williston in November. Mr. Saylor recommends that next year the Board attend the Jamestown, Minot and Williston career fairs, as those fairs have multiple schools attending. Other career fairs did not have much attendance or interest in the information provided by the Board. Mr. Saylor was contacted by Ashley Mattson with Bismarck State College about a potential college fair in the fall. Marketplace for Kids was held in December, and went well. Four additional Marketplace for Kids events will take place in March. Mr. Saylor has completed 107 audits, and has finished the auditing process. He reported the results of these audits to the board.

Mr. Schmidt informed the Board that Richard Wolfe had informed the Office that his tentative retirement date will be July 1, 2022. Mr. Wolfe is asking if the Board will consider covering his COBRA insurance from his retirement until the age of 65, as the Board has done for other employees in the past.

Christina Roemmich moved the Board adopt the Employer COBRA Insurance Purchase policy as articulated by Board Staff, Tom Paulson seconded. The Executive Director will review the language with legal counsel prior to implementation. The motion carried.

Mr. Schmidt provided the Board with an update of the water damage to the office, and reconstruction. Goldmark is providing a modest rent adjustment for the inconvenience.

Mr. Schmidt provided an update as to the status of the Board’s potential agreement with the MHA Nation to perform electrical inspections. Upon further review, the Executive Director believes the current system of performing inspections following written invitation from the MHA Nation is working fine, and no formal agreement is needed at this time. Mr. Schmidt is meeting with MHA Nation representatives in February. The Board agreed to shelve the issue for now.

Mr. Schmidt informed the Board that ION Field Services in Fargo is wiring a home alongside students in the West Fargo School District. Scott Halle with the Electrical Board has visited the students a few times. An inspector will perform a rough in when appropriate.

Mr. Schmidt reported that District 5 has been reestablished. A new inspector, Brad Luck, has been hired as the inspector for District 5. Doug Grinde is currently training Mr. Luck.

Mr. Schmidt provided an update on Districts 4 and 6. The District 6 inspector has moved out-of-state, and Mr. Saylor is currently filling in. The inspector for District 4 is looking to retire. The Board is currently advertising for these positions. The job advertisement is closed, and the Board is currently scheduling interviews with the five applicants for early February and possibly hiring 3 qualified applicants.

The Board discussed the 2022-2023 budget. Mr. Schmidt provided data regarding the Board's finances, and the Board's efforts to decrease its reserves. The Board discussed the potential of waiving the 2023 licensing fees, and will discuss the issue again in the fall. Mr. Schmidt then presented the Board with several options for a budget, with employee wage increases at various percentages. The Board discussed the various options. Mr. Schmidt informed the Board there may need to be a discussion regarding the starting wage for inspectors. Ms. Roemmich and Mr. Paulson requested Mr. Schmidt present additional information on this issue at the next meeting.

Tom Paulson moved the Board approve a 6% maximum increase to salary increases in 2022. Christina Roemmich seconded. The motion carried.

Discussion was had on electrician market wages around the state compared to the inspector's wages. Paul Durbin suggested market increases across the board to start with your highest performing worker would be comparable to with a IBEW Foreman's' wage and move backward to 85% for the entry level inspector wage. This would be comparable with an electrical apprentice and establish your base market starting wage. Mr. Schmidt will provide additional information at the March meeting RE: base wage market increases for the employees to finalize the 22-23 budget.

Mindy Piatz, an accountant with Brady Martz, spoke on the audit for the NDSEB for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. It was found the Board's financial statements were in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Ms. Piatz provided information as to a new accounting standard that will be coming in the next year that will impact the Board.

Mr. Schmidt presented the Board with information on Jeff McDonald. Mr. McDonald needs to appear before the Board before his Master's license can be reinstated. Mr. McDonald was scheduled to appear at 9:00 a.m. but did not appear at the meeting, and had not called the office. Mr. McDonald has no outstanding issues, but is required to appear before the Board before reinstatement. This requirement was put in place because he had let his license lapse without communicating with the Board. The Board decided to maintain the current findings, that Mr. McDonald needs to appear, either in person or via telephone before his license can be renewed.

Mr. Schmidt spoke on the Office Remodel and Expansion. The city building permit was held but the remodel appears to be only a couple weeks behind schedule. The Board should possibly be back in the Offices for their March 2022 meeting.

Mr. Schmidt presented data on the money spent from the undertaking fund in the past. This data was presented to allow the Board the opportunity to discuss if the Board should act on consumer protection, by seeking a reinstatement of the undertaking fund, or a bond requirement at the next legislative session. A FOIA request was made for the same information. Staff is currently compiling data on how much consumers had to pay out of pocket to repair violations left behind by contractors. The Board will hold this issue to the next meeting.

Mr. Schmidt informed the Board that there is no update on the education committee, beyond an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Schmidt informed the Board that a staff member has resigned their position with the Executive Office. The Board reviewed the staff member's file. Because the Board paid for additional education credits for this staff member, provided the member stay employed with the Board for a specific period of time, the agreement between the Board and staff member requires paying a portion of that amount to the Board.

Tom Paulson moved the Board enter executive session for the purpose of attorney consultation. Paul Durbin seconded. Tom Paulson – Aye, Paul Durbin – Aye, Christina Roemmich - Aye

The Board entered executive session at 11:13 a.m.

The Board exited executive session at 11:34 a.m.

Tom Paulson moved the Board accept the resignation as presented. Christina Roemmich seconded. Discussion was held regarding the resignation letter, and the demand to use annual leave.

Paul Durbin moved to amend the motion to incorporate the employee “closing” procedures, to take place on January 28, 2022 by 2:00 p.m. Tom Paulson, the original movant, agreed to the amendment, and Christina Roemmich seconded. The amended motion passed.

The Board discussed whether to require the staff member to pay the portion of the education, as required by the agreement.

Paul Durbin moved the Board seek reimbursement for the education expenses in the amount of \$6,600.07, (25%) pursuant to the agreement. Tom Paulson seconded. Roll call vote, Paul Durbin - Aye, Tom Paulson - Aye, Rodney Mayer - Aye; Christina Roemmich - Nay. The Motion passed.

The next board meeting will take place on March 23, 2022 at 8:30am.

Paul Durbin moved to adjourn, Tom Paulson seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Date _____

Date _____

Rodney Mayer, PRESIDENT

Christina Roemmich, SECRETARY