

STATE ELECTRICAL BOARD MEETING
March 5, 2021

ATTENDEES: Dave Hunter Jim Brummer, Mike Hunsberger, Curt Griess, Boyd Pedersen, Chief Inspector, Mike Bouwens, Division Director, Craig Thelen, George Morrisey and guest, Ed Bergstraesser.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by George Morrisey at 9:02AM. No discussion of meeting minutes occurred. Motion to approve minutes made by Mike Hunsberger and seconded by Jim Brummer. Voting aye; all.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Thelen reported that finances are reflecting 45% of the budget year spent with 66% of the budget year that has passed. \$1.8 million is remaining. A separate document shared with attendees reporting the cash flow of \$1.579 million. Director Thelen shared he will be using neo.gov cash report that is more accurate than previous reporting from Melissa \$1.884 million is the accurate number. George is requesting to keep the old format of budget reporting, but to plug in the accurate results for ease of review. Bigger expenditures include insurance of \$7,500 on fleet vehicles is expected to be paid out. Scanning expenses are also coming to bring the Division filing system up to date.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Thelen shared that he met with the Nebraska Rural Utilities Association and reported the Electrical Division office will begin emailing when a new permit is filed to increase communication and notification.

The WebEx meetings remain successful in providing clarity of topics/issues, so everyone is on the same page with inspectors from different districts. Contractors are pleased with this streamlined process with increased consistency amongst inspectors.

Continuing the progression of LB1174 –the requirements for sign installer, irrigation, solar and industrial. Will be introducing this for next legislative session. Director Thelen would like to create a sub-committee and is requesting Board members to assist with this process. The convolution of the 2-year licensing process will be in the forefront. LB594 will be pushing to bypass licensed individuals to help within a 50-mile radius of a project. The Director for Economic development can circumvent individuals in any trades (construction, plumbing, electrical, etc.) to assist with completion of a project and bypass licensures

needed by the State. Director Thelen will follow up on this bill and consultation with Senator Slama is in order as she is representing the bill in the legislature.

LB263 – reports that a credentialed Electrician that comes from another state that is part of an Apprentice Program shall meet the licensing requirements for the state of whether they meet the Nebraska requirements or not. A minimum of 8,000 hours is required in Nebraska. ICC testing is required in this state, but not others (i.e. Kansas). A reciprocating agreement is currently practiced amongst 14 states nationwide. This is regarding journeyman licenses, except for South Dakota and Minnesota that we reciprocate contractor's licenses, as well. Director Thelen testified against LB263 and was contacted by the Omaha World Herald regarding a military Veteran that reported having 8,000 hours without verification to confirm his status. It is the responsibility of the individual to log/report hours to verify. All media comments need to come through Director Thelen regarding this issue.

LB467 made it out of committee. Vote ended 4/2. Four Democratic votes supporting with two Republican votes against it with one republican that did not vote. Director Thelen will reach out to another senator to move this through as a Priority bill to be heard during this legislative session. Home Builders Association conflicts with subjects of external emergency disconnect, 240-volt GFCI protection, AFCI for the basements and surg protectors. This accounted for less than \$700 improvements for safety.

Tom Hamre provided a detailed report updating what the Board had requested of him and Director Thelen was content with what was provided. His email will be forwarded to the Board members for any feedback they wish to provide.

Safety Plan has been updated and will be put into place for the Electrical Division. This policy is representing the Electrical Division that includes incident or accident reports, PPE for inspectors, and acknowledgement that the Division has a policy in place and the pathway of reporting for OSHA.

MiFi for phones and discontinued phone lines have been addressed and located roughly \$400/month in savings. Paying for phones that did not exist or were not being utilized have now been dismissed.

Updating over 1,800 outstanding permits since 2014. Goal is to address these and not be more than one year out for any permits that have not been closed.

Director Thelen is coordinating a Town Hall meeting in the Valentine area to offer continuing education hours for those inspectors and possibly recruit for the inspector position open in that area. He is attempting to partner with a supply house who would provide food for the meeting.

Continuing Education hours – needing to verify hours by online facial recognition. Contact was made with the online continuing education providers to provide this service.

Office of OCIO has been contacted regarding a software for scanning licensure documentation. Attempting to get this in place before next renewal time.

Challenges are being shared regarding code class offered in western Nebraska. The ICC testing is not convenient for them and they are requesting other options for testing. Online testing is working and perhaps we continue in this direction. Zoom offerings were discussed to go Statewide with the continuing education portion to save monies spent for lodging/travel hours/meals. Discussion was had about ICC with special needs for increased testing time. Consensus was there was no offerings for extended test times through ICC. Perhaps working with ICC to develop testing sites through contractor/pronto proctors for isolated areas of Nebraska to test onsite through a computer. Director Thelen is going to research working with the ICC for testing and utilizing Zoom for concepts involving continuing education hours only.

Linda Henke is retiring at the end of March 2021. Her position has been filled. A clock will be purchased for her dedicated services.

Director Thelen has completed his six-month requirement to obtain his Inspector's Certification.

Emeritus status for retired electricians was shared by Mike Bouwens. A retired electrician called the office requesting to retain his license through an Emeritus status. He does not want to work but retain the status as a licensed electrician. The Board decided he would have to pay annually to keep his license and that Emeritus status would not be something the board would be doing.

Board elections – George Morrisey stated that John Hiller would accept the motion as Vice President and will move to the Presidents role in the coming year(s). A motion was made by Jim Brummer and seconded by Mike Hunsberger to retain George Morrisey as President and nominate John Hiller as Vice President. Tenure was decided at two years and the change of leadership would take effect end of December 2022. Voting aye; all.

Oath of Office can be notarized by Melissa at the Electrical Division office. Curt Griess and Boyd Pedersen will stop at the office to complete these documents.

NEW BUSINESS

George Morrissey reported on hiring contract for Director Thelen stating a pay increase of \$3,000 annual increase after 6 favorable months with the division and passing the general inspectors exam. He has moved the division forward and then some. Dave Hunter presented a motion to increase Director Thelen's wages as stated in the contract and it was seconded by Jim Brummer.

Zoom meetings can be available for Board members who are traveling or unavailable to those who cannot be in face-to-face attendance. Director Thelen will add a Zoom invite to the Board calendar invitations. Discussion was also made regarding adding an OWL camera/microphone combo for audio/visual capabilities that would assist with Zoom meetings.

Discussion regarding farming out licenses on large jobs – the process was compared to a Union Hall concept. Walmart had a contractor from Georgia who did not have Nebraska licensure, but was working under the Nebraska contractor license and this is compliant.

Expense reimbursement documents can now be emailed to the Division office. Director Thelen distributed a paper document to each Board member.

An Inspector Observation Form has been developed and will be utilized to assess the field inspectors for growth and development of personnel.

Great feedback is coming in for the virtual rough-in inspections process by uploading pictures. An increase of 5%-10% is the goal within in the next 6 months. Using Google Dual and Face Time along with pictures to demonstrate the proper installation. Requesting utilization of a date stamp for submitted pictures to keep the contractors honest about the current rough-in jobs.

Board reported appreciation of new information offered from Director Thelen to keep meetings moving through new/revisited topics. Director will attempt to provide a list of the LB-laws to keep them organized and understood by all Board members.

Motion for the meeting adjournment at 10:25am by Mike Hunsberger was made and seconded by Boyd Pedersen.



Craig Thelen, Executive Secretary