

**STATE ELECTRICAL BOARD MEETING**  
**July 16, 2021**

**ATTENDEES:** Kurt Griess, John Hiller, Boyd Pedersen, Division Director Craig Thelen, George Morrissey, Mike Hunsberger, Mike Bouwens.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by George Morrissey 9am. No discussion of meeting minutes occurred. Motion to approve minutes made by John Hiller and seconded by Mike Hunsberger Voting aye; all.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Director Thelen reported that finances wrap up the fiscal year at \$1,963,268. The 6/30/21 budget report does not show the encumbrances which will be added to last years budget once all receipts come in then it will be certified, so the actual spend of 73% will actually go up and it will be closer to 81% of the budget spent. Purchased the laptops with last years funds. The budget for last year will be certified on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The new budget was manually entered into the database, in which more dollars were moved into transportation object code since these numbers have been going up. The 6/30/21 budget report does not show the purchase of the laptops, but this cost was manually entered in as an encumbrance from last year. There was funds budgeted for software/technology which includes that last payment for the upgraded software for the permits. Cash fund we have \$1,727,978, We do not have spending authority for \$1,240,000 of these funds. Discussion about how to spend some of this cash down so this cash fund does not continue to grow, so Director Craig Thelen suggested we look at getting the pay for the Inspectors bumped up, since the starting rate for the Inspector position went from \$18.49 per hour to \$22.00 per hour and now there is a dollar and hour difference between starting rate for the Inspectors to Inspectors that have been with the Agency for 5 years or less. We also have one open position yet to fill. Director Thelen will look into getting a pay adjustment for all the Inspectors it was discussed to look at a 4 step adjustment.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Thelen reported that the PITA software upgrade will be done in the next couple of weeks.

Purchased 18 laptops which are a dual function laptop/tablet. These were beta tested for about 6 weeks and feel they will work well for the Inspectors.

Researching the fleet vehicle data shows a 32% increase in cost from 2019-2020 and a 29% increase from 2020-2021. It looks like 16 trucks would be a \$416,000 investment. Last year we spent \$170,000 on transportation and this year I put \$243,000 in this budget with almost \$75,000 extra to potentially use to purchase trucks or we can look at other options. The truck lease agreement is based on a \$26,000 truck divided by 60 months and this is roughly what our monthly lease payment is. A discussion was had about the possibility of purchasing 16 new trucks and we will look into using the cash fund to purchase all of them, a motion was made by the Board for Director Thelen to pursue this option.

Pre exam test is now online, it is in a power point and so far we have received \$720 of revenue for this online service. They have a 30-day period once they pay the \$40 where they can review it as many times as they want online.

Continue to work with Nebraska Interactive to address the online credit card payments where the processing fee will be paid by the consumer not the Agency, this will amount to potentially a \$65,000 annual savings for the Agency. There are 5 contracts that we are in the process of rewriting.

Met with Nebraska Rural Electric Association via Web ex to discuss several different topics that include discussion on the boring statute from 2019, gas pipeline, disconnects on homeowner utilities, solar and irrigation. The boring discussion was helping them understand that the utility can do the boring without a Journeyman present, but as soon as they contract this work out it will require a Journeyman to be present and this was clarified by the Attorney General in a request for opinion by the AG's office. The discussion about the irrigation primarily was that the Rural Utilities are starting to refuse to energize the irrigation until they see that it has been inspected. Dawson Power would add roughly 70 inspections if they started to require an inspection before energizing and I told them we could handle the additional workload from these being inspected.

Open permits are down to under 900 continue to clean these all up in the next couple of months. These are all permits prior to December 31, 2019.

Continuing to scan the licenses in and now have the proper process in place to shred documents.

Consultants are on board to help us with Legislation, discussed the updates with LB1174, which is the Solar, Sign Installer and Irrigation bill. The Committee met and started the dialogue regarding LB1174 and getting away from licensing and instead going towards certification and what those requirements might look like. Including continuing education. The discussion included removing the Industrial Electrician from this bill.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Continue to work on Scanning licenses in to Onbase.

Language on EC and what is considered farming out your license. The discussion was very good and the key points were that the Journeyman and Apprentices need to be employed by the EC and if the EC works for a Company that is carrying the insurance for the EC that is acceptable, but it is still ultimately the EC that is responsible for any work being done. The Board agreed that we would add the "I agree" statement on the form for a permit that the EC would have to acknowledge that he is aware of the project as he is applying for the permit. I will also investigate with Nebraska Interactive on the permit site to see if we can add an email to the EC on file when a permit is filed to make sure someone isn't taking out a permit without the EC knowing about it.

I suspended an Apprentice card for 6 months for an individual that was working as an EC, I also notified his employer that he cannot work as an electrician for 6 months as well.

Following two Legislative Bills that have Resolutions LB 191 and LB211, there is a special Legislative session in September.

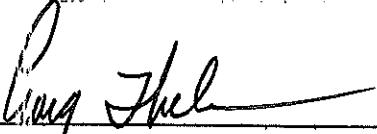
Trying to promote the electrical trade and looking at working with the Community Colleges to build a tiny house that we can showcase the electrical trades with display walls of residential, commercial, industrial and solar installations that can travel to College events and the College representative and the Inspector from that area could be in attendance as well to promote the trade by discussing the process and the different steps in the licensing.

Inspectors are reading a book called crucial conversations to help them grow as an inspector.

Listed Assemblies and where is it required. We will gather information and discuss this at our next Board Meeting.

Inspectors working as an electrician after hours and when was this enacted by the Board to not allow them to work as an electrician after hours.

Motion for the meeting to adjourn at 10:38 was made by George Morrissey and seconded by John Hiller.

  
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Craig Thelen, Executive Secretary