

## **STATE ELECTRICAL BOARD MEETING**

**April 9, 2021**

**ATTENDEES:** Jim Brummer Kurt Griess John Hiller, Boyd Pedersen Division Director, Craig Thelen, George Morrissey, and guest, Ralph Quick.

### **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 Kurt Griess and seconded by Boyd Pedersen Voting aye; all.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Director Thelen reported that finances are reflecting 50% of the budget year spent with 75% of the budget year that has passed. Scanning expenses are going to be coming soon to make the electronic licensing storage for the Division filing system up to date. Hiring of an SOS will assist with this process. Cash flow is reporting at \$1,864,000.00. Calculation error has occurred from Melissa and they are working to resolve it. George mentioned the increase in cash flow over the year. Director Thelen stated it will begin to decrease with the hiring of the added inspector position. The July 2<sup>nd</sup> Labor rate increased from \$18.45 starting per/hour to \$22/hour. Computer replacements after six years will also be coming out of this cash flow account. The \$1.8 is the cash flow in the Division, but the spending authority for is \$2,684,000.00 found on page 3 of the budget report. Therefore, \$1.8 is remaining in the "checking account."

Within the report, NEO Gov reflects numbers that are over budget. Director Thelen stated when individuals pay their fees online, the State is paying the additional fee through NEO Gov to process the electronic payments. Craig will be discussing this situation with NEO Gov and attempt to have this transaction fee paid by the individual submitting, not the Electrical Division.

George Morrissey asked about any large expenses coming in the next 60 days. Director Thelen responded with the cost of the SOS labor for scanning documents along with OCIO office creation of the database for holding the electronic licenses. TSB – Transportation Service is charging the agency for insurance on the State vehicles. Previously, it was part of the lease agreement, but is now an added cost to leasing vehicles. The cost is \$7,500/annually for all the State vehicles. This was apparently approved last year before Director Thelen arrived.

Discussion was had regarding top of page 2 in the major account totals. The report reflects approximately \$600,000.00 was budgeted, but to date \$171,000.00 was spent. A variance of unspent monies includes \$425,000.00 remaining. The question/concern is that the error in the \$1.8 calculation previously mentioned? Discussion ensued about the amount of monies that were not spent in the previous year's budget that may need to be adjusted for the coming budget year 2021. Revenue needs to be spent.

A suggestion was made to have a tablet in the field that would allow the inspector to access software programs to update their records in the field instead of returning to the office to input in the computer. Director Thelen will reach out to Joel Aslaksan from Fourware to find out how the software is coming and how soon money can exchange hands to cover the cost of purchase and development within this budget year.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Thelen shared regarding continuing the progression of LB467- adoption of the 2020 Code. Director Thelen has been working with Senator Bostar and Snyder Electric hired a lobbyist to move this through as a Priority bill LB306 to be heard during this legislative session. A letter was sent out to all the senators asking for their support. Home Builders Association is still holding firm against the code adoption.

Code writing panel has TIA exemptions out relating to condensing units on the outside of a house; 240 Volt GFI requirements due to issues with them tripping breakers and including the same for ranges. Dryer is the only item left that is not mentioned. Discussion by the Board was to agree to exempt these condensing unit, range, and dryers, to 2023 Code. Perhaps the exemption should be worded as a delaying of implementation and that would be better terminology.

LB263 -Universal licensing and they have since removed the State Electrical Division through the re-write of the bill. Page six, third paragraph, line eight contains the direct notation of the State removal on the bill.

Director Thelen reviewed the credentialing for the Veteran that wanted to test for his license, and he will be completing that exam on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Veteran will have a follow-up article by the Omaha World Herald and was grateful for the personal review of his situation. Director Thelen will now be reviewing each application concerning these special circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Town Hall Meeting to be held in O'Neill NE on April 19, 2021. Northeast Wireman Association as well as Utilities for O'Neill will be in attendance. Director Thelen is wanting to get out and listen to the people with their questions and concerns.

The Division is offering a Continue Education two-hour presentation on Solar will be presented by Todd Flick for CEU's. This quarterly inspector's meeting will be focused on working with the municipalities and will be held April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. IAEI Inspectors will be involved in this quarterly meeting as well.

Director Thelen met with Sun Pro Company out of Louisiana. They have over 220 permits in the State of Nebraska. They have been informed of NE State Electrical licensing requirements and are installing approximately 70 jobs per month. By summer, they should have over 400 permits open. Challenges were discussed regarding the placement of line-side taps. Sun Pro was directed to attach these differently and not on the inside of the panel board. They have Journeyman from NE that are working for Sun Pro.

John Morgan from Bassett, NE filled the open position for District 3. He will start April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Down to 1,400 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. Continuing to clean them up.

Met with OCIO regarding the scanning of the licenses.

ICC is the testing group we use for licensing, and they do not do Fire Alarm testing, so those will continue to be conducted by the Division.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Continuing to work with LB1174 –the requirements for sign installer, irrigation and solar and industrial. Director Thelen will be ready to create a sub-committee and is requesting Board members to assist with this process.

Suggestion was made by John Hiller to hire a lobbyist for the State Electrical Division to assist Director Thelen in expressing the majority interests and end the day-to-day meetings needing to be attended while trying to move a new bill into legislation. This would involve hiring a legal team to represent the Division that would then work with the legislature directly. Having a legal representation cannot hurt and is merely a suggestion to be discussed.

Discussion was made about the recommendations for the new tablets to be used by the inspectors on the job. Director Thelen is going to visit with Chris Cantrell to see what they are using for equipment and software. Money is available for equipment refresh and we will attempt to purchase this fiscal year.

Fire Marshal classification is not distinguishing between Class I or II - Div I or II. An additional conversation needs to be had with Doug Hohbein for clarification.

Motion for the meeting adjournment at 10:47 was made by John Hiller, and seconded by Jim Brummer

  
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Craig Thelen, Executive Secretary