

State Plumbing Apprenticeship Advisory Committee Minutes

October 8, 2014

WTCS Foundation
One Foundation Circle
Waunakee, WI

Approved Minutes

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Balke, Brian	EGI Mechanical
Breitlow, Steve	UA Plumbers Local 75
Brenner, Joseph	J.F. Ahern Company
Busch, Michael	UA Plumbers Local 75
Clark, Roger	Plumbers Local 118
De Young, Carol	Countryside Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
House, Mike	UA Plumbers Local 75
Huiting, Mark	Bassett Mechanical, Inc.
Ignatowski, Chris	Plumbers & Fitters Local 434
Jones, David (Co-Chair)	Dave Jones Inc.
Pertzborn, Jesse	H.J. Pertzborn Plumbing & Fire Protection
Rozga, Bill	Rozga Plumbing & Heating Corporation
Schedler, Keith	Don's Plumbing Service, Inc.

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Callies, Dan	Oak Creek Plumbing
Cartagena, Alaina	UA Plumbers Local 75
Flory, Tyler	Plumbers & Fitters Local 434
Scherer, Michael	Ideal Plumbing & Heating

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Ahmad, Hafeezah	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Cook, Jim	Milwaukee Area Technical College
Emrick, Leigh	Associated Builders and Contractors
Gerhardt, Gail	MCA of North Central WI
Hamus, Paul	Plumbers Local 75

Johnson, Allan	Plumbers Local 118
Nielson, Julie	Plumbers Local 118
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Vanderlin, Molly	Madison Assoc. of Plumbing Contractors
Wenger, Scott	UA Local 400

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1. The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Co-Chair Dave Jones, in conformity with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
 2. Roll call was conducted, and sign-in sheets were circulated.
 3. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

4. Old Business

a. Review the roster.

Owen distributed the current roster and asked the committee to review the composition of its membership and the accuracy of its contact information. He noted that the committee has two employee vacancies and reviewed that employee members are nominated by contractor associations, which are selected by the Bureau based on the composition of the committee at the time.

A member asked how many members a contractor association can have. Owen replied that each contractor association can have one member. Thereafter, the Bureau considers the current composition of the committee and the number of active participants, and may ask a contractor association to nominate additional members.

Owen will approach Southeast Wisconsin and Mechanical Contractors Association of Wisconsin for nominations. If members are still needed, the Bureau will approach additional associations based on an analysis of the membership.

b. Review the follow-up items from the previous meeting:

Owen reviewed that the state committee had asked the Bureau to analyze the available data to determine the effectiveness of the 54-hour course. Owen reported that, prior to her retirement, Marge Wood advised the Bureau that the available data would not result in a strong, direct comparison of the success on the licensing exam of apprentices who took the review course versus the success on the licensing exam of apprentices who did not take the course. Non-apprentices cannot be filtered from the results; apprentices can take the review course and licensing exam multiple times; and not additional issues make it infeasible to establish the comparison desired by the committee.

Consultants expressed concern that the analysis could not be made.

Steve Breitlow briefed the committee that the Water Quality Association is lobbying the Dept. of Safety and Public Service to use the Association's exam as the state exam for a restricted license, as well as allow the Association to be the proctor. In comparison, the journey worker exam is created and proctored by the State of Wisconsin, which is viewed as a neutral third party. Committee members are watching the issue closely because they are concerned that allowing an industry organization to create the exam would compromise integrity of the license and set a dangerous precedent. The committee added that the proposal is being ramrodded through an approval process, as well.

c. Discuss the Plumbing Review Course.

Owen reminded the committee that this item will be on each agenda to discuss administrative matters that may arise with the course.

Al Johnson expressed concern that the technical colleges do not notify the local committees of whether an apprentice takes the review course and the outcome. A general discussion followed, and several consultants and members stated similar concerns.

Action: the committee requested that technical college inform local committees of whether an apprentice passed or failed the review course, and that the Bureau research possible solutions.

d. Review the status of the Veterans in Piping program.

Owen updated attendees on the program and asked for feedback on the progress of the program.

The first class included six participants. Classroom training began on June 23 and concluded on July 31. Each candidate successfully completed with above-average scores, and two candidates registered as apprentices and therefore bypassed the on-the-job training portion.

The second class will begin on February 16. Interviews will be conducted on December 9 and 11. The goal is to place participants with an employer by early April. The Bureau conducts ongoing recruitment through veterans' job fairs and career expos.

Owen noted that more UA contractors are expressing interest in participating in the VIP program, as a result of word-of-mouth success stories. UA contractors currently participating in the program have been impressed with the skills and work ethic of VIP participants, and have encouraged fellow contractors to strongly consider participating.

Owen asked attendees for feedback on their experiences with the program. Some members stated that the program has some administrative kinks that need to be resolved by requiring all paperwork to be completed prior to training and eliminating as many costs for participants as possible.

e. Apprenticeship Completion Award Program

Owen asked members and guests for their feedback on their familiarity with ACAP and their experience requesting reimbursement. The feedback would help the Bureau gauge the effectiveness of its mass informational mailings. Several consultants reported that they are familiar with the program and have requested reimbursements. Other members and guests replied that they do not know much about the program.

Owen reviewed the eligibility requirements and the reimbursement awards. He noted that if the apprentice is eligible, the sponsor and the employer are also eligible. If multiple parties incurred costs, the reimbursement allotment is split between the parties.

Owen emphasized that training trusts are eligible for reimbursement, if they incurred costs. He used Local 75 as an example. If Local 75 paid tuition for an apprentice, it could be reimbursed. The sponsor, which is the local committee, would request the reimbursement and provide documentation and designate the trust as the payment recipient on the reimbursement request.

f. Other

No additional items were brought forth.

5. New Business

a. BAS personnel update

Owen reported that the Bureau projects it will hire new Apprenticeship Training Representatives for the Madison and Waukesha areas by December 1.

b. BAS Review of State Exhibit A's

Owen reiterated the critical work the state committee does creating its state Exhibit A. The document outlines the required minimum standards for all apprentices and local committees and literally provides the template for every apprentice contract throughout the state. Therefore, the Bureau is reviewing all state Exhibit A's this fall to ensure the contents are legal and clear. The review has three possible outcomes: no revisions necessary; minor revisions necessary; or major revisions necessary.

c. For Action: proposed revisions to state Exhibit A

The Bureau reviewed state Exhibit A for Plumbing and noted that the Special Provisions included a list of courses and a required range of hours for unpaid related instruction that was approved in 2001. Therefore, the Bureau asked the state committee whether the list was still current or whether updates are needed.

The committee reviewed its rationale and intent behind the 54-hour course, particularly whether they require the apprentice to complete the course. A general discussion on the pros and cons of requiring the course followed. If apprentices were required to pass the 54-hour course and they failed the course at least once, they may have to extend their contract to retake the course. In contrast, requiring the course prepares all apprentices for the licensing exam. The committee agreed that the intent behind the course is to provide the apprentices with an opportunity to help pass the licensing exam, but not require them to take and pass it.

A side discussion followed on whether the timeframe in which apprentices must take Transition to Trainer could be extended from 12 months to 18 months. Proponents argued that the extended timeframe would compensate for scheduling difficulties and limited availability of class sections.

The committee then proposed several minor revisions, including adjusting the minimum amount of hours for Transition to Trainer from seven to eight; clarifying that apprentices must complete first aid, CPR, and OSHA 10 within the first twelve months of the apprenticeship; successfully complete Transition to Trainer; and participate in or test out of the 54-hour review course.

Last, the committee asked whether the proposed Online Apprenticeship Orientation, which was mandated by the Apprenticeship Advisory Council, would be implemented. Owen replied that it was on hold pending further discussion. The committee stated that if the orientation will be implemented, it should be included in the Special Provisions.

Action: *the committee agreed on the proposed changes, but decided to postpone the official motion to the 2015 spring meeting pending the implementation of the Online Apprentice Orientation.*

d. For Action: can the electronic version of the Plumbing Code Book be used during testing?

Owen reported that the Department of Safety and Professional Services will discontinue printing the Plumbing Code book as of 2015. A sponsor had requested that the state committee discuss whether the electronic version could be used during testing. The sponsor supported its use.

A general discussion followed on the pros and cons of permitting electronic copies of the book. The committee expressed concern that many electronic reading devices can access the internet and therefore be used for cheating. As an alternative, the committee supported requiring apprentices to print their own copy from the website.

The committee approved a motion to prohibit the use of electronic device to view the plumbing code book during the test-out and licensing exam. The Bureau will forward the request to the appropriate parties.

e. American Apprenticeship Grant

This year the U.S. Department of Labor is projected to make applications available for \$100m in American Apprenticeship Grants. The competitive grants will be awarded to partnerships that

- launch apprenticeship models in new fields, such as advanced manufacturing and health care;
- align apprenticeships to career pathways by rewarding workplace learning with college credit or linking to pre-apprenticeship programs;
- and scale apprenticeship models that work by marketing the value of apprenticeship, or building national and regional partnerships to expand apprenticeships

The maximum grant award is \$6m.

To prepare for the grant application, the Bureau convened two industry focus groups: one for the construction sector, one from the manufacturing sector. This strategy of engaging industry early proved excellent for the SAGE grant: by identifying numerous potential ways in which grant money could upgrade apprenticeship programs, the Bureau was able to submit a more robust grant application, more quickly.

Although the specific requirements of the American Apprenticeship Grants are yet to be announced, the industry focus groups convened by the Bureau identified these potential uses:

- increase the apprenticeship "pipeline" by promoting and developing pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship prep programs and linkages between youth and registered apprenticeship, including transcribed credit
- develop outreach materials and events targeted at parents and educators to improve the perception of skilled trades as viable, valid professions. Efforts might include media campaigns, print publication, and tours of local facilities given by partners organizations, such as local chambers of commerce. All efforts would utilize social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

- develop mentoring programs for skilled workers, possibly by increasing the availability of transition to trainer courses

A general discussion on the grant objectives followed. The committee agreed that making high school students more aware of the skilled trades and exposing them to foundational skills are critically important.

f. WI Career Pathway Subcommittee

Owen Smith reported that apprenticeship continues to receive national attention due to a "perfect storm" of factors, and the attention has directly influenced the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council to implement significant new efforts.

Nationally, economists predict an unprecedented shortage of workers in the next five to ten years, due to the progressive retirement of the baby boomer generation and concurrent lack of young adult workers to replace them. In addition, more countries, sectors and industries are expressing interest in apprenticeship training. These changes necessitate creating and expanding pipeline programs into apprenticeship, especially by offering credentials or advanced credit.

To position the state programs to respond effectively, the Advisory Council approved the creation of the Wisconsin Career Pathway Advisory Subcommittee. The new subcommittee will oversee the development of bridges between youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, and will be co-led by representatives of both staffs.

Linking the programs through credit is feasible because the programs utilize training checklists that are very similar: youth apprenticeship programs utilize a "skill standards checklist," and registered apprenticeship programs utilize job books.

A pilot effort to link the two programs through credit has proven successful in manufacturing. Both programs are prevalent in the sector, and many employers sponsor both programs. However, program is pertinent to the construction sector because the new Architecture & Construction youth apprenticeship program is now available, and includes a focus on plumbing skills. .

The Bureau and Youth Apprenticeship are recruiting members for the subcommittee, and will convene the first meeting in November.

A general discussion followed that reiterated the need to create pipeline programs into youth apprenticeship to expose youth to careers in the skilled trades and create a more positive impression of the trades in parents and guidance counselors.

The state committee supported the idea and work of the subcommittee, but voiced concern over liability and safety issues with youth apprentices on a job site. In addition, they noted that plumbers work is licensed, and expressed concern that the youth apprentices be able to gain experience without performing work that requires a license.

Action: *the committee approved a motion to invite the YA staff to the 2015 spring meeting.*

g. Other

No additional topics were discussed.

6. WTCS Update

Owen noted that Marge Wood retired in September and that her interim replacement is Tim Weir. The WTCS projects it will hire a permanent replacement by 2015. A more detailed update is available on the BAS website.

7. Review the program participants.

As of September 26, 2015, active participants included 543 apprentices and 314 employers with a contract in active or unassigned.

8. The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 29, at Associated Builders & Contractors in Madison.

9. The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Follow-up Items

- i. The Bureau will research potential solutions for informing JACs of apprentices' license exam scores.*
- ii. The Bureau will add a review of the Exhibit A to the agenda for the 2015 spring meeting.*
- iii. The Bureau will invite the DWD YA staff to present at the 2015 spring meeting.*

Submitted by Owen Smith, Program and Policy Analyst