

State Plumbing Apprenticeship Advisory Committee Minutes

April 16, 2014

WTCS Foundation
One Foundation Circle
Waunakee, WI

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Brenner, Joseph	J.F. Ahern Company
Breitlow, Steve	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, Robert	H.J. Pertzborn Plumbing & Fire Protection
Schedler, Keith	Don's Plumbing Service, Inc.

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Balke, Brian	EGI Mechanical
Busch, Michael	UA Plumbers Local 75
Callies, Dan	Oak Creek Plumbing
Cartagena, Alaina	UA Plumbers Local 75
Flory, Tyler	Plumbers & Fitters Local 434
Rozga, Bill	Rozga Plumbing & Heating Corporation
Scherer, Michael	Ideal Plumbing & Heating

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Ahmad, Hafeezah	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Cappetta, Darrel	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Cook, Jim	Milwaukee Area Technical College
Emrick, Leigh	Associated Builders and Contractors
Gerhardt, Gail	MCA of North Central WI
Morgan, Karen	DWD/BAS
Nielson, Julie	Plumbers Local 118
Peterson, Dean	Madison Area Technical College
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Walsh, Samantha	Madison Assoc. of Plumbing Contractors
Zastrow, Wesley	Plumbers Local 75

1. **The meeting was called to order** at 10:00 am 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**, October 9, 2013, were reviewed and approved as written.

4. Old Business

a. Follow-up Items from Previous Meeting

Owen Smith reported that all follow-up items were completed.

b. For Action: Review of Roster and Election of Employee Co-Chair

Members Mark Huiting, Roger Clark and Steve Brietlow announced that they would renew their term. A general discussion followed on nominees for Employee Co-Chair. Members nominated Mike House.

***Action:** A motion to elect Mike House as Employee Co-Chair was made, seconded and passed.*

c. 2014 Biennial WI Apprenticeship Conference Summary

Owen Smith reported the outcomes of the 2014 Biennial Wisconsin Apprenticeship Conference Summary, asked Members for their feedback, and explained the Bureau's plans for future Conferences.

i. Summary

Overall, the Conference was a great success, attracting the second highest Conference attendance—450 participants—despite below-freezing temperatures and earning praise for its speakers and workshops. Unfortunately, winter temperatures forced most high schools throughout the state to close. As a result, the Expo was attended by only 50 of the more than 600 high school students who had registered.

ii. Speakers

All speakers earned high ratings from attendees, especially Governor Walker, national economist Anirban Basu and national author Mark Breslin. Governor Walker's speech earned the Conference brief media coverage in several state metropolitan news and television outlets.

iii. Workshops

Most workshops received very favorable feedback from attendees, particularly for their professional relevance. The Conference offered a series of introductory workshops on apprenticeship and key partners, such as "The Department of Public Instruction 101"; and several well-received workshops on youth apprenticeship and apprenticeship prep programs. The three most attended workshops were, "Preparing Students for Apprenticeship Programs," "Diversity in the Workplace," and "Understanding Generational Differences in the Workplace."

iv. Criticisms and Suggestions

The Conference received two common criticisms: it was held during the timeframe of year that poses the highest risk for severe cold and inclement weather; and the removed location of the Expo, a mile from the conference activities, limited the amount of time attendees could visit without missing workshops and discouraged some attendees from visiting at all.

Therefore, the most common suggestions for improvement were twofold: hold the Conference in spring or fall; and hold the Expo and Conference as unique, separate events.

Owen Smith asked the members for their responses to the Conference. A general discussion on the pros and cons followed. Members agreed that the layout of Chula Vista was confusing and the

distance between the Conference and Expo was frustrating. However, overall, Members praised the success of the Conference, particularly the speakers.

v. Future Conferences

Owen Smith acknowledged the downside of scheduling the Conference in the first calendar quarter of the year and holding the Expo in a removed location from the main Conference area. However, he explained the factors that make the timeframe and hosting the two events together the most ideal plan.

Foremost, the first calendar quarter of the year is when the most apprenticeship stakeholders are available. Spring is when the construction sector, the largest sector of apprenticeship stakeholders, typically prepares to return to work, sometimes as early as mid-March and public schools generally have spring break. Fall is the beginning of the academic calendar for high schools and technical colleges, and the construction trades typically remain active through October. Late fall and early winter contain deer hunting season, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Second, the few hotels that can provide all Conference accommodations are most likely to offer the state lodging rate during the off-season months. The Conference requires a large meeting space, five-to-seven breakout rooms for workshops, and at least 20,000 square feet for the Expo. Many hotels can meet the first two requirements, but very few can satisfy all three requirements.

Third, hosting the Expo and Conference as separate events on alternating years would place the Bureau in perpetual planning and fundraising cycles for the last half of each year. Conference preparations typically take at least six months, and the Bureau would be continuously asking its stakeholder base for donations.

Given the feedback from the Bureau and several state committees, the Advisory Council made two decisions at its March meeting: the next Conference will be held in early March; and the Expo will be held in the same location as the Conference but one day prior to the opening of the Conference.

d. Plumbing Review Course Update

Owen Smith reported that he continued to have this item on the agenda so that stakeholders and members could suggest improvements, if needed. If the Committee believes the course is running smoothly, then Owen will not include the topic on future agendas.

The Bureau shared that it received requests from apprentices who failed the course for their specific test scores. Currently, apprentices are informed only whether they passed or failed. Dean Peterson confirmed that apprentices do not receive feedback on their specific score because they are able to take the quiz as many times as needed to pass.

Dean updated attendees on the current availability of the course. It is offered in two different formats: Fox Valley Technical College holds the course entirely online, three times a year; and Madison Area Technical College offers a blended course, with both in-person and online components. The MATC course has proven popular with journey workers who are preparing for their masters exam. So, the benefits of the course are extending beyond the apprenticeship program, to journey workers across and outside of the state. This was part of the benefits the Technical College System saw in developing the course.

A general discussion followed on the benefits and challenges of online delivery. Members agreed that the preferred format among apprentices and journey workers varies greatly by geographic area. Does the review class make a difference in completing? Use this topic on agenda as an update on the success rate.

Members requested that the item be included on future agendas as an opportunity to review and discuss any appropriate, non-confidential data pertaining to the success rate of students in the course.

Follow-up: BAS will research and prepare appropriate data on the success rate of students in the course for the fall meeting.

e. Advisory Council Update

i. Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit

Owen Smith walked members through the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit website, a one-stop resource on Apprenticeship for high school guidance counselors, teachers and staff to assist their raising awareness of registered apprenticeship among high school students and parents.

The website was created and is administered by the Department of Public Instruction.

Key content includes:

- An explanation of registered apprenticeship as well as a separate explanation of youth apprenticeship, which explicitly states it is "not the same as [registered] apprenticeship."
- Apprenticeship Salary Chart, a downloadable document that compares the potential earning of an apprentice to an individual on a four-year degree program
- Educator How to Sheet, which advises educators on classroom strategies for engaging students about apprenticeship, such as inviting industry representatives as guest speakers
- Apprenticeship Promotional Flyers, five versions, one per audience, communicate three central points to parents, educators, students, and more: apprentices earn a good wage without incurring student debt; they earn college credit, and they earn nationally recognized credentials.
- Sample Apprenticeship Pathway Program of Study, which outlines how high school general education courses and specific electives prepare students for potential apprenticeships in different economic sectors, such as manufacturing

Owen reminded members that the Toolkit is an organic, living website that is to be updated with new material as stakeholders see fit. He asked the Committee whether it preferred to publish additional material to the site.

A general discussion on the content and pending shortage of skilled workers followed. Members expressed their support of the website and its content. They suggested that the website could include projections on the pending shortage of skilled workers and the demographics of workers needed by contractors. The Committee agreed that the pending shortage will require all contractors and apprenticeship stakeholders to think out of the box to develop new strategies for recruiting and retaining workers. What remains constant, however, is the need for the stakeholders to change the image of the skilled trades in the eyes of parents.

Follow-up: BAS will forward the suggestion to include workforce demographic information in the Toolkit to the Department of Public Instruction.

ii. Parents' Guide to Apprenticeship

Karen Morgan reported that the Bureau will produce a guide to apprenticeship this fall for guidance counselors to distribute during career counseling sessions with parents and students. The document will be modeled after the Wisconsin Technical College System program guide. The project was recommended by guidance counselors who attended the apprenticeship presentation by Ms. Morgan and Mr. Clay Tschillard at the Wisconsin School Counselors Association meeting this spring. The counselors specifically requested a print publication because many students do not have access to computers and/or internet, particularly in rural areas.

Members who attended the presentation stated that it was very informative, appropriate and well-delivered.

f. Other

No additional items were brought forth for discussion.

5. New Business

a. DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the WI Apprenticeship Program

Bianca Shaw a representative from the Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, briefed attendees on the agency's vision and services in assisting persons with disabilities in gaining and keeping employment.

The definition of disability is much broader than people often assume. A disability is physical or mental condition that makes it hard for an individual to find or keep a job. Qualifying disabilities can include anxiety, depression and learning disabilities, as well as physical limitations, such as paralysis. DVR assists job seekers with developing an employment plan, interviewing and resume writing skills; and addressing economic barriers such as child care and transportation costs.

DVR assists employers to tap into highly-reliable and qualified job applicants who can put their diverse abilities to work, as well as help employers build strategies to ensure that they maintain a critical edge and competitive advantage.

Ms. Shaw emphasized that DVR does not want employers to believe they must hire less-than-able candidates. On the contrary, DVR candidates are pre-screened and qualified, and must earn the job opportunity like any other candidate. The operative difference is that the federal government is financially assisting DVR with helping the candidate find employment.

A general discussion on qualifying disabilities and the referral process followed. Members stated that the plumbing occupation includes very physically demanding duties and asked how a contractor would address the need to be able-bodied to the DVR and the potential employee. Ms. Shaw reiterated that DVR does not encourage employers to hire candidates that are unable to perform the work; rather, the candidates are pre-qualified for the occupations for which they receive assistance. Furthermore, job injuries among DVR clients are below average and job attendance is above average.

b. BAS Personnel Updates

Owen Smith reported several recent personnel changes within the Bureau:

Liz Pusch is the new Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) for Area 10, which includes Dodge, Ozaukee and Washington counties. Liz worked formerly as a legislative aide in Madison. She is from the Dodge, Ozaukee and Washington county area. The area was served previously by ATR Barb Robakowski.

Andrea Loeffelholz is the new ATR for Area 6, which includes Dane and Rock counties. Andrea worked formerly as a grant specialist for the WI Department of Transportation in Madison. The area was served previously by ATR Mary Pierce, who accepted a Policy Analyst position within the Bureau's Administrative Office in Madison.

Darrel Cappetta is the new coordinator of the Veterans in Piping program. Darrel was previously in the Office of Veterans services where he worked as a DVOP

Kay Haishuk, ATR for Milwaukee County, announced that she will retire in June. Kay has worked with the Bureau for many years.

c. For Action: Helmets to Hardhats and Related Revisions to State Standards

Karen Morgan presented an overview of the national Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) program and asked the Committee to endorse the implementation of the program in Wisconsin by adopting several modifications to the state standards.

i. Overview

The Department of Workforce Development supports implementing H2H in Wisconsin to streamline access to apprenticeship and career opportunities in the construction industry for veterans during a period of increase in both the number of returning veterans and the need for quality applicants to the skilled trades. Nationally, H2H is administered by the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans Employment (CMRAVE), a non-profit Section 501(c) (3) joint labor-management committee.

ii. Outcomes

The outcomes of endorsing the Helmets to Hardhats program would be:

- Veterans who have completed military technical training and/or participated in a recognized apprenticeship program or related craft while in the military may be given direct entry into a civilian apprenticeship program.

The local apprenticeship committee would evaluate the military training received to ensure they receive all necessary training for completion of the apprenticeship program. Apprentice applicants seeking credit for previous experience gained outside the supervision of the program sponsor would have to submit such request at the time of application and furnish all records, affidavits and other documents to substantiate the experience. The veteran applicant will be required to meet the programs entrance requirements, including entrance examinations.

- Veterans who have completed military service but have not completed military technical training or participated in a recognized apprenticeship program or related craft while in the military may be provided special consideration for entry into the apprenticeship program by the sponsor. The veterans would have to complete the sponsor's application process and may be required to take an entrance examination.

iii. Proposed Changes to State Standards

Karen Morgan reviewed three additions to that State Standards that she proposes the Committee adopt.

Section	Additions
I. Definitions	"Direct Entry:" Qualifying applicants are directly admitted into the apprenticeship program, and all pre-selection requirements remain in force. "Direct Interview:" Qualifying applicants go directly to oral interviews and are placed on the list, if appropriate.

<p>VII. Minimum Qualifications of Apprentices</p>	<p>F. Direct Entry for Veterans</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet qualifying requirements as stated VII of these standards. 2) Individuals must submit a DD-214 to verify military training and/or experience 3) Local committees may elect direct entry or provide for a direct interview after entry qualifications are met. 4) Entry of Veterans will be done without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, creed, handicap, marital status, ancestry, or sexual orientation.
<p>V. Local Apprenticeship Committee Functions and Duties</p>	<p>D. Recommend to the BAS credit for previous experience/education in conformity with State Carpentry Apprenticeship Policy and Procedures</p> <p>Individuals selected into the apprenticeship program via direct entry and who have received training or employment in an occupation directly or directly related to the occupation in the local standards, will be award Credit for Previous Experience and will pay the apprentice at the wage rate commensurate the awarded credit.</p>

If the State Committee would approve the additions, local committees would have the discretion to adopt the changes.

A general discussion on the proposed additions followed. Members confirmed that the appropriate documentation for discharge is the DD2314 form, and supported having the new language apply to all veterans.

Action: *A motion to support the changes was made and seconded. The motion carried.*

d. Veterans in Piping Update

Karen Morgan reported the United Association of Plumbers and Fitters closed the Wisconsin location of the Veterans in Piping program, and relocated it to an active military base in California.

However, the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association elected to continue the program in Wisconsin with several key modifications. Most of the welding curriculum was replaced by curriculum from all piping trades in order to expose participants to work processes for plumbers, steamfitters and sprinkler fitters. The program was moved from Camp Douglas to six UA training centers, and trainees will spend 40 hours at each center.

Gov. Walker included funding for a VIP coordinator as well as supportive services for participants, which would help alleviate the concern that participants would not be earning a wage while in the program.

e. 2013 WI Act 57 (Apprenticeship Completion Award Program) and DWD 295.25 (Emergency Rule)

The Department of Workforce Development is drafting an emergency administrative rule to implement 2013 Act 57, the Apprenticeship Completion Award Program (ACAP). ACAP was passed in November 2013, and will be active from June 2, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Developed by the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Walker, ACAP partially reimburses eligible apprentices, sponsors and employers for partial related instruction costs. Available funding totals \$450,000.

ACAP will be administered by the Bureau, as directed by law. BAS may reimburse the apprentices, the employer and the sponsor—whichever incurred the cost—a maximum of \$1,000 for up to 25% of the tuition, book, materials and other course fees directly associated with related instruction. An

apprentice is eligible when he or she successfully completes either the one-year calendar anniversary of the contract start date or the entire apprenticeship program within the ACAP performance period.

Karen Morgan reported several key considerations and requirements for implementing the program. First, it will be a learning experience for the Bureau, and BAS will pay close attention to any lessons learned. Second, the Bureau will require the sponsor to confirm that the apprentice is in good standing to qualify for the one-year reimbursement. If an apprentice is eligible, the reimbursement will go to the party that incurred the cost. Split reimbursements can be made if more than one party incurred expense.

The Bureau plans to present performance data to the Legislature after the program concludes in the hopes that the program is continued in subsequent fiscal years. ACAP is projected to be used extensively by apprenticeship stakeholders, because similar funds available through the SAGE Grant (2011-2013) were disbursed entirely. Ideally, all funding will be disbursed before the performance period concludes, which would show a high need for additional funding.

f. Wisconsin Apprenticeship Website

WisconsinApprentice.com is a privately owned and operated website that culls and collects news articles relating to apprenticeship from multiple news sites into a single blog format. The owner created the website as a public service to apprenticeship, and approached DWD to sponsor the site, but DWD declined. The Bureau is sharing the website with state committees because it may be a useful information tool and because the website address is close enough to the Bureau's website address, wisconsinapprenticeship.org, that stakeholders may inadvertently confuse the two.

g. Other

i. Veteran Employment Grants

Karen Morgan distributed an informational flyer on veteran employment grants available currently through the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Governor Walker signed the grant program into law as part of the 2013-15 state budget, following approval by the Wisconsin Legislature.

Employers can receive a state grant of up to \$10,000 over four years when they hire a veteran who is eligible to participate. Participating veterans must meet statutory unemployment requirements and be rated with a 50% or more service-connected disability by the Federal Department of Veteran Administrator rating schedule. DWD's Office of Veteran Services will identify veterans who meet the disability requirements.

The state grant is in addition to up to \$9,000 in tax credits that employers can receive under the existing federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit program for hiring a disabled person.

ii. Proposed Changes to Restricted Appliance License

Members expressed concern over efforts underway by the Wisconsin Rural Water Quality Board to change the requirements for the Journeyman Plumber-Restricted Appliance License. The WRWQ proposes that the national Water Quality Association would write and proctor the state-approved licensing exam, as well as offer a preparatory training course. The license itself would be issued by the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services.

Members oppose the proposed revisions, because they take control away from industry. Members requested that the item be added to the agenda for the 2014 fall meeting.

Follow-up: BAS will include an update on the proposed changes in the 2014 fall agenda.

6. WTCS Update

Jim Cook reported that national legislation to introduce a tax credit for apprentice sponsors was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Dean Peterson reported that the plumbing instructors have allocated their funding to completing the below-the-line materials for the Green Plumbing course developed through the SAGE grant. The instructors have gathered various training materials already, and will meet throughout the summer to develop the remaining segments of the training. The instructors plan to spend next year's funding on developing online course materials, because the need for online training for remote students and employers has increased noticeably.

7. Review Plumbing Program Participants, current and historical

As of April 15, 2014, active participants included 468 apprentices and 277 employers. Both totals were the lowest totals in the past ten years, respectively.

8. The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 8, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at the Plumbers Local 75 in Madison.

9. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

10. Follow-up Items

As a result of these discussions, the following will occur before the next meeting:

- i. BAS will update the roster and recruit new members, if needed.
- ii. BAS will research appropriate data on the success rate of students who take the Plumbing Review Course.
- iii. BAS will forward the suggestion to include workforce demographic information on the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit website to DPI.
- iv. BAS will update the State Standards with the Helmet to Hardhat provisions.
- v. BAS will include an update on the proposed revisions to the Restricted Appliance License on the fall agenda.