

City of Auburn Plumbing Board

Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 4:00 PM, Memorial City Hall

Present: Joe Sliwka, John Sanford, Seth Jensen, Vince Klino, Greg Gallinger,

Seth: Alright no Public to be heard. Motion to approve the meetings from last meeting. Motion approved by Greg Gallinger and second by John Sanford. All in Favor. I.

Seth: Old business, updating the plumbing code and updating Master Plumber Drawings.

Joe: CAD drawings for the Master Plumbers Exam are almost completed. I handed our Engineering dept the Homeowners exam as well so we can get started on updating the drawings for that test. The plumbing code book has been updated on the city's website. We are going to talk budget fees tonight. Mr. Rooter came into the City and paid their \$1,000 fine. An update on 72 Mary St, as of this morning they have not paid their \$1,000 fine but if they don't pay it the fine will roll to their taxes. That is all old business.

Seth: Thanks, alright lets talk about new business. One thing we will be looking at today is our budget cycle. As far as our plumbers go, we have testing fees and permit fees. Is there a fee for homeowner's test? It is not in our budget right now so if we can get that info we will need that soon.

Joe: Let me check in the morning and I will let you know.

Seth: As far as permit fees, what are your thoughts?

Joe: I have a 2018 Onondaga county pricing:

- Charge \$300 for the Master Plumber exam
- The Master Class A license in \$500
- Inactive \$250
- Plumbing Contract Class B \$310
- Contracting License Class C \$250
- Annual Fees \$500

Seth: How many hours does it take for you to go through that?

Joe: Well, the time limit for our exam is four hours and then another few hours to go back and forth for reviewing.

Joe: The City of Cortland:

- The fee for their exam is \$100 and for their license is \$300
- Annual Master Renewal is \$100

Seth: Seems like our prices are in the middle.

Seth: Joe, can you check with Brian to see what his thoughts are for the electrical side of things.

Joe: I will get with him in the morning.

Seth: Only thing I will recommend is increasing the amount of the test fees as we are spending our time on that. Maybe we can bump that up. What you guys think?

Plumbers/Joe: I agree

Seth: Can we say we bump the fee up to \$300 to take the initial Master Plumbers Exam and Drain Layers Exam?

Plumbers/Joe: I agree

Seth: As far as the plumbing permit fees go, you have any recommendations?

Joe: (goes over pricing of Onondaga Permits fees)

John: Well Onondaga has way more overhead than what we do.

Seth: Well revenue from last year is about half of your (Joe) salary, so that is where we want to be.

Joe: I had some questions from Codes Dept about gas piping. I didn't know if other Entities charge for gas piping.

John: I know in the City the plumber has to do it. I know in Onondaga it is not in the plumbing because RGE regulates it all.

Joe: I have been on a few calls to inspect gas piping,

Vinny: NYSEG is the one that handles that.

John: If NYSEG goes to a house with a leak they will tell the homeowner to call a licensed plumber.

Seth: Will this fall under the resident renovation fee?

John: I will say new or extending gaslines will need to require a permit.

Joe: Normal Permit fee for that.

Seth: What about grease traps, annual grease trap fees?

Joe: I think we should, maybe \$50. If they do not do a yearly cleanout then we should also charge them a \$25 fee for not keeping up on their grease trap.

Seth: What do other communities do for grease trap inspections?

Joe: I will look into that.

Seth: Alright, how are we with Plumber Fines, like a licensed plumber doing work without a permit. Are we good with it staying the same?

Plumbers: Yes, we are good with that.

Joe: Penalty for violations we have a fee for 1st offense, 2nd offense and 3rd offense. I have had a few complaints from residents about how high the 1st offense \$1,000 fine was. In my opinion I think the \$1,000 is good I would not lower it for the 1st offense.

Seth: When a \$1,000 fine is ok for charging homeowners then why not charge a company stating they are a plumber should be charged \$5,000.

John: Well that opens a gray area.

Seth: Well, currently the fines have been working to a certain extent.

John: I think the fines shouldn't be both the same then. Homeowner vs. the contractor should be fined differently.

Joe: What we do right now is if I fine someone for changing out their toilet and they state they did not know they had to get a permit, then I tell the homeowner they need to call a plumber and then the plumber will pull the permit.

John: Basically, we charge for a service call and pay the fee for a permit.

Joe: Then if they don't comply then we charge the \$1,000 fine.

Seth: As long as that is happening, that works then.

John: Well, if now we are getting into the home and we can see what other plumbing work has been completed and we can notify the Plumbing Inspector.

Joe: Lets state for a homeowner should be \$1,000 for 1st offense and \$3,000 for 2nd offense.

Seth: Ok we will have two tiers, Residential performing without a license and Business performing without a license.

- Residential will be 1st offense \$1,000 and 2nd offense \$3,000
- Business will be 1st offense \$2,000 and 2nd offense \$4,000

Seth: What about business like Standart Woods and their property managers.

Joe: I talked to Corp Council and he states that it will be a good idea stating they should at least pull permits for water heaters and HVAC systems since they are larger ticket items.

Seth: If we are going to drive a hard line on a resident how are we not doing the same thing on large facilities like that?

Joe: I have no problem sending a letter out stating the Rules and Regulations for the City of Auburn. I will put a list together of all the apartment complexes in the city.

(Greg leaves the meeting)

Seth: Maybe their maintenance guys need to take a test to be a maintenance worker in an apartment complex.

Joe: That's an idea.

Joe: I got a question from a local plumber; can we use Schedule 40 cellular core PVC? Everyone from the board came back with the answer no. Can we get this added to the Plumbers book that way it is black and white?

Seth: Yes.

Joe: 28 Steel St had a DIG Safe Ticket pulled for Sewer Repair. The gentleman that did the work is not a licensed Drain Layer. He was supposedly putting in a concrete pad for an AC unit. He hit the cleanout so he had to dig down a little bit, cut the pipe and put the cap on it. The Code office has sent a fine for working without a permit. Then a \$1000 fine for working without a license.

Vinny: When you put in a DIG safe ticket you need to enter what size line, how deep and how far for the pipe.

John: Yes, there is paper trail for that. The owner of that property knows the rules to what he needs to do.

Joe: Anderson Water Company called and stated they didn't know they needed a permit and asking for forgiveness on their fine of \$1,000. John Stanford went in after and inspected the work they completed after we spoke with the Home Owner that she will need it to get it inspected by a licensed plumber.

Vinny: I don't believe we should penalize the homeowner as she did the right thing after we called her to let her know she needed a permit.

Seth: Well, this is their 1st offense.

Joe: I will say we will waive the 1st offense but if they get caught again, they will get fined with a 2nd offense.

Seth: That works.

Joe: Joe Donofrio had a concern about re-pipe copper gas lines if they are present. I talked to Codes about this.

Vinny: There are rules that are set by NYSEG.

Joe: Brain states you can use copper for gas lines.

Vinny: Yes, you can but it can only be within 15ft from the appliance but if we come across this, we will replace them out.

Joe: By the sounds of it we can still use it.

Vinny: If it is existing then we will use it but if we can replace it with black pipe we will.

Motion to adjourn made by Seth, seconded by John. All in favor. None Opposed. Motion Carried

Recorded by Crystal Nevidomsky