

## Plumbing Advisory Board

January 18, 2024

Advisory Board Attendees: Ed Bigley, John Inks, John Cummins, Jim Eichenlaub, David Green,  
Regis Claus, Ruthann Omer, John Moffit

Absent Advisory Board Members: William Price

ACHD staff Attendees: Geoff Rabinowitz, Drew Grese, Jeff Czochara, Elizabeth Rubenstein, Jack Cronin  
Todd Bogdanovich

Mr. Bigley called the meeting to order and requested votes to approve the minutes from April.

**Action:** Mr. Cummins motioned to approve the minutes from October 2023. Mr. Claus seconded the motion.

**The motion passed unanimously by a 8-0 vote.**

Mr. Grese stated that this was the first meeting of the Plumbing Advisory Board that had attendees representing all three of the plumbing apprenticeship programs located in Allegheny County. He provided the Advisory Board with the program's end of year statistics and noted that a \$215,000 decrease in revenue from 2022 was not unexpected. The program filled a vacant Senior Secretary position and was fully staffed administratively. An inspector vacancy was also filled by hiring Abigail Reese. Patrick Nestler was promoted to Plans Examiner. The program is in the midst of a transition to being able to electronically accept drawings. The program has installed two 55" touchscreen monitors for the plans examiners. Existing drawings, for 400 projects which were documented on 1800 pages, were also scanned and stored digitally. All ACHD Environmental Health programs will be transitioning to new software in 2024, with late-summer being the target for going live.

The program has begun the ground stages of updating the plumbing exam. Mr. Grese stated that he has met with DIT and he will have more information for the Advisory Board at its next meeting. The new test will be held for the first time in April 2025. Regarding the December 2023 test, pass/fail letters have been mailed out. 17 of 32 applicants passed the Journeyman exam, and 15 of 28 applicants passed the Master exam. The next exam will be conducted on April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. The deadline to register for that exam is March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Inks began the discussion about the agenda item of Altro Flooring. He stated that Altro Flooring was referenced in previous meetings about having been approved by IATMO. He contacted IATMO and Altro Flooring was not listed as an approved product by IATMO. And although there had been an attempt to present Altro as a finished product, ANTSI refers to it as a liner. Mr. Cummins stated that there is no documentation that Altro meets standards. Mr. Bigley stated that he has seen it leak. Mr. Cummins stated that the goal is to protect the end-user, which is the homeowner. Mr. Bigley stated that this is an example of why the Advisory Board should not be gung-ho about rushing to approve products.

**Action:** Mr. Green motioned to approve Altro flooring for use in the creation of a wetroom or modified wet room shower area. Ms. Omer seconded the motion.

**The motion failed to carry by a vote of 0 in favor, and 7 against.**

**Mr. Green abstained from voting.**

Ms. Omer asked Mr. Grese if the number of apprentices has been changing. Mr. Grese stated that the number has remained steady. He stated that there has been previous discussion about incorporating a practical component into the Journeyman license exam and that he will further investigate that option. Mr. Inks expressed curiosity about the legal requirements and implications of doing so. Ms. Rubenstein stated that the County is insured, but she is unsure of the extent regarding this matter. Mr. Cummins suggested that it could be incorporated as a class requirement into the shop class held during the second year of apprenticeship. Ms. Rubenstein stated that would make more sense and to have it be a prequalification to take the Journeyman exam. Josh Ohrman, of MYPAS, asked if that would necessitate an amendment to Section 1 of Article XV. Ms. Rubenstein stated that it would need to be a change to Article XV. Mr. Grese stated that it would be looked into further.

Ms. Omer asked about term limits for the members of the Advisory Board. Mr. Grese and Ms. Rubenstein stated that it would need to be looked into.

Mr. Green stated that he would like to talk about a data-sharing MOU for when the County switches to its new software system. Mr. Grese stated that would be a good idea, as it would be beneficial to both the City of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County governments. Ms. Rubenstein noted that she is meeting with the City of Pittsburgh's Solicitor and that she is trying to have a good relationship with the City of Pittsburgh.

**Mr. Cummins moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Green seconded the adjournment.**