



**Minutes
Elevator Advisory Board Meeting
December 7, 2004**

Attendees: Jonathan Brooks, Dept. of Labor, Elevator Bureau
Eric Barber, Otis Elevator
Nick Mebane, Thyssenkrupp Elevator
Clyde Wagner, Wagner Consulting Group, Inc.
Dave Trimmer, Kone, Inc.
Will Montgomery, Kone, Inc.
Roger Shumate, International Union of Elevator Constructors
Joseph Brummett, Elevator Specialists of Carolina, Inc.
Buddy Godwin, The Godwin Company
Tom Chambers, Dept. of Labor, Elevator Bureau
Nancy Vick, Dept. of Labor, Elevator Bureau
Commissioner Cherie Berry
Art Britt, Dept. of Labor, Administration/Governmental Affairs
Cameron Bailey, Dept. of Labor, Administration/Constituent Affairs

Jonathan Brooks opened the 2nd meeting of the Elevator Advisory Board by welcoming everyone. He expressed condolences to Joseph Brummett on the passing of his father, Ron Brummett, and relayed to everyone that Joseph was filling the spot held on this Advisory Board by his father. Introductions were made by all members and attendees.

Mr. Brooks explained the terms of the memberships were staggered in order that all members were not leaving at the same time. He informed the membership that they could meet as many times as needed and the Bylaws stated that they meet at least twice per year.

Commissioner Berry welcomed the new members, condolences to Joseph Brummett, and awarded the new members with Certificates of Appointment to the Elevator Advisory Board. She hopes we can make the licensing program a reality in North Carolina.

Licensing of Elevator Mechanics

Discussion on how this will impact us on an industry level and company level. Mr. Brooks wanted feelings from everyone today in order to get best legislation on licensing for us. He also wanted input on how this will affect our customers.

1. Code A17 addresses elevator personnel by definition and should be required by code.
2. This is a liability issue and we should have inspectors certified.

What type of testing should/will be required?

1. It's important to have some type of testing; national testing rather than on state level.
2. Out of state inspectors in emergency?

3. Some agree there should be state testing. What if a job is not done correctly that is specific to North Carolina. An outside company should put in accordance to NC codes.
4. We should go with a model, i.e., a program that is already in position, NECA Program (National Elevator Contractors Association). We should be on same level as an organization such as this and not “re-invent the wheel”. It is understood that 75-80% of all elevator mechanics are members of this program. This should not be an issue with codes.
5. NECA doesn’t tell what the codes are, but agree that NECA would be a good model.
6. Most programs require continuing education. May have to give written tests as well as orally for those that cannot read or write English.
7. Where to give tests? Sylvan Learning Centers? A home study program could be used and require students to come in to test.
8. Should be one test and on par with NECA Program. Some tests today are 144 hours per year. It should require extensive training and study.
9. If a truly experienced person is from out-of-state, he should not be required to come to North Carolina and go through the entire study program. He should be able to just take the test.

Art Britt explained issues from a Legislative perspective, i.e., what questions will be asked and what answers may be needed. Is it necessary? What are the safety issues? Stories from other states? Legislature has an interest or is it liability? Will the State benefit from fees for this and will it be enough to cover the process?

If the industry is supportive, get good sponsors to move it. Who will benefit and is anyone gaining personally? There are licensing boards for a lot of things. What is required for licensing? Who are we putting out of work? Are we growing government? This all comes back to “what is the price of safety?” Nothing is usually done until someone is hurt. An incompetent person could be out of business. How much would it cost to get into this type business? Some issues: exam, costs, regulation and enforcement. You may be asking for permission to do this, but not in-depth job descriptions. We must ask the bare questions to get this legislation passed and enacted into law. Can we begin licensing - then give good reasons. They may not go to in-depth data.

He, Cameron and the Commissioner’s Office will be free lobbyist for us when needed.

10. Licensing has been passed in 22 states. The Department of Labor should be the governing body. Agreement that this program must encompass in our office and make it another facet of what we do. A stand-alone office to handle would be too costly.
11. There is a need. One reason; a neighbor could begin working on elevators. Licensing will eliminate this and protect the people needing this service. Only profit would be the testing services.
12. Community Colleges could do this type testing? Guilford Tech is currently working with some companies in this area per Roger Shumate. Jonathan asked that he get more data for the Board on the number of people working on elevators in the state and how many are card-carrying mechanics. He also stated that he would be calling on all members to gather data to push this program through legislation.

13. Most all companies support licensing, but will not get as much support from the individual mechanics.
14. Question may be “why do we want to do this?” We need to look at the pre-requisites or eligibility to sit for an exam. There should be a certain level of education and experience in order to take the exam. This Board needs to decide on the basics for testing, what questions, etc.
15. If A17 code has this licensing as a requirement, why do we have to go through legislation? Art Britt says the fees involved cause the legislature to rule on this.

Mr. Brooks estimates this legislation could take a year (following year) or more likely be January, 2007.

2004 Code Changes

November 1, 2004 is the effective date of new code changes. The 2000 code is a re-write and remains the same now except for the 2004 supplements and some minor safety changes. There is a fire service panel change (6 feet above floor). Three zones are required now instead of two. All changes are driven by fire protection community. Another change is the hydraulic piping to be identified.

MRL supplement probably coming out in 2005. This passed A17 and National Electrical Code. Five ballots and the last one has passed. Supplement to code in late 2005 or early 2006. This replaces the mid-rise elevators and creates an atmosphere to do this for 6-story versus traction elevators.

Kone, Inc. was first to put MRL in the state. Clyde/Jonathan put moratorium on them 2 years ago. It is required that the company request a variance for suspension, put a light in the machine room and add a governor access door. When the code addresses the MRL, the Elevator Bureau will address it. The new code section 1.2 addresses this. MRL is allowed in North Carolina with some restrictions. (There is a New Technologies Committee to streamline processes in A17 code.)

What is required to be kept in the machine room? Logs are to be kept “in machine room or on premises” (oil usage logs, monthly fire services)

Bureau Field Issues

We as a Bureau have a tough time getting code requirements into the field. We want a line of communication with the industry. We want members of the Advisory Board to be our means of communication from their companies. Please bring issues received or hear to these meetings to discuss. (“Can’t regulate someone you don’t listen to”)

Question on point from last meeting: Bureau wasn’t going to call elevator companies on smoke detectors/sump pumps? We call on jurisdiction that regulates this area of non-conformance to resolve and make the call. We may request a letter stating their decision.

Electronic permit applications are still in IT department. Applications will be on our website to complete as well as print. There will be a submit button to send to an email address here at the Bureau which will be monitored daily to receive online applications, process and return approvals.

New software program a good probability soon. Inspection reports will be handled electronically by inspectors thus saving time in processing.

Our fee structure is too high according to one company. It was explained that these fees were set through legislature and we have no plans to go through that process to lower or increase the current fees. Problems need to be addressed initially at installation of elevators and there won't be so many issues later.

Elevator Company Field Issues

Too many applications are coming into our office that are not filled out correctly or are incomplete. In the future, we will return those to the company for corrections.

Company should know when the building permit was issued. The elevators installed before November 1, 2004 fall under 2000 code.

Please make sure owner information is correct on applications. Our database is setup with state numbers based on your application information. It is time-consuming to make changes to that owner information later, confuses some id numbers and puts problems on Budget department with billing issues later.

Discussion/Suggestions

Could the Elevator Bureau be available to inspect private residence elevators, if person could not get a private inspector? Maybe a one-time new inspection. These private elevators are not being installed according to code. There are not many private inspectors. There is a huge safety concern by the public. There are no tracking mechanisms to see how many accidents/problems happen. Private inspectors handle about 200-300 inspections per year. We are exempt by legal statute in NC law, but a few counties require QEI inspections. This is a legitimate concern and we will discuss with appropriate people in the Dept. of Labor. We can be proactive and start looking at a process or avenue to take.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Next meeting of the Elevator Advisory Board is set for June 15, 2005.