

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Business and Labor Committee March 11, 2021

*Indicates written testimony submitted prior to the public hearing per
our COVID-19 response protocol

B. HANSEN: All right. Good afternoon and welcome to the Business and Labor Committee. Today's hearing is about the appointment of three candidates, gubernatorial candidates for the Boiler and Safety Code Advisory-- Boiler Safety Code Advisory Board. We have four of them today and we're actually going to change up a little bit from the list that we had before. We're going to start with actually Martin Kasl. And just a couple of things about our committee, my name is Senator Ben Hansen. I represent District 16, that is Washington, Burt, and Cuming Counties, and I serve as Chair of the Business Labor Committee. I would like to invite the members of the committee to introduce themselves starting on my right with Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Hi there. I'm Megan Hunt. I represent District 8 in midtown Omaha.

M. HANSEN: Matt Hansen, District 26 in northeast Lincoln.

BLOOD: Senator Carol Blood, District 3, which is western Bellevue and southeastern Papillion, Nebraska.

HALLORAN: Good afternoon. Steve Halloran, District 33, which is Adams and parts of Hall County.

GRAGERT: Good afternoon. Tim Gragert, District 40 in northeast Nebraska.

B. HANSEN: Also assisting the committee as our legal counsel, Benson Wallace, and our committee clerk, Ellie Stangl. Just a few notes about our policy and procedures, please turn off or silence your cell phones. On each of the tables near the doors of the hearing room, you'll find green testifier sheets. If you're planning to testify today, please fill out one and hand it to Ellie when you come up to testify. This will help us keep an accurate record of the hearing. If you are not testifying at the microphone, but want to go on record as having a position, there are white sign-in sheets at each entrance. Also I would note if you are not testifying, but have a position letter to submit, the Legislature's policy is that all letters for the record must be received by the committee by noon the day prior to the hearing. We do use the light system for testifying, but not for the appointees. We won't use the light system. We'll just let you testify, but if it gets too long, we'll let you know. When you, when you come

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up to, to testify, please begin by stating your name clearly into the microphone and then please spell both your first and last name. The hearing on each bill-- the hearing for each appointee will begin with the-- well, I don't have to worry about that part. So just a couple of things about COVID-19 hearing procedures. For the safety of our committee members, staff, pages, and the public, we ask those attending our hearings to abide by the following procedures. Due to social-distancing requirements, seating in the hearing room is limited. We ask that you only enter the hearing room when it is necessary for you to attend the bill-- the hearing in progress. We request that everyone utilize, utilize the identified entrance and exit doors to the hearing room, which are so marked, and we ask that you please eliminate handouts if you can. With that, we will start with the first candidate for Boiler Safety Code Advisory Board and we'll start with Martin Kasl first.

MARTIN KASL: Good afternoon.

B. HANSEN: Good afternoon and welcome. So if you could, just kind of share a little bit about yourself and your interests and why you're running for the board-- or rerunning for the board, right?

MARTIN KASL: Rerunning, yes. Again, my, my name is Martin Kasl. I'm a licensed mechanical engineer in the state of Nebraska and a few other states. I-- a little bit of my background is when I came out of, came out of college, I worked at Nebraska Boiler Company. We did industrial boiler design and installation around the world, really, did that for over-- about five years and then I've been working in more of a consulting business role here for the last 23 years, working for Engineering Technologies. We do mostly commercial and small industrial design, so the boilers we work on now are much smaller than the ones that I used to, but-- I've actually been on the board for 20 years now, so I told Chris I would do-- our chief boiler inspector-- I told him I'd go ahead and do one more term if he wanted me to, so, so this is another reappointment, I guess.

B. HANSEN: Well, good. Not your first rodeo, obviously, with this board, so good. We'll go to-- thanks for sharing and so I'll first just ask and see if any of the committee members have any questions for you at all. OK, well, it's just-- I, I'm just kind of curious and so with all-- with your extensive experience, like, what's, what's

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kind of the most exciting part about being on the board? Like, what,
what do you, what do you kind of enjoy the most?

MARTIN KASL: So the-- our board has put together of-- a lot of, a lot
of the gentlemen are inspectors that have been in the field working on
their-- they're owners of boiler systems. So I'm the mechanical-- I'm
the engineer that's on the board. So what, what I get to do is
actually design the systems that, that go into the buildings, so I, I
had a lot of fun doing it, like I said, years ago when I was actually
able to design the, the nuts and bolts of the boiler itself. Now, what
I do is the boiler systems, so I take boilers and put them into the
systems of the buildings. It's great to work on a lot of projects, you
know, that you see. We do a lot of schools, office buildings, hotels,
whatever around that-- you see the, the cranes going around downtown.
Some of those are our projects and things, so it's, it's always
rewarding to get to see those things come, come out of the ground and,
and hopefully work well and correctly. But the purpose of our board
is, of course, is to make sure that the codes, the safety codes are,
are adopted appropriately for the state and that we, you know, you
know, have the safety of the constituents in, in mind when we review
the, the codes and, and the things that come in front of our board,
so--

B. HANSEN: Are boilers being used more now or have they slowly been--
like--

MARTIN KASL: Well--

B. HANSEN: I, I know-- are these-- I know they're used-- although,
like, they seem like they're used quite a bit with bigger buildings,
but it seems-- I don't know if they're being replaced now or if
they're being used as much or--

MARTIN KASL: Yeah, you still see them a lot in the industrial designs
and a lot of, like, cogeneration or use boilers in conjunction with
steam turbines, things like that, to generate power as you need, you
know, they heat the steam for energy. So there's a lot of those
cogeneration types of things that they're still used for. Large
hospitals, places like that, are still using that because they need
the steam. They need that, that high temperature. You're seeing a lot
of schools, things like that, going to maybe heat pumps and other
kinds of things where, you know, some of us that grew up and had the

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big old boiler in the, in the school, those things are going away and
going to different types of systems that are a little more, more
efficient than the old, traditional maybe gas-fired or the coal-fired
boilers-- even some of the old ones, so--

B. HANSEN: I think that's what I remember. I worked at a grade-- my
dad was a janitor at a grade school for, for a long time and I always
worked there too and they always had the big boiler in the basement.
It was massive and it was hot, so I'm just-- but, you know, compared
to maybe what they have now, I'm just, just curious.

MARTIN KASL: Right, now, now a boiler might be the size of this table.

B. HANSEN: Yeah.

MARTIN KASL: You have two of those instead of that big, massive one.

B. HANSEN: Yeah, that one was the size of a room and it was huge--

MARTIN KASL: Yeah.

B. HANSEN: --so-- OK. All right, any other questions from the
committee? All right, well, good. Well, thank you for coming.

MARTIN KASL: Yeah.

B. HANSEN: And then we'll, we'll end up having like an Executive
Session and vote on this and we'll take it to the floor for a vote of
the Legislature to-- for approval, so--

MARTIN KASL: OK--

B. HANSEN: --thank you.

MARTIN KASL: --thank you very much.

B. HANSEN: All right, so let's see if I don't butcher this name here.
The next one we'll take is Aaron Jazzinska [PHONETIC]?

AARON JAZYNKKA: Jazzinka [PHONETIC].

B. HANSEN: Oh, OK. Well, I was close.

AARON JAZYNKKA: Pretty close.

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B. HANSEN: Sounds Czech. All right, well, welcome and if you could,
just share a bit about yourself and you're interest and--

AARON JAZYNKKA: Omaha native, this is my second term on the board. I
represent the boiler sellers whereas Marty is on the engineering side.
I am the boiler sellers' capacity. I'm a project manager, estimator,
steam fitter by trade. I went to college and got a philosophy degree
and realized a philosophy degree doesn't really lead to a career
necessarily, so I became a steam fitter and I have been doing the
project management estimating side of that for about 10 to 12 years,
still kind of green. I'm not the seasoned veteran that Marty is after
going into his fifth term, but it's interesting being on the board
seeing-- because like Marty was saying, the bar-- the boilers have
changed, but the safety concerns remain the same and the ways that's--
we deal with those new technologies. It's nice to stay kind of ahead
of the curve and see what's happening nationally and how Chris
translates that, that for Nebraska. Yeah, I look forward to hopefully
doing it again. It's enjoyable. It's-- there's-- it feels like there's
limited ways to kind of serve the public when you're in the
construction industry. It's a lot of private business and industry, so
any little way you can do something I think is helpful.

B. HANSEN: OK, good. And you-- this-- you, you're getting reappointed
again. What--

AARON JAZYNKKA: Yes.

B. HANSEN: Did I miss how many terms you've done so far?

AARON JAZYNKKA: This would be my second one.

B. HANSEN: Your second one. OK, all right. So far so good?

AARON JAZYNKKA: Yeah--

B. HANSEN: OK.

AARON JAZYNKKA: --no, yeah, it's great. It's-- with the insurance guys,
engineers, Chris, I mean, I see different sides of the industry that I
don't normally deal with in my day to day. So to see their perspective
on safety, technology, and kind of the progression of the industry is,
is refreshing.

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B. HANSEN: OK, good. Any, any questions from the committee at all?
Yes, Senator Gragert.

GRAGERT: Thank you, Chairman. Did you seek this position out or
somebody come to you?

AARON JAZYNKKA: Somebody came to me, Chuck Cole. He is a supplier in
Omaha. When he was getting ready-- i think he had also done four or
five terms when he was getting ready to be done with it, knew that I
kind of had an interest to do a little bit more than just punch in,
punch out, so he sought me and asked me if I'd want to give it a shot
and here I am for round two.

GRAGERT: Thank you. Thank you for your service.

AARON JAZYNKKA: Um-hum.

B. HANSEN: Any other questions at all? All right, thanks for coming
here--

AARON JAZYNKKA: Great--

B. HANSEN: --appreciate it.

AARON JAZYNKKA: --thank you.

B. HANSEN: All right, and with that, we'll take our next appointee and
that will be Gerald Whitlock. I believe it's Mike, right?

GERALD WHITLOCK: Yes.

B. HANSEN: Yes.

GERALD WHITLOCK: One of those lucky people where your parents name you
one thing, but call you something different. Again, my name is Gerald
Whitlock. I grew up in the Bellevue, Nebraska, area and currently
reside in Papillion. I went into the military, joined the U.S. Navy
after high school where I was a nuclear propulsion engineer on a
submarine-- attack submarine for about four and a half years, six, six
years total in the, in the service. And when I got out of the
military, came back to Nebraska to go to school, worked as a station
engine-- stationary engineer for a cold storage company and then got a
boiler inspector position with Hartford Steam Boiler, who I'm

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currently employed with. And I've been with them for just shy of 16
years now and I have recently moved into management position with them
and supervise ten other boiler inspectors in Missouri, Iowa, and
Nebraska, so--

B. HANSEN: And, and you are-- this is your second term?

GERALD WHITLOCK: Pretty-- kind of a term and a half. I came in about
halfway through the last due to a resignation.

B. HANSEN: OK, good. Any questions from the committee at all? Yes,
Senator Blood.

BLOOD: Thank you, Chair Hansen. How are you doing, doing today, Mike?

GERALD WHITLOCK: Good, doing good.

BLOOD: Hey, I got a quick question because I'm seeing in a couple
forms and hoping you can walk me through it.

GERALD WHITLOCK: Um-hum.

BLOOD: By the way, I'm glad you're from Papillion. I noticed there's
duplicate answers on discriminatory on the questions. It says no, do
not-- did not publish, post, or say anything which could be construed
as discriminatory. Was that, like, an, an option that you picked and
the computer put it in or did you guys have help with that? I, I just
think it's interesting because we didn't use to see these on these
forms.

GERALD WHITLOCK: I'm, I'm, I'm sorry. I didn't catch the whole part of
it again.

BLOOD: On the application form that you guys filled out--

GERALD WHITLOCK: OK.

BLOOD: --under discriminatory--

GERALD WHITLOCK: OK.

BLOOD: --it will say no, did not publish, post, or say anything which
could be construed as discriminatory and then the next question is

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linked to the discriminatory post. They didn't used to ask those
questions and I was just curious, like--

GERALD WHITLOCK: I, I don't recall.

BLOOD: --was that an option, like--

GERALD WHITLOCK: That may have been, may have been a--

B. HANSEN: I-- yeah, I believe it's, like-- so when they fill out the
application-- because it's like when you, you put yes or no and if
you've ever published--

BLOOD: And then it automatically puts it in--

B. HANSEN: Yeah.

BLOOD: --populates it? I just thought was really interesting--

GERALD WHITLOCK: Yeah.

BLOOD: --and I'd never seen it before.

GERALD WHITLOCK: Yeah, I believe those were just default.

B. HANSEN: Yeah, those are one of the questions that they ask--

GERALD WHITLOCK: Yeah.

B. HANSEN: --on their application for executive appointment, so it's
put a yes or no.

BLOOD: But they're, they're new questions, though. They didn't used to
be that way--

B. HANSEN: Yeah, maybe.

BLOOD: --so that's interesting. So that's-- I was just curious. I
would-- I didn't know if it auto-populated or is that something that
people helped you with or--

GERALD WHITLOCK: No,

BLOOD: It wasn't a trick question. It was--

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GERALD WHITLOCK: Yeah.

BLOOD: --just a, a question of curiosity. And I do appreciate the fact
that you served. I like to see people from my district area on these
committees, so--

GERALD WHITLOCK: Thank you.

BLOOD: Thank you.

B. HANSEN: Any other questions? All right, seeing none, thank you for
coming, appreciate it.

GERALD WHITLOCK: Thank you.

B. HANSEN: All right and we will move on to the final appointee,
Johnie Jason Girmus or-- is that right? Did I say that right-- but go
by Jason?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Yep.

B. HANSEN: OK.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: And my father was Johnie, my grandpa, grandpa was
Johnie, and my son is Johnie, so we go by our middle names.

B. HANSEN: All right. Well, thanks for coming, appreciate it. If, if
you could, yeah, just share a little bit about yourself and-- because
you're up for I think a reappointment again-- as well?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Yeah, second term as well. So I actually grew up
around boilers. My father worked for Nebraska Boiler just right before
I was born. He started his own company in 1982, so I worked, you know,
through high school with him. I was 13 years old the first time I
climbed inside of a boiler. After college, I just went to work for him
full time and then he passed away coming up on 40 years ago when I
bought the company from him right before that. So and I-- actually, I
believe I represent the public, but I, I do work on boilers. I own my
own company, just, just myself working on boilers. I travel the
country and in mostly control and combustion work. I don't do too much
labor anymore. So just a lot of start-ups and troubleshooting,
preventative maintenance, that kind of thing.

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B. HANSEN: OK. From Ithaca, right?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Yeah.

B. HANSEN: OK. I think that's Senator Bostelman's district.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Yep.

B. HANSEN: Yeah, OK.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Just outside of-- well, I went to school in
Wahoo.

B. HANSEN: OK.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Ithaca is pretty small.

B. HANSEN: Yep. OK, well are there any questions in the committee?
Yes, Senator Halloran.

HALLORAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good, good to have you here, Jason.
Yeah, are, are young people getting into this trade?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Into boilers?

HALLORAN: Yeah, pipe fitting and--

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: I meet some-- most of the guys I meet are-- a lot
of them are going to be engineers and they're in the controls. You
know, a lot of the stuff is computer based anymore, control and
combustion, and I meet very few, so everybody kind of talks about how
it's-- you know, I'm, I'm-- I'll be 48 years old this year and I'm--
seem like I'm one of the young guys. But I do know-- I have a couple
of friends that work for-- it's Cleaver-Brooks now in Lincoln, used to
be the Nebraska Boiler, and they're about ten years younger than me
and they're just about the youngest, youngest I know and they're in
their 30s.

HALLORAN: OK. Thanks for reapplying.

B. HANSEN: Yes, Senator Gragert.

GRAGERT: Thank you, Chairman. I was just going to ask how many members
are on this board?

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JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: You know, I don't remember.

GRAGERT: I was just-- where I'm going with this, three of you are
second term-- all three, other than 20 years over there, but is there
quite a turnover?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Not that I know of--

GRAGERT: OK.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: --but it's only been a couple of years for me,
so--

GRAGERT: OK, thank you.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: --I'm still someone new.

GRAGERT: All right, thanks.

B. HANSEN: Any other questions? I just maybe got one question. So is
there, like-- do you guys usually-- I don't know about now, but maybe,
like, in the future, do you see any challenges that you guys will have
to kind of face here in the future-- I don't know-- with maybe
shifting technology or, you know, rules and regulations or anything
like that? Do you guys-- any issues you guys see coming up?

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: I don't, I don't know if we're seeing anything.
The biggest thing I think is the, the emissions. Those are the biggest
things that have changed, you know, you know, and I don't, I don't see
a whole lot. You know, the emissions, things you see on the news
that-- you can only do so much with them and I know they're trying--
because I've worked mostly you-- mostly industrial.

B. HANSEN: Um-hum.

JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: I do some utility, you know, so we see a lot of
coal going away. For the industrial, most everything is natural gas. I
just don't see that changing too much for probably my lifetime.

B. HANSEN: OK. Yeah, I was just kind of curious what your thoughts
were on that. OK, well, I appreciate you coming here and talking to
us. So is there any other questions from the committee at all? All
right. Thank you, appreciate it.

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JOHNIE JASON GIRMUS: Thank you.

B. HANSEN: All right. And like I mentioned before, we'll have-- we'll discuss, discuss this further at next-- at our next Executive Session, move these forward onto the floor for a vote for the Legislature and, and for approval, so-- again, thanks. I appreciate everybody for coming today and that will end our hearing for this afternoon. Thank you.