



MAURA HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIM DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ERIC PALEY
SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Occupational Licensure

One Federal Street, Suite 600
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-2012

LAYLA R. D'EMILIA
UNDERSECRETARY, CONSUMER
AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS
REGULATION

SARAH R. WILKINSON
COMMISSIONER, DIVISION OF
OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE

BOARD OF BUILDING REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS
NOTICE OF VIRTUAL MEETING

Fire Prevention and Fire Protection Subcommittee

In accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 30A § 20, notice is hereby given that the Fire Prevention and Fire Protection Subcommittee of the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) convened a meeting in accordance with G.L. c143 § 97 on:

Meeting called to order on Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 9:38 AM
Meeting Minutes

Roll Call

| | |
|--|---|
| David LeBlanc, Chair, Fire Protection Engineer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Luke McKneally, BBRS Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Jake Nunnemacher, BBRS Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Carissa Lisee, DOL Appointee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Tom Farland, Municipal Fire Official | <input type="checkbox"/> present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Steven Nocco, Municipal Building Official | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Michael Yanovitch, Building Contractor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Eric Svahn, Architect | <input type="checkbox"/> present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent |
| Matthew Bourque, Developer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present <input type="checkbox"/> absent |

1. Review/Discuss/Vote FFPF meeting minutes from December 17, 2025
Cariss Lisee motioned to approve BBRS meeting minutes from December 17, 2025 ,
seconded by Jake Nunnemacher.
A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed
unanimously.

2. Review/Discuss Code change tracker form
Luke McKneally stated he is in the process of integrating the new code
proposals to the BBRS into the FFPF tracker.

3. Review/Discuss Assigned code sections – Chapters 4, 7, 9
Chair LeBlanc introduced Chapter 7. There were no items specific to Chapter 7
discussed. Jake Nunnemacher motioned to approve Chapter 7 unamended,
seconded by Michael Yanovitch. A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none
abstained. Motion passed unanimously.
There was a question with discussion about the fire area definition in MA and why it
was changed. Jake Nunnemacher gave a high-level explanation of the enhanced



fire safety laws and lack of effectiveness of firewalls. Examples were given. In summary, MA law goes above and beyond requiring sprinklers with firewalls in large residential (Type 5 and Type 3) buildings.

Chair LeBlanc introduced Chapter 4. Discussion about Section 403 High Rise Buildings. The code change proposal from Sam Naylor regarding Definition of a high-rise building was introduced. Chair LeBlanc explained that MA changes the definition of high-rise buildings and that a low rise building can be a taller building in other parts of the country. He explained how MA defines it versus how the IBC defines.

Sam Naylor spoke to his submitted code proposal to change the definition to a building with an occupied floor located more than 75 feet (22 860 mm) above the lowest level of fire department access. Justification given is a gain in more housing and a lot of mid-rise projects, which should be very beneficial to bring production numbers up for housing units.

Mr. Naylor inquired if people can submit proposals for the 10th edition and how can this proposal be considered for the 10th edition. Discussion ensued about code proposals being considered for the 11th except if they have life safety impacts or public safety concerns.

There was further discussion as to charge of FFPF and what they can recommend back to BBRS. Board Counsel Kilb recommended the subcommittee use its technical expertise to develop a record of what this change will do prior to making a motion to recommend adoption or not. He stated this record should include what changing this definition would do, how is it going to impact things, and specifically, what parts of the code are going to change if the definition is changed.

Discussion then ensued with members indicating that they should first put on the record that the matter is not urgent to justify a 10th edition code change.

Jake Nunnemacher motioned to make the decision on the definition of high-rise buildings be put for the 11th edition and not the 10th edition, seconded by Carissa Lisee. A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

Luke McKneally motioned to modify the code proposal such that for Chapter 2 Definition, the Massachusetts amendment be deleted and the Chapter 2 definitions from IBC 2024 move forward unamended, seconded by Carissa Lisee.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

It was then noted that there hadn't been discussion on the rationale for this decision. There was a robust debate on impacts and what is unique in Massachusetts. Jake Nunnemacher pointed out that although the proposal stated there are no cons, there are cons for the fire service as there are additional stories being added impacting fire department apparatus access as well as life safety. He asked Mr. Naylor if he had a side-by-side comparison of what MA is now and what it would be if move to IBC language. It was noted that the committee needs to do a comparison review to incorporate more detail regarding impacts from all areas. The comparison between where we are vs IBC language, what is the delta, what are gaining, what are we losing. There was continued discussion on loss of life safety measures access, and if the change is made, are we dramatically impacting life safety in a negative way.

Luke McKneally moved to reconsider and retract the prior motion to modify the code proposal such that for Chapter 2 Definition, the Massachusetts amendment be deleted and the Chapter 2 definitions from IBC 2024 move forward unamended, seconded by Carissa Lisee.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

Jake Nunnemacher and Chair LeBlanc recommended themselves to individually work on background information, delta comparison, pros and cons for the high-rise definitions overall.

Carissa Lisee motioned to table this topic to the next scheduled meeting, seconded by Jake Nunnemacher.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously. For next meeting, there will be additional information regarding delta differences along with fire service concerns.

Chair LeBlanc continued with Section 403.4.5 Emergency communication coverage. Jake Nunnemacher motioned to amend the code language in section 403.4.5 to read in accordance with 780 CMR Section 918, seconded by Michael Yanovitch. Discussion ensued about the FFP requirements for emergency responder coverage found in the IFC in section 510. It was discussed that Massachusetts for the last several additions has brought over the requirements of the IFC into the IBC to eliminate confusion and make it easier to understand and that we should continue this and direct the individual directly to that code section in Chapter 9. Board Counsel Kilb advised the committee to remove the word section and have it read 780 CMR 9.00. He also stated that in referring to 780 CMR, when writing it, there is a specific format that will have to be followed. Executive Director LeBlanc recommended having it read Section 918.

Both Jake Nunnemacher and Michael Yanovitch were in agreement with the friendly amendment.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair LeBlanc continued with 404.2 Use.

Jake Nunnemacher motioned to change the code language in 404.2 to remove verbiage of International Fire Code and add 527 CMR 1.00: Chapter 12, seconded by Carissa Lisee. Minimal discussion about the change.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

404.3 Automatic sprinkler protection reviewed.

Jake Nunnemacher motioned to maintain the deletion to exception 1 in 404.3, seconded by Luke McKneally. Minimal discussion that exception one will be deleted and that it deals with sprinkler options related to atriums and two-hour fire barriers. It was also mentioned that if it was kept, it would potentially be in conflict with NFPA 13 since it's given exception saying certain places adjacent to the Atrium would not have to be sprinklered as long as there's a fire barrier there.

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

406.2.7 Electric vehicle charging stations and systems reviewed. Chair Leblanc noted there have been ongoing issues in the industry aligning the codes with rapid changes. There was discussion about increased hazards with electric vehicles and electrical vehicles charging, inside buildings, particularly with faster chargers. There is the potential of what's known as a thermal runaway of the lithium-ion battery which creates a fire that's a challenge to deal with, in part, it creates its own oxygen off gases like hydrogen. Fire testing that has been completed was mentioned.

Board Counsel Kilb noted if there are things that are fully regulated by the mass electrical code, they shouldn't be in the building code at all.

Chair LeBlanc noted that this is all currently IBC 2024 language and Board Counsel Kilb suggested it is deleted as it is not regulated by the BBRS. Counsel stated if the subcommittee wanted to have a signpost that may be fine, however, he questions whether even that is necessary when a matter is obviously regulated by another code. A very lengthy discussion ensued noting various concerns with back and forth discussion. One concern with it not being here that it might be OK for a contractor to go ahead and install an EV system without a licensed electrician. Another concern voiced was crossover of codes and confusion on where guardrails are for the code. Examples cited included energy codes requiring charging stations, yet the actual electrical nuances are governed by the electrical code. It was noted to direct this to DOER and DFS it is showing up in energy codes. Further concern is that information here is governed by the electrical code yet being placed into the building code which creates a problem but at the same time might be good information to be carried through. Comments made that it is important to not create conflict between the codes and to be aware of the verbiage with signposts being appropriate. It was also discussed that the subcommittee will encounter this listing and labeling verbiage again.

A motion was made by Luke McKneally, seconded by Carissa Lisee to remove the electrical language from 406.2.7. A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Review/Discuss/Vote – Code Proposal

- a. Chapter 2 definitions – high rise building code proposal submitted by Same Naylor – incorporated in above minutes

5. Discuss Other matters not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting

Chair LeBlanc posed question to Board Counsel Kilb about NFPA 70 references that were added from 2021 to 2024 and if we wanted to put a signpost could we put a general not upfront like a blanket signpost? Board Counsel Kilb advised if you see NFPA 70, replace it with 527 CMR 12 and if you see fuel gas code, replace it with 248 CMR; in both cases you can also refer back to Chapter One of 780 CMR.

Chair LeBlanc provided awareness with fire test data and what it would take to protect some of these things like EV passenger vehicles and EV chargers. It was mentioned there have been significant parking garage fires. This is an ongoing situation and possibly more discussion to be had on this topic. It was also noted that it is not just related to small cars but diesel vehicles, construction equipment, etc and their storage facilities/warehouses.

Chair LeBlanc wrapped up discussion noting we will start next meeting off with review of 406.2.8. and will continue working through chapter 4 and be on the lookout for more information on the high rise definition.

Jake Nunnemacher motioned to adjourn meeting, seconded by Michael Yanovitch. .

A roll call vote was held, none opposed, none abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:13 PM.

Items relied upon

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes
- Code Change Proposals