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RIBA leaders hear report regarding ongoing lawsuits targeting fees

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A full agenda, including approval of the 2009-2010 budget, greeted members of the Rhode Island Builders Association's board of directors at their monthly meeting on November 3rd.

Attorney Michael Kelly attended the meeting to report on several lawsuits currently before the courts. The cases mostly involve high permit fees and the imposition and use of impact fees.

Directors reviewed and approved RIBA's annual budget. President Michael Artesani Sr. emphasized that the executive committee is monitoring costs and revenues on a quarterly basis.

Education and Workforce Development Committee

Reporting for chairman Robert Baldwin, John Bentz said the committee is monitoring student construction programs throughout the state and is lobbying wherever possible to prevent budget cuts that could curtail them. Bentz added that Woonsocket school officials recently voiced a commitment to preserve the construction program at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center.

Remodelers Committee

Reporting for the Remodelers Committee, chairman Michael Artesani Jr. said the panel's 2010 event calendar might include programs that are fewer in number but broader in interest.

Workers' Compensation Committee

Chairman Kenneth Jones told directors that many RIBA members are renewing their workers' compensation insurance with the Renaissance Group, as hoped. Plans to expand that program to allow policy holders to also become investors are proceeding, he added.

Code Subcommittee

Robert DeBlois also reported for the subcommittee that is monitoring the state's review of the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC).

The most significant changes have to do with energy, he said. This includes a shift from R-15 to R-19 wall insulation and mandatory duct blaster tests. DeBlois also mentioned that there are new requirements to secure decks to buildings.

The state Building Code Standards Committee is reviewing these proposed code changes for use in Rhode Island beginning in late 2010.

Paul Eno is the owner and editor-in-chief of New River Press, Woonsocket and is the editor of the monthly RIBA newsletter, The Rhode Island Builder Report.

