

MINUTES
BOARD OF COAL MINE SAFETY
DEP Cambria Office
June 8, 2023 – 10 a.m. – Ebensburg, PA

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Stefanko, DEP, Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mining Operations
Bobby Bodenschatz, PCA
Joseph Zelanko, PCA
Frank Reidelbach, UMWA
Ron Bowersox, UMWA
Roger Berringer, UMWA

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TEAMS

Todd Moore, PCA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT

Richard Wagner, DEP, Director, Bureau of Mine Safety
Richard Murphy, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Charles Washlack, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Brad Russian, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Stephanie Doratio, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Peggy Scheloske, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT VIA TEAMS

William Hudak, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Art Brower, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
David Lowery, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Laura Griffin, DEP, Policy Office
Richard Marcil, DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel

OTHERS PRESENT

Ben Stock, Rosebud Mining Company

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Stefanko, DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mining Operations and Acting Chairperson of the Board of Coal Mine Safety (Board), called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. in the DEP Cambria Office, Conference Room 1 A/B in Ebensburg. Acting Chairperson Stefanko informed the members that DEP Acting Secretary Richard Negrin was unable to attend today's meeting because he is currently on-call for his confirmation hearing. He then asked the members present to state their names and indicate who they are representing on the Board. He introduced the Board's new member, Roger Berringer, and then asked all others present in

person and via Microsoft Teams to introduce themselves.

The Board considered its first item of business, which was approval of the June 15, 2022, meeting minutes. There was discussion regarding representation on the Equipment Taskforce. Director Wagner read Section 350(d) of the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act, which states that the membership shall be comprised of equal numbers of representatives, not less than two nor more than four, selected by the Department and the major trade association representing coal operators. The Department agreed to commit to keeping the UMWA members informed of future task force projects.

Frank Reidelbach moved to adopt the minutes to the Board. Joe Zelanko seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board, and the minutes were adopted as presented.

Apprentice Miner Certification Plan

Acting Chairperson Stefanko explained that the presentation to the Board is intended for discussion to see if the Board should consider developing a certification plan for apprentice miners and, if so, how it should be pursued.

Brad Russian, Bituminous Underground Mine Inspector with the Bureau of Mine Safety, presented a general outline of what the Apprentice Miner Certification Plan might look like. He explained that there was an accident that involved an inexperienced miner in January that prompted the Department to look at what we can do as a Department and as a community to prevent incidents from happening with inexperienced miners. There was collaboration with operators, miners and the Department to see why these accidents are happening. There is an influx of new miners and these persons are not knowledgeable of mining processes. In addition, certification will help Pennsylvania mine operators if inexperienced miners move around to different Pennsylvania mines.

The members thanked Brad for his presentation and discussion ensued. The members expressed their desire to pursue the plan with a more thorough review of the requirements to work towards eliminating redundancy.

Acting Chairperson Stefanko proposed that a work group be created with all stakeholders, including industry and contractors, to review what has been developed. He will reach out to the PCA for assistance with the work group. Brad Russian will be the point of contact and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

Retention of Pennsylvania Trained Miners

There was discussion about retention of Pennsylvania Trained Miners. Inexperienced miners trained in Pennsylvania are eligible to start as an apprentice miner in West Virginia after six months. West Virginia currently has a certification program in place that requires 80 hours of training. Pennsylvania is putting in the effort to train a miner only to have them leave in 6 months. The members would like to have the Department look at this. Reciprocity was discussed and Director Wagner explained that Pennsylvania offers reciprocity to West Virginia miners

when considering length of time working in a mine, as it applies to Pennsylvania requirements.

Review of Equipment Task Force Recent Accomplishments

Acting Chairperson Stefanko reported that the Equipment Task Force has been very busy in recent years as the industry continually moves towards implementing new technologies and has developed safety standards for flare approvals, rubber-tired personnel vehicle specifications, and the use of permissible pumps in return entries.

Chas Washlack, Electrical Mine Safety Program Manager, provided an overview of the Task Force's recent work regarding methane reduction flares, rubber-tired personnel vehicle specifications and the use of permissible pumps in return entries. He reported that all these specifications can be found on the Bureau's website. He also informed the Board that the Task Force will be meeting tomorrow to review variable speed drive ground fault protection. This will be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

Diesel-Powered Equipment: Extend Oil and Filter Change Interval from 100 hours to 200 hours

Acting Chairperson Stefanko reported that the proposal to extend oil and filter change hours that was presented and discussed at the March 2, 2022 Board meeting was formally introduced as Senate Bill No. 115. After it was passed by the Senate, the bill was forwarded to the House Transportation Committee for review and then voted out of that Committee on June 5, 2023. It is now on the House floor awaiting a vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Acting Chairperson Stefanko asked the group if there was any other business that they would like to address. Mr. Bowersox asked if it would be possible for the Department to present any reports on serious incidents or fatalities to the Board. The members present agreed that they would like that to be a regular agenda item. Director Wagner offered to forward final reports of bituminous incidents automatically to the Board members when reports are completed. There was no other business presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Acting Chairperson Stefanko asked the members of the public in attendance if they would like to provide any other comments. There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Board meeting is scheduled to be held on September 6, 2023, at 10 a.m. at the DEP Cambria Office in Ebensburg.

With no further business to discuss,

Frank Reidelbach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bobby Bodenschatz seconded this motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.