

**MINUTES**  
**Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council**  
**New Stanton, PA**  
**April 10, 2018**

A meeting of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council was held on April 10, 2018, in the Westmoreland Room at the DEP New Stanton Office in New Stanton, PA.

Attendance:

Members Present:

Chris Anderson, Special Medical Response Team (SMRT), Acting Chairperson  
Will Dando, Pennsylvania Coal Alliance (PCA)  
Richard Fink, House Representative  
John Kline, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)  
Mark Lepore, Mental Health Professional

Others Present:

Craig Carson, DEP-BMS  
Dustin Mowery, DEP-BMS  
Margaret Scheloske, DEP-BMS

Acting Chairperson Chris Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Acting Chairperson Anderson clarified that a quorum of five was present for voting purposes.

Minutes from the April 18, 2017, meeting held in DEP New Stanton were reviewed. Will Dando noted that L. Ray Bashline was appointed as the Senate appointee not the House appointee.

**A motion was made by Will Dando to accept the minutes with the correction that L. Ray Bashline was appointed as the Senate appointee. The motion was seconded by Richard Fink and all members accepted the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.**

Report of Bureau of Mine Safety Activities:

Bureau of Mine Safety Director Colvin Carson gave an overview of the Bureau's activities since last year's meeting. He introduced Dustin Mowery as the new Bureau of Mine Safety Emergency Response and Training Manager.

Director Carson reported on four (4) incidents that occurred in the Pennsylvania mining operations, one of which was a fatality. He provided an update on a fatality at a Reading Anthracite screening facility that was processing coal fines/banks. The employee was pushing material towards the top of a bank by himself and stopped the dozer just before the breakover point and did not set the brake, stood on the trap and the machine rolled and ran over him. There

was a joint investigation with MSHA. We don't know why he did what he did, compliance orders were issued.

Another event occurred at a Commonwealth mine where an explosion occurred in an area that produced a lot of methane where a miner's beard was singed. There was an explosion in another mine where it blew out return walls and knocked people to their knees. Ten compliance orders were issued, with revocations of certifications of machine operators and some mine officials. Finally, there was another serious accident where the miner was caught between a scoop and a shuttle car, resulting in a broken leg. This was investigated and recommendations were made.

Mark Lepore asked if any debriefing was offered for the fatality and suggested that MFFAC could assist with debriefing in these instances. Director Carson reported that someone who knew the family offered debriefing for the fatality. Mark Lepore suggested MFFAC could also assist during an explosion so that families were aware of miners' location during an explosion.

Update of Member Status:

Acting Chairperson Chris Anderson reported the following appointments and reappointments:

Effective August 16, 2017:

Christopher Anderson: Local Emergency Response Professional Alternate  
William Dando: Pennsylvania Coal Alliance  
John Kline: United Mine Workers of America  
Mark Lepore: Mental Health Professional

Effective February 23, 2018:

Richard L. Fink: House Representative

Paperwork continues to be in progress for PEMA member nominee Philip Barker and PEMA alternate nominee William Spencer, Ronald Bowersox, United Mine Workers of America and Judith Shabbick, Local Emergency Response Professional.

PA State Teams Mine Rescue Skills Contest Wellness and Rescue:

Dr. Mark Lepore reported that he and Judith Shabbick created a survey and presented it to mine rescue teams at a MERD the Bureau conducted on May 25, 2017 at the Indiana Fire Academy. There were six teams. In addition to the questions presented, the team members were asked for their input into possible questions to be added. The results have been published and presented to Coal Age Magazine. They are also considering pursuing a grant that may be available to obtain additional resources. He will make sure that everyone gets a copy of the article. There was discussion regarding the protocol for a team member to be excused from participation. The consensus is that a member would not ask to be excused, so the employer needs to have a mechanism in place for removal.

Further discussion ensued on steps going forward for a successful return to work after an incident. Acting Chairperson Anderson suggested that the Expert (Deport Team) in each county become involved and that the State could request that operators list the name of a point of contact and a non-emergency contact number in their individual plans.

#### Cues for Activation of Services

There was discussion regarding the cues for activation of services. The general list should be provided to non-emergency contacts so they know what is expected and can follow the plan. Ideally each mine plan should be shared with their respective county.

#### Recollections of Sago:

As UMWA alternate member Ron Bowersox was again unable to attend, this agenda item will be removed from the agenda and when Mr. Bowersox is available it will be added to the agenda.

#### Nomination and Election of Chairperson:

Acting Chairperson Chris Anderson opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council.

**A motion was made by Richard Fink to nominate John Kline for Chairperson of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Committee. Mark Lepore seconded this motion which was unanimously approved by the Board.**

New Business:

#### Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual:

Dustin Mowery presented the Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual. He reported that the last training for liaisons was in 2016 and noted that the Resource Manual indicates that training shall be scheduled at least annually. He asked if the Committee would consider providing some type of electronic training for the liaisons. Discussion ensued and Chris Anderson said that he would be willing to host a secure portal where a class could be conducted.

Mark Lepore and Judy Shabbick can address the psychological aspect and Chris Anderson and Richard Fink will work on a list of external agencies using positions not names. The persons to be trained are the contact liaisons named in each operator's plan and the program would be no longer than one hour, with the person demonstrating competency.

Additionally, a recommendation was made to request that the operators include a provision in their plans for providing a "holding" place for the families to congregate during the event of a mine emergency.

New Business:

A card for Allison Gaida, Administrative Officer, who recently retired, was passed for the members to sign, and Peggy Scheloske was introduced as the new Department staff person responsible for administrative and clerical duties for the Mine Families First Response and Communications Council.

Next Meeting Date:

The Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council will hold its next annual meeting on April 9, 2019, at the DEP New Stanton office.

**A motion was made by John Kline and seconded by Mark Lepore to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 a.m.**