

MINUTES
Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council
New Stanton, PA
October 18, 2024

A meeting of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council was held October 18, 2024, in the Westmoreland Room at the DEP New Stanton Office in New Stanton, PA. The meeting was held in person and using Microsoft Teams. Chairperson Sbaffoni informed the group that the meeting was being recorded for transcription purposes only.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Sbaffoni, At-Large-Member- House, Chairperson
Philip Barker, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Ron Bowersox, UMWA
Judy Shabbick, Local Emergency Response
Chris Anderson, Local Emergency Response-Alternate

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TEAMS

Rachel Gleason, Pennsylvania Coal Alliance (PCA)
Mark Lepore, Mental Health Professional
Grafton Eliason, Mental Health Professional-Alternate

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT

Richard Wagner, Bureau of Mine Safety (BMS)
Dustin Mowery, BMS
Margaret Scheloske, BMS
Heather Cordial, BMS

OTHERS

Megan Dennis, Director of Environment Health Safety, Pennsylvania Aggregates and Concrete Association (PACA)
Jeff Ivicic
Tom Mills, UMWA

After confirming a quorum, Chairperson Joe Sbaffoni called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of October 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the October 13, 2023, meeting held at DEP New Stanton were reviewed.

A motion was made by Ron Bowersox to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Judy Shabbick. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Sbaffoni welcomed Megan Dennis, Director of Environment Health Safety, Pennsylvania Aggregates and Concrete Association.

Bureau of Mine Safety Report of Activities

Bureau of Mine Safety Director Richard Wagner gave an overview of the Bureau's activities since the last meeting in 2023.

The current operations consist of nine Anthracite, 26 Bituminous with one idle and 25 Industrial Mineral operations with ten idle.

Fatal Accident Summary

There were two Anthracite mining fatalities.

Ellengowan Bank #45

On January 30, 2024, a haul-truck driver was fatally injured when the haul truck he was operating went off the edge of the stockpile where he was attempting to dump and overturned. He was 63 years old with 13 years of experience went over a berm. In addition to the driver not wearing a seatbelt, there were several other violations identified. There was a lack of illumination at the site, there were no berms in place and there was a lack of signage specifying where the dump point should be.

Hazleton Shaft Preparation Plant

A fatality occurred on July 25, 2024, a 44-year-old laborer with 1 ½ years' experience, was in the process of cleaning material off an overloaded stalled stacker conveyor belt that he was standing on, he lost his balance and was drawn into the hopper where he was covered

Discussion followed.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual

Dustin Mowery distributed an updated Resource Reference Manual and Response and Communication Implementation Plan to the members present.

The members discussed the confidentiality of the reference manual and if it is posted, should it be marked "confidential" or "for official use only". Dustin will check with legal counsel on the best way to proceed.

DEP Liaison Training Update

Dustin Mowery reported that a training was held in March of this year where members attended a MERD at Consol. The Bureau is also talking with the MSHA Academy to try and do another liaison training with them. There are currently five liaisons, Dustin Mowery, Heather Cordial, Eric Smeak, Malik Boyd and Lauren Camarda are the current liaisons for the Bureau. Director Wagner explained that we lost two of our liaisons due to a recent reorganization of our Bureau. Malik Boyd is from our Policy Office and Lauren Camarda is a press secretary.

Director Wagner noted that it is easier to use Bureau of Mine Safety employees; because they are directly under our supervision but noted that the persons currently listed would probably need to be assisting elsewhere in the event of a mine emergency.

There was continued discussion about how the Department could fulfil their obligation to provide trained liaisons. There were suggestions that perhaps we borrow from other government agencies, for example the Department of Human Services, or with the individual counties who already have these types of services in place.

Director Wagner thanked everyone for their suggestions and said that he would like to review some of these ideas outside of this meeting. He has an upcoming meeting with administration and said he will also pursue the other items listed. Chairperson Scaffoni said that he would be willing to prepare a letter from the Committee if that would be helpful.

Review of Mine Families First Response and Communication Implementation Plan

The Plan was distributed with the meeting materials and there have been no changes. There were no recommended changes.

Public Comments

None.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Judy Shabbick and seconded by Phil Barker to adjourn the meeting at 11:08 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.