

MINUTES
Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council
New Stanton, PA
October 28, 2025

A meeting of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council was held October 28, 2025, at 10:00am, via virtual Microsoft Teams. Chairperson Sbaffoni informed the group that the meeting was being recorded for transcription purposes only.

ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTEES PRESENT VIA VIRTUAL TEAMS:

Joseph Sbaffoni, At-Large-Member - House, Chairperson
Deborah Irwin, At-Large-Member - Senate
Philip Barker, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Judy Shabbick, Local Emergency Response

ALTERNATE ADVISORY APPOINTEES PRESENT VIA VIRTUAL TEAMS:

Grafton Eliason, Mental Health Professional - Alternate (for Mark Lepore)
Thomas Mills, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) - Alternate (for Ronald Bowersox)
Chris Selfridge, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) - Alternate
Chris Anderson, Local Emergency Response - Alternate

PUBLIC PRESENT VIA VIRTUAL TEAMS

Megan Dennis, Director of Environment Health Safety, Pennsylvania Aggregates and Concrete Association (PACA)

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BUREAU OF MINE SAFETY
STAFF PRESENT IN THE ROOM**

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

Call to Order:

- Meeting Called to order: Chairperson Joe Sbaffoni, 10:01 a.m.
- Quorum Confirmed and Established: 4 voting members

Reading & Approval of October 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from the October 18, 2024, meeting held at DEP New Stanton were reviewed.

- A motion was made by Judy Shabbick to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Chris Selfridge. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairperson Sbaffoni welcomed new Advisory Council Member Deborah Irwin.

AGENDA ITEMS

Public Comment

- No public comments

Informational

Bureau of Mine Safety Report of Activities

Richard Wagner, Director of the Bureau of Mine Safety provided an overview of the Bureau's activities since the last meeting October 18, 2024.

Fatal Accident Summary

- September 2, 2025 - Torrance Quarry II – The Victim was kneeling while loading the bottom holes of a shot when a rock fell from the roof and struck him, causing fatal injuries.
- January 10, 2025 – Acosta Mine – The Victim was fatally injured when he was found pinned between the operator's compartment and the rib while operating the rear mobile bridge of the continuous mining system.

DEP Mining Family First Liaison Update

Chairman Sbaffoni ask how we choose the Liaisons and if there was training scheduled

- Director Richard Wagner reported that with the Advisory Council's opinion requiring the Department to find Commonwealth Employees to fit the role has proved challenging to maintain liaisons given the ongoing turnover of employees due to job promotions, leaving the Commonwealth, etc., The Department is continually trying to fill the roles with replacements.
- Dustin Mowery reported that a training was held in March of last year where members attended a MERD at Consol. He informed the Advisory Council that he was talking with the MSHA Academy to try and do another liaison training with them. The Department cannot currently schedule trainings at MSHA Academy due to the budget restrictions. Training is scheduled on November 17, 2025, in-house via TEAMS.

Appointments for Boards and Advisory Councils

- Chairman Joe Sbaffoni requested a list of members and ask about appointments.

- Director Wagner informed the Advisory Council that the Governor's office has requested multiple candidates be submitted for any Board or Advisory Council vacancy.

Current Mine Count

- 23 Active Bituminous Mines
- 9 Anthracite Mines
- 25 Industrial Minerals
- The Department no longer inspect caves

MSHA Closures

- District 2, Mt. Pleasant MSHA office is closed as of October 1, 2025

Furloughs at the Bureau of Mine Safety

- Mine Safety employees are essential and have not been impacted. No changes due to the current budget impasses besides pausing noncritical training and the imposition of travel restrictions.

Review & Approve of Mine Families First Response and Communication Implementation Plan, Mine Families Resource Reference Manual

- Director Wagner and Dustin Mowery informed the Advisory Council that the Mine Families First Response and Communication Implementation Plan, Mine Families Resource Reference Manual plans were updated with 2025, and no changes were made. Chairperson Sbaforoni asked the Advisory Council if they had any recommendations on the plan, they did not. No motion was made.

Next Meeting Date

- Chairperson Joe Sbaforoni ask if we had a date set for next year's meeting. Heather Cordial, will send out a poll to the Advisory Council to find a date that works October 2026

Adjourn

- **A motion was made by Judy Shabbick and seconded by Deborah Irwin to adjourn the meeting at 10:55am. The motion passed unanimously.**