



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

MINUTES OF MEETING
OF
ILLINOIS STATE MINING BOARD
INA, ILLINOIS
OCTOBER 24, 2019

The following State Mining Board members were present:

John Duty
Bob Eggerman
Bernard Harsy
Michael Huff
Ronnie Huff
Steve Willis
Don Stewart, Executive Officer

Call to Order, Roll Call of Board Members

Executive Officer Don Stewart called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and read the roll call of board members. All Board members were present, there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 18, 2018 State Mining Board meeting was reviewed. Board Member Willis made a motion to approve and accepted as presented.

Foresight Energy – 250’ Crosscut Centers at Mach and M-Class

Shawn Batty and James Miller, both representing Foresight Energy, addressed the State Mining Board about the experimental approval for 250 feet crosscuts at Mach and M-Class mines. The State Mining Board had given the company experimental approval for one year and the company representatives were back requesting permanent approval.

Mr. Miller stated the 250 foot crosscut centers has been used sporadically, approximately 2 dozen times, at each mine. A question was asked regarding who made the decision that adverse conditions were present and the crosscuts be extended to 250 feet. Mr. Batty indicated the decision was made by the unit supervisor. It was pointed out to the two representatives that neither state mine inspector had been notified of the company's use of the extended crosscuts and asked why they had not been contacted. Mr. Miller said the company felt it was not necessary to contact the state mine inspectors and were not aware they were required to do so. State Mine Inspector Colombo indicated while he was not notified of M-Class Mining using extended crosscuts he would periodically check on extended crosscut development and would visit the locations. He stated extended crosscuts were consistently used in bleeder development and behind longwall set-up rooms and pillars, and he briefly illustrated on the maps provided by the company where extended crosscut development could occur.

Several questions were asked by the Mining Board relating to face ventilation and curtain installation. Inspector Dave Colombo, indicated his concern over the amount of extra tubing and curtain required for the 250 foot extended crosscuts. Board Member Ron Huff asked if the company has had to install curtain and Mr. Miller indicated it was done on every power move. Board Member Eggerman asked how long it took to install curtain and was told 15 to 30 minutes.

Board Member Ron Huff indicated he would prefer to continue the experimental approval as the inspectors were not notified during the experimental period and with the extension of the experimental approval the inspector would be notified prior to developing the extended crosscut so he could evaluate the decision. A discussion followed with several board members indicating allowing the company to use extended crosscut should not be delayed and Inspector Colombo indicated he would prefer to be told similar to being notified of a roof fall which is upon his next visit to the mine. He would in turn visit the extended crosscut area during that inspection.

A final question was asked how the company would proceed if adverse conditions were still present upon reaching 250 feet. Mr. Batty stated if this was to occur the state would be notified and asked to allow them to proceed a few feet further to find competent top, which he stated is what the company does at the current 150 foot crosscut centers. If none is found the company would back up and turn a crosscut in competent top. Mr. Miller emphasized this extended crosscut plan is not for permanent mine development but only when adverse conditions are found.

Board Member Willis made a motion to accept and approve what has been submitted by the company for permanent approval. Motion was seconded by Board Member Mike Huff. Executive Officer Stewart called the roll and motion was approved on a 5 -1 vote, with Board Member Ron Huff opposed.

Patton Mining LLC, Deer Run Mine – U-Type Bleederless Ventilation and Extended Entry and Crosscuts Centers

Mark Cornell, President of Patton Mining LLC, addressed the Mining Board regarding the company's proposed plan to implement a U-type Bleederless Ventilation System in their longwall panels and increase entry and crosscut centers. Mr. Cornell provided a brief history of the mine; mine construction began in 2010, longwall development in 2011 and longwall production in 2012. He further described the first longwall panel hotspot in 2014 with the mine returning to operation in 20 days. Finally, he outlined the circumstances relating to the 2015 longwall panel hotspot that led the mine being eventually sealed in 2016.

Mr. Cornell stated it was the company decision to attempt to discover why the spontaneous combustion or hot spots were occurring. Samples of the mine roof and floor were taken and analyzed to determine if something in the coal was creating the problem. It was found the Herrin #6 seam was not the cause of the spontaneous combustion but instead the apparent cause was a layer of rich pyritic sulfur above the Herrin #6 that extended throughout the territory and actually throughout the Illinois Basin. This layer was the Allenby zone and in the area of the latest hot spot was only 17 feet above the Herrin #6 and measured 2 feet thick. In Montgomery County the Allenby zone lies 15 to 30 feet above the Herrin #6, while in other areas of the state; such as southern Illinois it is 60 feet. It was found the hot spots were directly associated with the close proximity of the Allenby zone. Also, the hotspots would occur in the areas of roof falls and the longwall gob and took approximately 9 months before the spontaneous combustion manifest itself.

MSHA has indicated the company could no longer develop longwall panels with a bleeder system and must develop an alternative method of mining coal. The company chose to look at how the longwall mines in the western United States addressed spontaneous combustion and found two mines, Desperado and West Elk mines, as having similar conditions to the Deer Run Mine. After reviewing how each mine ventilated their longwall faces, it was decided to re-design their longwall ventilation to mirror the Desperado Mine, which was the U-type ventilation. Mr. Cornell stated the mine's new ventilation plan was submitted to MSHA in February and approval was granted in July.

In addition to the revised ventilation system, the mine felt it needed to revise its entry and crosscut centers. The mine was requesting to increase entry centers to a maximum of 150 feet and crosscut centers to a maximum of 250 feet. Extending these distances would help increase pillar strength and stability, protect the gob seals, and reduce the overall number of gob seals required as the longwall retreats. A question was asked how soon the company anticipated using the bleederless system and increased entry and crosscut center distances. Mr. Cornell stated

there was no immediate need for approval as the mine was not ready to use either and projected approval would not be needed until March, 2020.

Executive Office Stewart asked the board members if they had enough information for a decision or if the Board needed more time and information. Board Member Ron Huff thought it was a good idea to have more time to consider and review the company's request. Board Member Mike Huff made a motion to table the company's request to a later date. Board Member Ron Huff seconded the motion. Executive Officer Stewart called the roll and the motion passed unanimously.

Definition of Superintendent

This agenda item was to define superintendent as it relates to section 5.05 of the Coal Mining Act. State Mine Inspector-at-large Bill Patterson addressed the board stating a definition by the board would eliminate the issue of a mine stating they did not have a superintendent, instead they had a general manager. The mine would further state this person did not have to have mine manager certification as required for a superintendent. The Board members were provided the definition for superintendent as stated in West Virginia and Kentucky mining laws. After a brief discussion, Board Member Ron Huff made the following motion. Motion was seconded by Board Member Harsy. Executive Officer Stewart called the roll and the motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent is defined as the person who has, on behalf of the operator, immediate supervision of one or more mines and holds mine manager certification.

225 ILCS 705/Art. 7 – Who Is Approved To Conduct the Required Training Course

The next item on the Board's agenda addressed questions raised pursuant to 225 ILCS 705/Art. 7, Hoisting Engineer and Hoisting. Two questions were asked; who is approved by the Mining Board to conduct electrical hoisting engineer training and how does an individual become an approved instructor for this training. Mr. Patterson explained that currently the hoisting engineer classes were taught either by agency state mine inspectors or college instructors but he felt all hoisting engineer classes should be conducted in-house by a state mine inspector. The Mining Board expressed their agreement that it should be conducted in-house and Board Member Ron Huff made a motion that the electrical hoisting engineer class instruction be performed by Office of Mines and Minerals state mine inspectors. Board Member Harsy seconded the motion. Executive Officer Stewart called the roll and the motion passed unanimously.

Certification

Final agenda item was a request by the agency attorneys' that the State Mining Board approve or ratify all certification from March 21st to this meeting. The IDNR director is now signing the certificates and no longer the office director. The attorney's felt that before the certificates

mailed out the Board must render approval. Board Member Willis made a motion to ratify all certificates issued from March 21, 2019 to October 24, 2019. Motion seconded by Board Member Duty. Executive Officer Stewart called the roll and the motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Duty made motion to adjourn. Board Member Mike Huff seconded the motion.