



MINUTES OF MEETING

OF

ILLINOIS STATE MINING BOARD

503 EAST MAIN STREET, BENTON, ILLINOIS

September 29, 2022

1:00 P.M.

The following State Mining Board members were present:

Robert Eggerman
Bernard Harsy
Michael Huff
Ronnie Huff, Executive Officer
Michael Martin
Stephen Willis

Call to Order, Roll Call of Board Members

The meeting was called to order by Executive Officer Ronnie Huff. A roll call of board members was made with all members present. Having a quorum, Ronnie Huff proceeded with the meeting.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The prior meeting minutes were approved and accepted as presented by unanimous decision.

Designate one State Mining Board member to serve as Secretary

Ronnie Huff nominated Mike Huff to serve as Secretary of the State Mining Board. Bernard Harsy seconded the nomination of Mike Huff. The Board voted unanimously to appoint Michael Huff as secretary of the State Mining Board.

Discussion on labeling of primary and secondary escapeways in underground coal mines

Bill Patterson, State Mine Inspector at Large, introduced the topic of whether or not the Board should require all underground coal mines in Illinois to use the same two colors to label primary and secondary escapeways. This issue was brought up because there are many contractors in the state who regularly travel to different mines, and they may not be able to quickly identify escapeways if they are forced to evacuate.

Mike Hathaway of Hamilton County Coal expressed that this would be a major cost to the industry and that if people are trained properly on how to use a lifeline, the color is only a secondary issue. He also expressed concern that changing the labeling would have a negative impact on workers who have been with a mine for a long time. Mr. Hathaway's views were supported by Todd Grounds of Prairie State Generating Co.

Steve Willis expressed his concern on whether the Board had jurisdiction to rule on this issue. Mr. Willis also agreed with Mr. Hathaway's concern about workers who have been with a mine for many years.

Bill Patterson stated that people coming in for First Class papers did not know what the colors in their mines are and that this needs to be included in trainings.

Michael Martin commented that even if only one person doesn't know how to get out of a mine, that's an issue that needs to be solved and that making all mines uniform might help everyone remember the colors and get out of a mine safely.

Wes Campbell addressed the Board in support of uniform labeling stating that he had brought this issue up before and felt that many contractors did not know how to get out of the mine.

Keith Dixon, State Mine Inspector, addressed the Board and said that the physical markings on the lifeline are just as important as the color because they will lead you out of the mine regardless of what color they are.

Ronnie Huff motioned to table the discussion for a later date. Bernard Harsy seconded the motion. The discussion was tabled by a unanimous vote.

Closed Session

Ronnie Huff motioned to close the meeting to the public, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to consider litigation affecting and pending before the State Mining Board. Specifically, the meeting would be closed for the Mining Board to discuss the Department of Natural Resources' oral motion to temporarily suspend the Mine Manager Certificates of Competency held by Nick Hammann and Brandon Parsons. The motion was seconded by Mike Huff and approved unanimously.

Ruling on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' oral motion to temporarily suspend Nick Hammann's Certificate of Mine Examiner Competency

The Mining Board unanimously decided to reject the Department's motion to temporarily suspend Nick Hammann's Certificate of Mine Examiner Competency without prejudice.

Ruling on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' oral motion to temporarily suspend Brandon Parsons' Certificate of Mine Examiner Competency

The Mining Board unanimously decided to reject the Department's motion to temporarily suspend Brandon Parsons' Certificate of Mine Examiner Competency without prejudice.

Public Comments

There were no public comments