



MINUTES OF MEETING

OF

ILLINOIS STATE MINING BOARD

503 EAST MAIN STREET, BENTON, ILLINOIS

April 21, 2023

1:00 P.M.

The following State Mining Board members were present:

Robert Eggerman
Bernard Harsy
Raymond Hood
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.

Consideration of requiring uniform labeling of primary and secondary escapeways in underground coal mines

This topic was discussed at the Board's previous meeting on September 29, 2022 but was tabled.

Ronnie Huff proposed picking a color code for any new mines or any mine where production stops for two months. Concern over the two month time period was raised and several industry members felt six months would be better because two month shut downs are not uncommon. Concern was also expressed for long time employees who are used to a certain color code. Steve Willis added that while requiring uniform colors may help contractors, it may hurt these long term employees. Ronnie Huff motioned to table the discussion which would give the Board a chance get a list of all colors currently used in Illinois. This motion was seconded by Bernard Harsy and voted on with unanimous support for tabling the discussion.

Interpretation of 225 ILCS 705/Art. 8. Miner's Examinations: Sec 8.09 – What is the definition of “coal producing sections”? and Sec 8.09 – What is required to satisfy the requirement to “produce satisfactory evidence to the Mining Board of having had not less than 1 year experience”?

The Coal Mining Act requires experience on “coal producing sections” for those seeking First Class certification. The issue brought before the Board was whether or not they need to define the phrase “coal producing sections”. Mike Huff felt the requirement was self explanatory while Ronnie Huff proposed two crosscuts outby the tail to the face as the coal producing section. Vernon Miller stated that MSHA defines a working section as from the feeder to the face and felt this was a good definition. Ronnie Huff agreed and changed his proposed definition to from the feeder to the tail. Concern was expressed by the Board and Tony Mayville of MSHA that miners seeking first class certification without having any experience at the face could be dangerous because once they have their first class papers, they can work at the face unsupervised. Ultimately, no motion was made to define “coal producing sections”.

The Board also considered what was required to satisfy the Sec 8.09 of the Coal Mining Act which requires anyone seeking first class certification to “produce satisfactory evidence to the Mining Board of having had not less than 1 year experience”. At the time those seeking certification submitted an application, signed by a mine official, that required them to list their experience. The Board decided that anyone seeking first class certification needed to include a letter, on company letterhead and signed by a mine official with their applications, attesting to their experience. A vote on this was motioned by Ronnie Huff and seconded by Stephen Willis. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The Board also decided that the part of the First Class application that asks for “Applicant’s work experience” should be changed to “Applicant’s work experience on coal producing sections” to ensure that anyone applying has at least some experience on coal producing sections, thus satisfying the requirements of Sec 8.09 of the Coal Mining Act. A motion to make this change to the first class application was made by Michael Martin and seconded by Raymond Hood. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Comments

There were no public comments