

**Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Oklahoma Mining Commission  
10:30 A.M., Thursday, April 30, 2026  
Cameron Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and  
Zoom Videoconference**

**Commission Members Present**

Jim Brakefield, Chairman  
Tommy Caldwell  
John Curtis

Mark Helm, Secretary  
James Kemp, Vice Chairman  
Kurt Klutts

**Others Present:**

Suzen Rodesney, ODM  
Jenna Bedwell, ODM  
Clayton Eubanks, ODM  
Benita Jose-Mathew, ODM  
Travis Shore, ODM  
Rawles Roberts, III, ODM  
Natalie Carter, ODM  
Mike Darneal, ODM

Ginna Harmon, ODM  
Mike Lewis, ODM  
Marysue Martin, ODM  
Claire McCubbin, ODM  
Robert Thomas, ODM  
Michael Reed, OMTI  
Michelle Wynn, Secretary of Energy & Environment  
Devery Youngblood, OKAA

The scheduled regular meeting of the Oklahoma Mining Commission was called to order in accordance with the Open Meeting Laws at 10:30 a.m. by Commissioner Jim Brakefield, Chairman of the Commission.

**Meeting Place:** Cameron Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Zoom Videoconference. Roll call was made and a quorum was declared with six (6) members present. Commissioners Donoley, Hefty, and Krukowski were absent.

**Safety Moment:** ODM Hydrologist Natalie Carter gave a brief presentation on water and drainage management for highwall safety. Mrs. Carter discussed when and how water can accumulate and weaken the integrity of highwalls. She reviewed ways to design highwalls such as including drainage channels and slope stabilization and encouraged monitoring and managing water levels near the highwalls Mrs. Carter also shared some innovations in water control systems to help maintain highwall stability and ensure safety in the mining operation.

**Motion 1, March 26, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Caldwell made a motion that the minutes of the March 26, 2026, meeting be approved. Secretary Helm seconded the motion. Roll call was made and the motion passed unanimously with (6) aye votes.

**Brakefield: Aye**

**Caldwell: Aye**

**Curtis: Aye**

**Helm: Aye**

**Kemp: Aye**

**Klutts: Aye**

**Director's Report:** Director Rodesney greeted everyone and reported the following:

### Congratulations

- On April 16, the Senate Energy Committee voted 9-0 for Commissioner Tommy Caldwell to continue his position as a Mining Commissioner. On April 27, the full Senate confirmed Commissioner Caldwell's appointment for another seven years.

### Budget Update

- Governor Stitt signed the general appropriations bill which will provide ODM \$1,284,084 for FY 2027 (beginning July 1, 2026). The agency had requested \$1,348,000. The \$100,000 provided for this year's website permit mapping portal was removed, however, the requested \$100,000 for Phase II modernization efforts was added. The Legislature has indicated an across-the-board reform to agency contributions to the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) is pending. As such, ODM's budget was reduced by \$78,790. Another legislative bill is increasing employee longevity rates in FY2027, which provides an increase of \$14,191. The agency's request for \$100,000 for staff salary adjustments was not included in the FY2027 appropriations. Overall, this is a net decrease of \$64,609 from the current year's appropriations.

### Modernizing Efforts

- The permit mapping portal is active to the public via ODM's website and to agency employees via a staff portal. New meetings are scheduled to plan Phase II updates to the agency's information technology efficiencies. Items that will be addressed include an automated type of inspection reporting tool for the inspection staff, online payment options for fees, online production reporting access, and the initiation of an online permitting process. These updates will be dependent upon funding availability and may result in multiple phases in future fiscal years. ODM plans to focus on the inspection reporting updates next.

### Legislation

- ODM continues to monitor legislative bills related to the agency, Commission, and industry. April 23 was the deadline for reporting opposite chamber bills from committee. The Legislature has indicated its intent to end session early this year.
- House Bill 4032 by Representative Caldwell was formerly a shell bill. On April 13, the bill was revised to include language raising the non-coal mining production fees from \$0.0125 to \$0.0150 per ton and set a flat annual rate of \$5.00 for operations whose production was less than that level. The House approved the bill on April 14, and the Senate approved it on April 16. On April 22, the Governor vetoed the bill. Passage of the bill would have provided an estimated \$150,000 in FY2027 and \$200,000 every year after to the agency. This estimate is based upon an annual production of 84 million tons reported each year.
- Other tracked bills of interest are as follows:
  - House Bill 2166 by Representative Pfeiffer establishes additional standards and duties on newspapers dealing with public notice. This carryover bill has had no movement this year.
  - House Bill 3310 by Representative Eaves updates invoicing and state purchasing rules. On April 7, the Senate committee passed this bill.
  - House Bill 3322 by Representative Osborn clarifies how the courts must interpret amendatory acts when multiple versions of a statute exist. The bill calls for the most recently passed version to be the one considered. Governor Stitt signed this bill into law on April 17.

- House Bill 4319 by Representative Kendrix requires agencies to cite explicit state law authority for rules and repeals noncompliant rules by 2030. Governor Stitt signed this bill into law on April 17.
- Senate Bill 169 by Senator Hall increases state employee longevity payments by fifty percent (50%). Governor Stitt signed this bill into law on April 23 with an effective date of July 1, 2026.
- Senate Bill 1316 by Senator Bergstrom states beginning February 1, 2033, and every four years thereafter, ODM rules will sunset. The agency will have to submit permanent rules to the Legislature for review. This bill is scheduled on the House floor agenda today.
- Senate Bill 1877 by Senator Hall requires agencies to submit obligatory reports through a centralized filing system and will standardize reporting procedures. This bill is scheduled on the House floor agenda today.

### Artificial Intelligence and Technology Implementations

- Cabinet Secretary Starling's office sent out notice that all state agencies and directors need to reinforce the statewide policy on artificial intelligence (AI) standards for government use. Mrs. Rodesney provided a one-page summary of the policy to the Commission and indicated she has reviewed it with staff during meetings. It is important to not enter personal information into the AI systems and to read and verify what the system produces before use. All staff must complete on-line training with respect to the policy and Chief of Minerals Operations Travis Shore has indicated how and when AI use is appropriate in the inspectors' written reports.
- During the recent South Central Joint Mine Health and Safety Conference, the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) reported it will begin trying a type of glasses that will allow audio recording of inspection items as viewed and added visuals to the inspection reports.
- Another topic discussed during the conference is the use of autonomous haul trucks at some of the larger mining operations around the country. Chief Shore has contacted one of the vendors and will get a personal tour and explanation of their use. ODM rule or policy changes may be needed as these vehicles are put into use at Oklahoma mines.

### Recent and Upcoming Events

- Mrs. Rodesney will attend the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) meeting in French Lick, Indiana in May. Oklahoma is the meeting chair this year. During the meeting, the IMCC member states will select a new Executive Director.

**Financial Report:** Chief Financial Officer Benita Jose-Mathew reported the agency has expended approximately \$2,040,000 or 68% of its overall budget thus far in FY2026 and is 75% (9 months) through the fiscal year. The agency had \$68,196 in its revolving fund as of March 31. Ms. Jose-Mathew noted there is a strong balance in the escrow accounts as well. Agency collections, shown on page 3, are at 72%. ODM's FY2026 production collections are estimated to be 84 million tons with approximately 68.9 million tons reported to date. Production is 8% higher than last year at this time. Expenditures are shown on the fourth page, broken down by major cost categories. Some categories such as repairs to agency field vehicles and rented meeting room space for legal proceedings have overages, but overall ODM remains under budget at 68% expended. Page 5 is ODM's financial history page followed by the most recent billing statement from Eastern Oklahoma State College (EOC) for OMTI expenses.

**OMTI Report:** OMTI Director Michael Reed submitted the FY2026 Training Report for October 2025 – March 2026 to the Commission and reviewed March numbers. Public classes were held in Del City, Ada, Wilburton, and via Zoom and private classes were held in Bartlesville, Davis, Lamar, Shady Point, Southard, and Oklahoma City. A total of 548 certificates were issued in March. This is less than the number of certificates issued last March, but the FY2026 second quarter ended slightly higher than last year as January was an excellent training month. In general updates, Mr. Reed reported the conference committee is actively working on preparations for this year’s health and safety conference and registration is now open. ODM Lead Inspector Troy Young has been instrumental in helping obtain speakers who will present free of charge. Dolese Bros. Co. is due for supervisor refresher training this year, and OMTI has been able to reserve space free of charge at Eastern Oklahoma State College’s (EOSC) McAlester campus to use several classrooms for breakout sessions. Approximately 150 Dolese supervisors will be trained during these sessions. Mr. Reed attended a leadership team meeting at EOSC where President Harp shared his key metrics for success. One of those highlighted was workforce development. President Harp indicated he wants to utilize OMTI as part of the college’s workforce development plan to benefit both parties. Mr. Reed stated he intends to ask President Harp to attend one of the scheduled Dolese supervisor classes to give him a better idea who OMTI serves. There have been 8 fatalities nationwide in 2026, with three occurring since the Commission met in March. Four underground and four surface fatalities. Mr. Reed briefly reviewed these fatal accidents.

**Motion 2, Vote for Executive Session authorized by the Open Meetings Act, 25 O.S., Section 307 (B.4) Review of Litigation Involving ODM:** Vice Chairman Kemp made a motion that the Mining Commission enter Executive Session. Commissioner Curtis seconded the motion. Roll call was made and the motion passed unanimously with six (6) aye votes.

**Brakefield: Aye**  
**Caldwell: Aye**  
**Curtis: Aye**  
**Helm: Aye**  
**Kemp: Aye**  
**Klutts: Aye**

Chairman Brakefield asked Director Suzen Rodesney, Chief Counsel Clayton Eubanks and Recording Secretary Jenna Bedwell to attend the Executive Session.

**Executive Session:** Chief Counsel Clayton Eubanks reviewed litigation involving the agency with the Commission. (25 O.S., Section 307 (B.4)).

**Motion 3, Vote to Return to Regular Session:** Secretary Helm made a motion that the Mining Commission return to Regular Session. Commissioner Caldwell seconded the motion. Roll call was made and the motion passed unanimously with six (6) aye votes.

**Brakefield: Aye**  
**Caldwell: Aye**  
**Curtis: Aye**  
**Helm: Aye**  
**Kemp: Aye**

**Klutts: Aye**

There was no vote needed for items discussed during Executive Session.

**New Business:** There was no new business.

**Motion 4, Adjournment:** Vice Chairman Kemp made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Curtis seconded the motion. Roll call was made and the motion passed unanimously with six (6) aye votes.

**Brakefield: Aye**

**Caldwell: Aye**

**Curtis: Aye**


**Helm: Aye**

**Kemp: Aye**


**Klutts: Aye**

The meeting was adjourned until the next scheduled meeting date of June 11, 2026, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

**APPROVED:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenna Bedwell, Executive Assistant  
Oklahoma Department of Mines

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Helm, Secretary  
Oklahoma Mining Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date