

## Meeting Minutes: Workers' Compensation Advisory Council

Date: May 9, 2025

Minutes prepared by: Alyssa Westergard, executive secretary to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council

Location: Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Room, 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN

### Attendance

#### Members attended

Bill Gschwind  
Bob Ryan  
Brad Lehto  
Burt Johnson  
Colin Beere  
David Henrich  
Doug Loon  
Gary Thaden  
Hannah Alstead  
John Thorson  
Maggie Hobbs  
Matthew Schmidt  
Rep. Dave Baker

#### DLI staff members attended

Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach  
Assistant Commissioner Jessica Stimac  
Alyssa Westergard  
Alexis Johnson  
Ethan Landy  
Jeanne Vogel  
Jon Brothen  
Josiah Moore  
Karen Kask-Meinke  
Michael Gray  
Michelle Doheny  
Nichole Sorenson

Sandy Stoddard  
Sharon Benkufsky

#### Visitors attended

Aaron Cocking, IFM  
Andrew Essling, MCIT  
Andrew Morrison, KMCH Law  
Auntara De, MWCA  
Bill Marshall, Wilson McShane  
Celina Vang, LMC  
Daniel Gillis, Minnesota Senate  
James Heer, WCRA  
Joel Hanson, MNABC  
John Kysylczyn, K Solutions LLC  
Kara Huberty, LMC  
Katie Storms, Aafedt Forde  
Laura Ziegler, AGC MN  
Lauryn Schothorst, Minnesota Chamber of  
Commerce  
Lisa Kuriger, Workers' Compensation Court of  
Appeals  
Mark Foster, Housing First Minnesota  
Nicole Van Heel, Bauer DB  
Rebecca Yang, WCRI  
Ryan SanCartier, MCA  
Sarah Gillaspey, Minnesota Department of  
Commerce  
Sarah Hunter, SFM

### Call to order and roll call

Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. A roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

## Approval of the minutes and agenda

Doug Loon moved to accept today's agenda and the minutes from April 9, 2025. Brad Lehto seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

## Announcements

Commissioner Blissenbach noted things were moving along smoothly at the Legislature. She also called attention to it being Public Service Recognition Week and thanked the members for their service on the council. Assistant Commissioner Jessica Stimac echoed the commissioner's words of thanks and added her appreciation for the time and thoughtfulness the council members had put into the legislative package.

## Agenda items

### 1. **Vote on workers' compensation premium fraud prevention in construction industry and wrap-up form proposals**

Ethan Landy, deputy chief general counsel, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), and Sarah Gillaspey, senior associate counsel, Department of Commerce, reviewed the proposed language regarding workers' compensation premium fraud prevention and wrap-up forms with the council. They noted several changes, since the previous walkthrough, that had been incorporated after feedback from the council and stakeholders.

Commissioner Blissenbach asked for a motion to approve the workers' compensation fraud prevention and wrap-up program proposal and amend it onto the existing advisory council bill, with the ability for DLI to account for technical conforming changes that are made in the drafting process by the revisor's office. Bill Gschwind made the motion and Burt Johnson seconded it. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Maggie Hobbs noted the council does not want to encourage the misuse of a zero-estimated payroll policy, but they also need to acknowledge it is still an important instrument to the business community; in particular, its correct use performs a stop-gap role to ensure employees are always going to have coverage for an occupational injury. She added that the changes are not acknowledging there is something inherently fraudulent about the use and purchasing of these policies, but that they want to make sure they are being used correctly within the business community.

Commissioner Blissenbach said she expects there will be some revisiting of the language in the future to make sure the intended impact of the proposals is happening.

## Other business

The next Workers' Compensation Advisory Council meeting will be determined at a later date.

## **Adjournment**

Thaden moved to adjourn the meeting and Bob Ryan seconded. A vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alyssa Westergard, executive secretary