

## Mariner's Advisory Committee Minutes

September 12, 2024

Chairman Captain David Cuff welcomed members and guests in the room to the 3rd Quarterly Meeting

### Following the Posted Agenda

**NOTE: Presentation summaries are below, presentation detail can be found in the attached pdf here:**

#### I. Approval of the Minutes

Captain David Cuff opens the meeting. The first order of business is the approval of the minutes from the September Meeting. If anyone would like to make a motion to accept those minutes.

Motion to approve minutes- Michael Cureton and seconded by Rob Herb.

Captain David Cuff then requested we go around the room for participants to introduce themselves.

Yesterday was 23 years since one of the worst terrorist attacks anywhere in the world. I'd like to take a moment of silence for all the lives that were lost on September 11th.

#### II. Reports

**A. Treasurer's Report – Michael Cureton** – Good morning everyone. From June, the deposits are \$16,533.84. A new deposit of \$800, total balance of \$17,333.84. Once we debited for the past meetings with disbursements, our new balance is \$13,425.98.

**B. Membership Report – Michael Cureton** – Thank you all for being members. Nothing new to report.

**C. USCG Report – Captain Higgins Bloom** – Good morning, everybody, apologies for our lateness. There's a medium-ish spill going on, and I know there's actually a little bit of the vessel traffic going on this morning. In addition to our ongoing response operation today, this has been a pretty big week in Sector Delaware Bay. We launched or had the christening for the NMSV Patriot State. Secretary Buttigieg came, as well as Secretary of the Navy del Toro. It's just great to see that kind of senior engagement and some strategic focus from the White House, as well as transportation, commerce, DHS, and DOP. Talking about a ship that is not moving anytime too soon is the SS United States. I won't belabor it too much, but we're really looking forward to working as a group, to be ready whenever the vessel is ready to move. I am going to talk just a little bit about cyber security. Some of you might be aware that there was a relatively significant cyber-attack on the MTS. It was an attack on a company headquartered on the west coast, but that has ships that call here in Philly. It was really a first-of-its-kind attack. It was really remarkable to see how quickly this particular piece of ransomware moved from the shoreside facilities to the ships. We were able to work with the vessel owners and the companies, as well as Coast Guard Cyber Command, to ensure that the system here was safe, that the port itself was safe. One more quick thing; I know October 2025 might seem really far away, but it is not. We're currently in some planning meetings with the Navy and the Marine Corps for their 250th birthday celebration. It's shaping up to be a pretty large marina band. We look forward to working with all of you to make sure it's a fun event, but also a safe event, and that we're not shutting down the port for four days to make it happen.

**D. USCG Report – Todd Wardwell** - My name is Todd Wardwell. I'll be talking to you today about the GETS WPS priority, and if you don't know what that is, that's cool because it's a CISA program, not a Coast Guard program. One of the things that went completely right on the Key Bridge was the pilots were able to communicate with the bridge through cell phone, and they were able to notify them, and they stopped traffic. We have a lot of events coming up in 2025 and 2026 and one of the things that we're looking at is the critical features of telecommunications, and the possibility that telecommunications, especially post-disaster operations, might not be something we're able to do. They're talking about 2026 as the equivalent of 10 Eagles games simultaneously. That's not something the telecommunications industry in Philadelphia is prepared for. So, CISA puts this program out; It's a suite of services that enable priority communications. Basically, what happens is that during disaster, emergency services such as fire, EMS, and all these folks, they have what's called priority telecom services. You'd expect 911 services and all the other folks to have priority lines. However, as we've kind of gotten through disasters, we recognize there are certain private sector entities that are kind of important to talk to. During the California wildfires, they found out that the school bus drivers became a heavy-duty entity that they didn't have comms with. So, school bus drivers actually ended up getting some of these. What these are, basically in a nutshell, is giving priority telecom services to people that wouldn't normally get them or be considered a traditional emergency responder. Now, how do we get this? If you or your organization, if you're a current member of the MITS group, contact me, and we will get you a priority phone card and we will have that issued to you. If you have a critical need for emergency telephone communications or are part of keeping the MTS in the court running, we will get you a phone card. If losing telephone capacity in your organization is going to have a lead to a much wider emergency situation in the court, we will get you a phone card. If you have questions on this, and any of these conditions hold true, you can contact me. If you hit that QR code right there, that will open up an email browser and it will start an email to me. I will work directly with CISA. I will be managing the telephone accounts. This is a really good service the federal government offers and we're trying to tap into it.

Details in meeting packet 3 through 16

**E. ACOE Report – Mr. Timothy Rooney** – Good morning, everybody. All right, I'll give the brief on the Corps dredging projects. We have Norfolk dredging that finished up, Marcus Hook, Newcastle, Deepwater, Cherry Island Ranges this summer. And we also have a maintenance contract, for which the bid was opened yesterday, and the apparent low bidder was Cottrell Contracting. They've worked in the port before at Wilmington and Salem. This will be the first time they're doing the Delaware River work. But we're looking forward to working with them. They've got a good safety record, and we're very excited. Next is the hopper dredge McFarlane; she's finishing up three weeks of maintenance dredging on New Castle Range due to the high shoaling that occurred this summer. She'll be going back out on the 20th of September. We're going to review some of the surveys with the pilots, and we'll figure out exactly where she'll be going, which ranges, next week. And last but not least we have the object removal contract, which is going to be awarded by the end of the month. There's a handful of objects that are out there right now that we are going to be removing. And then we have another object removal contract, which is going to be done sort of like putting somebody on retainer, so we don't have to go through our contracting process. Next up, Philly to Trenton, and the Delaware River. The Seaward Marine is scheduled to complete on January 1. Wilmington Harbor, it's a consolidated project, so again, the apparent low bidder is Cottrell Contracting, and they'll probably be going in there in the wintertime frame, but that's to be determined. C&D Canal construction continues on the St. George's Bridge deck replacement. There are no expected air gap reductions. Reedy Point Bridge construction has started and will continue through September 2025. Again, no planned air gap restrictions. Last but not least is the maintenance dredging. The award is planned for late October. We're moving approximately 300,000 cubic yards of material and placing them in the upwind dredge material facility known as Pierce Creek. Salem River, Cottrell Contracting completed the maintenance dredging of the 16-foot channel, and this is the area that station 3000 to 15,500 is mostly silts and mugs and that material has been placed beneficially at Socona Meadows.

Details in meeting packet 17 through 21

**F. NOAA - Mr. Ryan Wartick** – Morning everyone, just a couple updates. Regarding the current status of the chart cancellation process, we currently have all of our charts either canceled or updated. So, by the end of the year, all of our paper charts will be canceled. This is just an update on the status of the ENC gridding process. You can see all the green cells are the ENCs that have completed the gridding process. Pretty much Delaware River and Bay is pretty close to being done. That's good because it really helps with the visualization of the chart in the chart viewer. These are a couple of slides, from the Francis Scott Key bridge response, that I wanted to share. So, this is just demonstrating some of the technology we used during the response. This is a laser scanner. And believe it or not, at the response, we had a really difficult time getting the distances between spans and the vertical heights, of the bridge in the spans where there was no channel previously, because we were establishing auxiliary channels in those areas. And we're like, well, what's our air gap? What's the width? And we had all these drawings, and we had all this stuff, but we couldn't figure it out. So, we did a laser scan of it, and we were able to pick spots and determine heights in the span. And then we also used it for the salvage operation.

Details in meeting packet 22 through 34

**G. NOAA – Mr. Chris DiVeglio and Ms. Sierra Davis** – Good morning. For the three-month period ending August 31st, all of our air gaps were up and running and behaving and transmitting data close to 100%. For that period, the gear-mounted current meter down at Penn's Landing was operating 100%, and then we're having some issues, or there were some issues that developed for the buoy-mounted meter down on buoy 10 down in the bay. We had to turn it off for suspect data, and then we recovered the equipment in the middle of August, so we're working to get that back online. There's some contract and financial interface issues we're working through right now, so it may be down a little bit longer than usual, but the predictions are there as well. As for Brandywine Shoal, a crew was actually able to access that for annual service back in August, and for a long time we've been intending to install a second crew in or back up redundant water level sensor there. There were several updates that were made to the communications, but we do have issues just given that it's remote in the middle of the bay. We transmit data through GOES satellite, but also through IP satellite or modem and some charging issues, but we've been working through those remotely however we can. So, the data may continue to be intermittent at times, but that's up and running. Up at Ship John Shoal, a couple of weeks ago, the data went out completely. Now, we were able to actually pull the backup data, and now that's transmitting. And the other late-breaking news, unfortunately, tied to the other current meter at Penn's Landing, something happened last week that looks like it was a physical obstruction, and we're trying to understand why the data went out. The data quality suddenly changed, I even went over there myself yesterday and didn't see anything obvious. Obviously the meter sits below the water, but we're trying to look into what caused a sudden change in the data there. So unfortunately, both current meters are offline right now.

Details in meeting packet 35 through 42

**H. DRPA – Mr. Mike Venuto** - So good afternoon everybody, I'm Mike Venuto, I'm the Chief Engineer at the Delaware River Port Authority, there's Chief Safety and Security Officer Rob Finnegan and we're happy to be here today talking a little bit about some of our facilities, to answer your quick question about the Walt Whitman Bridge and about the USS United States going under it. We do have some good data from the last time it crossed under, we literally had people standing there taking pictures, taking measurements, so we have accurate data of where the bridge location is. So, for those that don't know which assets are under our purview, they are the Ben Franklin Bridge, the Walt Whitman Bridge, the Commodore Barry Bridge, and the Betsy Ross Bridge, not related to the ports. We also own and operate the Patco High Speed Line from southern New Jersey into center city Philadelphia, that goes over the Ben Franklin Bridge. As you can imagine, with the age of these structures and the size of them, we're always doing major capital projects on there, and a lot of the times, we require putting platforms underneath them. We appreciate the established partnerships that we have with the Pilots and the Army Corps and the Coast Guard to affect those projects. Following the tragedy in Baltimore, Rob and I met with Captain Hodgens and Captain Cuff, to talk about their assets and some of the things that we have been doing prior to this tragedy and the things that we're going to do after. The Commodore Barry Bridge, that's our southernmost asset, and is our highest draft at 186 feet. So, about the pier protection of that bridge, we identified in 2002, we did a threat and vulnerability assessment of all of our facilities and out of that, one of the things that was pointed out to us is that we should consider protecting those piers in the river. In 2005, we undertook a specific study about those piers and in 2008, we spent \$17 million to put those rock islands in there. And a theory would be that an errant ship would run aground before it would hit our concrete piers. They are designed to impede a 100,000-ton vessel traveling at 10 knots. At the Walt Whitman Bridge, that's a little bit lower draft, 150 feet. Over at one of the ports on the Jersey side, the pier is further into the land, so it's not as vulnerable. But there on the PA side, we have a pier fender, a wood fender system, and a timber fender system. And then we have one concrete dolphin. As we started the project, we recognized that this was a risk, based on some other assessments that we've had. We were underway for design for enhancements to both the Walt Whitman Bridge and the Ben Franklin Bridge. So obviously the Ben Franklin Bridge, one of our iconic structures, has a bit less of the air draft there at 135 feet. It's more protected because of the land, because of the shallow water. We have a fender system there, a timber fender system that is aging and clearly needs replacement. Again, that's why we started the project. And then the Betsy Ross Bridge with a lower clearance of 135 feet. We don't see as much traffic up there, obviously, as you guys know but we do have the dolphin system that was installed at the time of the construction of the bridge. We are right now undergoing a large paint project at Betsy Ross, and those dolphins will be painted. We are staying proactive, again, with the collaboration that we have with all of you, with our relationship with the Maritime Exchange.

### III. Unfinished Business / New Business

Captain David Cuff– Next up, any unfinished business and any new business. Tomorrow is the 55th Crab Feast, and that will be at Fort Mifflin from 12 to 6, so I hope everybody shows up for that. It should be a very nice event, nice weather. And another event, it'll be the third Fall Blast, November 7th, down at M&M's Sporting Clays in South Jersey. So, if you haven't already signed up or you're interested, Mike Cureton has volunteered to take care of that.

### IV. Adjournment

Captain David Cuff asked for a motion to adjourn: Mike Cureton motioned, and Paul Meyer seconded.

Next meeting Thursday, December 12th at Popi's 1030 for coffee and 1100 start.