

Mariner's Advisory Committee Minutes

December 12, 2024

Captain Drew Hodgens MAC Chairman welcomed members and guests in the room to the 4th 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 Drew Hodgens MAC Chairman opens the meeting. Thank you for making time to come today.

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

Motion to approve minutes- Captain David Cuff and seconded by Lynn Cointot.

II. Reports

A. **Treasurer's Report – Captain Drew Hodgens**– Good morning everyone. A new deposit of \$400, total balance of \$13,825.98. Once we debited for the past meetings with disbursements, our new balance is \$9,775.94.

B. **Membership Report – Captain Drew Hodgens** – Thank you all for being members. Rick will send out 2025 invoices when he gets back.

C. **USCG Report – Captain Higgins Bloom** – Good morning, Happy Holidays. I know we have a presentation today so I will keep this short. I do want to express my gratitude at the end of the year here. This is not only the Christmas and Thanksgiving season, but for all the interagency coordination and the industry cooperation that we've had over the last year. It has been just another busy year here at Delaware Bay. I think Philadelphia and Wilmington have really come together and kept things moving. Thank you so much for that. I do have a quick update, which is the USS United States. We would like to get them so that they can get the vessel out of the port, but we currently don't have a solid plan for them to depart the port. When we do, you guys will know about it.

D. USCG Report – Scott Taylor - For those of you who don't know me, my name is Scott Taylor. I'm the chief of the Coast Guard's Regional Exam Center. We're located in Baltimore, Maryland, and we cover Sector Delaware, Sector Maryland, and Sector Virginia for all aspects of licensing. What I want to do, and I don't get up and speak too often here at these events, but when there's a significant change in licensing and how that obviously affects some of your employees, it's always good for me to get up and kind of clear things. What I wanted to do today and talk a little bit about the requirement now to vet all of your employees for sexual assault and sexual harassment. And this comes out of The Safe Seas Act. What's going on now is that we have to look at everybody. And what we came down with, and this is a little bit more than what we used to do, which was when you originally applied for a credential, you were looked at, it was a criminal background investigation. Now to catch the entire population up, and that includes people that have been, you know, working on the waterways for even 20 years or more, this is what we're doing. All original requests for a merchant mariner credential get looked at. We're also looking at everybody now who comes up for a renewal. The only other addition to this, and this is a new one, is that any officer in grade application, in other words, you're going from third mate to second mate, you're promoting up the line, you're going to get looked at as well. This adds anywhere from 10 to 20 days processing times. And as you all know, we're running about 50 days to turn around a credential. That's about it, if you have the questions I can take them or if you want to meet with me afterwards to talk about any aspect of licensing I'm happy to help. Once again, it's always enjoyable to be here, thank you.

Details in meeting packet 3 through 4

E. **ACOE Report – Mr. Timothy Rooney** – Good morning, everybody. All right, I'll give the brief on the Corps dredging projects. Delaware river Philadelphia to Sea project they are working on Marcus Hook anchorage, they are going to take a holiday break starting on the 23rd, and they'll be back on the 27th of December at which time they will start dredging the range in the New Year. They'll probably start the first week of January and then they'll work into February, finishing by the end of February. They're going to have the Lexington go over to Marcus Hook Anchorage. They are doing Wilmington Harbor also, and they'll be bringing up the Dredge Rock Bridge, and that will be mobilized to the area prior to the new year. Last but not least is our Hopper Dredge McFarland. She's at the dock until basically April, when she'll go out on some tours. Next, Philly to Trenton, that job has been completed. I don't think there's any issues there. C&D Canal, they just opened a bid. Yes, and it was awarded. I unfortunately don't know who was awarded to. They'll be starting up, and hopefully they will finish prior to March 15th window. Moving to Summit Bridge, that job was awarded to Abhe & Svoboda. We're in the process of getting the submittals. We do not have their work plan but there is potential for air gap restrictions on Summit Bridge. Once we get the work plan we'll coordinate with the pilots regarding that. Salem River, Cottrell Contracting completed the dredging down there. This was a great project because we did beneficial use. Dredge Murden will mobilize to the Delaware River next week to clear sand shoals. And that's it, thank you all, you made it easy for me, and have a happy holiday.

Details in meeting packet 5 through 9

F. **NOAA - Mr. Ryan Wartick** – Morning everyone, just a couple updates. I wanted to give you guys, just a really quick intro to our new website that we're using to publish chart updates. So, this website is kind of cool because you can look at all the chart updates in several different ways. So, for example, you can select an area by drawing a polygon, you can select by Coast Guard district, you can select, you can actually load in a NOAA custom chart into the system, and it'll tell you all the updates for that chart. You can also load your entire chart catalog into the system, and it'll tell you which charts are out of date so you can reprint them out if you need to. Eventually this new chart update website will be integrated into the NOAA custom chart tool, so it'll be kind of all in one. You're not going to be necessarily aware of changes that are happening to the chart, because they're just happening on a daily basis but if you want to know if things are changing on your chart in your area, you will have to go into a system like this to see what's going on with the chart. Also, I have some slides regarding the air gap sensors. Since the last meeting they have all been doing pretty well. There have been some problems with the current meters and from what I understand that's primarily due to a funding issue that's hopefully getting worked out. If you have any questions please reach out to Mr. Chris DiVeglio, his contact information will be in this slide presentation. Alicia Schuller could not be here. She wanted to just pass along a few slides about the North Atlantic right whale and we are in season right now. All vessels 65 feet or larger are required to go 10 knots or less when you're in that area. This affects our sea lanes both from the south and from the east and all vessels must comply to this and they're aware of it ahead of time. This is both inbound and outbound. Any questions, her contact information is on the slides.

Details in meeting packet 10 through 23

III. Unfinished Business / New Business

A. **Captain Drew Hodgens** – Next up, any unfinished business and any new business. I did want to say a few kind words about Lisa Himber. I don't believe she's here today, but she is retiring from the Maritime Exchange, and she has been a tremendous asset to us in the port community and we can't thank her enough for all her hard work and dedication and of course we wish her well in retirement. With that, we want to welcome Captain George McCarthy who will officially be taking over on January 1st. If you haven't had a chance to say hello to Captain McCarthy you can do so. He's looking forward to working in the port and making things come right along, so thank you George. All right I think we can make a motion to adjourn if anybody.

IV. Adjournment

A. **Captain Drew Hodgens** asked for a motion to adjourn: Mike Cureton motioned, and Captain David Cuff seconded.

Next meeting Thursday, March 13th at Popi's 1030 for coffee and 1100 start.