

Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee

Meeting Summary

September 19, 2024

9:30am – 12:30pm (AKDT)

Aspen Hotels – Soldotna (326 Binkley Cir, Soldotna, AK 99669)

Committee Members:

Capt. Justin Theriot, At-Large – Alternate
Shaylon Cochran, CIRCAC – Alternate
Suzann Speckman, Environmental – Alternate
Bill Wolverton, Offshore Oil Production – Primary
David Griffin, Port MacKenzie – Primary
Ronnie Poole, Port of Alaska – Alternate
Bryan Hawkins, Port of Homer – Primary
Todd Paxton, Response Organization – Primary
Capt. Ian Maury, SWAPA – Primary *HSC Vice-Chair*
Capt. Mark Maxim, Tanker Operators – Primary

Ex Officio:

Capt. Christopher Culpepper, USCG
LTJG Brett Woodward, USCG
BMC Stephen Braun, USCG
MST2 Elizabeth Burges, USCG
CIV Daniel Payne, USCG
Michael Wills, USCG
Jade Gamble, ADEC

Other:

Kaleena Barnes, CIRCAC
Monique Cortez, Matson
Haley Griffin, Nuka Research
Jay Griffel, KPL

Managing Board:

Mayor Peter Micciche, President
Capt. Paul Mehler, HSC Chair
Capt. Ron Ward, Vice President

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Captain Paul Mehler, HSC Chair, reviewed the agenda and called the thirteenth meeting of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee to order at 9:36 am AKDT.

Captain Mehler led the Pledge of Allegiance and reviewed meeting protocols. Haley Griffin reviewed general housekeeping items and led introductions for meeting attendees.

Approval of Agenda

Motion Bryan Hawkins, Captain Mark Maxim to approve the agenda as prepared. Motion passes by no objection.

Meeting Summary April 26, 2024

Motion Todd Paxton, Captain Justin Theriot to approve the April 26, 2024, meeting summary as prepared. Motion passes by no objection.

Round Table Committee Member Updates

Committee members took turns providing updates on the recent work of their organizations. David Griffin reported that Port Mackenzie is planning to outfit one of their docks with a container of spill response equipment and is seeking input on its contents. Todd Paxton offered to help David with this. Ronnie Poole stated that Step 1 of the North Extension Stabilizations (NES 1) project is underway as part of the Port's Modernization Program to update its aging infrastructure. Suzann Speckman added that HDR Alaska is monitoring the breakdown of NES 1 project infrastructure to stop operations when beluga whales are present in the area (40-50% of the time). She also reported that permitting is about halfway complete for the cargo terminal replacement component of the NES 1 project.

Bryan Hawkins shared that the Homer Harbor Expansion Investigation is underway and is looking to support Coast Guard assets in the harbor. Funding sources are currently being sought for this expansion project. Homer will also be hosting the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators Conference on October 21-25. Bill Wolverton reported that Hilcorp is on schedule to Plug and Abandon

(P&A) their Baker Platform and that a Spartan 151 jack-up rig was recently purchased. It was a busy year for Hilcorp with about 3000 dock visits per month, so a 1-way traffic flow was created to handle the higher volume of traffic. Hilcorp also underwent an internal facility security assessment this year.

Captain Mehler shared that Ice Week hosted by Marathon will take place in November with a simulation training, followed by the pre-winter meeting. Marathon has also added iPads to their vessels to monitor mooring tension on the bridge for spring lines at the KPL dock. Jay Griffel added that a new gangway was purchased for the KPL dock after it was damaged by ice last winter season. Approximately 13-14 vessels were delayed this summer due to poor weather conditions. Captain Theriot reported that more fishing days in state waters were observed this year and that this was the first season of stricter management within the EEZ. Shaylon Cochran informed the group that CIRCAC's Board will be meeting in Anchorage in December, inviting interested parties to attend.

No actionable items arose from the discussion.

Ex-Officio Updates

USCG

Captain Christopher Culpepper reported that three (3) patrol boats are being decommissioned within the next year and replaced in Kodiak by three (3) Fast Response Cutters, bringing the total number of Cutters in District 17 to six (6) and increasing officer presence in the Aleutian region. The Coast Guard has purchased the commercial icebreaker 'Aiviq' which is planned to be operational then dry docked for refitting and rehomed in Juneau. The Coast Guard Cutter 'Healy' recently suffered an electrical fire but has been repaired and will be operational again in the near future. Aircraft resources within the district have been redistributed following recent impacts to three (3) helicopters. Increased presence of the Coast Guard in Kotzebue will continue for a few more weeks as part of Operation Arctic Shield. Lastly, Captain Culpepper reported that the Coast Guard is currently hiring and encouraged the group to inform any individuals that may be interested.

ADEC

Jade Gamble informed the group that Baere Logistics plan is under review for a new spot charter vessel operator in Cook Inlet and the public comment period ends on September 24th. This plan will bring a maximum of 365,000 gallons of refined product to Cook Inlet. Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plans for Marathon and North American Fuel Corp are also being reviewed, with ADEC's Requests for Additional Information (RFAI) in progress. On August 8, North American Fuel Corp conducted their first exercise in Alaska since shipping fuel in the state, simulating the release of 2,000 bbls of Jet A fuel at the Port of Alaska. Ms. Gamble also reported that after a Sundog Charters vessel sunk in Nikiski on July 22, Global Divers were able to locate the vessel via sonar and recover it on August 9. Approximately 100 gallons of diesel fuel were released.

Managing Board Report

Mayor Petter Micciche reported that a technology center is located nearby and can be used as a venue for future Committee meetings. He also stated that the Managing Board plans to meet during the fourth quarter to reappoint members with expiring seats and approve the 2025 Budget. He spoke to the primary membership being in good shape and asked primary Committee members present to identify and nominate individuals to fill the vacant alternate seats. The LinkedIn page is now set up, and Mayor Micciche suggested starting a monthly *On the Waterfront* report on the platform to bring more awareness of the HSC to the public. Todd Paxton suggested reaching out to local rotary clubs to increase the Committee's visibility in the area.

HSC Chair Report

Captain Mehler provided highlights to the group from the last winter season, including when Alpha and Bravo of the Operating Guidelines for Ice Conditions were turned on and off. A new screen was installed at the KPL dock for people to be able to observe cable tensions in real time and the ice camera functioned well throughout the winter. He spoke to the Ice Guidelines and how they should be more applicable to Cook Inlet as a whole, even though the post-transit Ice Checklist in itself is comprehensive. Instead, the goal is to implement a real-time checklist to maintain up-to-date weather conditions for operators (hosted on CIRCAC's website).

Captain Mehler asked for the Committee's support in coordinating with the Aleutian Islands Waterways Safety Committee (AIWSC) to share activities and accomplishments with one another. Committee members present indicated their support. He also informed the group that each member will have the chance to provide a briefing on their organization at future meetings. Lastly, Captain Mehler stated his intent to follow up with the individuals that presented on tsunami risks at the spring HSC meeting to see if funding has been allocated to the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program and suggested the potential for a presentation on earthquakes at a future meeting.

Workgroup Reports

Navigation Work Group

Captain Mehler stated that Ice Week and the Pre-winter meeting are typically run by Marathon, but he would like to transition management of these events to the Navigation work group and Committee to be more community-led. He made it clear that the HSC will not be financially responsible for either of these events and added that he will speak with Captain John Stewart more about this, allowing this year to be a transition phase to mentor the new leadership.

Marine Fire Fighting (MFF)/Salvage Work Groups

Daniel Payne reported how the work of both groups was set aside due to his and Todd Duke's involvement in response operations after the Baltimore Bridge collapse in Maryland. A large number of personnel from Alaska were involved in the response, working together to recover the bridge and get the MV Dali operational again. He stated that revisions to the Salvage and MFF Plans are unable to be located, so he intends to work with Todd Duke to set the next meeting up in October or November and encouraged attendance from the Committee members. Captain Culpepper recognized Dan's key role in the Baltimore incident, noting the vital information he provided federal officials on restoring commerce. Dan recommended that Todd provides a briefing of the incident at the spring meeting.

Harbor Safety Plan Work Group

Kaleena Barnes informed the group that CIRCAC is updating its *Cook Inlet Vessel Traffic 2011 – 2020* Report in 2024, including data from 2021 to 2023. She stated that she will be reaching out to some members of the Committee to gather information on what vessel traffic looks like among different operators in the Inlet. The final report will be available in spring 2025.

Facilitator's Report

Haley Griffin shared the current vacancies and the process for members to recommend interested applicants. She also listed individuals with expiring seats and mentioned that she will reach out to gauge their interest in maintaining their committee seat. Lastly, Ms. Griffin displayed the new LinkedIn page for the HSC and encouraged those on the platform to connect.

Presentations

Cook Inlet Spill Prevention & Response Inc. (CISPRI) Operations and Capabilities Brief

Todd Paxton provided an overview of CISPRI, outlining its mission and managerial structure as a U.S. Coast Guard-certified Worst Case Discharge (WCD) Oil Spill Removal Organization (OSRO). He reported that CISPRI has expanded its response zone to include Kodiak and Seward and stationed response equipment in Kodiak, redistributing gear throughout the region. Todd reviewed CISPRI's equipment, including vessels, skimmers, temporary storage (barges and bladders), and support equipment (boom, dispersants, in-situ burning, and inland equipment). CISPRI maintains a Contract fishing vessel program with 70 vessels, with regular training. The organization also holds weekly training events for staff and Members to test Technical Manual tactics and Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) and has a test tank for its contractors to evaluate the efficiency of various skimming systems.

CISPRI's partners include the City of Seldovia, where their Sea Otter Rehabilitation Center is located, Alaska SeaLife Center, the International Bird Rescue, Member Immediate Response Teams (Marathon), Short Notice Response Technicians, and 1-Call Alaska. Todd highlighted several projects CISPRI has initiated this year, including construction of the Port of Alaska Response Center to increase coverage at the Port, supporting 7 Member organizations in tabletop drills, and acquiring new Crucial 13-30 skimmers to enhance support for the contract fishing vessel fleet. Mayor Micciche thanked Todd for his

presentation and noted CISPRI's impressive efforts to modernize emergency response capacity in the region.

Southwest Alaska Pilots Association (SWAPA) Operations Brief

Captain Ian Maury shared SWAPA's mission to ensure the safe navigation of large vessels through Southcentral Alaska's ports and waterways, safeguarding life, property, and the marine environment. He noted that SWAPA offers marine pilotage services for cargo, oil and passenger vessels, emphasizing the need for pilots to adapt to changing weather conditions. Nationwide, maritime pilots complete approximately 780 transfers to and from ships each day, guiding an average of 540 large commercial through constricted waterways. Captain Maury displayed photos highlighting the complexities of winter helicopter operations and the importance of information exchange between pilot and Ship Master (i.e., weather, ice conditions, gill net presence, mooring buoy locations, etc.). He mentioned that three (3) pilots will be retiring at the month's end, bringing the number to 18. Captain Ron Ward discussed SWAPA's training program and the extensive requirements for becoming deputy pilots and Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Certified. He encouraged the group to share his information with anyone interested in becoming a SWAPA pilot. Captain Mehler thanked Captain Maury for his presentation and emphasized the importance of SWAPA's regional partnership.

Public/Final Comments

Dan Payne mentioned that funding has been sought out to support future MFF and Salvage trainings. Captain Culpepper stated CDR Christine Brown and LTJG Brett Woodward have replaced CDR John Downing and LT William Mason as the HSC's Ex-Officio representatives.

Review Action Items & Set Next Meeting

Captain Mehler and Ms. Griffin outlined the action items.

- ❖ Committee members will reach out to Daniel Payne if interested in attending the next Salvage and Marine Fire Fighting work group meeting in October/November.
- ❖ Committee members will identify individuals interested in alternate seats on the HSC.
- ❖ Captain Mehler will reach out to Captain Buddy Custard (AIWSC) for future information sharing between the two committees.
- ❖ The Managing Board will conduct outreach to local rotary clubs to increase visibility of the HSC.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will reach out to Todd Duke to brief the HSC on the Baltimore Bridge collapse and response operations at the spring meeting.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will reach out to members of the HSC for the first *On the Waterfront* LinkedIn report.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will send a list of personnel changes within the Coast Guard to the HSC.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will forward Ice Guidelines language to the Navigation work group when updated.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will share the summary and materials shared during the meeting with the HSC.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will share the meeting presentations on the CIHSC website.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in late April of 2025. A date will be circulated to the Committee once a venue is chosen for the spring meeting.

Adjourn

Captain Mehler thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 12:38 pm AKDT.

Meeting Materials: (1) Meeting Protocols, (2) CIHSC Roster, (3) April 26, 2024, Meeting Summary, (4) List of Work Group Members