

Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee

Meeting Summary

October 18, 2023

12:00pm-3:00pm (AKDT)

Aspen Suites Homer Hotel
91 Sterling Highway, Homer AK 99603

Committee Members Present:

Steve "Vinnie" Catalano, CIRCAC – Primary
Shaylon Cochran, CIRCAC - Alternate
Vicente "Ben" Cruz, Dry Cargo Ship Operators – Alternate
Bill Wolverton, Offshore Oil Production – Primary
Ronnie Poole, Port of Alaska – Alternate
Todd Paxton, Response Organization – Primary
Shaylon Cochran, CIRCAC - Alternate
Rachel Lord, Environmental – Primary
Suzann Speckman, Environmental – Alternate
David Griffin, Port MacKenzie – Primary
Ronnie Poole, Port of Alaska – Alternate
Bryan Baker, Small Passenger Vessel Operators – Primary

Committee Members Absent:

Bryan Crisp, At-Large – Primary
Capt. Justin Theriot, At-Large – Alternate
David Martin, Commercial Fishing – Primary
Frank Smith, Dry Cargo Ship Operators – Primary
Capt. Brad Kroon, Harbor Tug Operators – Primary
Bryan Hawkins, Port of Homer – Primary
Luke Hasenbank, Ship Agents – Primary
Angelina Fuschetto, Tanker Operators – Primary
Capt. Mark Maxim, Tanker Operators – Alternate
Capt. Erik Velsko, Commercial Fishing – Alternate
Steve Ribuffo, Port of Alaska – Primary
Bryan Hawkins, Port of Homer – Primary
Matt Clarke, Port of Homer – Alternate

Todd Duke, Salvage Organization – Primary
Capt. Peter Garay, SWAPA – Primary, *HSC Vice-Chair*
Capt. Ian Maury, SWAPA – Alternate
Andrew Mew, Ship Agents – Alternate
Mark Theriault, Tug & Barge Operators – Primary

Managing Board Present:

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

Managing Board Absent:

Mike Munger, Secretary/Treasurer

Ex Officio:

Captain Christopher Culpepper, USCG (COTP)
CDR John Downing, USCG (Chief of Prevention)
LT William Mason, USCG (Waterways Management)
Mr. Daniel Payne, USCG (MTSRU)
BMC Stephen Braun, USCG (Waterways Management)
Capt. Chris Coutu, AK Marine Exchange

Other:

Mr. Michael Wills, USCG Sec Anchorage (Cyber)
Eric Wyatt, Wyatt Alaskan Consulting, LLC
David Ridge, Crowley Fuels
Haley Griffin, Nuka Research
Sara Werba, Nuka Research

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Captain Paul Mehler, HSC Chair, reviewed the agenda and called the twelfth meeting of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee to order at 12:02 pm (AKDT).

Captain Mehler led the Pledge of Allegiance, and reviewed meeting protocols and general meeting housekeeping actions.

Haley Griffin led introductions for meeting attendees.

Approval of Agenda

Motion Vinnie Catalano, Ben Cruz to approve the agenda as prepared. Motion passes by no objection.

Meeting Summary April 27, 2023

Motion Vinnie Catalano, Suzann Speckman to approve the April 27, 2023, meeting summary as prepared. Motion passes by no objection.

Round Table Committee Member Updates

Committee Members in attendance took turns providing the group with updates from their industry sectors.

Captain Chris Couto of Alaska Marine Exchange (MXAK) was asked to give a formal presentation of their Automatic Identification System (AIS) Aids to Navigation (ATON) Stations and geofencing capabilities at the Spring Meeting next year. Ms. Rachel Lord highlighted the upcoming Cook Inlet Water Quality Summit in Anchorage (24-25 October) and encouraged members to attend the open meeting.

No other actionable items arose from the discussion.

Managing Board Report

Mayor Peter Micciche thanked everyone for being at the meeting and reiterated the importance of the CIHSC as a body, and the Committee's amazing continuity for the past 8 years. The Managing Board continues to support in the best way possible, the efforts of the Committee.

HSC Chair Report

Captain Mehler stated that the Managing Board had written a letter of support from the CIHSC for Tim Robertson as a recipient of a 2023 Legacy Award (from the BC Oil Spill Task Force) and highlighted that Tim was selected for the award. With the help of Cassandra Johnson and CIRCAC, the organization's bank account has been moved from Wells Fargo to Key Bank, which is helping to save a small portion of the operating expenses.

Captain Mehler and Mr. Mike Munger will be attending the National Harbor Safety Committee Conference in Chicago, IL in March 2024 and encouraged members to submit any issues or subjects that can be brought to the Conference. He also praised the efforts of the Harbor Safety Plan (HSP) workgroup and others that contributed to the Plan for their efforts to conduct the document review and implement the changes.

Workgroup Reports

Navigation Workgroup

Captain Ron Ward reported that the Navigation work group met to review and edit underkeel clearance language and added a definition of in-transit in the HSP. He thanked the HSP workgroup for allowing their last-minute suggestions to update South West Alaska Pilot's Association's (SWAPA) contact information to be included.

Marine Firefighting (MFF)/Salvage Workgroups

Mr. Daniel Payne reported that the membership of the MFF/Salvage workgroups needs to be boosted in order for their work to move forward. There have been important updates and revisions to the State and Federal plans that should be reviewed and commented on but there are not enough participants to do so. He asked that any Committee members interested in joining either workgroup reach out to him.

Ms. Lord requested that Municipal Harbor Masters be included in the membership solicitation for these workgroups.

Harbor Safety Plan Workgroup

Mr. Catalano reported that the Harbor Safety Plan had been undergoing the changes submitted during the last Committee and Public review periods, and the new draft has been provided in the meeting materials.

With the last edits submitted on the day of the meeting, final approval will need to be accomplished via email. Please be on the lookout for an email from Haley, review the changes and respond with your vote. Once the Committee has approved the document, it will undergo final publication and be posted on the Website and circulated to the Public. The next annual public review period will be held in 2024.

The issue of whale strikes will be addressed at the next meeting.

Facilitator's Report

Haley Griffin reported that Nuka Research has been busy coordinating meetings with the Managing Board and assisting in the review and editing of the Harbor Safety Plan. She reviewed seat vacancies, upcoming seat expirations and other administrative updates. See slides for details. Members were encouraged to submit ideas for upcoming meeting presentations and action items, website content, and potential future members. Small boat operators were highlighted as an especially important stakeholder group to be included.

Presentations

Cyber Crime in the Maritime Domain

Mr. Michael Wills with the US Coast Guard presented an overview of Cyber Crime statistics within the State of Alaska and typical response errors made by organizations when an incident occurs. Industry best practices, solutions, and methods of resilience were provided. He encouraged the Committee to start socializing cyber concepts and normalizing the idea that cyber security is important for all.

Captain Mehler asked what is considered best practice for users without an IT department? Mr. Wills stated that it depends on the scale of the problem, but there are resources available. He mentioned that a non-profit organization board is in place to help small businesses navigate these problems.

Eric Wyatt with Wyatt Alaska Consulting then presented a case study of a real-life example of a cyber-attack he experienced while working at the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Mr. Wyatt stressed the importance in understanding these issues and taking lessons learned from other, real-life examples. Cyber Secure Alaska was established to help small businesses deal with cyber problems. Smaller, local governments are often without the resources to fight hacks but are linked to larger government institutions and are vulnerable gateways for cybercrime. Data theft, disruption of government and extortion are what motivates hackers, depending on what organization is involved. Evaluating the risks of making data public is very important.

Mr. Wyatt encouraged everyone to be cautious because most of the time, organizations in this region think they are too small to be targeted, and that is what makes them vulnerable. Yes, it does happen here. It's not just an IT problem to solve. Everyone at every level of the organization needs to be involved in the fight against cybercrime. Mr. Wyatt highlighted some steps in response, including to call DHS-CISA and the FBI, be sure not to blame the victim, and form a team (i.e., all members of the organization, contracted support, and volunteers). Increasing your organization's resilience to a cyber-attack requires preparation. This can mean establishing and practicing an incident response plan, sharing lessons learned, having data backed up, and strengthening public relations.

Port Issues Brief - Captain Christopher Culpepper, COTP

Captain Culpepper thanked the Committee for hosting. He provided his background in the Coast Guard, which began in 1998, and expressed his gratitude for being stationed in Alaska. He began by highlighting the importance of the HSC and taking lessons learned from other established HSC's. He also spoke to the balance and coordination of service between federal, state, and local shareholders, solicitation of feedback from all users, and how change in management within the USCG is hard but he working to do it positively. He encouraged everyone to be familiar with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) as one way for communities to have resilience and self-help capabilities when faced with cybersecurity incidents.

Captain Culpepper reviewed current updates within the USCG, including three (3) new 150 ft. response cutters coming to replace older 110 ft. patrol boats (2 in Kodiak & 1 in Seward), soon-to-be updates published within the Arctic Strategy Implementation Plan around operations and tactics, and the development and implementation of new sensor capabilities in unmanned aerial systems (UAS). The UAS will use hyperspectral imaging as a mapping overlay to increase visibility levels and overall safety and interoperability of the Inlet. He hopes to pass this technology on to other users.

Captain Culpepper announced that across the entire USCG, Sector Anchorage has earned an award for environmental protection award over the last year. He will be attending Ice Week in Seward and is planning to highlight a recent incident where the M/V Aurora (AMHS) provided critical support in a rescue before USCG could.

HSP/MFF Plan Updates

Mr. Catalano stated that the HSP workgroup is waiting for the MFF and Salvage to be finalized before being inserted into the HSP.

Public/Final Comments

Mr. David Ridge with Crowley Fuels asked Captain Coutu about ACS cables - when a vessel triggers the ATON to MXAK who calls? Mr. Ridge offered to help with vessel contact numbers within his company for those vessels encroaching on the sensitive areas. He stated that he will contact their Juneau office and provide a list of numbers.

Review Action Items & Set Next Meeting

Captain Mehler and Ms. Griffin outlined the action items.

- ❖ Alaska Marine Exchange will work with Nuka Research to schedule a presentation of ATON capabilities and geo-fencing projects in Cook Inlet at the next Committee meeting.
- ❖ Ms. Griffin will circulate an updated version of HSP with recent changes that have been submitted - Committee members will be asked to review and approve the document via email prior to final publication.
- ❖ Committee will submit suggested improvements and important news items/resources for the CIHSC website to Ms. Griffin.
- ❖ Nuka Research and the Nav workgroup will work to follow up on the whale strike issue with NOAA.
- ❖ Committee will share the Borough's Municipal Harbor Fund opportunities with the group.
- ❖ Committee members interested in joining the MFF or Salvage workgroups will reach out.
- ❖ Improve outreach to small boat owners for Committee engagement (contact Joe McCullough, local Harbor Offices such as the Homer Charter Association and Seldovia Harbor Master).

Next Meeting

Captain Mehler stated that the next Committee meeting will likely be held in the April-May timeframe of Spring 2024.

Adjourn

Captain Paul Mehler thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 2:58 pm (AKDT).