

Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee

Meeting Summary

April 27, 2023

1:30pm-4:30pm (AKST)

Kenai Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center
11471 Kenai Spur Hwy, AK 99611

Committee Members Present:

Capt. Justin Theriot, At Large – Alternate
Steve “Vinnie” Catalano, CIRCAC – Primary
David Martin, Commercial Fishing – Primary
Frank Smith, Dry Cargo Ship Operators – Primary
Vicente “Ben” Cruz, Dry Cargo Ship Operators – Alternate
Suzann Speckman, Environmental – Alternate
Capt. Brad Kroon, Harbor Tug Operators – Primary
Bill Wolverton, Offshore Oil Production – Primary
Ronnie Poole, Port of Alaska – Alternate
Bryan Hawkins, Port of Homer – Primary
Todd Paxton, Response Organization – Primary
Luke Hasenbank, Ship Agents – Primary
Angelina Fuschetto, Tanker Operators – Primary
Capt. Mark Maxim, Tanker Operators – Alternate

Committee Members Absent:

Bryan Crisp, At Large – Primary
Shaylon Cochran, CIRCAC - Alternate
Capt. Erik Velsko, Commercial Fishing – Alternate
Rachel Lord, Environmental – Primary
David Griffin, Port MacKenzie – Primary
Steve Ribuffo, Port of Alaska – Primary
Bryan Hawkins, Port of Homer – Primary
Matt Clarke, Port of Homer – Alternate
Bryan Baker, Small Passenger Vessel Operators – Primary
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. Ron Ward, Vice President
Capt. Paul Mehler, HSC Chair
Capt. Mark Nielsen, Member

Managing Board Absent:

Mike Munger, Secretary/Treasurer

Ex Officio:

John Downing, USCG
LT William Mason, USCG
Daniel Payne, USCG
LCDR Hadley Owen, NOAA
Capt. Chris Coutu, AK Marine Exchange

Other:

Sierra Fletcher, Nuka Research
Haley Griffin, Nuka Research
Angelo DiBello, Seabulk
Nick Capuzzi, USCG MSD Homer
Michael Wills, USCG Sec Anchorage
David Ridge, Crowley
Nisha Kappas, USCG
Capt. Michelle Bas, USCG
Jay Griffel, CCI
David Dellinger, National Weather Service
Aviva Braun, National Weather Service
Mike Lawson, National Weather Service
Carolyn Vermette, SWAPA
Adam Carron, CGIS

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Captain Paul Mehler, HSC Chair, reviewed the agenda and called the eleventh meeting of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee to order at 1:31pm (AKST).

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, Todd Paxton to approve as the agenda as prepared.
Motion passes by no objection.**

Meeting Summary September 7, 2022

Motion Vinnie Catalano, Todd Paxton to approve the September 7, 2022 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. No actionable items arose from the discussion.

Todd Paxton with CISPRI stated in his update that ship inspection manning requirements for OSV has raised some unexpected issues and that he will be meeting with CDR John Downing on Tuesday, May 9th to seek a resolution.

Ex Officio Reports

USCG

CDR John Downing reported that USCG has been inviting small passenger vessel operators to industry days in Seward and Homer to hear the latest from MSIB on fire safety. He introduced Coast Guard District 17's Captain Michelle Bas and Nisha Kappas with the Cyber Security effort. John stated that USCG has released a website on Homeport with resources focused on cyber risk assessments and cyber hygiene, encouraging all in attendance to review the website and attend to these issues. He encouraged the Committee to think about how information is communicated during a cyber event.

CDR John Downing also offered to create a local MSIB with information on cyber resources for industry that can be posted and circulated, but generally Homeport is the primary means of communicating with industry. He also stated that USCG is in need of personnel, encouraging the Committee to reach out to others for consideration.

ADEC

There were no individuals present from ADEC.

NOAA

LCDR Hadley Owen stated that she will be giving the Committee updates on the status of charting in the region and the transition to electronic charts from ENC's later in the meeting.

Managing Board Report

Mayor Micciche thanked everyone for being at the meeting and stated the Board's intent to show appreciation to Tim Robertson for his work on the Committee. The Mayor also thanked the Ex-officio partners and recognized the Managing Board for their work on the

Committee. He expressed his appreciation to the entities that have made financial contributions for far this year and that the Board is trying to maintain a low spending budget. Lastly, Mayor Micciche informed the Committee of recent discussions to increase the exposure of the Committee in the region.

HSC Chair Report

Captain Mehler also expressed his thanks for Tim Robertson's work on the Committee. He talked about recent work to update the website and encouraged everyone at the meeting to provide feedback on how to continue improving the website. He announced a goal to focus on training, expressing his intent to hold firefighting and first aid trainings and to review radio protocols with appropriate entities.

Captain Mehler asked Haley Griffin to review the current vacancies and new members on the Committee. She stated that the primary and alternate seats for Cruise Ship Operators and Recreational Boaters are vacant, and that the alternate seats for Harbor Tug Operators, Marine Oil Terminal Operators, Offshore Oil Production, Port MacKenzie, Salvage Organization, Small Passenger Vessel Operators and Tug & Barge Operators are vacant. Haley welcomed Captain Justin Theriot, Suzann Speckman, David Griffin, Captain Mark Maxim, Mark Theriault, Jeremy Allen, Col. Daniel Craig, Captain Steve White, and Captain Chris Coutu to the Committee as new members since the September 7th meeting.

Captain Mehler reported that good work is being done in the Marine Firefighting and Harbor Safety Plan workgroups on their plans. He announced a few short-term goals of preparing for the summer months by putting out the MFF plan, working to improve communications between deep drafts and fishing vessels, and looking into the issue of whale strikes. His long-term goals are to get the word out about the Committee, discuss best practices of the HSC's operation and share the Committee's activities with a larger audience.

He thanked members for their continued interest and support in serving on the Committee.

Workgroup Reports

Navigation Workgroup

Carolyn Vermette reported recommendations from the workgroup to make changes in the Harbor Safety Plan. Changes to the Plan include updating and replacing the existing Underkeel Clearance language by utilizing language from the Coast Pilot and Port of Alaska Manual, to define and add a definition of "in-transit" and define and add recommended anchorages from Cook Inlet SWAPA guidelines. Adding a definition of "wake control" was discussed by the workgroup but was not recommended to be included in the Plan.

Motion Captain Ward, Captain Kroon to update and replace the definition of Underkeel Clearance in the Harbor Safety Plan. Motion passes by no objection.

Motion Captain Ward, Captain Kroon to define and add the definition of “in-transit” to the Harbor Safety Plan. Motion passes by no objection.

Motion Captain Ward, Frank Smith to define and add recommended anchorages into the Harbor Safety Plan. Motion passes by no objection.

Salvage Workgroup

Daniel Payne reported the Workgroup’s plan to have a meeting on May 31st to take the final steps in updating the Salvage section of the Plan and that more members are needed. Daniel Payne, Todd Duke, Jim Elliot, and Victoria Bowls are working to put the changes out for comment.

Marine Firefighting

Daniel Payne stated that the Marine Firefighting Plan is in its final steps and is projected to be finalized on May 31st. He also stated that Bryan Crisp was the head of the MFF Workgroup, but he has since transitioned jobs.

Harbor Safety Plan

Vinnie Catalano reported that the HSP workgroup met on April 18th and discussed updates to the Plan. These changes support the goal of making the document more user friendly and include the creation of a reference and tools space in each of the Plan sections to make it easier for users to access relevant information, soliciting input from the Committee regarding a place holder for a section regarding future LNG development, and the creation of best practices at the beginning of each section. He asked for the Committee’s general input to these suggestions and on the Plan generally.

He stated that a workgroup member, Greg Lebeau, is researching information on marine mammal strikes and avoidance to speak to at the next Committee meeting. Suzann Speckman offered to work with Vinnie on the HSP workgroup to provide information on marine mammals and help address this issue.

Vinnie also sought direction from the Committee to identify industry and the regulation process/steps to take when equipment is damaged (e.g., fishing gear). He asked if anyone could provide input on what to do in these situations and what information is available for the fishermen and other involved parties.

Facilitator’s Report

Sierra Fletcher stated that Nuka Research has recently worked to assist with coordinating both Harbor Safety Plan and Navigation workgroup meetings and facilitate this Committee meeting. She also stated that an up-to-date roster can be found on the CIHSC website, and that Haley Griffin will reach out in the coming months to those with positions expiring this year so individuals may express their inclination to continue on the Committee.

Haley Griffin also spoke to the recently released MSIB for fire safety on small passenger vessels, which provides a self-assessment emergency preparedness checklist for evaluating fire safety on-board.

Presentations

New National Weather Service Marine Zones & other Program Updates

Aviva Braun, Mike Lawson and David Dellinger presented together on this topic, stating that definitions of marine areas were changed to be more specific, including some areas in Cook Inlet. They spoke about the importance of community preparedness in the mitigation and response to weather-related disasters, and how collaboration will increase public safety. The ocean prediction center products are located on the marine zone pages on the National Weather Service website, and it is possible to navigate to the ice maps as well and find parameters such as stage and concentration.

Mayor Micciche commented that the cell phone dial-in service requires individuals to call back in to reach a new area rather than being able to call once and enter numbers to navigate to the desired area. Aviva will take this comment back to the team for discussion.

Aviva stated that the chart application has an option to be used when individuals have low bandwidth, and that they can sign up for low-bandwidth texts for any of the marine zones. The information put out by the weather station can be accessed through social media, online, or on the mobile phone (mobile.weather.gov). Aviva and David recommended that Committee members consider signing up to be a weather ready nation ambassador to lead in improving resilience to changes in climate.

To answer the question of how the Office of the Coast Survey gets faster, more accurate information, Mike Lawson stated that everything in the system is satellite-based and has the capacity to monitor rapidly changing events of significance in Cook Inlet. Cloud cover makes it difficult to see the Inlet more than 3 times a week, but the cameras from CIRCAC are heavily used for ground-level visibility. David commented that the use of data from voluntary observing ships is a way to collect offshore data, and that ships under the IMO in the SOLAS program are a great tool to inform NWS forecasts. Real-time vessel data, or data from weather stations or buoys can be a valuable tool as well to provide supplemental information to the forecasts. Data produced hourly by ships may be helpful to inform other vessels traveling in the region.

Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) – Vessel Crimes

Special Agent Adam Carron with CGIS presented on the status of vessel crimes and new efforts put forward by the Coast Guard to address these issues. He reported an increase in fights on fishing vessels in the North Pacific (on boats such as factory trawlers, etc.) and reviewed various types of crime and some examples, including seaman's manslaughter cases, vessel negligence, narcotics, property crimes (e.g., scuttling and theft) and assault.

Agent Carron encouraged the Committee, particularly those that manage vessels, to give input and come forward to the USCG Sector Command Center if they see or hear about something that could qualify as a crime. He instructed those to watch for signs of human trafficking and to refrain from tampering with crime scenes (i.e., not touching drugs or throwing weapons overboard). He highlighted the particular danger of exposure to fentanyl.

CDR John Downing commented that there will be more information to come on the increased scrutiny of sexual assault/harassment among Coast Guard personnel. He stated that USCG has put in effort to create tools and conduct trainings to address the problem. He made a point that having these incidents on record may impede an individual's ability to receive future marine credentials, and that reporting will follow the same process as other crimes. Since the sexual harassment MSIB was issued and the CGIS anonymous crime tips app was created, the reporting has exponentially increased.

Regional Charting Status & Transition to ENCs

LCDR Hadley Owen presented on the role of NOAA's Office of the Coast Survey, present state, and future of NOAA charting in Alaska. One of the larger roles of the Coast Survey Office is to collect data from vessels and display this information on charts, which are then shared for navigational purposes and natural disaster response. In 2017, the transition began from paper charts to electronic charts. NOAA is beginning to focus exclusively on the development of electronic charts, with a goal to completely transition by January 2025.

The development of ENCs will allow individuals to view multiple layers, e.g., water level, surface currents, etc. in an S-100 Data Framework. Change is also coming to SOLAS under the IMO in the international hydrographic office to increase consistency for vessels traveling internationally. She reminded the Committee that canceling paper charts means they will no longer be updated, and that some raster charts in Western and Southeastern Alaska will be canceled in November this year. However, all paper charts have currently been replaced by a corresponding ENC.

The ENCs can be found at <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/>.

NOAA Charts Latest Editions can be found at <https://charts.noaa.gov/MCD/Dole.shtml>.

Public/Final Comments

David Martin spoke about the upcoming commercial fishing season, asking the Committee to consider how to get the word out that communications need to increase during times of fishing to minimize the number of nets being run over and the damage to equipment. John Downing suggested that a public safety message could be sent out in the form of a local MSIB.

Review Action Items & Set Next Time

Captain Mehler outlined the action items.

- ❖ Committee will bring forward recommendations to the CIHSC website.
- ❖ Committee will share training opportunities among one another.
- ❖ Haley Griffin will post presentations (once approved), Small Passenger MSIB, and other shared materials on the CIHSC website.
- ❖ Workgroups will meet and address assignments.
 - HSP workgroup will make changes to the Harbor Safety Plan to be prepared for public review.
 - Marine Firefighting workgroup will make final edits to the MFF plan.

Captain Mehler stated that the next Committee meeting will likely be held in the September timeframe and will include a Tabletop Exercise focused on response efforts to cyber security events.

Adjourn

Captain Paul Mehler thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 4:32pm.