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Minutes: Forum #104

Date: December 16, 2015
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: University of Southern Maine
Room 216 (Second Floor) Abromson Center
88 Bedford Street
PO Box 9300
Portland, ME 04101

Special Note: Please remember our colleagues who perished on October 1, 2015 aboard EL FARO, especially fellow Mainers, Captain Michael Davidson, Dylan Meklin, Danielle Randolph, Michael Holland, as well as Brooklyn, New York native Mitchell Kuflik. All were Maine Maritime Academy graduates.

1. Introductions and Administration:

Introductions – The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the Port Safety Forum Co-Chair John Henshaw of the Maine Port Authority with Captain Baroody as the Co-Chair representing the Coast Guard. A quorum was comprised of 30 individuals.

Review and Approval of the September 16, 2015 Port Safety Forum Meeting Minutes – Hearing no amendments or objections to the content of the September 16, 2015 minutes, Mr. Henshaw accepted the minutes as approved.

2. Coast Guard Update:

Ice Breaking – LT David Bourbeau

LT Bourbeau of Sector Northern New England's Waterways Management Division, provided an overview of the Coast Guard's icebreaking mission and procedures. The Coast Guard's icebreaking mission has three basic priorities:

- Search and rescue;
- Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security;
- Urgent Response to vessels;
- Exigent community service (e.g., flood relief); and
- Facilitate navigation.



Sector Northern New England has four dedicated ice breaking resources; three 65' harbor tugs, and one 140' ice breaking tug. The Coast Guard uses Auxiliary air craft to fly regular ice reconnaissance missions to track ice formations. The Coast Guard's navigation facilitation focuses on petroleum facilities on:

- Piscataqua River;
- Portland Harbor/Fore River; and
- Penobscot River/Bucksport/Searsport.

The Coast Guard may also be dispatched to break ice where "Reasonable Demand of Commerce" is justified, such as breaking out an iced facility. Requests may be made 24 hours a day by contacting the Coast Guard Command Center at (207) 767-0303.

Mariner Activated Sound Signals – LT David Bourbeau

LT Bourbeau updated the Forum regarding the ongoing replacement of obsolete VM-100 fog signals with the latest generation on-demand Mariner Activated Radio Sound Signal (MRASS) systems. The VM-100 systems are aging with growing reliability issues and limited spare parts, requiring the transition. The U.S. Coast Guard is upgrading the older VM-100 systems across the entire country including Maine and New Hampshire. The new MRASS system allows mariners to remotely activate navigation sound signals on demand by using a VHF radio. Mariners who require a sound signal will activate the aid by keying their VHF mic 5 times within 10 seconds on channel 83. The range of activation is line of sight. Once activated, the signal will sound for a pre-set period of time between 15 to 60 minutes. MRASS equipped aids to navigation will be appropriately marked on navigation charts.

East Coast Waterway Analysis and Management System – CWO Nichols

Chief Warrant Officer Nichols outlined a broad initiative led by the Coast Guard to conduct a comprehensive Waterways Analysis and Management System Study along the on the entire Atlantic and Gulf Seacoast Systems from Maine to Texas. The details are contained in Local Notice to Mariners 49/15. The study focuses on the existing offshore and near shore aids to navigation system, waterborne commerce, marine casualty information, and future development projects. The purpose of this study is to determine the navigational requirements of vessels operating in the offshore and near shore environments. Comments must be received by March 15, 2016.

- The analysis will consider stakeholder input, environmental considerations, channel framework, user capabilities, and available technology.
- The analysis is not a cost cutting measure, but rather, will determine how to more optimally mark waterways without negatively impacting navigation safety.
- Levels of Service will define where/how the Coast Guard will optimally provide Aids to Navigation in the future

Individual operators and interested maritime industry representatives are requested to provide comment and feedback using the Seacoast WAMs User Feedback Form link below.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1iMH8glUugWVsvxDP3LumHpCE0JXUguUl2iko9Nc5tw/edit?usp=sharing>

Comments and feedback using the survey can also be emailed to:

D01-SMB-DPWPublicComments@uscg.mil with **Atlantic Seacoast Systems WAMS** as the subject line.

3. Ocean Planning:

Regional Ocean Planning – John Weber

Mr. John Weber of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council briefed the Port Safety Forum regarding Regional Ocean Planning and explained the organization of the planning council, their mandates and goals. The National Ocean Policy, established by Presidential Executive Order in 2010, calls for the formation of nine regionally focused Regional Planning Boards to better manage the nation's oceans and coasts. In short, the Northeast Council is comprised of 10 Federal agencies, 10 Federally recognized tribes, the New England Fishery Management Council, public, and non-government agencies, as well as ex-officio participation from the State of New York and Canadian agencies. The council strives to engage with appropriate waterway users to collect waterway usage data into a practical package suitable for logical and science based planning. Using meaningful public participation, the council seeks the knowledge, perspectives, and needs of ocean stakeholders including fishermen; scientists; boaters; environmental advocacy groups; leaders in the shipping, ports, and energy industries; and all New Englanders who have an interest in the ocean. The Council, uses accurate, up-to-date data and information, including everything from practical traditional knowledge to innovative mapping technologies to best understand competing waterway demands. Specific areas of focus include:

- Maritime Commerce
- Aquaculture
- Recreation
- Commercial Fishing
- Energy
- Culture
- Mammals & Turtles
- Fish and Shellfish
- Other Marine Life
- Eel Grass
- Water Quality
- Birds
- Habitat
- Bathymetry

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council will prepare an Ocean Plan which will be designed for agencies to use as a guide when considering permitting applications for various waterway uses such as aquaculture and sustainable energy projects and will weigh those projects with other competing demands such as shipping and fishing (as examples). The Council is now in the final phases of preparing the Plan which will be ready for public comment in the early Spring (March). The Port Safety Forum has established an ad-hoc Ocean Planning Sub-Committee to review and comment. Currently, the Ocean Planning Committee is comprised of Brian Downey (Chair), LT David Bourbeau (USCG), the Portland Pilots Incorporated, and Kevin Battles (Portland Deputy Harbormaster). If you are interested in contributing as a sub-committee member, please contact Brian Downey at brian.downey@marinecs.com. For more information regarding the Northeast Regional Ocean Council please visit <http://northeastoceancouncil.org>.

4. Port Activities Update:

NERACOOS - Tom Shyka

Tom Shyka provided an update on the NERACOOS ocean data buoy system and thanked those in the Port Safety Forum for their letters of support offered while NERACOOS pursued Federal re-funding for their services. Based on user support and available resources, they are currently expecting to continue service with the existing funding levels. The NERACOOS website recently underwent revision which refreshed the look and feel of the site to make it more user friendly and more compatible with tablets and other hand held devices. If you haven't visited the site, it is highly recommended for anyone who works on the water or in the vessel/shipping industry. The site provides a comprehensive real time data from offshore buoys which monitors critical environmental data including winds, waves, visibility, air temperature, water temperature at various depths and more. In addition to hourly buoy data, other data products include forecasting of water levels, coastal flooding and erosion forecasts, and ocean forecasts. Further, the site offers the Environmental Research Division's Data Access Program which is a data server that provides a simple, consistent way to download subsets of scientific datasets in common file formats to make graphs and maps.

For more information, please visit <http://www2.neracoos.org> to learn more about the extremely valuable on-line tools available through NERACOOS.

NOAA - LCDR Meghan McGovern

- **Report Icing Conditions** - In an effort to improve freezing spray forecasts, NOAA is collaborating with Environment Canada to evaluate each country's freezing spray forecast models and tools. Analysis of freezing spray cases, forecaster feedback, and ship observations will allow Environment Canada and NOAA scientists and forecasters to better predict dangerous freezing spray conditions to protect life and property at sea. NOAA requests that you help in their study by reporting icing conditions using the following web-based link: <http://go.usa.gov/WYbm>.
- **Survey Work in Penobscot Bay** - NOAA is anticipating conducting some oceanographic surveys in Penobscot Bay. They have consulted with the regional pilots, Coastal Zone Management, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Maine Port Authority to focus the scope of the most critical survey locations.

Coastal Zone Management - Matt Nixon

The [Maine Coastal Management Program](#), is led by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry through a partnership with NOAA's Office for Coastal Management which continues to fuel their work with critical funding and technical assistance. The coastal management program consists of a network of 19 state laws with four state agencies working in cooperation with local governments, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, and the public to improve management of coastal resources. Maine CZM addresses an array of issues vital to healthy coastal resources and robust coastal economies, including access to the shore, harbor planning and management, habitat mapping and restoration, storm hazard resiliency, land use planning, water quality and citizen stewardship. Maine's coastal zone extends to the inland boundary of all towns bordering tidal waters and includes all coastal islands. Among CZM's current initiatives is seafloor mapping using a small research vessel which is regionally deployed each season. The focus this past year has been between the Kennebec River and Boothbay Harbor. Improving Maine's resiliency, the data collected by CZM is also used to identify offshore sand deposits for beach nourishment and use in storm surge models to generate more accurate predictions for coastal Maine. In the permitting and site selection process, government agencies, can use CZM data to evaluate the potential impacts of offshore development to enhance permitting decisions for offshore facilities.

5. Old Business/New Business:

Fatigue Management – Captain David Gelinis – Penobscot Bay and River Pilots

Captain Gelinis reviewed recent Fatigue Management training offered by the Maine Pilotage Commission to all Maine Pilots. The training was also offered to other key port users including commuter ferry operators and tug boat captains and crews. The training, delivered by Maritime Institute for Training and Graduate Studies provided a concise examination of sleep patterns, fatigue sources and strategies to enhance quality rest. The Penobscot Bay and River Pilots have already initiated methods to enhance rest quality through better coordination of ship scheduling with regional agents. The training was made possible through a Pilot Training Fund managed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Captain Earl Walker – Mr. Henshaw presented Captain Walker a letter from Governor LePage congratulating him on his distinguished service to the Maine Pilotage Commission. In September, Captain Walker stepped down from his Commission chair after nearly 30 years of dedicated service. Thank you Captain Walker!

6. Next Meeting:

- April 13, 2016 (Belfast), 10:00 AM
University of Maine Hutchinson Center
80 Belmont Avenue (Route 3)
Belfast, ME 04915

Recommended guest speakers, suggested topics and sub-committee proposals are always welcome and encouraged. Suggestions and comments may be sent to brian.downey@martinecs.com.

USCG Sector Northern New England:
www.uscg.mil/d1/sectornne/ & <http://homeport.uscg.mil/northernnewengland>
Maine Port Authority:
www.maineports.com
Port Safety Forum:
www.maineports.com/port_safety_forum.html