

Maine Pilotage Commission



MaineDOT ~ Room 227 Conference Room & Video Conference
June 24, 2020

Minutes of Meeting

In compliance with MRSA 38 § 85 and in fulfillment of the Commission's duties addressed in MRSA 38 § 90, a meeting of the Maine Pilotage Commission was held on June 24, 2020 in Augusta, ME.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, this meeting was held virtually by video conference and was not conducted in person, although Mr. Downey and Mr. Burns were on site together at the Maine DOT building in Augusta.

Administration:

Maine Pilotage Commission Members constituting a quorum were:

Captain Charles Weeks	– Chair of the Commission
Captain David Gelinis	– Pilot Member
Captain Gerald Morrison	– Pilot Member
Mr. Tom Dobbins	– Maritime Industry Member
Captain John Worth	– Public Member
Mr. Brian Downey	– Pilotage Commission Administrator

Maine Pilotage Commission Interested Parties present were:

Captain Skip Strong	– Penobscot Bay and River Pilot
Captain Michael Ames	– Master Mariner
Captain Robert Peacock	– Quoddy Pilots

Maine DOT staff present were:

Mr. Matthew Burns	– Maine DOT
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Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Captain Weeks opened the meeting at 1030 and acknowledged a quorum.

Amendments and Carry-Over Items: There were no carry over items from the April 22, 2020 meeting. Captain Gelinis requested an agenda item to be added to discuss the Covid-19 financial impact to pilot groups in Maine. Hearing no further objections, and one request to add an agenda item, it was thus:

RESOLVED to accept the agenda and add Pandemic Financial Impact to Pilotage to agenda item 9.

Agenda Item 2 – Review/Approval of the Minutes from April 22, 2020

After considering the content of the April 22, 2020 minutes, Mr. Dobbins motioned to accept the minutes from the April 22, 2020 meeting. Captain Worth seconded the motion. Hearing no objections or abstentions it was thus:

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the April 22, 2020 Maine Pilotage Commission meeting.

Agenda Item 3 – Financial

Mr. Downey reported on *Ports and Marine Accounts* which has a current balance of \$6,288.52. License income and insurance expenses flow through this account. The *Pilotage Training Account* currently has a balance of \$57,282.68. Mr. Downey offered that there had been no expenditures nor receipts to either the Ports and Marine Account nor the Pilotage Training Fund since the last meeting on April 22, 2020. The training account does not yet reflect the expenditures of two pilots who attended a High Speed Craft BRM course in early March which have not yet been invoiced.

Ports & Marine Account Cash			
Cash Balance			
31 October 2019	Beginning Cash Balance		\$6,288.52
Incoming Cash Receipts			
	Cash Receipts	N/A	\$00.00
	Total Cash		\$6,288.52
Cash Disbursements			
	Operating Expenses	Board Travel	\$00.00
31 March 2020	Ending Cash Balance		\$6,288.52
Pilotage Training Fund			
Pilotage Training Fund Balance			
31 October 2019	Beginning Pilotage Training Fund Balance		\$57,282.68
Incoming Training Fund Receipts			
	Total Fund		\$57,282.68
Training Disbursements			
		N/A	(\$00)
31 March 2020	Current Pilotage Training Fund Balance		\$57,282.68

Agenda Item 4 – Training Plan Update

Mr. Downey briefed the Commission regarding pilot training and the current status of the Commission three-year training plan. Two pilots attended High Speed Craft Bridge Resource Management training in early March 2020 immediately before the Covid-19 quarantine was established. The training was conducted to better prepare pilots to support the ALAKAI high speed ferry which had been due to start international ferry service in Bar Harbor in July 2020. Marine casualty investigator training and Manned Model training was planned for 2020 but is now deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A two day ECDIS for Pilots refresher course through Maine maritime Academy remains on the schedule for October or November 2020, pandemic permitting. The course is meant to meet the American Pilots' Association's recommendation of periodic ECDIS refresher training and will deliver a standardized course outline to the full active pilot roster.

Agenda Item 5 – Low Volume Area Update

Mr. Downey reviewed the entire background, scope and actions addressing Low Volume Area pilotage.

Background: Recently, large yachts have shown increasing interest in visiting Boothbay Harbor as well as other smaller low volume ports, with as many as three yachts possibly seeking pilotage in July with more anticipated later in the summer.

Pilot Endorsements: Two pilots have completed the application process and successfully passed the State Licensing examination for pilotage in Boothbay Harbor.

Federal Pilotage: The Coast Guard has agreed to eliminate the Federal Pilotage requirements for Low Volume Areas in Maine, which leaves the Maine Pilotage Commission as the sole authority to issue licenses in those areas deemed to be low vessel volume.

Statute Change: An amendment to 38 MRS 91 passed through the Legislature on March 17, 2020 and was signed by the Governor on March 18, 2020, which allows the Maine Pilotage Commission to adopt alternative standards including the use of vessels less than 1,600 gross tons for initial licensure training in Low Volume Areas.

Draft Rule Change: The Pilotage Commission finalized corresponding rules to accompany the pending statute change which is in a 30 day public comment period until July 17, 2020. The rule may be promulgated pending no unresolved comments remain at the end of the 30 day comment period.

Agenda Item 6 – Master/Pilot Exchange

Mr. Downey shared a proto-type of a Master/Pilot Exchange (MPX) outline document that could be used by pilots to aid them in executing a standardized exchange based on the American Pilots' Association's recommended guidelines. Mr. Downey has developed three proto-type templates for Eastport, Penobscot Bay/Frenchman Bay, as well as the Kennebec River. The document is designed to include an MPX outline but also basic port information, tug details, and emergency contact information. The format is designed to be a tri-fold brochure. Mr. Downey will forward electronic versions for a more comprehensive Commission review. The concept is anchored to the MPX details that are most important to the Maine Pilotage Commission.

Agenda Item 7– Longevity Plan

Mr. Downey led a conversation regarding pilot longevity particularly in some of Maine's smaller ports that are served by only one or two pilots. The discussion was framed to open dialogue regarding the recruiting and training of the next generation of pilots. While no formal plans are in place, pilot organizations are working informally with candidates who may eventually be interested in pursuing pilotage.

Agenda Item 8– Sandy Hook Fatality

On December 30, 2019 at approximately 0430 a 35-year veteran Sandy Hook pilot fell from a pilot ladder while boarding the U.S. flagged container ship *Maersk Kensington* inbound to the Port of New York/New Jersey. Sadly, the pilot sustained fatal injuries from the fall. While this incident occurred outside of Maine and did not involve any Maine pilots, the accident raises awareness of the daily hazards faced by pilots. The lessons learned from this tragedy will hopefully prevent future pilot falls.

Maersk Kensington, at 980' and 6,200 TEUs is much larger than most ships that visit Maine's ports. Regardless, the combination pilot ladder / accommodation ladder arrangement is similar to pilot boarding arrangements on other vessels entering Maine. In the case of *Maersk Kensington*, preliminary analysis indicated that a trap door arrangement in the accommodation ladder made the pilot ladder to accommodation ladder transition hazardous and possibly non-compliant with International Maritime Organization standards.

Agenda Item 9– Other/Miscellaneous

Tall Ships – Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all tall ship activities that had been planned for the Summer of 2020 are cancelled.

Wind Turbines – Captain Weeks requested that Mr. Burns offer an update on MaineDOT's role with the development of offshore wind energy. Mr. Burns mentioned that Governor Mills recently publicly declared the Port of Searsport as Maine's designated Offshore Energy Port. There was

some informal discussion that Eastport could be another possible port suitable to handle offshore energy infrastructure. He also explained that the Maine DOT is the leading agency of *The Port Infrastructure and Market Potential Assessment* which is being conducted by Moffett and Nichols Engineering of Massachusetts. The kick off meeting for the study was anticipated to occur on June 25. It is expected that it could be a 3-5 year process before any real infrastructure development occurs.

Autonomous Vessels – Captain Weeks offered that autonomous vessel technology continues to be developed and that there could be inherent pilotage/navigation risks. He urged pilots and the Commission members to remain informed as autonomous vessels continue to be developed and gain further attention from the International Maritime Organization.

Pandemic Financial Impact on Pilots – Captain Gelinis led a discussion regarding the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on pilotage. The virus has caused a slow down in marine activity and a full shut down of all cruise ship arrivals across the country for the remainder of the traditional cruise ship season. Likewise, Bay Ferries announced (after the meeting), that The Cat international ferry service was also cancelled for the 2020 season. In Bar Harbor alone, 170 cruise ships were expected in 2020 which are all now cancelled. As an association, the suspension of the cruise ships accounted for a loss of 65% of the association’s business. That number is likely higher with the loss of the international ferry service in 2020. The massive operational losses are exacerbated by significant capital investments made in a new pilot boat that was recently purchased to maintain top service for the expected high traffic volume in Bar Harbor. Additionally, the association proactively invested in a healthcare program for its employees based on the projected ship volume, the cost of which will now strain the group. Similarly, the Port of Eastport is also experiencing low volume with about one ship per month calling on the port. Captain Gelinis stressed that without a significant change in the maritime market and improvement in ship traffic, that pilot services could be negatively impacted, by laying up pilot boats, reducing healthcare benefits and reduction in salaries.

Agenda Item 10 – Commission/License Status

Mr. Downey reviewed the status of Pilotage Commission appointments and reported that the Commission applications for Mr. Dobbins, Captain Worth and Captain Gelinis remain with the Office of Boards and Commission and are pending. Commission renewals for Captain Moody and Captain Morrison both expire on August 21, 2020. Mr. Downey will forward renewal application documents to those Commission members to initiate the renewal process.

- Captain Klopp (Resigned)
- Mr. Dobbins (October 7, 2019)
- Captain Worth (October 7, 2019)
- Captain Gelinis (October 7, 2019)
- Captain Moody (August 21, 2020)
- Captain Morrison (August 21, 2020)

Mr. Downey also reviewed upcoming license renewals/actions which are as follows:

- Captain Ames (June 10, 2020)
- Captain Fournier (July 13, 2020)
- Captain Peacock (November 10, 2020)

Agenda Item 11 – Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair of the Commission, Captain Charles Weeks at 1200.

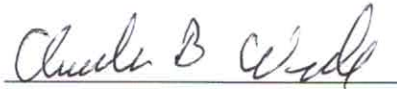
Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held November 18, 2020 at Maine DOT at 1030 in Room 227 and posted on the Maine Pilotage Commission website - www.maine-pilotage.com. If the state's social distancing requirements are still in place at that time the meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.com.

Respectfully submitted:



Brian I. Downey Jr.
Maine Pilotage Commission Administrator



Captain Charles Weeks
Chair, Maine Pilotage Commission