



MINUTES

CAPTAINS COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: February 15, 2011

PLACE: Double Tree Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio

ATTENDEES

List of attendees is on pages 6-7.

MINUTES

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

James H. I. Weakley, President, Lake Carriers' Association, opened the meeting by welcoming all. He then introduced Rear Admiral Mike Parks, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District, who reviewed D9's recently published Great Lakes Maritime Strategy. He expressed his desire to strengthen the Coast Guard's partnership with LCA members, but noted it is difficult to partner with those the Coast Guard regulates. Nonetheless, he knows what industry needs most: Predictability from those who regulate it, and pledged to pursue that goal.

RDML Parks asked for industry's understanding of some of the challenges the Coast Guard faces in dealing with other Federal agencies. For example, when working to standardize operating procedures between the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection, he speaks for the Coast Guard, but, in total, 12 individuals represent CBP.

When asked about the MOU concerning the Vessel General Permit recently signed by the Coast Guard and EPA, RDML Parks explained the Coast Guard will do the inspection, but then pass along its findings to the EPA, and that agency will take any enforcement action.

U.S. Coast Guard Agenda Items

Next to the Podium was Capt. Randolph C. Helland, Acting Chief of Staff and Chief of the Prevention Division. He related that the Great Lakes Waterways Forum has stood up two new subcommittees. The first is focusing on ways to streamline the Notice of Arrival. The goal is one form used by both the Coast Guard and CBP. Mark Bobal (216-902-6052 / Mark.D.Bobal@uscg.mil) is the contact for that subcommittee.

The second subcommittee is seeking reciprocity regarding U.S. and Canadian security regulations. Josh Peters (216-902-6127 / Josh.C.Peters@uscg.mil) is the contact for that subcommittee.

Commander Kevin Dunn, Chief – Waterways Management Division, first discussed Aids to Navigation. This is a challenging task; the Lakes represent the largest seasonal retrieval of navigation aids in the country. The Coast Guard continues to research buoys that will maintain a lighted signal year-round, thus reducing the need for retrieval. The Coast Guard realizes the SABIK buoys did not perform well in strong currents and has restationed them accordingly. 18 other prototype year-round ice buoys are still being

assessed. They have a tendency to tip. A new battery has been selected and is expected to last for 6 years.

To improve the visibility of these aids, the Coast Guard will be lengthening the lighted period. Studies show it is easier for the eye to pick up a longer flash.

Concerning icebreaking during the 2010/2011 season, CDR Dunn reported there were no lost cutter days between the commencement of icebreaking and the last lay-up of a commercial vessel. Industry expressed its deep appreciation for this outstanding performance, especially given that Operation Taconite started a week early than normal.

Dunn also reported that all icebreaking assets are scheduled to be ready to resume operations by March 15.

A general discussion followed and the Committee again asked the Coast Guard to consider having a vessel idled during the day so it could operate at night. The Coast Guard has explored this before cannot endorse it as there is no way to make the sleep routine work.

A member asked if the Coast Guard would like more than a 6-hour notice for arriving Whitefish Bay and Detour. The Coast Guard replied the more notice the better.

CDR Dunn said the Coast Guard knows the 140s are in need of service life extension. RDML Parks returned to the podium to discuss future plans. The proposed budget for FY12 has no money for recapitalizing the 140s. Senator Voinovich did add funds for this project in the FY11 budget, but it was never passed and the country is running on a Continuing Resolution, so funds remain unavailable. D9 believes modernizing the 140s is more important than a second MACKINAW, as one ship can only be in one place at a time.

Concerning the Coast Guard's icebreaking policy on the Lakes, RDML reported the policy has been signed. LCA has requested a copy. LCA also requested that Duluth/Superior Harbor declared a Tier I waterway.

CDR Cummins addressed bridge allusions and stated that the Coast Guard considers the fendering part of the bridge, so a strike must be reported, but also recognizes there is a difference between an intended and unintended allision. He suggested this subject to brought before the Great Lakes Waterways Forum for resolution.

There are no major developments to report concerning potential windfarms in the Lakes.

There was considerable discussion of Form 2692. Coast Guard inspectors are more and more requiring submission of a 2692. In many instances this is clearly uncalled-for, and is creating a misleading statistical data base. The form should be considered a safety tool, but it is assuming a prosecutionary standing. The Coast Guard is updating the NVIC that guides use of 2692 and seeks comment. The \$25,000 will also be updated.

Marc Cruder gave an update on the Vintage Vessel Center of Expertise in Duluth. The Center was established in 2009 to increase the Coast Guard's inspection expertise. The inclusion of civilian inspectors will help retain knowledge. Two courses will be offered in 2011. The first will be an in-depth study of steam propulsion. The second will review repairing riveted hulls. Industry representatives are welcome to attend.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Agenda Items

Wayne Schloop, PE, Chief, Operations, Detroit District, reported that the early opening of the Soo Locks allowed 300,000 tons of cargo to move before March 25. The 3-day extension at the end of the season

allowed another 172,000 to move. (If cargos loaded on January 13 and 14 are counted, the total increases to 470,000 tons.)

The FY12 Administration budget does not fund any dredging at ports that receive less than 1 million tons of cargo. Furthermore, the funding level will only allow the Corps to remove ½ of the sediment that builds up each year.

LCA warned its members this budget, if not amended, will force ports to start closing next year. When LCA, under the GLMTF banner, started its effort to get more dredging dollars, the backlog stood at 18 million cubic yards. The extra dredging dollars got the backlog down to 15 million, but the Corps now projects the backlog will be up to 21 million cubic yards by 2015.

Washington's financial woes also mean there is no money to repair the Rock Cut.

The winter work program on the Soo Locks began on January 19 and is scheduled to conclude on March 24. \$1.6 million is being spent on replacing the entire hydraulic system on the Poe Lock. Rewatering the Poe Lock begins on March 21

Members asked that, upon request, the lockmaster flush water to assist downbound vessels exiting a lock.

Bill Werick of Werick Consulting reported on the International Upper Great Lakes Study. The IJC has been tasked with developing a new plan to regulate Lake Superior. At the 2010 Captains Committee meeting Werick forecast that it was unlikely that a major change in the regulatory plan was in the offing. Another year of study has confirmed that the new plan will have very little impact on commercial navigation.

NOAA/National Weather Service Agenda Items

Ron Williams gave a year-end report on weather observations. Central Marine's WILRED SYKES was the top reporter with 4,613 observations. Williams' goal is to receive 50 observations per boat per month. He reminded the Masters that DMAWDS is the easiest way to report.

Dick Wagenmaker, Meteorologist in Charge NOAA/NWS Detroit reported on improvements to the Great Lakes Marine Web Portal.

Captain Mike Grzesiek explained how he installed a basic "weather station" on the WILFRED SYKES. It has a computer port to send the weather data to any computer. He wrote a program that ran in the background of the main navigation computer. Every hour it took the weather data from the station and combined it with the vessel position, course and speed. It asked the Mate (by a flashing pop up window on the navigation computer) if he/she wanted to enter visual cloud and wave data. It was then sent as an e-mail to the VOS program. It did that every hour, whether the Mate entered the data or not.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Captains Committee Recommendations

Following lunch, the Captains held an open discussion and made the following recommendations:

1. The Captains requested that a web cam monitoring the Huron Cut be placed on either the Bluewater Bridge or the Waterworks in Port Huron. Canadian carriers endorsed this request and there will be a joint LCA/CSA letter to Sarnia Traffic.
2. NOAA/NWS asked where the Captains would like to have additional current meters. The Captains' number 1 priority is the Saginaw River, right above the 6th Street Bridge. Next is the Fox River in Green Bay. The meter should be placed on the railroad bridge near Georgia Pacific Paper.
3. The Captains advised the St. Clair current meter is unnecessary.

4. The Captains reiterated their desire that vessels again be allowed to pass in the Flemming Channel. This is not a speed issue; it's a safety issue. It is the safest place to overtake a vessel. LCA/CSA and Lakes Pilots will send a joint letter to the Windsor Harbor Master.
5. The Captains repeated their request of last year that the U.S. Coast Guard change its speed regulations in the Detroit River. Currently vessels must be checked down to River speed at Detroit River Light. However, that light is several miles out into Lake Erie. River speed should commence at D33. That is when the vessel enters confined waters and wake and wash can become an issue. This topic should be discussed by the Detroit/St. Clair River Working Group and the Great Lakes Waterways Forum.
6. Great frustration was expressed over the requirement to clear Customs when fueling in Canada. The Detroit and Port Huron CBP offices won't take faxes. LCA will send a letter to the Great Lakes Waterways Forum, specifically the subcommittee focusing on the Notice of Arrival. A standardized entry form is needed (the IMO form would suffice). A program for preclearance for vessels should be investigated. Congresswoman Candice Miller (R-MI), who is chairwoman of the House's Homeland Security's subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, will be copied.
7. A letter will be sent to the Coast Guard's Bridge Branch reiterating that any new bridge in the Detroit River must not place any structure(s) in the water and must maintain the current air draft shore to shore.
8. The bridges in the Calumet River operated by the City of Chicago often open so slowly that Masters must check down. Masters were encouraged to use the Bridge Delay Form. The Coast Guard will take action if armed with evidence of poor performance.
9. The Captains again stated bridge hours in Bay City are no longer necessary.
10. The Captains reviewed the list of lights on which the Coast Guard will reduce intensity. The Captains recommended the lighted period then be lengthened to two seconds on the Detour, Duluth Harbor, Superior, and North Manitou lights.
11. The Captains asked that the Corps dredge the front channel of the Superior Entrance by the Great Northern ore dock, otherwise vessels have to light load when forced by a closure of the Aerial Lift Bridge to use the Superior Entrance.
12. LCA will ask that the old CN Bridge in Green Bay be removed.
13. Although it is not on the navigation chart, wind farm developers should be made aware of the LCA course line from Cleveland Harbor to Marblehead, Ohio. It is unlikely a wind farm would be located this close to shore, but still, developers should be made aware.

It was decided that in 2012 the Captains Committee meeting will start with the Captains and Navigation Committee having their open discussion. This way the Committee can make recommendations to the Federal agencies that day rather than later. The government agencies will make their presentations beginning at 1000 or so. There will be a lunch break, and then the Federal agencies will resume their presentations. The meeting will finish with another session just for the Captains and Navigation Committee.

The Committee adopted the following Mission Statement:

LCA Captains Committee Mission Statement

To provide a discussion forum and information exchange for the sailing Masters of LCA member companies and professional colleagues.

To provide a mechanism for the Masters to make recommendations, in way of safe and efficient navigation and environmentally sound operations, to the Association.

To enhance working relationships with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, the various maritime academies, as well as other regulatory and governmental partners.

Upon conclusion of the meeting, Captain Joe Ruch finished his term as Chairman and was thanked for his outstanding service. Captain Pat Hart moved up to Chairman. Captain Bill Millar was elected Vice Chairman. Hart and Millar now begin a 3-year term of office.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes Submitted By Glen G. Nekvasil
Vice President – Corporate Communications
Lake Carriers' Association

ATTENDEES

LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

(LCA Captains Committee Members – Bold)

Tom	Anderson	American Steamship Company
Captain Bob	Gallagher	American Steamship Company
Captain Bill	Millar	American Steamship Company
Captain Paul	Kimbro	Andrie, Inc.
Captain Mike	Grzesiek	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Captain Ray	Sheldon	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Tom	Wiater	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Captain Pat	Hart	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
Ed	Wiltse	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
Captain Mark	Blatnik	Great Lakes Fleet / Key Lakes, Inc.
Bill	Peterson	Great Lakes Fleet / Key Lakes, Inc.
Captain Dan	Rentschler	Great Lakes Fleet / Key Lakes, Inc.
Captain Tim	Dayton	The Interlake Steamship Company
Bob	Dorn	The Interlake Steamship Company
Captain Joe	Ruch	The Interlake Steamship Company
Jayson	Toth	The Interlake Steamship Company
Mark	Mather	Pere Marquette Shipping Company
Captain Al	Tielke	Port City Marine/Steamship
Captain Brian	Sauvey	VanEnkevort Tug & Barge, Inc.
Jack	VanEnkevort	VanEnkevort Tug & Barge, Inc.

LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

Katie	Gumeny	Lake Carriers' Association
Glen	Nekvasil	Lake Carriers' Association
Jim	Weakley	Lake Carriers' Association

CANADIAN VESSEL OPERATORS

Tom	Anderson	Seaway Marine Transport
Capt. John E.	Greenway	Seaway Marine Transport
Scott	Porter	V. Ships Canada Inc. (Canada Steamship Lines)

ATTENDEES – CONTINUED

FEDERAL AGENCIES

CDR Timothy	Cummins	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Kevin	Dunn	Ninth Coast Guard District
Capt. Randolph	Helland	Ninth Coast Guard District
RDML Mike	Parks	Ninth Coast Guard District

Lt. Kevin	Broyles	USCG, Vintage Vessel Nat'l Center of Excellence
Marc	Cruder	USCG, Vintage Vessel Nat'l Center of Excellence
Stephen	Petersen	USCG, Vintage Vessel Nat'l Center of Excellence

Richard	Edwing	NOAA/NOS – Silver Spring
Gary	Garnet	NWS – Cleveland
Lynn	Maximuk	NWS – Central Region
David	Soroka	NWS – Silver Spring
Tom	Townsend	NWS – Central Region
Richard	Wagenmaker	NWS – Detroit
Ron	Williams	NWS – Duluth
Mark	Willis	NWS Eastern Region

Josh	Feldman	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Buffalo
Wayne	Schloop	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit
Kevin	Sprague	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Soo
Dave	Wright	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit
Bill	Werick	Werick Consulting

INVITED GUESTS

Phil	Knetchel	Lakes Pilots Association
John	Wellington	Wellington Maritime