

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of The  
New Jersey Maritime Pilot and Docking Commission**

**August 20, 2024**

A hybrid meeting of the New Jersey Maritime Pilot and Docking Pilot Commission was held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024.

Audit Committee Meeting

The Audit Committee met, and reviewed proposals received from two firms, Kayode Agunbiade LLP and Yusufali & Associates, LLC. Both firms worked with the Commission in the past. Even though the proposal from Kayode Agunbiade LLP came in \$500 over the amount budgeted, the Committee agreed to retain Kayode Agunbiade LP again this year. Ms. Stuckey was advised to notify both on the Committee's decision while encouraging Yusufali & Associates to continue to bid on future opportunities.

Commissioner Dacey called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM.

Open Public Meeting Statement

Roll Call

Commissioner Timothy J. Dacey (via ZOOM); Commissioner Nicholas Fixmer (via ZOOM); Commissioner Dana Martinotti (via ZOOM); Commissioner Bjoern Kils (via ZOOM); Commissioner Charles Wowkanech (absent); Commissioner Brendan Roberts (via ZOOM).

Also included in the meeting were: Andre Stuckey, Executive Director (present); Al Hawkins, Administrative Assistant (present); Captain Timothy Ferrie, President, Sandy Hook Pilots (via ZOOM); Captain Kirk Pinto, President Harbor Pilots (absent); Captain Jon Miller, President, Metro Pilots (via ZOOM); Dorian Smith, Authorities Unit (present), Adam Richardson, President, Interport Pilots (present)

Approval of the July 16, 2024 regular meeting minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner Wowkanech to approve the July 16, 2024 meeting minutes.

All voted in favor.

Resolution #24-19 to approve the July, 2024 Treasurers Report

Ms. Stuckey reported that the Commissions rent will be increased as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Based on the Consumer Price Index, adjusted rent will be \$2,588. There will be a retro payment on the September Treasures report.

Ms. Stuckey provided the Commissioners with the Commission's most recent budget sheets. The budget sheets showed that the Commission will carry over a surplus of \$44,546 from last year's budget. The Commissioners were also provided with a year-to-date budget showing exactly what the Commission's income and expenses are to date.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner Martinotti to pass Resolution #24-19 to approve the July, 2024 Treasurers Report.

All voted in favor.

Meeting with United States Coast Guard

Ms. Stuckey thanked Captain Andrechik for attending the meeting. Ms. Stuckey advised how important it is for the Commission and the new leadership of Coast Guard Sector New York to get to know one another and continue to have a cooperative working relationship.

Captain Andrechik stated that it is an unbelievable honor to be serving as the Captain of the Port of New York/New Jersey. Captain Andrechik gave an overview of his vision and the Coast Guard's plans moving forward. Captain Andrechik advised that he understands that the New Jersey Commission has played a large role in ensuring the health, safety and operations of the port and he would love to continue that relationship with the Commission moving forward.

Captain Andrechik reported that in the wake of the Key Bridge collapse, the Coast Guard has announced a board inquiry that was started in May of this year and will conclude in May of 2025. During the inquiry the Coast Guard will look at 10 ports around the Country to review the risk of port infrastructure and vessel operations to further assess the risk on a larger scale to prevent another Key Bridge incident. He advised that during the inquiry into the New York/New Jersey area, the New Jersey Pilot Commission will be invited to join the discussions.

Ms. Stuckey reported that she participated in the Hurricane Preparedness Tabletop exercise hosted by the Coast Guard and thanked Captain Andrechik on behalf of the Commission and maritime community for being proactive so this port will be prepared in the event of a hurricane.

Captain Andrechik reported that in reference to Operation Clear Channel discussions continue. Captain Andrechik advised that he does not currently have all the details on current proposals but recognizes that this has been a concern that has been raised to the Harbor Operations Committee and is something the Coast Guard is taking a serious look into. He reported that one of the main constraints with the Coast Guard is the limited number of auxiliary vessels available to do the job. However, they are looking at how they can use the vessels that are available with the other resources to plan a better way forward.

Ms. Stuckey gave a brief description of the Commission's incident process and how the Coast Guard has been involved in the past.

Captain Andrechik thanked Ms. Stuckey for the overview and advised that he will take that information back to his investigation team to ensure the Coast Guard and the Commission continues their cooperative working relationship.

#### Executive Director's Report

Ms. Stuckey reported that Captain Kirk Pinto extends his apologies for not attending the meeting. He was called into work.

The Commission had a moment of silence for New Jersey Transit employee Steve Demby.

- A. Update on New Office Space - Ms. Stuckey updated the Commission on the new office space and provided a power point slide on the layout of the suite. She also advised that the Commission's tentative move date is November, 2024. She advised the Commission that there may be an issue with meeting space. She believes that the Commission's new conference room may be able to accommodate future hybrid meetings. The Commission also discussed how to dispose of the Commission's current furniture. Ms. Stuckey was advised to allow NJ Transit to dispose of it with their unused furniture.
- B. Meeting with Kean College -Ms. Stuckey met with Kean University and the Newark Board of Education to discuss adding a Maritime course to their curriculum. The immediate goal is to offer classes that will aid students in obtaining different licenses within the Maritime Industry. The second stage would be to establish a Maritime curriculum that will result in the student earning a bachelor's degree. Ms. Stuckey will include Commissioner Roberts in on the discussions when the second stage is ready to move forward.
- C. Meeting with Ethics Department - Ms. Stuckey had a meeting with the Ethics Department regarding the Commission's compliance. The Ethics Department is pleased with the progress that the Commission has made but would like clarification on the Commission's purchasing practices. Ms. Stuckey advised that the Commission only utilizes vendors that have been cleared by the Department of Treasury. There is a question on whether the Commissioners that work on different Committees would have to complete an affidavit stating that there is no personal relationship with the companies that the Commission enters into contracts with. Ms. Stuckey will keep the Commission updated.
- D. Update on Pilot Guard Program - The docking pilots have been testing the program over the past few months. The program is scheduled to go live on September 1<sup>st</sup>. After seeing the updated version, Ms. Stuckey is pleased with the program's performance. The organizers of the program will visit the New York/New Jersey area during the week of October 16<sup>th</sup> to meet with other organizations that have shown interest. Ms. Stuckey advised that she plans to meet with them at that time and asked if any of the Docking Pilot Presidents would like to attend the meeting.

- E. Video to Help Mariners on Medical Certificate - After receiving several complaints, the Coast Guard has developed a video tutorial that gives detailed directions on how to apply for medical certificates on their website.
- F. Petition re: Hudson River Anchorages - The Commissioners received a copy of an article and petition that was submitted by the Maritime Association, Dann Marine, Kirby Corporation, McAllister Tower, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation and the American Waterways. They are petitioning the Coast Guard's decision to stop the establishment of anchorages on the Hudson River. They requested that the New Jersey Pilot Commission send a letter in support of the petition. Ms. Stuckey advised the Commissioners to take time to review the information and a item will be put on the September meeting agenda for the Commission to make a decision.
- G. Liberty Nautical Education Center Annual Dinner - The Liberty Nautical Education Center will host their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual dinner on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Stuckey reported that she plans to attend and advised if any Commissioners would like to attend to please let her know so she can make the arrangements.
- H. Annual Inter-School Monomoy Challenge - The Commissioners were provided with a copy of a letter from the Marine Society announcing they will be resuming their Annual Inter-School Monomoy Challenge.

Captain Ferrie reported that the Marine Society started the Challenge right before the COVID-19 Pandemic. He advised that the challenge is between the State schools, the United States Merchant Marine Academy and the Coast Guard Academy. The challenge is a Round Robin Tournament utilizing rescue boats. The race will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup> at Suny Maritime. The Challenge is a fund-raising event for the Marine Society to help support the operation.

Captain Ferrie reported that if anyone would like to attend or help with the event, please let him know. He stated that it would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Stuckey advised the Commissioners that they were sent via USPS a copy of the New York Commission's and the New Jersey Transportation's annual reports.

- I. Vacation Schedules - Ms. Stuckey will be taking vacation time on Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup> and Friday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. During that time, she will be available for calls and emails.
- J. Articles of Interest - The Commissioners were provided with an article of interest that they were encouraged to read at their leisure.

#### Committee Reports

- A. Maritime Pilot Apprentice Selection Committee - The Committee had a meeting and reviewed all applications and test results. Of the 53 applicants, the Committee agreed to interview 39 and will begin on the afternoon of September 3<sup>rd</sup> continuing through the 15<sup>th</sup>. After all the interviews are completed, the Committee will select the top 15 candidates to send back to IFP for additional testing. If all goes well, the 15 candidates will be put on the Maritime Apprentice Selection List. A summary on each of the candidates will be provided to the Commission and a resolution will be put on the Commission's October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda to vote on the list.
- B. Docking Pilot Apprentice Selection Committee - The Commission was provided a copy of the ad that will be published for distribution during the last week of August. The deadline date for application submission is September 30<sup>th</sup>. To date, one application has been received. The Committee will wait until all applications are received before setting interview dates.
- C. Occurrence Investigation Committee
  - I. Carnival Venesia - Ms. Stuckey recommended that based on the investigators report, the Commission find no fault on the pilots, a copy of the report be sent to the Coast Guard, vessel agent, vessel owner and the file closed.  
A motion was made by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner Fixmer to accept the recommendation. All voted in favor.

Public Comment (s)

Comments from Captain Timothy Ferrie, President, Sandy Hook Pilots Association:

Captain Ferrie reported that there has been a problem with the Verrazzano Bridge air gap sensor. Captain Mahlman was able to get in touch with personnel to come on Thursday to assess the issue.

Captain Ferrie reported that Captain Tom Keating has officially retired after 29 years as a pilot. Captain Ferrie wished him a very happy retirement.

Captain Ferrie reported that the Sandy Hook Pilot's figures for July are down 5% from last year which will put them down 1.5% overall.

Captain Ferrie reported that there will be a follow up meeting for Operation Clear Channel that the Sandy Hook Pilots are looking forward to.

Captain Ferrie reported that he, Captain DeCruz and others have been doing soundings looking at all the potential berths. He advised that this port is down a tremendous number of berths.

Comments from Captain John Miller, President, Metro Pilots Association:

Captain Miller reported that all is well with Metro Pilots, and he is looking forward to Captain Brian Paiva returning to work at the end of this month.

Comments from Captain Adam Richardson, President, Interport Pilots Association:

Captain Richardson reported that all their boats have been cycled through their summer maintenance period and all is well.

Discussion Re: Karabiner Testing

Ms. Stuckey reported that she and Commissioner Kils visited High Exposure for the Karabiner Testing. She provided the Commission with pictures and a short video presentation.

Commissioner Kils reported that the purpose of the visit was to test a Karabiner that can be secured to pilot's safety vest as they climbed ships. He gave a summary on the specifications and instructions for the Karabiner.

Captain Ferrie advised that the Sandy Hook Pilots are going to try the Karabiner out for a trial with their pilots and will report back to the Commission after the testing is done.

Ms. Stuckey advised the Docking Pilots that she can set up a presentation for testing with their associations.

After conversations, the Commission agreed to revisit the Karabiners once they receive the reviews from the participating Pilot Associations.

#### Discussion Re: Maritime Pilot Apprentice Training Program

After meeting with the New York Pilot Commission, the Sandy Hook Pilots Association and several discussions the Commission believes that the proposed amendments to the apprentice training program are beneficial and timely. Ms. Stuckey has been advised to include a resolution on the Commission's September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda to vote on the changes.

Ms. Stuckey advised Captain Ferrie to submit a formal request of the proposed changes to accompany the resolution.

#### Resolution #24-20 to Award an Audit Contract

Commissioner Dacey reported that the Commission followed the process outlined in E.O 122. The Audit Evaluation Committee set the criteria to choose an auditor based on price due to the size of the audit. RFP's were sent to 21 accounting firms that are on the DOT's approval list. The Committee received 2 proposals and after meeting and based on parameters set by the Audit Committee, the Committee recommended the firm of Kayode Agunbiade LLP perform the FY2024 audit.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberts and seconded by Commissioner Wowkanech to pass Resolution #24-20 to Award an Audit Contract to the firm of Kayode Agunbiade LLP not to exceed \$7,000.

All voted in favor.

Resolution #24-21 To Appoint a Docking Pilot Apprentice

Ms. Stuckey reported that the Commission received a request from the Metro Pilots Association to appoint a new apprentice. Unfortunately, James Jorgenson is working offshore and is not able to attend the meeting.

Once the resolution is approved, Mr. Jorgenson will meet with Ms. Stuckey to receive his credentials so he can begin his apprenticeship. Mr. Jorgenson will come before the Commission once he is relieved from the tug.

A motion was made by Commissioner Martinotti and seconded by Commissioner Roberts to pass Resolution #24-21 To Appoint a Docking Pilot Apprentice.

All voted in favor.

Executive Session

WHEREAS, the open Public Meetings Act provides that a public body such as The New Jersey Maritime Pilot and Docking Pilot Commission may meet in closed session to discuss legal and personnel matters, and

WHEREAS, the Commission desires to meet in closed session to discuss such matters.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Commission shall at this time meet in closed session to discuss such matters the substance of the closed session would be disclosed publicly only if it would not warrant an invasion of privacy or constitute a breach of the attorney client privilege.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wowkanech and seconded by Commissioner Kils that the Commission goes into Executive Session.

All voted in favor.

The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:36 AM.

Return to Public Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Wowkanech and seconded by Commissioner Martinotti that the Commission return to Public Session.

All voted in favor.

The Commission returned to Public Session at 11:21 AM.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Fixmer and seconded by Commissioner Roberts that the meeting be adjourned.

All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 AM.