UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:		
MARATHON PIPE LINE OIL RELEASE IN ~~EVANSVILLE~~ EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS ON MARCH 11, 2022	*	Accident No.: PLD22FR002

Interview of: PAUL VAHALIK, Control Room Manager
Marathon Pipeline

Findlay, Ohio

Wednesday,
April 6, 2022

APPEARANCES:

KIM WEST, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

WESLEY MATTHEWS, Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

JOSHUA STUFFT, Operations and Logistics Manager
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Marathon Pipeline

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I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(8:25 a.m.)

MS. WEST: Good morning.

MR. VAHALIK: Good morning.

MS. WEST: Today is April 6th, 2022. It's now 8:25 Eastern Daylight Time. My name is Kim West. And I'm the pipeline investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. We're in the offices of Marathon located at -- they knew -- 539 South Main Street, Finley, Ohio.

This interview is being conducted as part of an investigation into the crude oil release on March 11, that occurred in Evansville, Illinois. The NTSB case number for this accident is PLD22FR002.

The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability. This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to you prior to entering it in public docket.

This is your opportunity to correct anything that you -- that has been transcribed incorrectly but not to change your answers or the content. Do you agree to have the interview recorded?

MR. VAHALIK: Yes, I do.

MS. WEST: Thank you. Please provide the spelling of your name, the company you work for, and your job title.

MR. VAHALIK: My name is Paul Vahalik. Spelling is P-a-u-l.

Last name is spelled V-a-h-a-l-i-k. I work for Marathon Pipeline. I am the pipeline operation center control manager.

MS. WEST: So you're permitted to have one other person present during the interview. This person is of your choice. It can be a supervisor, a union representative, your attorney, a friend, a family member, or nobody at all. Please state for the record who you have selected if you have.

MR. VAHALIK: I have selected Tonya (who is representing Marathon Petroleum and myself.

MS. WEST: Can the interviewee's designated representative please state for the record your name, spelling of your name, job title and your affiliation.

MS. WITTENMYER: Sure. Tonya Wittenmyer. T-o-n-y-a. Wittenmyer, W-i-t-t-e-n-m-y-e-r. Counsel for Marathon.

MS. WEST: Thank you. So we'll go around the room, have each person introduce themselves for the record. Please state your name, the spelling, job title, and your employer's name. I'll start --

MR. MATHEWS: Wesley Mathews, W-e-s-l-e-y M-a-t-h-e-w-s. Accident investigator, DOT PHMSA, P-H-M-S-A.

MR. MARTINEZ: Aaron Martinez for the Marathon Pipeline. A-a-r-o-n M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z. I'm the regulatory compliance manager and I'm also the party coordinator for the investigator for Marathon.

MR. STUFFT: Joshua Stufft, J-o-s-h-u-a S-t-u-f-f-t. I am

the operations and logistics manager for Marathon Pipeline.

MS. WEST: Thank you. And my name is Kim West. K-i-m W-e-s-t. I'm the pipeline investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board. So we have the task of learning the truth as much as we can. I know this can be stressful. I'll simply tell you, tell us what you know.

And first of all, I'd like to thank you for participating today. I know this can be a little difficult but we're here to find facts. So we recognize and appreciate the job that you do. I know it's tough being in the control room and your job in general.

MR. VAHALIK: Thank you.

MS. WEST: Thank you again.

INTERVIEW OF PAUL VAHALIK

BY MS. WEST:

Q. Let me just start off with a couple general questions. Can you tell us a little bit about your background. We heard about your title but some of the history of the years you've been with the company, previous positions, roughly how many years you've been with the company. Just some background about yourself.

A. So I currently have just a little over 37 years with the company. I started out in 1985 as a controller. I spent five-and-a-half years as a controller. Transitioned out of that into an inventory accounting position. Had some background and experience being on some process improvement teams. Around the

20th year of my employment here, I became the pipeline operations center supervisor. I was a supervisor in the control room for approximately five years. From there, I transitioned to our terminals group. I was there for approximately two years. Transitioned back to the crude oil movement's supervisor. Was in that position for about two-and-a-half years.

In early 2014, I transitioned to a temporary assignment in which I was given the task of looking at reorganizing the leadership of the control room. In November of that year, 2014, I accepted the control room manager position. And that's my current position today.

Q. Thank you. So can you tell us about your job, your current job. Exactly what you do. As much detail as possible.

A. So as the control room management -- as the control room manager, I think probably the biggest responsibility is ensuring that we operate our pipelines in an efficient and safe manner while following the guidelines set forth through PHMSA and the control room management plan.

I'm also heavily involved with the staffing. So it's important that we staff appropriately so that we can follow our fatigue risk management system and ensure that our controllers have proper rest between shifts.

I think that over the past five years, I've become very involved with our audits from our regulatory agency, PHMSA. So we, recently in 2020, went through a comprehensive control room

management audit. So I would say oversight in the control room, this falls under the control room management plan. But obviously, roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and also the controllers and specialists, emphasis on training, ensuring that everyone is properly trained prior to transitioning to a certified controller on a specific console or consoles. And I would say the last thing is that making sure that we are aligned with the executive leadership team here at Marathon Pipeline and also our operations and logistics manager, and also his direct reports.

Q. What does your typical day look like?

A. So the typical day is -- we normally start out every day with an 8 a.m. operations meeting. And we review our shift report from the previous 24 hours. And we talk about normal operations, abnormal operations, anything that we see in AOCs. And then, that usually takes about a half hour, 40 minutes.

Then I have some responsibilities for looking at staffing, you know, coordinating, assessment of either personnel or other issues that may pop up with our human resources department and communicating with them. We normally will spend some time out on the floor with the controllers just to ensure that things are moving smoothly and then I normally have some meetings either each week or every other week with my direct reports.

So we talk -- the way we're set up in the control room currently is we have three -- I have three direct report supervisors. And those -- each supervisor has the responsibility

of oversight of three consoles since we're a nine-console control room. And we talk about upcoming projects. We talk about anything that we need to perhaps work with our field personnel, our field leadership, maybe our hydraulics group. We do spend some time talking about OR management and some of the statistics.

So I look over a lot of statistical reports. I would say our leak detection/CPM alarms, any alarms that -- we look at alarms on a daily basis. And we also look at alarm summaries on a monthly basis. So we discuss where we may have some arise perhaps on a console or a system of alarming. And a lot of times it depends on the operations. I mean, it may be -- you know, that increase in alarms may be normal because the throughput is up and there's more starting and stopping of pumps and changing connecting carriers and things like that.

So I would say usually I've got some other meetings that I attend. So I participate in a monthly meeting with our integrity group when they talk about the IOI tools or tools that are used to, I guess you would refer to them -- some refer to them as smart tools that are run in the pipeline and we can talk about when that is going to happen, when the results could come back. Because when tools are run like that, those affect the control room.

Because we actually help to field, track those through the system while they're running through in order to record the inner piping wall and just see if there's any defects or anything. So spend some time doing that, as well. Also communicate quite a bit

with the movements manager and the scheduling supervisors to understand the demands and throughput of systems and where we need -- when a system may increase drastically in throughput or when a system may be reduced in throughput. So comprehensively, I think that pretty well sums it up.

Q. It's quite a job.

A. It's a busy one.

Q. Goes along with a lot of that experience you just talked about. One of the things I was going to ask you about. On the day of the incident --

A. Yes.

Q. Did you -- what did you talk about at that morning meeting? Was there anything unusual discussed at that meeting?

A. There wasn't anything that was really discussed unusual at all. You know, that -- on the day of the incident and that particular system, there wasn't anything that we did out of the ordinary or any movement that we would -- that we conducted that would not have -- would have raised a flag of like, hey, you know, keep an eye on this.

Normally, when we have something like that on a system, that would be -- come through as a management of change and that's where the supervisors have the ability to look at that management of change and they can determine and step through how that would -- movement may operate. And from that, we would develop an operating procedure. And then, we would train on that with a

console. And that happens several weeks or months prior to that actually so that we can ensure that we have conducted the training. And the training has been signed off on. And everyone understands their role and responsibility.

So as far as that morning goes, there wasn't anything that I would say that would indicate that that issue would come up during that day.

Q. Notable or (indiscernible) or anything --

A. Correct, correct. I think on the day that it happened, I had -- so early that morning, my supervisor who you met yesterday, Travis Unverferth and I think I need to spell that out. So that's Travis, T-r-a-v-i-s. Unverferth. So it's U-n-v-e-r-f-e-r-t-h.

So Travis had contacted me. He was my supervisor on call. And he said, hey, I got to drop my kids off at school. I said fine. And he said, I'll be in after that. So one of the other supervisors on staff came in and indicated, hey, we shut down the Woodpat. Not sure what happened. The controller went to the specialist. The specialist contacted me because I was actually out in the area where the specialist is at. And said that we had shut down the Woodpat. Something was noticed that just didn't seem right. Not sure yet what that is.

At that time, Travis arrived at the office. And he came in and actually said, hey, we shut the Woodpat down. Normally, when we have a system that's shut down and we're not sure at that time what is happening, they communicate to me that we have opened a

stop, help, start. So that's what he was coming to communicate. And I said, okay, do we know anything yet. And he said, I think the controller was getting some readings on pressure that he just did not like. And I said, okay, let me know. I think as soon as the field confirmed for us, Travis communicated back to me and IM'd Joshua Stufft.

Q. What was the name of the supervisor that was on the floor at the time?

A. So that was Kyle Brown. And that's K-y-l-e. Brown, B-r-o-w-n.

Q. Does he oversee the controller at the time or -- because Travis was coming -- incoming. But is he -- is Travis normally his direct supervisor? I don't know if that makes sense.

A. It does make sense. I'm trying to think of the alignment. I think the controller reports directly to Kyle Brown. But during the time of the incident, all the controllers would kind of be a dotted line to Travis. I mean, Travis has the oversight when you're on call. So they are on call. We have three supervisors and they are on call one week and they rotate. So Travis would be on call, then Kyle, then my third supervisor. Then it would come back to Travis.

Q. So is that how it's structured? You have one supervisor overseeing the floor and then the next one is in (indiscernible).

A. No, normally not. Kyle was just out on the floor. I think you may remember mentioning we interact with the controllers.

That was just a goodwill visit, so to speak, to the specialist. Hey, how are things going, you know, how was your day, how is your day going. Just something like that. Not as acting as the on-call supervisor.

Q. So I'm not quite understanding. Do the supervisors sit on the floor or do they sit in an office and then they coordinate or communicate back to the control room.

A. Yes.

Q. That's what you mean by on call?

A. Yes, yes. And in the event that the specialist -- so we -- as we talked about yesterday in the training -- so the controllers use the specialists as an SME. Then in the event that the specialist needs some guidance or help, that goes -- those questions go to the on-call supervisor. That's how it works. And they are on call 24/7.

Q. As well. And there's three of them. And they --

A. Yes.

Q. -- rotate through on an on-call basis?

A. Yes, that is correct.

Q. I'm with you now.

A. Okay.

Q. Just a quick question. Are you currently qualified as a controller?

A. I am not.

Q. We talked a little bit about the day of the accident but can

you walk us through from the time you were first notified and then what were your actions after that?

A. So I think when I was notified that there's -- that the field had identified a release -- so I talked with Travis -- okay, you know, now we have a release. We have confirmed that from the field investigation. So what we need to now do is to ensure that we're following guidelines and our practices. Let's see if we can find and -- find another certified controller for that console, conduct a shift change -- and this is probably local time 10:00 maybe. That's an estimate. We need to pull the controller off and we need to escort that individual for a DOT drug test.

That is what we talked about first. And then I think the next action was, hey, let's go ahead and start looking at trends. Let's look at from two hours prior to when it appears that something may have happened. So we just did various trends on pressures and flow rates. And we also took a look at the CPM or leak detection model. Then I want to say we looked at the SCADA events.

So that doesn't come five or ten minutes. That actually takes hours. So we spent the better of the latter portion of the morning into the early afternoon of looking at that.

Q. Who is we? I'm sorry.

A. It would have been Travis Unverferth, our specialist on duty, Chase. It would have been myself. It was Kyle Brown, and then I think it would have been our CPM or our leak detection support.

And I think that continued into the latter part of the afternoon and even into the early evening. I think by that time, Joshua Stufft was communicating to his direct -- directly to his manager. I believe that they were working with Aaron Martinez.

And during that time then the requests were coming about, hey, these are probably the things. And I'm -- now I'm not clear on this, but these are probably going to be the things that we're going to need to provide the regulator. Didn't name the NTSB. Did not name PHMSA. Just used the term regulator. So we probably -- Travis and I were here that evening until probably 9 p.m., 9:30 Eastern Time.

I will back track a little bit. Probably at about 11:30 a.m., the DOT drug test was conducted with the controller. And we actually had him -- drove him home. So that was -- and we did not bring the controller back, Trey Howard, until we got confirmation that the drug test was clear. And at that time, we brought him back to operate a console. I will add that Trey was pretty shook up which you can imagine. And we did check on him throughout the weekend just to ensure that he was doing okay.

But other than that, we felt like we followed our processes and our procedures and the guidelines that are within the regulatory documentation.

Q. I don't know if you can answer this question but when did you become aware of the volume that was released?

A. I think --

Q. I apologize. I wasn't out in the field so --
A. Yeah, no, that's --
Q. Yeah, I don't really --
A. That's fine. No problem. So I would say that was probably maybe sometime on Monday. So this incident happened on, I believe, Friday, March 11th. Probably sometime on the 14th of March. I think that was Monday.
Q. But did it come through the control room, the volume that was released, or a potential?
A. I think it did. I'm pretty -- I think it did come through the control room. What I mean by through the control room is, I believe that perhaps someone in hydraulics provided an estimate. I don't think it was the actual. I think it was just an estimate at that time.
Q. Just a little more detail on when you were notified. What were the actions after you were notified? Did you call up to the field or --
A. I do not communicate with the field at that time. And it's really -- I think it's more -- I do remember talking with Trey prior to him going -- it was Trey, Travis, and I. And I remember talking with Trey and he and Travis actually had mentioned that Trey received a call. I believe it was from field personnel that they were on their way and they were investigating.
I do not -- Kim, I do not -- I try to provide the time for the field to investigate rather than trying to bother them at that

time. So I try to refrain from speculating and -- I shouldn't say I try. I do. I refrain from speculating and what happened much like your investigation. I'm looking for facts.

Q. Moving up the ladder.

A. Yes, yes. Exactly. So I did not contact the field. I think normal protocols were followed with the operations -- the pipeline operations center. Then once that was confirmed, then our responsibility in communicating to the field would be to set up that stop, help, start call that we reviewed yesterday. And the sending out the notification for that.

Q. If I understood correctly from yesterday, that step, help, start meeting was ongoing throughout this incident.

A. Yes. There -- and sometimes we would be directly involved and sometimes indirectly involved. So directly involved would be if there was a request made from the field or regulatory or the ONL (ph.) manager. But other than that, we tend to try to document the -- any discussion that may be pertinent to the incident.

And then obviously, we are a full participant when the release site is fixed and we now get a review of the steps that were taken to do that. And return it to normal operations. In this case, it was normal operations with the D rate.

Q. So let me switch a little bit here. Talk about your leak detection system.

A. Okay.

Q. Maybe if you can describe for us how your system works and the limits of the system.
A. So I would -- first of all, I will start by saying that I received documentation that was provided to PHMSA and to the NTSB. And it was the formula that calculates the thresholds. I do not have the background nor the skill set to explain in detail the CPM system.

I do know that the CPM system has four different time periods where it's constantly gathering the data, the pressure data from the field, the flow rates, the gravities of crude or product. And it's bringing it into that model. Each CPM leak detection -- each system has its own model. So when that is -- data is brought into the SCADA system, it's continually looking for some type of deviation.

And there -- so that in -- I guess, a high, high-level summary. And those four is we have a two-hour, a 30-minute, a five-minute, and a one-minute. So it has four different time periods that it is doing its calculations with the information available. I think that --
Q. Maybe -- let me clarify. You're saying that it takes a sample, it does a calculation, and then sends back an answer or not?
A. If you remember yesterday when we were at the console and Travis showed you the four time periods that the CPM is calculating, that's a real-time printout. It's really -- once it

gets the data, it does the compilation of the data and then it's real time to you in those periods that you're looking at on the screen.

So each one of those time periods has a threshold. So there are -- I only know that those thresholds currently are based upon API recommended standards and practices. One of the things that with each model, they're -- obviously the hydraulics group supports the maintenance of the models.

Part of our process of going through the reports whether it be alarm management or the -- what we call the CPM leak detection report -- is to look for consistencies where we need to make some adjustments. So as an example, there could be a pipeline that is in -- not flowing and is in, I'll say, a stagnant state. There are times when a controller may be ready to start up and they would open a valve on the delivery end and start to line up the movement.

There are -- there can be times when, as that valve is opened up, you're looking at normal flow that flows into the station with an open flow path. And that's normal. You're going to see pressure drop off the line. It's all part of the process to start a system up. And it is also part of the procedure. There are times when we, in the control room, may get a CPM alarm for that. So that CPM alarm is legitimate but yet it may be caused by the model needing to be adjusted. That's where the maintenance comes in. So that's what we communicate back.

Now, our controllers, at times, will consider that -- oh, I had got a false alarm. It's not a false alarm. And we've been trying to work on that with them on the terminology. But the process is that is considered an AOC. So it is documented into our shift report. And there's an explanation given. Because any time that you get an AOC and you're not sure why you got that or even if you are confident why you received that, that is recorded and then it is looked at on a monthly basis.

So we review that. It's in our shift report. That's what we review every morning at 8:00 on Mondays. Obviously, it's for the weekend. So when we review those, we look at that and say, hey, didn't we see that alarm last week, or didn't we see it yesterday. You know, we need to talk with hydraulics about making an adjustment to the model. So that's where I would say -- high level, that's kind of a summary of the CPM system.

Q. Thanks. That was a beautiful explanation of that.

A. Thank you.

Q. Wonderful. Let me shift over and talk about your change management.

A. Okay.

Q. And how any changes are made to your SCADA system and how it's communicated out to the controllers and how that process works.

A. So when there is a change made to the SCADA system with what we would call point -- so let's say that they installed a new

pressure transmitter in the field. So that pressure transmitter, that was -- there was a management of change that was implemented, I'll say, in the operations side. Once that gets installed and prior to being included as a SCADA point, there is an MOC for SCADA that is created and it gets passed through the system. So my supervisors actually review that and they approve it once they understand the point and what it's for.

Q. This is a document you're talking about?

A. This is a document. Yeah. And the document is approving the installation. It's already been approved to be installed in the field. Now it's coming back around to SCADA. SCADA creates their own MOC from the current MOC.

Once that goes through and approved, then it gives them the opportunity to bring that into SCADA and capture the values of that point. At the same time, we also have a process in the control room where we take that information from the same SCADA MOC and that is put into what we call our MaCRoM system.

So our MaCRoM system is what we utilize for our control room management. Within the application, there is an MOC or management of change module. That information is sent to the console and listed on that distribution list is every controller that is certified to operate that console.

As they do the check-in on their next shift, that pops up. And they go through and review it and they sign off on it that, yes, they've added this pressure transmitter, as an example, and I

understand where it's located, I understand it's parameters and what it is being used for. That then goes from design all the way back around to the control room.

Q. Did you say it's on a console or is it on their administrative side? Did I misunderstand that? If you had two systems, right, you have the control system and then you have your corporate side, where does that change come in for MaCRoM?

A. The change would come to the SCADA supervisor or the SCADA support representative. I believe that comes from the control and analysis group that is within Marathon Pipeline.

Q. Oh, I'm sorry. That's not what I'm saying.

A. Okay, I'm sorry.

Q. So you have the two systems. Your administrative side and then you have the control side. So when the controller sees that change coming, the first time they log on, you said it pops up (indiscernible).

A. Um-hum.

Q. Does it come in through their console or does it come in through when they log into the corporate side?

A. Corporate side. It comes through the corporate side. Yes.

Q. So the first time they come on shift --

A. Yes.

Q. -- it comes up and --

A. That is correct. Normally, that is sent through at least a week or two prior to that even going online. Because sometimes

our controllers may be on vacation, have an extended leave. And we would not want them to come in and be blindsided with something that -- so we normally try to get that out ahead of time so everyone has a chance to take a look at it. If it is already implemented and its active, that's why that pops up right away. Because that's the first thing that we need to do after our shift change is ensure that they understand the new piece of equipment.

Q. So there's two opportunities for them to get information.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Both at the shift change, as well.

A. Yes, that is correct.

MS. WEST: (Indiscernible). That makes perfect sense.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Kim, can we take -- can I take a quick break?

MS. WEST: Yes, we'll go ahead and take a break.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

BY MS. WEST:

Q. I think I have the answer to this but for the controllers, do they have different qualifications on the console that they sit on or do they all have the basic qualifications and then knowledge of that console?

A. They have -- all our -- all controllers certified on each console have the same qualifications. Now, I will add that experience of two years versus four years, three years versus five

years, there may be -- there is no additional qualifications required but some may have more or less experience than their counterpart.

Q. Let me talk about your shifts or your -- for the controllers. Can you tell us more about how -- this is a unique -- I think you said it was a Dupont (ph.) blend?

A. It's a modified Dupont schedule. Yes.

Q. So tell us about that.

A. So the controllers work 12-hour shifts. Shift normally starts between 5:20 and 5:30 a.m. Goes to 5:20, 5:30 p.m. And then a shift change is conducted. And then we call that the night shift. So the night shift from 5:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.

They work a schedule of two on, two off, three on, two off, two on, three off. So it's -- in a 14-day period, it's seven days. And they'll work on an average of 14, maybe 15 days per month.

We are -- we have our controllers work four weeks of days and then transition to four weeks of nights. So we have -- that has actually been in place. We have not deviated from that schedule since 1980. It's been very consistent.

We have a robust fatigue management system plan that that fits in nicely with our -- so guidance from -- we use regulatory guidance from PHMSA on time off between shifts ensuring enough sleep. Making sure that the change from days to nights or nights to days, that there is sufficient rest time. And we educate on

the fatigue risk management system within the training that you all had an opportunity to view yesterday with Matt Schwinnin (ph.).

Q. How about off duty, are there any limits on, I guess -- maybe not limits but recommendation on off-duty activity?

A. Yes, there --

Q. To prevent fatigue.

A. There is. If you notice -- and I don't know -- perhaps maybe you missed it but when we went into the wellness room yesterday -- and I know we were only there briefly. We have a fairly big flowchart in there on the wall of identifying fatigue. As part of the specialist training, when you look at the recommended practices by API and PHMSA, so we actually have our specialists, especially on the night shift, make a walk at about 2 in the morning. Because that is basically what statistics have proven is where individuals may start to get fatigue.

And statistics tell us that that's when, I'll say, mishaps have taken place across the industry. And that's not just in the pipeline industry. I'm sure as an NTSB representative, you've heard that about bus drivers and those who operate trains and things like that. So I would say in general, you know, the shift is -- and the way the rotation is set up, is widely accepted.

We actually did a survey probably in 2020, early '21, about the opportunity to look at other shift rotations. And there were four or five that were developed and the controllers unanimously

voted on keeping the current work schedule.

We do educate on -- outside of the control room about your activities. I think Rich St. Amour, who you met yesterday, and Joshua may have mentioned that during COVID. I mean, we had a lot of discussions and a lot of communication about being cognizant of in the -- in and around the public. Especially when the numbers were high with the number of COVID cases. And again, we had our fair share. But the good news is that the transmission did not happen within the control room.

Q. I'm sorry. Could you spell Rich's name?

A. Yes. It's Rich, R-i-c-h. St. Amour, S-t. A-m-o-u-r.

MS. WEST: Thank you. Actually, I have -- that's all the questions I have.

BY MR. MATHEWS:

Q. This is Wesley Mathews. Would you say -- are you -- do you feel like you are adequately staffed for such a big release event?

A. Yes, I do. I do. I think we had a full shift. We had two specialists. We had all three of our supervisors here. We had ample support from our other organizations. I would say even including our compliance group and from the ONL manager.

Q. Thanks. So coming out of this, have you already started to plan specific items to -- for lessons learned for your group?

A. We -- currently, we have assembled a short list of things that we would like to review. I would say one of the examples that we identified is in the past we have done some of our

tabletop drills where a system has multiple booster stations. As you know, this one just had one pump station with three mainline pumping units. So that is something that the supervisors and I have already talked about is looking at opportunities for improvements on our tabletop drills.

Q. Thanks. So my last question was going back to the CPM stuff, so is it possible -- so you mentioned the fourth threshold times for the calculations. Is it possible to delay or extend those times? Like instead of it being a one-minute, it'll be four minutes, or the five minutes becomes ten. Is it possible to do that?

A. Wesley, I don't think I have the knowledge to answer that question to be honest with you.

Q. That's fine.

A. I just -- I don't even want to speculate on whether --

Q. Sure.

A. -- that's possible or not.

MR. MATHEWS: Thanks. That's fine with me. That's all the questions I had.

MS. WEST: We'll do another round, too. But do you have any questions.

BY MR. STUFFT:

Q. Joshua Stufft. So Paul, you had talked through kind of the events of that day with, I think, Travis, Chase, and Trey. From a team perspective, you talked about them performing within

expectations. So do you feel that the training that led up to their certifications in those roles was adequate for the performance that you saw?

A. Joshua, I would say absolutely. I think when you had an opportunity to look and view and review our training program, I think the one thing that I will point to that not a lot of other operators do -- and that's our panel discussion. You know, there's not a better way to determine if a controller is ready for certification than through that including the written testing.

And I think one of the things the panel does for you is it gives you a clear picture on do they understand the concepts and can they explain the concepts. And I would say that through that process, that for me -- the entire string of training, it all goes together. And when we are ready to certify a controller, we all feel confident that they're going to perform well.

MR. STUFFT: That's all I have.

MS. WEST: Any questions? I have no more.

MR. MATHEWS: Yeah, I have nothing.

MR. STUFFT: Nothing additional.

MS. WEST: Thank you. You answered all our questions very well. Thank you. I appreciate it.

MR. VAHALIK: Yeah, Kim and --

MS. WEST: With great detail.

MR. VAHALIK: -- and Wesley, thanks for your time. We appreciate it. If you need me to leave my contact information, I

can do that. I did look yesterday. I apologize. I am out of business cards. But I can provide that information and -- I don't know how that works after this meeting. If you need to go through Tonya for -- to reach me. But I'd be more than happy to answer additional questions if you need to.

MS. WEST: So this concludes our interview. It's now 9:33 and we will end for the day. Thank you, again.

MR. VAHALIK: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	MARATHON PIPE LINE OIL RELEASE IN EVANSVILLE, ILLINOIS ON MARCH 11, 2022 Interview of Paul Vahalik
ACCIDENT NO.:	PLD22FR002
PLACE:	Findlay, Ohio
DATE:	April 6, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Katie Leach
Transcriber

From: Vahalik, Paul A.
To: West Kim
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Marathon Control Room Employee Interview Transcripts
Date: Monday, May 16, 2022 10:23:45 AM
Attachments: [redacted]

Good afternoon Kim. I hope my response finds you doing very well. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to review the transcript. I have provided a few clarifications on the attached form. In general, very minor. Thank you again for your time. Have a good day

Paul Vahalik
Findlay Pipeline Operations Center Manager
[redacted]

From: West Kim [redacted]
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 10:14 AM
To: Stufft, Joshua B. [redacted]; Schroeder, Peyton J. [redacted] Howard, Trey D. [redacted] Drewes, Chase L. [redacted]; Vahalik, Paul A. [redacted]
Cc: Colletti Alexandria [redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Marathon Control Room Employee Interview Transcripts

Good Morning Joshua,

We request your assistance to ensure that the attached interview transcripts and errata sheets are distributed to Peyton Schroeder, Trey Howard, Chase Drewes, and Paul Vahalik for their review and comment, as appropriate. Please have them follow the attached instructions for completing the errata form and return it to me via email by May 13, 2022**.** When finished, please destroy all copies of the transcript until such time as these documents are reviewed and released by me and provided to all investigative parties.

Thank you.

Kindest regards

Kim L. West
Pipeline Accident Investigator, Office of Railroad,
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board
32125 32nd Avenue South, Suite 140
Federal Way, WA 98001
[redacted]

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

Subj: Transcript Review Request for the pipeline rupture near Edwardsville, Illinois, at 8:15 a.m. on March 11, 2022

Accident No.: PLD22FR002

To: Mr. Paul Vahalik

Dear Mr. Vahalik,

The enclosed transcript of your interview on April 6, 2022, is provided for your review and comment to ensure its accuracy. It is not for public release.

The transcript is investigative information of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) created as part of the NTSB's investigation into the pipeline rupture on March 11, 2022, at about 8:15 a.m. local time NTSB Accident No. PLD22FR002.

NTSB regulations prohibit the public release of investigative information prior to release by the NTSB without the permission of the NTSB Investigator in Charge (IIC). See 49 C.F.R. § 831.13(b). The IIC has not approved public release of this information at this time. Therefore, we request that you refrain from any further dissemination of this transcript.

Kindly review this transcript for accuracy and provide corrections, if any, in the attached table. Please print, sign, and return it to me via email by May 13, 2022. Please return or destroy the transcript after providing your comments.

Comments must be returned no later than May 13, 2022. Requests for an extension of this deadline must be in writing and received prior to the due date. If comments are not received by the due date, we will consider the transcript to be final without comment.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you have any question regarding the process, please feel free to contact me.

Best Regards,

Kim West

Pipeline Investigator
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board
32125 32nd Avenue South, Suite 140
Federal Way, WA 98001
[redacted]
[redacted]

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: [NAME]
RECORDED ON [DATE]

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
9	17	IOI	ILI
9	22	To	The
17	16	ONL	O&L (Operations & Logistics)
26	20	ONL	O&L (Operations & Logistics)

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement “no corrections needed” and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED. _____
Initials

_____
Printed Name of Person providing the above information

_____
Signature of Person providing the above information

_____
Date