

## Charleston Area Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) Meeting Minutes

Thursday – January 25, 2024

**Roll Call & Call to Orders:** LT [REDACTED], USCG

Meeting was conducted via Zoom and in-person at 200 Ports Authority Drive in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Membership list/attendance collected. See Table 1. LT [REDACTED] completed a roll call and transitioned to opening remarks.

### Opening Comments:

**Remarks:** CDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] USCG

CDR [REDACTED] provided opening remarks on behalf of CAPT DelRosso, who could not attend due to a scheduling conflict. He referenced several events that have kept Sector Charleston busy during January, including Winter Storm Finn, commercial fishing vessel issues, search & rescue cases, and various marine casualties. He then explained how Sector Charleston relies heavily on the cooperation and support of the port community. He thanked committee members for their continued partnerships, and briefly touched on the Cooper River agenda item.

**Opening Remarks:** Mr. George Detyens, Jr., KMD Marine

Mr. Detyens thanked Mr. John Cameron for volunteering to represent the Port of Charleston at the National Harbor Safety Committee Conference, March 20-21 in Chicago, IL. He also welcomed presenters who traveled to Charleston for our January meeting. He concluded his remarks by thanking representatives from Joint Base Charleston (JBC), as their participation is essential to the continued success of the HSC and the Port of Charleston.

**Committee Administration:** N/A

**New Business:** N/A

### Open Issues, Presentations, Proposals, Follow-Up:

**Upper Cooper River Committee Discussion:** LT [REDACTED], USCG

Considering two incidents of vessels colliding with Pier Bravo in the past 16 months, LT [REDACTED] referenced the Coast Guard's concerns on navigational safety in the Cooper River. The river geometry between Pier Bravo and Snow Point, combined with variable hydrographic data, the nature of marine traffic, presence of fixed structures and critical DoD assets make this part of the Cooper River an "Area of Particular Concern," to be reflected in the Coast Pilot. CDR [REDACTED] elaborated on the topic, and introduced a Captain of the Port (COTP) Order mandating tethered 2-tug escorts for vessels transiting this area that are either above 10,000 GT (ITC) or drafting more than 25 ft. He explained how the Coast Guard will be leaning on the HSC to come up with a more sustainable long-term solution for risk mitigation, as this part of the Cooper River falls outside the Federal Project. Mr. Rudy Socha validated the Coast Guard's concerns and spoke on additional hazards presented by abandoned/derelict vessels. Mr. John Cameron attested the Charleston Branch Pilots are aware of the appropriations and dredge activity

functions that specifically support the transit of military assets. The referenced part of the Cooper River will be included in the simulator module of their pilot training program. He also pointed out the thresholds stated in the COTP order will affect tankers and ATBs bound for the Nucor facility. CDR ██████ read the language of the COTP order to attendees. Mr. Galloway spoke on his efforts to establish an independent Cooper River Private Terminal Association. The stakeholders that would comprise this group are the most affected by this issue, and it would provide a good forum to discuss solutions like this.

**Ops/Nav Subcommittee – Post Storm Assessment Capabilities:** Mr. Ryan Sellers, Moran Towing

Mr. Sellers introduced the topic and LT ██████ elaborated on industry support to facilitate post storm assessments, particularly for critical ATON, after non-major storms. Mr. Cameron spoke on how the pilots have historically assisted the Coast Guard with ascertaining conditions in the entrance channel. Mr. Sellers discussed how established lines of communication between certain operators in the harbor would better facilitate ATON discrepancy reporting. Mr. Whit Jones asked for clarification on the subject. CDR ██████ responded by outlining historic trends of industry pressure to open the port faster after major weather events. LT ██████ closed the topic for continued discussion through an Ops/Nav Subcommittee call, which will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

**Southern AOR Subcommittee Update:** N/A

**Waccamaw River Wake Concerns Presentation:** Mr. Bob Anderson, Georgetown County Council

Mr. Bob Anderson presented on increased issues with boat wakes in the Waccamaw River portion of the Atlantic ICW. Changes in traffic patterns and rec vessel activity are negatively impacting private marine infrastructure, particularly between Lighted Buoys “79” and “83”. After reviewing past efforts to shift the ICW to create more distance between the affected infrastructure and transiting vessels, Mr. Bos Smith indicated commercial industry would not support that type of initiative. Previous correspondence from Coast Guard District 7 and USACE also outlined opposition to shifting the federal channel. Personnel turnover and inconsistent communications with other law enforcement entities have precluded the success of alternative solutions, more specifically, the effective establishment of a wake zone. LT ██████ informed Mr. Anderson that the conversation will be continued with the participation of both the Coast Guard and DNR.

**Predictive Underkeel Clearance Management:** Mr. Everhardus (Van) van den Heuvel & Ms. Meg Batchelor, OMC International

Mr. Van den Heuvel presented on predictive underkeel management systems offered to maritime operators by OMC International. He underscored the value of this system by explaining how it would improve information sharing between pilots and shipping companies, and better identify windows of opportunity for safe vessel movements. Mr. Cameron attested that the Charleston Branch pilots rely heavily on draft table data to bring vessels into port, and these tables have a conservative safety margin. Additional real time (and historical)

navigational data could potentially open transit windows for vessels movement, which would equate to more opportunities for commercial activity.

**Upper Cooper River Committee Discussion:** LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] USCG

LT [REDACTED] revisited the upper Cooper River topic and asked the representatives from JBC about their concerns and priorities. Clarification was requested on how vessels proceeding to Wharf A and TC dock will be affected by the COTP Order. CDR [REDACTED] stated the COTP Order is designed for vessels transiting completely through the area between Pier B and Snow Point. CAPT Andy Peterson (USN) added that JBC does not own that portion of the waterway, and that non-DoD users transit at their own risks. No appropriations or funding exist to dredge the channel for commercial traffic. Additionally, the risk of a tanker alliding with Pier Bravo does not affect national security enough to justify JBC dredging that portion of the Cooper River beyond their own needs. Their biggest concerns would be the marine infrastructure and assets at the Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU), further upriver, at the northern portion of the Area of Concern. CDR [REDACTED] provided a caveat that if the channel in the vicinity of Pier B becomes blocked, it would significantly affect JBC operations. Mr. Kyle Ward (NOAA) stated there have been no updates on conditional soundings for that area since 2012. NOAA's current efforts to create a new hydrographic data product will hopefully paint a significantly clearer picture of the upper Cooper River. Mr. Galloway brought up recent dredge surveys at JBC, asserting there is a disconnect in communications between NOAA, the Charleston Branch Pilots, and USACE. CAPT Peterson replied that JBC can work towards sharing their data, but certain DoD requirements may affect the nature and quality of the information. He will discuss the matter with his legal team before proceeding further. Mr. Tom Hodgson asked if the original Pier B allision investigation has identified a root cause. CDR [REDACTED] stated the investigation was not yet complete. LT Jen Simpson (CG Sector Charleston, Investigations) informed the group that she cannot speak on the root cause analysis due to the investigation still being active but validated the presence of multiple latent unsafe conditions. These conditions include hydrodynamic effects and available navigation data. CDR [REDACTED] explained to the group that the Coast Guard's jurisdiction in this case only falls on the movement of ships. Solutions beyond that will need to come from our port partners. Mr. Galloway stated the Cooper River Private Terminal Association could continue the discussion once it is formally established. CDR [REDACTED] asked if Mr. Galloway agreed there was value in utilizing an interim Harbor Safety subcommittee to drive private terminal participation. Mr. Galloway concurred. CAPT Peterson added that JBC is willing to engage with port partners in a Harbor Safety subcommittee, as it is a designated Federal Advisory Committee with Coast Guard oversight.

**SC Boat Removal Inventory Overview:** Mr. Rudy Socha, Wounded Nature

Mr. Socha provided the group an overview of the document sent out with the meeting agenda, outlining an inventory and corresponding project costs to remove abandoned/derelict vessels throughout the state. The data will be used to hopefully obtain coastal debris removal funding at the state level. He also spoke on recent and current vessel salvage initiatives by Wounded Nature.

**City of Charleston Anchorage Ordinance Update:** Sgt. Chris Morrell, Harbor Patrol Unit, CPD

Sgt. Morrell announced a new ordinance by the City of Charleston, for promulgation on February 1<sup>st</sup> and enforcement after a two-week period. This ordinance will mandate that all persons wishing to anchor their vessel for more than 14 days within the territorial limits of the city must obtain a permit from the city police department. Additionally, they must provide comprehensive documentation, including proof of ownership, minimum \$100,000 insurance, and contact information for government agency use. The permits will need to be renewed every 60 days. Mr. Socha added this will address the problem with derelict vessels in the vicinity of Charleston, but vessels unable to meet anchorage permit requirements will ultimately end up in other state waters. A state-wide solution to the issue will need to be pursued, but the new city ordinance is a step in the right direction. Sgt. Morrell concluded by referencing an law enforcement planning meeting for the Cooper River Bridge Run, scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Announcements/General Comments:** N/A

**Closing:**

LT [REDACTED] thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting. The next HSC meeting will take place on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



16600  
March 18, 2024

Master, T/V [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**CAPTAIN OF THE PORT ORDER 018-24: [REDACTED] (IMO# [REDACTED])**

By the authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act, 46 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 70002, and Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 160, vested in me as the Captain of the Port (COTP), I hereby issue this order.

The Cooper River portion of the Charleston Harbor Federal Project, which contains provisions for quarterly condition surveys and regular maintenance dredging, terminates at the northern edge of the Ordinance Reach turning basin. North of this point, the length of river between Pier Bravo and the Department of Defense facility in the vicinity of Snow Point, constitutes an area of particular concern due to a combination of variable hydrographic data, fixed structures, and critical assets. To promote safe navigation, ships that are 10,000 GT or more, or ships with a draft exceeding 25ft (7.6m), are hereby directed to:

1. Employ a tethered two-tug escort while transiting the river between Pier Bravo and Snow Point. The two-tug escort shall be tethered, to the satisfaction of the pilot(s), in a safe location well prior to entering this area of particular concern.
2. Once all clear of this area of particular hazard, the tethered two tug escort may be released at the satisfaction of the pilot(s).

**PENALTY FOR VIOLATING THIS ORDER**

This order is issued pursuant to the authority in Title 46, Chapter 700 -- Ports and Waterways Safety (46 USC §§ 70001 -70054) and the regulations in effect thereunder (33 CFR Part 160). In accordance with 46 USC § 70036, failure to comply with this COTP Order is punishable by a civil penalty of up to \$111,031 for each day the vessel is in violation; this may include in rem civil liability or be enforced through an injunction. Willful and knowing violation of this order is a class D felony, punishable by up to six years in prison (18 USC § 3581) or fines of up to \$250,000 for an individual or \$500,000 for an organization (18 USC § 3571). The conditions of this order remain in effect pending any appeal, unless stayed by the District Commander.

**APPEAL OF THIS ORDER**

Should you be aggrieved by this order, you may appeal under the procedures described in 33 CFR § 160.7, and request reconsideration orally or in writing to me directly. Should you be

**CAPTAIN OF THE PORT ORDER 018-24: T/V [REDACTED] (IMO# [REDACTED])**

further aggrieved, appeal orally or in writing through this office to the Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District. However, if the appeal is made orally, a written submission is required within five days of the oral presentation. While any request or appeal is pending, all provisions of this order remain in effect.

**COAST GUARD POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ORDER**

All questions pertaining to this order may be directed to the Sector Command Center at (843) 740-7050.

Sincerely,



**F. J. DELROSSO**  
Captain  
Captain of the Port  
U. S. Coast Guard

**CAPTAIN OF THE PORT ORDER 018-24: T/V TRF MONGSTAD (IMO# 9732814)**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
CAPTAIN OF THE PORT ORDER 018-24  
CAPTAIN OF THE PORT SECTOR CHARLESTON

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of Captain of the Port Order 018-24 signed by  
F. J. DELROSSO, Captain, U. S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port Charleston.

Receipt Acknowledged: Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Typed or Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reply via email ([D07-DG-SECTORCHASN-COTP@USCG.MIL](mailto:D07-DG-SECTORCHASN-COTP@USCG.MIL)) the signed receipt to U. S.  
Coast Guard Sector Charleston.

Copy: Charleston Branch Pilots  
Moran Shipping Agencies, Inc.