DCA23FM036

NAUTICAL OPERATIONS

Group Chair's Factual Report

Interview Summaries

Interviewee: Dr. Paul Brett
Representative: None
Date/Time: September 15, 2023 / 10:30 EDT
Location: via Micrsoft Team
Present: LCDR [redacted] for U.S. Coast Guard
Investigators: Mr. Bart Barnum; NTSB; Mr. Marcel Muise, USCG; Mr. Jason Neubauer, USCG; LCDR [redacted] USCG

OVERVIEW

The Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation and NTSB interviewed Dr. Paul Brett of the Marine Institute via Microsoft Teams. The Marine Institute (MI) is the maritime campus of Memorial University (MUN), in St. John's, Newfoundland. Dr. Brett is the MUN Vice President at MI.

LCDR [redacted] led the interview. Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from notes taken of the in-person conversation.

SUMMARY

OceanGate and MI first made contact in 2017 through industry connections. MI was looking for partnerships for their ROV technician student work terms. OceanGate at the time was in their early stage of work and nothing came of the connection until 2022.

OceanGate later operated expeditions from St. John's and in July 2022 OceanGate approached Dr. Brett's predecessor about a partnership. The partnership would include work terms for student ROV pilots and support roles and promotion of ocean exploration. OceanGate was interested in space to stow and work on their submersible. The two parties agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding to that end.

Dr. Brett remembered seeing *Titan* outside at the Harvey secure facility on the waterfront in St. John's in July 2022, while it waited to be imported into the country. His predecessor visited the vehicle there with the OceanGate CEO. The submersible arrived at MI in February of 2023. It was craned into the facility then rolled into the workshop. The space was a teaching workshop where the vehicle was on display and not secured. In early May the vehicle was move to MI's waterfront facility in Holyrood, Newfoundland, where OceanGate carried out spring maintenance ahead of the 2023 Titanic expedition.

No MI students ever took internships at OceanGate as the expedition schedule in 2023 did not align with the school's academic schedule. One MI student took a summer position at OceanGate on her own and was aboard *Polar Prince* during the accident voyage. No student or employee would have been allowed to dive with the vehicle, even if it was offered, due to the liability.

Dr. Brett stated that his staff had shared security footage and pictures of *Titan* with TSB Canada.

Interview concluded at 1055 EDT.

END SUMMARY