

**BOARD FOR BRANCH PILOTS MEETING
MINUTES**

The Virginia Board for Branch Pilots met on Thursday, September 13, 2012, at the Virginia Port Authority, 600 World Trade Center, Norfolk, Virginia, with the following members present:

Captain Robert H. Callis, III
Captain Milton B. Edmunds
Thomas P. Host III
Patrick B. McDermott
Captain John A. Morgan, Jr.
Christine N. Piersall
Meade G. Stone, Jr.

Board members Charles R. Amory, Jr. and J. William Cofer were not present at the meeting.

Staff present for the meeting was:

Kathleen (Kate) R. Nosbisch, Executive Director

There was no representative present from the Office of the Attorney General.

Finding a quorum of the Board present, Mr. Stone, President, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Host moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Piersall seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Callis, Edmunds, Host, McDermott, Morgan, Piersall and Stone.

**Approval of
Agenda**

Mr. McDermott moved to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2012, board meeting as amended. Captain Morgan seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Callis, Edmunds, Host, McDermott, Morgan, Piersall and Stone.

**Approval of
Minutes**

There were no public comments.

**Public Comment
Period**

Captain Callis provided the Board with a report of the examinations conducted by the Examination Administrators on September 13, 2012. The following report was made:

**Exam
Administrators
Report**

Charles A. Huffman V

Captain Huffman answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven and Sewell's Point, anchoring deep draft vessels, overtaking situations, limitations of navigation equipment, usage of the deep water route in the southeast sealanes, under

keel clearance and safe vessel speed.

Captain Huffman stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain Callis moved that Captain Huffman be raised in grade from an Golf classification (55,000 gross tons and 42 feet maximum draft) to a Hotel classification (64,000 gross tons and 46 feet maximum draft).

Mr. Host seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Callis, Edmunds, Host, McDermott, Morgan, Piersall and Stone.

Joseph M. Schacherer III

Captain Schacherer answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven and Sewell's Point, anchoring techniques, characteristics of deep draft vessels, vessel squat, inner harbor transits, restricted maneuvering in narrow channels, traffic management, timed arrivals and safe vessel speed.

Captain Schacherer stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain Callis moved that Captain Schacherer be raised in grade from a Echo classification (42,000 gross tons and 36 feet maximum draft) to a Foxtrot classification (46,000 gross tons and 40 feet maximum draft).

Mr. McDermott seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Callis, Edmunds, Host, McDermott, Morgan, Piersall and Stone.

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that the final regulations are at the Governor's office for approval. Once the regulations are approved and signed, the regulations must proceed to the Registrar's office within 14 days to be published. A 30-day public comment period will follow. The regulations become effective the day after the public comment period ends as long as no comments are received that may cause them to be reviewed again.

Regulatory Review Update

Board members reviewed a witness statement from Captain L.D. Amory III filed with the U.S. Coast Guard, regarding an occurrence as he was piloting a container ship.

Other Business

"On August 21, 2012, Captain Amory boarded the inbound container ship A.P.L. OMAN at 0500 hours to pilot her to the APM Terminal. The wind at the time was light and variable and the tidal current was ebbing. They proceeded inbound at slow speed while assessing the local transit route. Finding the area clear, they slowly increased speed to approximately 15 knots. At approximately 0530 hours as they were approaching the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, they observed outside the channel two

outbound vessels that were later identified as small Naval vessels. Captain Amory observed them visually and on radar when they were approximately two miles away, and at that point were moving slowly eastward outside of the channel on the south side (green side). At about 0535 hours, they began to enter Thimble Shoals Channel about one mile ahead of Captain Amory, crossing from his port side to his starboard side. Captain Amory made repeated attempts to contact them by VHF radio on both channels 13 and 16, but received no response. At that point they were entirely on the red side of the channel and appeared to be exiting the channel on the north or red side. Captain Amory began to alter course to port in order to pass under their stern, while continuing to call on the VHF. At that time they turned on their special purpose lights (red and white lights in a vertical line) and Captain Amory could see for the first time that they were handling a section of causeway or something similar. After reaching the red toe of the channel they started to drift back to Captain Amory's port (green side). Captain Amory started to sound danger signals and slowed the vessel. He then gave orders to stop the vessel while dropping the anchor. They were able to stop the vessel prior to the tunnel crossing. The vessel never left the channel. When the channel was clear, they heaved the anchor and proceeded to A.P.M. Terminal without further incident. The success of this event was due largely to excellent bridge team management. The captain and chief officer as well as the crew on the bow and the wheel responded to the crisis as skilled professional mariners and worked with Captain Amory, the pilot, as a fine tuned machine."

Captain Jacob Johnson was also in the vicinity of the occurrence and he too filed a witness statement with the U.S. Coast Guard. Captain Johnson's statement also included an Army craft in the vicinity that tried to communicate with the two small naval vessels with no success. The U.S. Coast Guard praised Captain Amory for his piloting of the vessel under his command.

Captain Callis noted situations such as this arise from and time to time and the Virginia Pilot Association encourages pilots to provide information to the Board. Ms. Nosbisch indicated pilots should be encouraged to clearly distinguish between incident letters and witness statements, so they are addressed appropriately by the Board. The Board agreed there are three distinct categories: incident reports that may include pilot error, incident reports that may not include pilot error, and witness statements. The Board is to review the documents for accuracy of the occurrence. The Board agreed by consensus and requested Ms. Nosbisch send a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation to Captain Amory.

Ms. Nosbisch provided board rosters for the members to review for completeness.

Ms. Nosbisch suggested that beginning with the October 13, 2012, board meeting, agendas and supporting documents will be sent electronically via email. Mr. Stone, Board President, will continue to receive hard copies. The process will be evaluated in six months. Ms. Nosbisch stated that paper copies will continue to be provided at the meetings.

Mr. Stone inquired about an update on the Walter Hugh McCrory, Jr., appeal. Ms. Nosbisch indicated she spoke with board counsel September 12, and there was nothing new to report at this time.

Conflict of Interest forms were completed by all members present.

**Conflict of
Interest Forms**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Adjourn

Meade G. Stone, Jr., President

Gordon N. Dixon, Secretary