

**BOARD FOR BRANCH PILOTS MEETING
MINUTES**

The Virginia Board for Branch Pilots met on Monday, May 2, 2008, at the Virginia Port Authority, 600 World Trade Center, Norfolk, Virginia, with the following members present:

Captain Robert H. Callis, III
Bruce R. Cherry
Captain J. William Cofer
Captain Milton B. Edmunds
Thomas P. Host, III
William M. Martin, III
Douglas E. Miller
Captain W. Hugh McCrory, Jr.
Meade G. Stone, Jr.

Staff present for the meeting were:

Jay W. DeBoer, Director
Saba L. Shami, Chief Deputy
Mark N. Courtney, Deputy Director of Licensing and Regulation
Marian H. Brooks, Program Administrator
Nick A. Christner, Deputy Director of Compliance and Investigation

Cynthia Norwood was present from the Office of the Attorney General.

Finding a quorum of the Board present, Mr. Cherry, President, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Call to Order

Captain Callis moved to approve the agenda. Captain McCrory seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Host, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone.

**Approval of
Agenda**

Mr. DeBoer introduced the new Chief Deputy of the Department, Saba Shami.

**Introduction of
Chief Deputy**

Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2008, meeting as amended. Mr. Martin seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Host, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone.

**Approval of
Minutes**

Captain Callis provided the Board with a report of the examinations conducted by the Examination Administrators on May 2, 2008. The following report was made:

**Exam
Administration
Report**

Jacob R. Johnson

Captain Johnson answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven and Sewell's Point, inner harbor transfers of part loaded vessels, safe vessel speed, the effects of wind on high profile containerships, under keel clearance, times arrivals, and anchoring techniques for loaded vessels. Captain Johnson stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain Callis moved that Captain Johnson be raised from the Golf classification (50,000 gross tons and 42 feet maximum draft) to the Hotel classification (60,000 gross tons and 46 feet maximum draft). Mr. Martin seconded the motion which was approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Host, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone.

Mr. Host recused himself from the meeting and left the room as the company he works for, T. Parker Host, Inc., was the agent for the ships involved in the incident letters from Captains Herbert Roberts Green, III, and John A. Jones, Jr.

Recusal of Mr. Host

Mr. Courtney indicated to the Board that this matter was continued from the previous Board meeting.

Captain Herbert Roberts Green, III, M/V SWAN

Captain Cofer indicated that no new information had been received regarding this incident. After discussion, Mr. Martin moved that the letter be filed and that the Board take no action, as there appears to be no violation of the Board's regulations or statutes. Mr. Miller seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone. Mr. Host was not present during the discussion or vote.

On Thursday February 19, 2008, Captain Jones was ordered to sail the M/V VENTURER from the south side of Pier IX terminal to Cape Henry. The M/V VENTURER is a 127,907 deadweight ton vessel built in 1981. She is 867' 07" long with a beam of 134' 01". On this occasion she had a reported draft of 49'. Her draft dictated a sailing time of 4 1/2 hours prior to high water to ensure a rising tide during the transit. Winds were west southwest at 27 knots.

Captain John A. Jones, Jr., M/V VENTURER

Captain Jones boarded the M/V VENTURER at approximately 1445 and proceeded to set up the DGPS unit on the bridge. The ship's Captain arrived on the bridge shortly afterward and proceeded to exchange information pertinent to the transit. The ship's Captain informed Captain Jones of the draft as 49' fresh water, and Captain Jones showed the Captain the tide data and informed him it was rising during the transit.

The docking master, Captain Tyler Moore with McAllister Towing, boarded the vessel shortly after Captain Jones and discussed the draft, the tide, and the undocking maneuver, which the Docking Master concurred could be carried out safely at the existing state of tide. The Docking Master called for three tugs - the STEVEN MCALLISTER, the MARK MCALLISTER, and the MARY MCALLISTER to get into position for undocking. Once the tugs were in place, all lines were cast-off and a dead slow astern bell was given by the Docking Master. The Docking Master increased this to a slow astern bell and the vessel slowly increased it's sternway to approximately one half knot.

After moving astern for approximately 120 feet channelward, and a distance off the pier of approximately 50 feet, a "Full Astern" command was given and answered on the engines.

At this time Captain Jones noticed the vessel stop all astern movement even though her engines were making revolutions for full astern. Captain Jones immediately advised the Docking Master of this and he agreed that the vessel had stopped. The Docking Master then stopped the ship's engines. Captain Jones advised the ship's Captain and the Docking Master that he suggested putting the vessel back to it's berth and notify the Coast Guard of the incident. They agreed and this was done. At approximately 1635 the vessel was back alongside safely moored. Captain Jones contacted the Coast Guard and informed them of the incident.

Since this incident on February 19, dredging has been ongoing at this berth to address the shoaling and no further deep draft vessels have sailed from the pier.

After discussion, Mr. Martin moved that the letter be filed and that the Board take no action, as there appears to be no violation of the Board's regulations or statutes. Captain McCrory seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone. Mr. Host was not present during the discussion or vote.

Mr. Host returned to the meeting.

After discussion, Mr. Miller moved to amend the wording on the renewal certificates to account for the fact that licenses approved for renewal in a preceding year are valid for the following year. Mr. Martin seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Callis, Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Host, Martin, Miller, McCrory, and Stone.

Captain Cofer noted that the Virginia Maritime Association conducted its third annual Navigational Summit which identified five areas where

Return of Mr. Host

**Consideration of
Changes to Branch
Pilots Certificates**

**Discussion of
Atlantic Ocean**

navigational improvements are needed. Captain Cofer pointed out that one of the areas identified that is of interest to the Board is the proposed re-alignment of the Atlantic Sea-lane Channel approach. The current configuration of the sea-lane (which is outside of Virginia waters) was developed in 1987 mainly for the deep-draft colliers as an outbound, one-way channel for ships with drafts to 50'. Container ships, which have grown significantly in size over the past twenty years, will begin needing to utilize this channel in the near future because of their deep drafts, inbound and outbound. Currently, there is concern that the Atlantic Channel Sea-lane is not wide enough to safely accommodate the larger container ships along with the coal ships for two way navigation.

Approach Project

Ms. Norwood indicated she had spoken to John Walters of the US Coast Guard about this issue and he stated that the US Army Corp of Engineers will need to conduct modeling and a study in order to make proposed changes to the sea-lane. In addition, any final changes to the Atlantic Channel sea-lane will need to be reviewed and adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and this process can take a number of years to complete.

After discussion, the Board decided to continue to monitor this issue.

Mr. Cherry requested that the Virginia Pilot Association make a presentation to the Board regarding the Differential-GPS at the Board's August 1, 2008, meeting.

Other Business

Mr. DeBoer informed the Board of Karen O'Neal's retirement and announced that Mark Courtney has replaced her as the Department's Deputy Directory of Licensing and Regulation.

Conflict of Interest forms were completed by all members present.

Conflict of Interest Forms

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Adjourn

Bruce R. Cherry, President

Jay W. DeBoer, Secretary