



Connecticut Port Authority hires first Maritime Development Manager

Eric Dussault, U.S. Coast Guard veteran, Sea Tow captain, will be responsible for Small Harbors Program, grants, dredging projects

(OLD SAYBROOK, CT, June 12, 2024) – The Connecticut Port Authority has its first Maritime Development Manager.

Eric Dussault, a resident of Old Saybrook and Coast Guard veteran who served aboard the cutter Reliance, begins his job Friday. Dussault will be responsible for elevating the Port Authority's Small Harbors Improvement Projects Program, or SHIPP, port and harbor dredging projects, Pilot Commission administration, and coordination of state and federal maritime grants and initiatives.

The program provides grants for infrastructure improvements that result in better public access to the water, strengthening the state's maritime economy, and supporting economic development in communities across the state.

Dussault will work with the Connecticut Marine Trades Association and other maritime stakeholders to highlight the program and provide support for those seeking SHIPP grants.

A total of \$12,011,706 has been awarded through the first three rounds of the program for 33 projects in 16 municipalities. The CPA is currently accepting applications until July 1 for the fourth round of SHIPP grants.

Dussault comes to the CPA from American Cruise Lines, where he worked for nine years, most recently as Director of Port Operations. American Cruise Lines ships will dock in New London several times this year during excursions between New York and Boston. Dussault is a licensed 100-ton captain and worked as a Sea Tow operations manager and captain in the central Connecticut area for nearly 10 years, rescuing boaters from Old Saybrook to West Haven. He has extensive experience conducting strategic planning, supporting infrastructure and capital investment projects, and communicating with engineering firms for design, permitting, and construction. In addition, he serves on the Old Saybrook Board of Finance.

“I applied for the position because of the need for relationship building,” Dussault said. “I’ve done a lot of that with both the public and private sectors through my work arranging port visits around the country for American Cruise Lines, and my work with Sea Tow. And my volunteer work with the Old Saybrook Board of Finance has given me experience in how municipalities work, which will be helpful as I work with town and city leaders in the Small Harbors program. The better the relationship, the better the result.”

Ulysses Hammond, interim Executive Director of the CT Port Authority, said that with Dussault onboard and other positions filled, the CPA now has the professional staff to properly pursue the Authority’s mission to enhance Connecticut’s maritime economy.

“We’re thrilled to have Eric join us and I look forward to him taking the Small Harbors Improvement Projects Program and state and federal grants management to the next level by building stronger relationships with our municipalities and those within Connecticut’s robust maritime sector,” Hammond said. “Eric’s experience in and around ports and his municipal governance skills and abilities make him a perfect fit for this vital position.”

Dussault joins Fayola Haynes, finance director, ethics liaison, and compliance officer at the Connecticut Port Authority, Jill Dowling-Moreno, office manager, and Laurie Epler, fiscal administrative assistant.

Haynes is a Fellow with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and has more than 20 years of experience in accounting and finance within the private and public sectors. She has developed accounting policies and procedures in various organizations and has contributed to the launch, growth, and development of new products and services. Haynes reports to Hammond and prepares and manages the CPA operations budget, ensuring that CPA complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Dowling-Moreno has more than 20 years of experience in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. She is responsible for providing high-level administrative and operational support to the Executive Director and senior staff, including support to the Board of Directors and Board Committees.

Epler has been with the CPA for three years and provides accounts receivable, accounts payable, and CT CORE fiscal analysis in support of Haynes. Epler has more than 40 years of accounting-related experience in the public, private, and non-profit sectors and has served as the bookkeeper for several local municipalities as well as town treasurer.