



Connecticut Pilot Commission Public Meeting

Tuesday, March 4, 2025
9:00am

Location:
CT Port Authority Office
455 Boston Post Road, Suite 204
Old Saybrook, CT 06475

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Bill Gash called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

CPC Members in Attendance: Chair Bill Gash; Vice-Chair Mike Eisele; Wynne Bohannon; Joe Maco; Paul Whitescarver

CPC Members Absent: Chris Clark; Paul Liistro; Michael Peszke; Dave Pohorylo

CPA Board & Staff: Michael O'Connor; Fayola Haynes; Jill Dowling-Moreno

Public: Chris Murray; Robert McCollom; Matthew Butcka; Sean Meade; Arnold Skretta; Patrick Kennedy

2. Approval of the February 4, 2025 meeting minutes

Motion by Mike Eisele, seconded by Wynne Bohannon. So VOTED, with NO opposed and NO abstentions.

3. Public Comment – Public participation related to Agenda topics (limit to 5 minutes per person/topic)

Sean Meade noted that the pilots received the most recent soundings for the channel in New Haven. He noted that a letter will be sent to the terminals in New Haven stating the pilots' concerns that it would not be safe to load ships for 37 feet and the need to bring it down to 36 feet. Chris Murray noted that he drafted the letter that will be sent to the terminals. Sean Meade noted that the pilots will be meeting with the terminals next week to show them the areas of concern.

Sean Meade noted that maintenance dredging in New Haven Harbor is scheduled for October 2025, and that it was supposed to take place in 2020 but was pushed out due to the New Haven Harbor Improvement Project. Joe Maco noted that the maintenance dredging needs to be done every five to seven years. Michael O'Connor noted that Craig Martin from USACE confirmed that maintenance dredging is expected to begin in October 2025.

4. **U.S. Coast Guard Update**

Not in attendance

5. **CPA Executive Director Report**

Michael O'Connor noted that if pilots have any safety concerns, to please bring them to his attention right away and do not wait until the next meeting as waterways need to be safe for navigation and accessible.

Michael O'Connor provided an update on his communications with USACE regarding the projects planned in the state, and his discussions regarding dredging, CAD cells, and beneficial use. Paul Whitescarver and Michael O'Connor briefly discussed the dredging window of October through February. Michael O'Connor provided an overview of prior and upcoming meetings including the meeting he had with Congressman Courtney, the co-op meeting next week in New Haven, and the CMA Shipping conference he will be attending in April in Stamford (he will not be in attendance at the next Pilot Commission meeting). He also noted the hiring of Andrea Sangrey as the new Maritime Development Manager.

6. **Continuing Business**

(a) CT Pilot Apprentice Progress Update (Interport)

Sean Meade provided an update and noted that apprentice pilot Robert McCollum has completed his trips, and that they plan to submit them to the Connecticut Pilot Commission ("Commission") next week for review prior to the next Commission meeting. Bill Gash noted that Adam Richardson can send the recommendation letter and materials electronically and provide a hard copy to Connecticut Port Authority ("Authority").

(b) Recommendation for Revisions to Marine Pilots Procedures Regarding Qualifications, Selection and Training for New Applicants for a License as a Connecticut State Marine Pilot.

Michael O'Connor noted that the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Revision of Marine Pilots Procedures has been posted on the Authority's website and in the CT Law Journal, and that no comments have been received to date with a due date of presenting views by March 14, 2025. He noted that this will be included on the agenda for the Authority's Board of Directors meeting scheduled for March 18, 2025.

Mike Eisele noted that the working group that will review the qualifications will reconvene after the current apprentice pilot solicitation has concluded. Bill Gash noted the members of the working group are Mike Eisele, Paul Whitescarver, Joe Maco and Adam Richardson. Wynne Bohonnon expressed interest in joining the working group.

7. **New Business**

(a) Ship Arrivals 2024

Sean Meade provided a list of 2024 LIS Ship Arrivals to the Commission. He provided an overview and comparison to the previous year, noting that there was an increase of more than 25 ships this year due to State Pier being fully operational, and that Gateway New Haven had less bulk cargo but increased tanker traffic. He noted that the data shows total Long Island Sound ship arrivals of foreign flag that require a CT State Pilot in 2024.

Michael O'Connor asked if the pilots could handle more ship arrivals and Sean Meade noted that they can handle a lot more and provided some background information regarding ship arrivals for previous years back to 2006. Paul Whitescarver requested that information be provided to the Commission. Michael O'Connor noted that offshore wind is exclusive at State Pier currently and what could be there next. Joe Maco provided an update regarding the decrease in arrivals in Riverhead.

Chris Murray noted that he would provide a PDF of the soundings and leave the hard copy at the Authority. Michael O'Connor noted that he would give the hard copy back to Chris Murray next week.

8. Executive Session for the purpose of discussing apprentice pilot application review committee results

Motion by Mike Eisele to convene into executive session for the purpose of discussing evaluation of applicants for appointment as an apprentice Connecticut State Marine Pilot. Seconded by Wynne Bohannon. Paul Whitescarver invited Michael O'Connor and Jill Dowling-Moreno into the executive session.

So, VOTED with NO opposed and NO abstentions.

Mike Eisele noted that all attendees were in the room when the vote to convene into executive session was conducted.

It was noted that no votes would be taken in executive session and that the Commission would invite all attendees back into the room once out of executive session before taking any votes.

The Commission returned from executive session at 9:50am and public attendees were invited back into the room.

Motion by Mike Eisele to recommend to the Connecticut Port Authority that Matthew Butcka be appointed as apprentice Connecticut State Marine Pilot and that the Connecticut Pilot Commission provide the apprentice pilot applicant ranking to the Connecticut Port Authority with Matthew Butcka ranked number one and Patrick Kennedy ranked number two. Seconded by Wynne Bohannon.

So, VOTED with NO opposed and NO abstentions.

Sean Meade asked if the apprentice pilot could start logging trips now or if the recommendation has to go to the Authority Board first. Joe Maco asked if public attendees could state their names at future meetings. Michael O'Connor noted that he will check and let them know.

9. Adjourn

Bill Gash adjourned the meeting at 9:54am.

Next Meeting: April 1, 2025