

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for July 28, 2022, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on July 28, 2022 at the Sabine Pilots Office in Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated January 29, 2019. Meeting information and power point presentations are available electronically through the SETWAC website www.setwac.org.

1. Call to Order:

- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Mr. Whalen welcomed those attendance. 71 members and guests were in attendance at the Sabine Pilots Office. Mr. Whalen opened the floor to CAPT Wike.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- CAPT Wike welcomed those in attendance and thanked the Sabine Pilots for the use of their conference room. CAPT Wike congratulated SETWAC on the recent award of the “2020-2022 Harbor Safety Committee of the Year” for their work on the SNWW over the previous two years.
 - CAPT Wike presented United States Coast Guard Certificates of Merit to Nikki Fitzgerald (Commercial Fishing Representative) and Erik Stromberg (Chairman of the Education, Research and Workforce Development Sub-Committee) for their contributions to SETWAC, the SNWW family and the local community.

3. Approval of the April 28, 2022 Minutes and Proposed SETWAC Board Membership:

- A motion was made (CAPT Guidry) and seconded (Jim Robertson) to vote to approve the April 28, 2022 minutes. A vote was conducted; the minutes were approved.
- Dr. Keith Jones, Lamar State College Orange, was recommended and offered to Chair the Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-Committee. This is a non-term limited position. There were no objections to Dr. Jones assuming the Chair.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- CAPT Guidry, Sabine Pilots, commented on the slight increase in Ship v. Tow “slight touch incidents” during the previous two quarters, mostly due to overtaking maneuvers between the two intersections. A Ship-Tow Interaction Meeting was held and a decision was made to co-sponsor (with SETWAC approval) the 2022 Houston Area Brown Water-Bluewater Coordination Course. The intent is to hold a similar coordination course on the SNWW in

2023. A motion was made, and seconded, to approve co-sponsoring the Houston event. A vote was conducted; the motion was approved (slides on SETWAC website).

Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-committee Report:

- Mr. Erik Stromberg, Lamar University, thanked SETWAC and the Coast Guard for recognizing him and turned the floor over to Dr. Jones.
- Dr. Jones, Lamar University Orange, introduced himself to the group and indicated he looks forward to working with SETWAC and industry partners.

Port Welfare Public Ad-Hoc:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Seafarer's Center, briefed on the events, and Flag-State detention, of the Liberian-flagged M/T PRIORITY after receiving a report that there were grave issues aboard the vessel. He thanked the USCG and the Sabine Pilots for prioritizing and focusing corrective efforts with the vessel (slides on SETWAC website).
- Fr. Oubre thanked all parties who contributed to a successful "Camp Seaport" July 11-15, 2022. He also brought attention to the "IMO Day of the Seafarer," June 25, 2022, and "Sea Sunday," July 9, 2022.

Commercial Fisheries Report:

- Ms. Nikki Fitzgerald, Texas A&M AgriLife, reinforced the participation and success of "Camp Seaport" while thanking all entities who participated. She looks forward to "Camp Seaport II" in February.
- Ms. Fitzgerald announced the qualification of 5 new Marine Safety Instructors, one of whom is her. The new instructors successfully completed a 60-hour instructor certification course put on by Alaskan Marine Safety Education Association. Prior to the training/certification there was only one local certified Marine Safety Instructor. There are now five. She anticipates a CPR/1st Aid training session with local fisherman in January 2023.
- The July 6th Hurricane Meeting for local fisherman was successfully conducted. .
- Mr. Fitzgerald reported many local fishermen are struggling because the price of fuel is outweighing the price of shrimp. She stressed purchasing locally caught shrimp rather than the imported shrimp that is currently flooding the market.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:

- Larry Fountain, SNND, updated the group on the SNWW Deepening Project. Mr. Fountain indicated the Dutra Group is currently dredging offshore on Contract “2A” (new location of Sea Buoy inbound to LB’s 17/18). Contract “2A” should be complete by April 2023, at which time Contract “2B,” inbound from LB’s 17/18 to Cheneire LNG, will be implemented. Upon completion of Contract “2B”, SNND will implement Contract “3,” which will see dredging completed from Cheneire LNG to the Taylor Bayou Junction. Contract “3” should be completed by 2025.
- Mr. Fountain passed that “Renaissance” and “Connetico” will work together (in August 2022) to complete the offshore pipeline removal project. Mr. Kyle Reed intends to hold weekly meetings with the USCG, Sabine Pilots and concerned terminals, both ahead of and throughout the project, to minimize vessel traffic delays. Mr. Fountain indicated Mr. Reed will have the requisite information to begin holding these meetings in a couple of weeks.

Dredge Operations Report:

- Mr. Scott Sherman (USACE) spoke to ongoing and future dredge projects including PA-8 and PA-11 improvements; Neches River improvements; SNWW Entrance Channel to Sabine Pass deepening; Sabine Outer Bar & Bank dredging; the Orange County and Port Arthur & Vicinity Coastal Storm Risk Management Projects, and the Taylor’s Bayou Channel improvement proposal (slides on SETWAC website).

Area Maritime Security Report:

- Mr. Michael Arnett, USCG, addressed the group as the new Port Security Specialist at MSU Port Arthur.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- BM1 Sistrunk, USCG ANT Sabine, updated the group on the ALFA and UNIFORM Ranges. The ALFA FRL is built and working as designed. The ALFA RRL is in the final inspection stage and should be operational within a week. The ALFA range is now a day/night range (no dayboards). The UNIFORM Range is in the final stages of completing the land lease, after which a determination will be made as to location and height of the rebuild.
- BM1 Sistrunk indicated USCGC HATCHET recently repaired all discrepant fixed aids to navigation in the waterway. USCGC WALNUT will be arriving August 18. In addition to routine servicing of floating Aids to Navigation, WALNUT will relocate the Sea Buoy 600-yards to the east to facilitate dredging related to the deepening project.

- BM1 Sistrunk informed the group the ANT will be working closely with the COTP and the Sabine Pilots to “stormproof” the waterway and to possibly convert more ranges to day/night ranges.

5. New Business:

- Mr. Sean Marchant, Valero, proposed the creation of a sub-committee to study fair and equitable tug utilization and dispatch across the SNWW.
 - Mr. Whalen recommended the Navigation sub-committee take the proposal for action. There were no objections. CAPT Guidry, Sabine Pilots, to organize a meeting to review.
- Dr. Quentin Stubbs, NOAA, provided an update on survey requests (all have been forwarded to NOAA HQ). He informed the group of the proposed NOAA survey project for the SNWW (2023-24) and presented key questions for waterways partners concerning the deepening project and subsequent NOAA surveys (slides on SETWAC website).

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, October 27, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn:

- Mr. Whalen adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.