

# **SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Meeting Minutes for January 26, 2023, Full-Committee Meeting**

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on January 26, 2023 at MSU Port Arthur 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](http://www.setwac.org).

### **1. Call to Order:**

- SETWAC Vice Chairman, Mr. Randall Ogrydziak, called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Mr. Ogrydziak welcomed those in attendance. 72 members and guests were in attendance at MSU Port Arthur. Mr. Ogrydziak opened the floor to CAPT Suffern, MSU Port Arthur, Acting Commanding Officer.

### **2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:**

- CAPT Suffern welcomed those in attendance. He informed the group that CAPT Wike will be retiring on June 15, 2023. CAPT Anthony Migliorini has been ordered in as the new Commanding Officer/COTP.

### **3. Approval of the October 27, 2022 Minutes:**

- A motion was made (CAPT Guidry) and seconded (Mr. Jack Bradshaw) to vote to approve the October 27, 2022 minutes. A vote was conducted; the minutes were approved.

### **4. Expiring Terms and Vacancies for SETWAC Managing Board:**

- Mr. Ogrydziak informed the group of expiring terms of two managing board members and several current vacancies that need to be filled. He appealed for volunteers to fill these positions (slides on SETWAC website).

### **5. Committee Reports:**

#### ***Navigation Sub-Committee Report:***

- CAPT Guidry, Sabine Pilots, passed that the next “Blue Water /Brown Water” seminar will be cosponsored with the Houston Pilots. For those interested in attending, the event will be held at the Houston Pilots facility 20-21 April 2023
- CAPT Guidry indicated the Enterprise WSA is currently awaiting USCG OCMI approval.

#### ***Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-committee Report:***

- Mrs. Sadé Chick, Port of Beaumont, presented workforce training and continuing education initiatives including a BISD Maritime Program update and information pertaining to the construction of the Lamar State College Orange “Mobile Training Unit” (simulated barge). (information available under Community tab on the Port of Beaumont website).

***Port Welfare Public Ad-Hoc:***

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Seafarer’s Center, spoke to upcoming events including the Port Arthur International Seafarer’s Center Annual Cocktail Party; Seafarer’s Center of Beaumont’s Gator Country Crawfish Night; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Buddy Hicks Memorial Golf Tournament; the Texas National Maritime Day Gala and the National Maritime Day Observance at the Seamen’s Memorial Sundial (slides on SETWAC website).
- Fr. Oubre addressed Seafarers mental health and wellbeing (slides on SETWAC website).

***Commercial Fisheries Report:***

- Ms. Nikki Fitzgerald, Texas A&M AgriLife, informed the group of the success of the January 18, 2023 annual shrimper’s meeting. More than 130 area fisherman and presenters attended the meeting, highlighted by Congressman Randy Webber’s efforts and continued support of local shrimping.
- Ms. Fitzgerald announced the upcoming February 21-22, 2023 CPR/First Aid course.

***Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:***

- Representatives unable to attend.

***Dredge Operations Report:***

- Mr. Tim White (USACE) spoke to ongoing and future dredge projects, including deepening and widening plans, the offshore channel extension, Coastal Storm Risk Management Projects, and the Taylor’s Bayou Channel improvement proposal (slides on SETWAC website).

***Area Maritime Security Report:***

- Mr. Keith Pierre, USCG, indicated the AMSC Annual Report should be published shortly.
- Mr. Pierre introduced the newly-hired Port Security Specialist, Mr. Mike Hiatt.

***ATON Status/Projects Report:***

- BM1 Sistrunk, ANT Sabine, reported the Outer QUEBEC Range Front Light was relit; construction the UNIFORM Rear Range Light is to commence shortly, and Neches River

LB 2 was relocated shoreward to lessen the possibility of it being hit, dragged or sunk. USCGC HARRY CLAIBORNE is to be servicing Aids to Navigation in the area next week.

## **6. New Business:**

- Mr. Quentin Stubbs, NOAA, informed the group about surveying operations taking place in the Gulf of Mexico by the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON. Mr. Stubbs also said the NRT survey boat will be working throughout the Neches River (slides on SETWAC website).
- Mr. Whalen, USCG, presented the 2022 State of the Waterway (slides on SETWAC website).
- Mr. Whalen passed that Golden Pass LNG will be conducting tests of their high-pressure piping system sporadically over the next 2-3 years. This necessitates the establishment of Safety Zones in the test area when tests are being conducted. Three Safety Zones will be instituted (based on planned blast zone of pipes being tested); however, none should have significant impact on commercial shipping. The Jefferson County Marine Department will ensure F/V's vacate the testing area.
- Mr. Whalen relayed the start of a Port Access Route Study (PARS) taking place in the Gulf of Mexico. He briefly addressed the progress of Wind Energy Areas (WEA) to be constructed in the Gulf.
- Mr. Brian Hill discussed the Port of the Future Conference to be held in Houston April 4-6. Mr. Dwayne Davis (FEMA) will be in attendance and speaking on best practices to obtain port security grants. During the conference there will be panels on Strategic Ports and a Marine Highway Panel. Guest speakers include General Stephan Lyons, USA (Ret) and MARAD Administrator, Rear Admiral Ann Phillips, US Navy (Ret).

## **7. Next Meetings:**

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

## **8. Adjourn:**

- Mr. Ogrydziak adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.