

Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays of San Francisco, San Pablo, and Suisun

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PILOT FITNESS COMMITTEE MINUTES January 28, 2015 1:30 p.m.

Committee members present

Knute Michael Miller, Chairman
Brig. Gen. Chester L. Ward, MD
Robert Kosnik, MD
Capt. Joe Long

Committee member absent
Barbara Price

Staff present

Allen Garfinkle, Executive Director
Roma Cristia-Plant, Assistant Director
Kelly Dolcini, Staff Services Analyst
Sigrid Hjelle, Office Technician

Public present

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) Vice President Mike Jacob
Alan Hobbs, PhD. of San Jose State University
Hans Van Dongen, PhD., Washington State University (by telephone)
Kimberly Honn, PhD., Washington State University (by telephone)
OiSaeng Hong, RN, PhD, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), School of Nursing (by telephone)

Open Meeting

Prior to the start of the meeting, Chairman Miller introduced all Committee members present as well as members of the audience for those joining the meeting telephonically.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. He asked Staff Services Analyst Kelly Dolcini to call roll and found that a quorum was established.

2. Approval of minutes of Committee meeting of November 18, 2014.

MOTION: General Ward moved to approve the July 23, 2014, meeting minutes. Capt. Long seconded the motion.

ACTION: The Committee unanimously approved the minutes on a voice vote.

3. Fatigue Study Request for Proposals (RFP) informational conference call. (Chairman Miller)

Chairman Miller opened the floor to questions from researchers who had joined the meeting. Dr. Van Dongen spoke first to the importance of gathering all stakeholders for input in how the study will be conducted. He wondered who the stakeholders might be and whether they were all present. Chairman Miller and Executive Director Allen Garfinkle responded that the study was mandated by the legislature to the Board and delegated to the Pilot Fitness Committee, which would be the first point of contact and that the San Francisco Bar Pilots (SFBP) would also be involved via the Port Agent.

Dr. Van Dongen also asked if any other researchers would be involved. Chairman Miller replied that there are no other researchers who are contractually obligated to the BOPC. Capt. Long further answered that the San Francisco Bar Pilots (SFBP) had contracted with Drs. Charles Czeisler and Laura Barger to conduct separate research on pilot fatigue for the SFBP, and that the study has not been completed and released yet. Both Capt. Long and Chairman Miller indicated that the SFBP-funded study is a separate study, that these researchers do not have a contractual relationship with the Board, and that the SFBP study may be complementary to the Board's fatigue study.

Dr. Van Dongen further inquired whether the Pacific Maritime Shipping Association (PMSA) had any stake in the study. Mr. Jacob responded that PMSA had sponsored Senate Bill 1408, which mandates the study, but that PMSA would not take a formal role unless the Board requested the organization's participation.

Mr. Garfinkle answered a question from Dr. Honn and discussed the pilots' general work schedule, indicating that pilots typically work one week on and one week off, but occasionally a pilot can work two weeks on and two weeks off. He indicated that this schedule resulted from a recommendations stemming from a 1986 study conducted by Manalytics. Capt. Long further responded that deviations from the one week on/one week off work schedule are usually the result of either the need for additional seasoned pilots to work with junior pilots (also called "handholds") or pilot reassignments by the Port Agent for special and specific pilot skills, such as ship movements on the rivers.

Dr. Hobbs queried if there was pilot resistance to wearing monitoring devices, such as actigraphs, and indicated that actigraphs could provide valuable fatigue study data. Capt. Long replied that, based on feedback from pilots, there is great reluctance among pilots to any invasive monitoring equipment, and that the researchers should be aware of this fact.

He also indicated that there is also concern among the pilots that data gathered from devices such as actigraphs could be subpoenaed in the event of a maritime incident if the pilots was wearing the equipment when the incident occurred. Dr. Hobbs assured Capt. Long that there are ways to make the data confidential, and asked if pilots were resistant to other methods of gathering data. Capt. Long again responded that pilots are generally supportive of the study, and will submit to personal interviews and other methods of data gathering. Mr. Garfinkle stated that the selected researcher will have an opportunity to make a case to the pilots about the need to utilize certain data collection technologies, but repeated that there seems to be reluctance by pilots to using such technology as actigraphy. Capt. Long further added that researchers will want to think about including a “Plan B” for data gathering in a research proposal if the researcher is unsuccessful convincing pilots to use an actigraph or similar monitoring equipment.

Dr. Hobbs next asked if researchers would be able to observe the pilots at work. Chairman Miller and Capt. Long responded that researchers are encouraged to ride along with pilots and observe their work, and that a pilot’s transportation to ships is by pilot boats and vehicles, not helicopters.

Ms. Hong asked whether the researchers would be able to publish their work in scientific journals. Mr. Garfinkle responded that the final study will be a public document, and a researcher is free to publish the results once the study has been accepted by the Board. She further inquired about the budget and electronic data collection. Mr. Garfinkle stated that the Board does not have a designated budget for the study, and that price will be one of the factors reviewed by the committee when making a researcher selection recommendation to the Board. Assistant Director Roma Cristia-Plant added that budget dollars could be used to acquire equipment, but such details would need to be negotiated with the Board in compliance with State contracting rules and regulations.

In response to a question from Ms. Honn, Dr. Kosnik gave an overview of the current pilot physical fitness requirements, including annual exams involving questions about the pilots health and medications, the Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular 04-08 requirements, tests for illicit drugs, an annual agility test, and other testing if indicated, such as tests for obstructive sleep apnea. Mr. Garfinkle advised that the Board’s website contains the Board’s regulations involving medical requirements, Board medical assessment forms, and links to U.S. Coast Guard regulations and NVIC 04-08.

Chairman Miller called for any additional questions. There were none.

4. Public Comment on Matters not on the agenda.

There were no comments.

5. Proposals for additions to next meeting agenda.

There were no proposals.

6. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the Committee, Chairman Miller called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Capt. Long moved adjourn the meeting. General Ward seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Dolcini,
Staff Services Analyst