

Minutes	Pilot Safety Committee Meeting	Date:
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Committee Members Present

Capt. Steve Roberts, Chairman
Vice President Dave Connolly
Capt. Rick Hurt

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 Michael Jacob; San Francisco Bar Pilots (SFBP) Business Director/General Counsel Ray Paetzold; SFBP Commissioner George Livingstone; Port Agent Capt. Pete McIsaac; and, Board Past President Knute Michael Miller.

1. Call to order and roll call

Chairman Roberts called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and noted by inspection that a quorum was established.

2. Review and Approval of the December 4, 2014 Pilot Safety Committee minutes.

The minutes were discussed and Capt. Hurt questioned the record in that his recollection on who was to provide the Pilot Evaluation Committee with the article *Working with Others* from “The Human Element” publication. Executive Director Garfinkle agreed to provide the PEC with the information.

MOTION: Vice President Connolly moved to approve the December 4, 2014, Pilot Safety Committee minutes as amended. Capt. Hurt seconded the motion.

VOTE: Yes: Roberts, Connolly, Hurt.
No: None.
Abstain: None.

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ACTION: The motion passed.

3. Develop a mission statement and focus for the Committee.

The Committee reviewed its prior discussion of its mission from the October 2, 2014, meeting. Mr. Connolly read a statement that could serve as a starting point for a Pilot Safety Committee (PSC) mission statement. Mr. Paetzold stated that the human element is what the Committee has jurisdiction over. He reminded the PSC members that historically the Board has traditionally resisted reviewing pilot operational guidelines, and left that area to the pilots, United States Coast Guard (USCG) and others. He suggested that the PSC seek further Board guidance before finalizing a mission statement. Mr. Connolly agreed that they human element should be the primary focus of the Committee, but noted that there is often an overlap between the human element, technology and operational issues and that the Committee should not overlook areas of focus that crosses over b traditional concepts of jurisdiction. All agreed that the mission statement should remain on the agenda until complete.

4. Review and consider recent published material concerning “best practices” in piloting safety specifically, and maritime safety more generally.

Mr. Connolly shared that the National Transportation Safety Board’s (NTSB) *Most Wanted List* and the last item on the list was strengthening procedural compliance. Identifying and reviewing procedures is an area where risk can be reduced. The Committee also reviewed an article on airline pilot fatigue, which stressed the importance of procedural compliance to avoid human errors. Capt. Livingstone expressed the opinion that heavy reliance on automated flight contributes to skill degradation, a detachment from the manual skill set, and creates a false sense of security for pilots, which lead to errors. Mr. Connolly concluded the discussion by noting that events are down in number but that the consequences of an event is greater than ever.

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5. Review and discuss the Board’s October 23, 2014 order stemming from the USNS PONCHATOUOLA incident, which referred both the use of precision independent positioning devices for flat or dead ship tows transiting the UPRR Bridge and the need to evaluate proper tug configuration when engaged in flat or dead ship tows transiting the UPRR Bridge to this Committee for study.

Chairman Roberts read the IRC recommendation to the Committee. Mr. Connolly stated that, in spite of the IRC’s recommendation of no pilot error in the USNS PONCHATOUOLA, it had recommended that the Pilot Safety Committee review present procedures to determine whether it is appropriate for pilots to use precision piloting units (PPUs) during dead-ship transits of the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge (UPRR Bridge).

Capt. Hurt shared some of the unique aspects of dead-ship towing and reported to the Committee that aids to navigation are available and that pilots are never denied this requested assistance. He also noted that the precision equipment is intended for use in cases where the vessels are so large and the tolerances so small that eyes are not a precise enough tool. He added that there are quite a different set of circumstances than the challenges presented by transiting the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge (UPRR Bridge) with a dead tow. Capt. Hurt felt that the chain of error in this case was quite evident in this incident.

Mr Connolly stated that this was an opportunity for the pilots to use the IRC findings as a tool and that all available means should be utilized in the interest of safety. Capt. Hurt expressed his concern that the Committee not recommend a standard that is unrealistic. He additionally noted that pilots discuss IRC reports informally and requested that all IRC reports be distributed to all pilots so that they can be used as discussion tools at meetings.

It was discussed that the Board recommendations also mentioned tug usage. Mr. Paetzold felt that distributing the order to the pilots may make they feel as if they must utilize this equipment, and see it as a Board mandate to use the PilotMate device in situations where professional judgment might deem otherwise.

Capt. Roberts pointed out that there are only a few vessels left in the National Reserve Fleet, so the discussion may be moot.

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6. Review United States Coast Guard (USCG) Report of the Investigation into the Circumstances Surrounding the Incident Involving the T/V OVERSEAS REYMAR Allision with the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and accompanying recommendations with particular attention to recommendations #5 and #6 recommending the development of a mechanism to evaluate pilots while underway and piloting, and that the BOPC consider additional training in low visibility/restricted waters radar navigation, respectively. Develop plan to implement recommendations.

The Committee discussed the recommendations made by the USCG and the feasibility of their implementation. Chairman Roberts felt that there may be some economy by waiting to see how the American Pilot Association (APA) addresses the issue. Mr. Connolly disagreed noting that the Board was specifically mentioned in the Report, that the Board has sole jurisdiction over the regulation of pilots in this area, and that the Board has a duty apart from the APA to implement the appropriate changes.

Chairman Roberts suggested that the Committee inventory what is currently being done with regard to the enhanced restricted visibility training and that is aligned with the recommendations and document those actions.

Mr. Jacob suggested that the Board write a letter documenting the ways in which it is already fulfilling the spirit of the recommendations, how it maintains authority and responds to incidents, as well as how California Department of Transportation actions are informed by the Board.

As for in-situ review, Mr. Connolly noted that it amounts to a sea change in piloting. He further noted that trainees and new pilots are constantly being reviewed, but that after the initial phases there is a lack of evaluation while actually piloting. Capt. Hurt added that the issue is one of a pilot, working alone, may be insulated as piloting is such a singular role. The issue is one of how the Board and SFBP ensure that best practices are being followed.

Capt. McIsaac added to the discussion by noting that as pilots age, it is possible for their skills to degrade, but that peer review or a check ride once a year is unlikely to catch that issue. Mr. Connolly expressed his opinion that even in a “best behavior” review there is some value in learning new methods associated with professional critical feedback, and since very serious deficiencies could be uncovered among other reasons...

Due to the depth of the issue, it was agreed to revisit this discussion at the next meeting.

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7. Identify and Discuss possible options for funding and conducting an under-keel clearance study for crossing the San Francisco Bar.

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Identify and discuss existing risks and current action to mitigate such risks. Identify and discuss possible actions to mitigate risks that have been identified.

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9. Public comment on matters not on the agenda.

There were no comments.

10. Proposals for additions to next Committee meeting agenda.

There were no proposals.

11. Adjournment

Due to time commitments of the Committee members, the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Kelly Dolcini