

BOARD OF PILOT COMMISSIONERS
Minutes May 23, 2002

The Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun regular meeting was held in the Port of San Francisco, Bayside Room #1, Pier One, San Francisco, CA, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday May 23, 2002, Commissioner Falaschi presiding. A quorum was present, including Commissioners Bayer, Rosequist, Wagner, Welch and Winn. Also in attendance were Port Agent Captain McIsaac, Board Counsel Ray Paetzold, Executive Director Moloney and BOPC Secretary Alice Evans and various members of the public. Commissioner Lundeborg arrived at 10:00 a.m.

The Minutes of the April 18, 2002, meeting were unanimously approved as amended. Page 3, Unfinished Business, #5. Pilot Training Curriculum Committee report, 3rd line change "pre-student cost" to "per student cost".

Correspondence and Activities since the April meeting – Executive Director Moloney

1. The Board received a letter date May 4, 2002, from Captain Dana A. Wirkala, regarding the pilot trainee selection simulator test.
2. The Board received a letter dated May 13, 2002, from Alberto L. Gonzalez, Special Assistant Attorney General, regarding Disabled Access Enforcement Letter to Local Public Entities
3. The Board received a letter dated May 16, 2002, from Carroll, Burdick & McDonough LLP, regarding Public Records Act Request for legal services contracts.
4. The Board received a letter dated May 20, 2002, from Captain Oliver Pierre, regarding the pilot trainee selection written examination procedures.
5. The Board received a letter dated May 20, 2002, from Benicia Port Terminal Co., regarding the SFBP rate allocation increases and an advisory letter regarding same from Board Counsel Paetzold, White & Brodsky, dated May 20, 2002.

Copies are available in the Board office.

Other Pilot Matters -- Executive Director Moloney

1. The Board issued license renewals to SFBP Captains Chadwick, Chapman, Fuller, Gabe, Horton, Sweeney, D. Weiss, Wells and Inland Pilot Captain Slough during the month of May.
2. The Board has received the manpower reports and statements for pilotage fees and surcharges collected from SFBP through March 2002 and Inland Pilot Slough through April 2002. Copies are available in the Board office.

Port Agent's Report -- Port Agent Captain McIsaac

1. There are currently two pilots NFFD. Captain Rosen will be off the board until June 15, 2002, recovering from back surgery. Captain Hughes continues to recover from heart bypass surgery on May 1. There is no established FFD date. Captain J. Weiss was NFFD from April 29 to May 8, 2002, while recovering from burns on his hand. Captain Simenstad returned to work on May 22 after recovering from shoulder surgery.
2. There was one MRP violation on April 25, with a rest period of ten hours. There were nine MRP violations on May 4. The shortest rest period was seven hours and thirty minutes. There were five pilots off the board; two NFFD, two on comp time and one pulled personal.
3. The passenger vessel STAR PRINCESS aborted her attempt to anchor in Monterey Bay due to inclement weather on May 5. (The pilot had boarded in San Diego so the transfer at sea was not an issue.) The vessel proceeded to San Francisco.
4. Through April 2002:

Bar Crossings	-5.0%
Bay Moves	-19.5%
River Moves	+16.0%
Total Moves	-7.1%
GRT	-1.3%

Compared to same time last year.

Unfinished Business

1. Open Incidents – Executive Director Moloney
 - a. M/V ORIENTAL HOPE, allision at Parr 5B, Richmond, August 27, 2001, Pilot Captain D. Keon – Executive Director Moloney distributed copies of the findings of facts and continued with the IRC report.

The fendering was discussed at length. It was noted that there was insufficient information on the condition, suitability and size of the Yokohama fender and the reasons for its failure and on the nature and substance of the improper pilot conduct on departure from the dock as noted in the IRC report. The Board discussed its responsibility to the public for safety and quality of pilot services. It was moved and seconded to return the matter to the IRC for additional investigation and review to address these issues. Commissioner Falaschi asked for discussion. It was discussed and agreed that if the pilot's conduct on the dock was not relevant to the incident or to his pilotage duties, the statement would be stricken from the IRC report. There being no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.
 - b. M/V CEFALONIA, grounding San Joaquin River, light 56, January 8, 2002, Pilot Captain Steve Roberts – Executive Director Moloney distributed copies of the findings of facts and continued with the IRC report.

PROBABLE CAUSE

On 7 January Capt S. Roberts was assigned to pilot the tanker CEFALONIA, carrying molasses to Stockton. He would join the vessel at the Pittsburg pilot change area. Prior to going to Pittsburg, he went to Stockton to drive as much of the route as he could to check the visibility on the river.

He joined the vessel at Stake Point and the pilot he relieved advised him that one of the radars had a heading flasher that was 2° off. Capt Roberts request that the master have it adjusted and the other radar put in head-up mode. During the attempts to adjust the radars, gyro course presentation was observed to be off as much as 25°.

Visibility held at about two miles. When the vessel was in the vicinity of the Antioch Bridge, Capt Roberts noted that the radar heading flasher and gyro presentation were still in error. He advised the master that if visibility deteriorated, the vessel would have to go to anchor. Visibility remained fairly good until in the vicinity of Potato Point it dropped to about a quarter of a mile.

As the visibility dropped, Capt Roberts had the vessel slowed to half ahead. The vessel turned at Webb Point and headed for Potato Point. As they approached, Capt Roberts ordered the rudder left and a new course of 126°T, but the helmsman over steered and came to 121°T. Visibility continued to drop and slow ahead was ordered on the engine.

At the completion of the turn Capt Roberts observed by radar that the vessel was too far left in the channel and ordered a new course of 130°T. Very shortly after that order, with the vessel abeam light #55 he ordered right 20° rudder, then midship and to steady on 153°T. The vessel began to turn but then sheered to starboard from bank cushion and/or bank suction. In the fog the swing was not apparent and it wasn't until the helmsman said he swinging past the course that it was recognized. The rudder was hard left but the vessel was still swinging right. It grounded gently with a slight roll to port on a heading of 158°T at 1848.

The vessel attempted to back off unsuccessfully and the port anchor was lowered. The USCG was notified, tugs from Stockton ordered and tanks sounded. There was no spillage or as subsequent inspection confirmed, any damage at all. Capt Roberts remained on the vessel until the following day when it was refloated using additional tugs at 1218. It was easily refloated one hour prior to high water. He was relieved by Capt O'Laughlin and remained aboard until the vessel berthed in Stockton.

OPINIONS

1. Environmental conditions were not unusual, but were challenging.
2. The vessel's radars were not properly adjusted, with heading flasher and gyro error.
3. The vessel's rudder did not consistently move to 35 degrees angle on demand.
4. The vessel's helmsman was not able to consistently make course changes on demand.
5. Capt Roberts speed reductions were prudent under the prevailing visibility.
6. In the final set of turns prior to the grounding, the helmsman oversteered the requested course getting the vessel into a sheer from bank cushion and/or suction. Due to the requirement to stay at low speed the vessel's sheer could not be broken and it grounded gently on the side of the channel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Close this case. No pilot error. Capt Roberts showed good planning and forethought by driving as much of the route as he could ahead of the job to observe visibility conditions.

2. His discussions with Capt Limaye on correcting the radars and the consequences on not having well tuned equipment being anchoring until visibility improved, showed prudence.
3. When the visibility began to deteriorate, Capt Roberts was not in a good position to anchor. He slowed and prepared to anchor in a safer area. As noted later in the transit, he may not have been getting the amount of rudder he had ordered and in any case it appears that the helmsman was having difficulty changing to new courses.
4. When the visibility dropped to about a quarter of a mile, Capt Roberts showed prudence in reducing speed again, but in doing so, may have lost some steering capability. The helmsman still did not have the vessel under control and the subsequent grounding was gentle and resulted in no damage, partly because of the low speed.
5. Actions subsequent to the grounding were thorough and professional. Refloating was attempted with the most accessible and economical assets. When that didn't work, more capable tugs were called for which resulted in a successful, uneventful refloating. The Board Investigator noted that Capt Limaye complimented Capt Roberts on his coolness and good seamanship under the circumstances due to weather conditions.

It was moved and seconded to accept the IRC report. Commissioner Falaschi asked for discussion. The Board discussed the fluctuation of the gyro heading on the radar and the pilot's decision to continue before the problem could be corrected. In hindsight, anchoring earlier until the electronics problems were corrected could have averted the grounding. It was noted that the pilot anticipated anchoring after Prisoner's Point Bend. There being no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

2. Pilot Ladder reportable incidents – Executive Director Moloney – no reportable incidents.
3. Rules and Regulations Committee -- Commissioner Welch – no report.
4. Finance Committee -- Commissioner Winn – no report.
5. Pilot Training Curriculum Committee -- Commissioner Wagner – report on status and cost of sending two pilots to MITAGS to evaluate “Anti-terrorism Awareness for Maritime Pilots” course – Commissioner Wagner reported the MITAGS 1-day course will be given on June 19, 2002, at an anticipated cost of \$250 per student (assuming a full class of 20 students).
6. Ad Hoc Pilot Power Committee -- Commissioner Wagner – status report re recommendation to update the 1986 San Francisco Pilots Manpower Model – no report.
7. Trainee Selection Process -- Executive Director Moloney -- status report on results of examinations held week of April 22, 2002 – receipt of the test results and the report of the Office of Examination Resources are anticipated in early June.
8. Pension Committee – Commissioner Bayer -- report on Committee meeting held May 17 -- Harbors and Navigation Code, Section 1167 regarding Review of Benefits – **possible Board action re same** – The Committee meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled – no report.

9. IMO STCW requirements; extending deadline for compliance – review Coast Guard response to Harbor Safety Committee letter; discussion and determination of Board's position -- **possible Board action** – the Board discussed the letter dated April 10, 2002, to the Harbor Safety Committee from the USCG regarding the guidance issued by the IMO concerning enforcement of the STCW Code and the Coast Guard's intent to strictly enforce the STCW Code commencing August 1, 2002. The Board directed Board staff to forward a letter to the USCG regarding its appreciation of the direction of the USCG regarding the enforcement of the STCW requirements.

New Business

1. Public Comment on matters not on the agenda – there was none.
2. Proposals for additions to next month's agenda -- there were none.
3. M/V GAZ DIAMOND, grounding San Joaquin River, Lt 38, May 14, 2002 – Executive Director said this incident is under investigation.

Schedule next regular meeting – the next several meetings were scheduled as follows:

June 27, 2002	9:00 a.m. at Port of San Francisco Pier 1, Bayside Room #1, San Francisco
July 25, 2002	Place to be determined
August 22, 2002	Place to be determined
September 19, 2002	Place to be determined

Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice A. Evans
Secretary