

July 31, 2008

PAGE 1

STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,  
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING  
**BOARD OF MARINE PILOTS**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**July 31, 2008**

**Teleconference**

**B**y the authority of AS 08.01.070(2), AS 08.62.030, and in compliance with the provisions of provisions of AS 44.62, Article 6, a meeting of the Board of Marine Pilots was held July 31, July 31, 2008 by teleconference.

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 1400 by Chairman Austerman and the Marine Pilot Coordinator (MPC) conducted roll call.

Members present constituting a quorum was:

Mr. Robert Arts	- Agent Member	Anchorage
Mr. Joe Austerman	- Commissioner's Designee	Anchorage
Captain Dale Collins	- Pilot Member	Juneau
Mr. Les Cronk	- Agent Member	Ketchikan
Captain Mike O'Hara	- Pilot Member	Anchorage
Mr. Joseph Miller	- Public Member	Fairbanks
Mr. Jack Poulson	- Public Member	Juneau

Staff present was:

Renda Heimbigner, Marine Pilot Coordinator (MPC)	Juneau
--	--------

Guests present were:

Captain John Webb	Retired
Paul Axelson	North Pacific Maritime/YSA
Captain Richard Gurry	SEAPA
Captain Jeff Pierce	SWAPA
Kate Tesar	Alaska Steamship Association
Captain Pete Garay	AMP
Tom Reuter	Alaska Maritime Agencies

**Review / Set Agenda**

A notice of imminent shortage of pilots in Region One was the only agenda item.

**Agenda Item 1**      **Imminent Shortage of Pilots - Region One**

It was noted that 08.62.080 allows the Board to consider temporary licenses for the affected region after consultation with the recognized pilot organization and registered agent in the affected region. The Board began their review of SEAPA's notice with a summary from Captain Richard Gurry. He addressed the shortage raised in his letter of July 27, 2008 and emphasized the shortfall was anticipated for brief periods of time with foreign pleasure craft representing the major challenge. He gave a brief scenario for the nature of yacht itineraries, unknown arrivals and the difficulties that presented for pilot scheduling. He said the vessels referenced were for the most part larger yachts not eligible for an exemption from pilotage. Questions followed.

Captain O'Hara asked about Region One part-time and recently retired pilots that could be pressed into greater service. Captain Gurry explained only 3 pilots worked part time and for either health or family reasons, none could provide more time than already pledged. He added no retired pilots in their region held current licenses.

Captain Pete Garay, President of Alaska Marine Pilots, offered two licensees from his region with experience in Region One. Captain David Lund had worked as small freighter captain in Southeast and Captain Carter Whalen held federal pilotage for the region. Mr. Arts asked about billings. Garay gave his suggestion but explained it had not been discussed. The Chairman clarified the Board's concern would be for licensure and dispatch would be outside of the Board. Captain O'Hara questioned the actual shortage. Discussion followed.

Captain Jeff Pierce, President of Southwest Alaska Pilots Association, raised questions for both compensation and schedule for the temporary pilots. Mr. Austerman offered the idea of a 60-day license. Mr. Poulson asked about supporting regulations and how to gain Commissioners recommendation. Mr. Austerman identified his ability to speak on behalf of the Commissioner.

The MPC provided an update on 3 unexpected demands for pilotage service within the last four days from yachts either in violation of their exemption or unannounced arrivals. Mr. Cronk agreed the situation was challenging and outlined the options as granting the temporary licenses or letting the vessels go without a pilot. Kate Tesar from Alaska Steamship Association asked if this process had been initiated before and Captain O'Hara answered it had not.

**July 31, 2008**

PAGE 3

Questions followed. Captain Webb gave a brief description of his qualifications for piloting in Southeast. He suggested the problem could be adequate hiring of pilots for the region. Captain Gurry explained SEAPA had 12 trainees with federal pilotage as an example for SEAPA's attempt to fill the demand. Discussion followed.

Captain O'Hara objected to emergency licenses at this time and suggested the issue be dealt with by regulation after the Board had time to digest the matter. Mr. Cronk clarified the alternative to temporary licensees as vessels transiting without pilots. O'Hara expressed concern for qualified local knowledge and maintaining State standards. Paul Axelson, Alaska Yacht Services, agreed there was potential that a pilot might not be available. Mr. Cronk agreed. O'Hara emphasized Region One trainees were more qualified for licensure by their recency. Discussion continued.

Captain Dale Collins gave his feelings for the current statute as forcing the Board between licensing a lesser qualified pilot or letting a vessel proceed without one. He offered the latter as the least offensive. Captain Garay clarified their offer to help was in the event of emergency need, not economic. Mr. Cronk gave insight to private vessel preferences and clarified Sergis and Wrangell Narrows as 'no go' areas without a pilot. Captain Gurry stated it had never been a problem covering commercial vessels or critical waterways for private yachts. It was specifically the unknown schedules that defined the current challenge.

Captain Collins called attention to regulation that allowed a vessel to move without a pilot should one not be available. He felt it a better solution than licensing persons that did not meet the standard qualifications. He encouraged greater attention to raising the number of qualified licenses to satisfy increasing demand. Captain Pierce commented on actions taken in Region Two to encourage trainees.

It was agreed to table the issue pending actual shortage and the Chairman directed the MPC to notify the Board at such time. On a motion by Captain O'Hara, seconded by Mr. Cronk, and carried unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1516.

**July 31, 2008**

Respectfully submitted:

---

Renda Heimbigner  
Marine Pilot Coordinator

---

Joe Austerman, Chairman  
AK Board of Marine Pilots