

MOBILE MARITIME COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: February 16, 2000; 1000-1130

LOCATION: Trade Center, Killian Room

CAPT Dave Carey (Harbormaster)

LT Rich Schultz (USCG MSO)

AGENDA: Capt Carey and LT Schultz started the meeting with introductions and a review of the agenda as follows:

Elect committee chair and vice-chair
Discuss subcommittee needs
Theodore update & success
McDuffie Coal Terminal brief
Cruise Ship Terminal brief

Communication issues
Delta Mariner brief
ATON issues
ACOE issues

Capt Carey provided background information on where the Port of Mobile Maritime Committee has been and how it has been loosely organized and activated as issues occurred. LT Schultz discussed the need to become more formally organized, citing examples from other Gulf coast ports, to better serve the needs of the port into the future. This could begin today by electing a committee chair and vice-chair, as well as decide on possible subcommittees. At this time, Capt J. J. Kichner, Capt of the Port, expressed his desire to form a more cohesive maritime committee in the port in order to meet the needs of a growing port with some obvious changes about to occur in the near future. Capt Kichner informed the group of the upcoming Harbor Safety Committee meeting in New York on March 6-7, 2000. An information pamphlet was passed around, and the web site (www.motivatorsconference.com) was announced.

Before the meeting proceeded with the scheduled agenda, John McClelland of Midstream Fuel Services, recommended electing the chairs and subcommittees at the end of the meeting. Everyone was in agreement.

Theodore Update & Success: Wendell Spencer of Environmental Treatment Team, the Theodore Subcommittee Chairman, informed the group of the decrease in incidents and problems in Theodore since a formal subcommittee was formed on November 1, 1999. The barge fleeting area has been moved, which had been a potential hazard in that area of the turning basin. Communications have improved, and companies have contacted him when questions or concerns have surfaced. Both he and John Chapman of Mobile Woodchip, vice-chairman, recommended the Port of Mobile try to organize more formally as well.

McDuffie Coal Terminal Brief: Capt Carey discussed the issue of the Alabama State Docks McDuffie Coal Terminal beginning to import more coal than it exports, and that the number of ships at the terminal will increase and be in and out of port on a regular schedule. Also, the possibility exists that the vessels will unload coal directly to barges on the outboard side. This operation would extend into the Mobile River channel. Provisions will be made so that the operation can be broken down in an acceptable amount of time and out of the way in the event of an emergency. It is unknown at this time, when these coal ships will start this operation on a regular basis at McDuffie. This brief also led to the discussion of ship sailing schedules, costs of delays, and vessel priorities sailing and arriving the Port of Mobile.

Cruise Ship Terminal Brief: Al St. Clair with the City of Mobile described the city's downtown redevelopment plan with respect to three initiatives on the waterfront. First and foremost was the intent to have cruise ships calling on the Port of Mobile by the end of the year, and utilizing the State Docks container dock when available, but more likely the Convention Center as an interim cruise ship terminal facility. Talk of cruise ships and tight vessel scheduling in and out of the port caused further discussion of vessel priorities, costs, and spreading the possible pain when it came time for a company's turn to get delayed. Group discussion of a possible subcommittee to tackle this issue ensued.

Communications Issues: There were no significant radio communications issues to report, just the normal information passed that vessels that do not normally transit the area do not communicate at times, especially in the lower end of the flats. However, this conversation led to Capt Mareno of the Mobile Bar Pilots addressing the idea of having a weather information buoy located on Dixie Bar that would supply information on currents, wave height, wind, etc. This prompted Capt Carey to mention that the National Weather Service had been in contact with him to offer support in port needs.

At this point LT Schultz asked the group for suggestions on what other industries/companies should be part of the Mobile Maritime Committee. Following is a list of those recommended additions (some listed, were contacted, but not able to attend the meeting this day):

Benders Shipbuilding	Harrison Brothers
Atlantic Marine	National Weather Service
OrSouth	ACL Fleet
U.S. Customs	Navy Liaison
Parker Towing	Bisso Marine
CSX	Cooper Fleet

The minutes to this meeting will be sent to these companies for their information.

Delta Mariner Brief: Capt Kichner briefed the group on this vessel that will be operating on the inland waterway from Decatur, AL through Mobile carrying rocket boosters to California or Cape Canaveral, Florida. The vessel is designed to draft 8 feet of water on the rivers and ballast down to 12 feet for open ocean transit.

ATON Brief: CWO Steve Seymour introduced Senior Chief Gary Bean as his new assistant at Group Mobile ATON and continued further about the Cutter Wedge working on the Tenn-Tom Waterway adjusting and placing buoys, but any Broadcast Notice To Mariners (BNTM) are probably not heard 20 miles past Mobile. BTNMs are also broadcast from Group Ohio Valley. In emergency or urgent situations, the Group Mobile notifies the Lock & Dams and operations managers of the tow boat companies in the area by phone. Local Notice To Mariners are posted on a web site at www.navcen.uscg.mil/lnm/d8GM/. Capt Carey recommended CWO Seymour and Paul Hartman of Warrior and Gulf Navigation formalize a system so that BNTMs are received.

ACOE Brief: Paul Bradley passed that the Dredge Columbus is continuing work in the Mobile Ship Channel. Also, several contracts will be awarded shortly for dredging operations in the Black Warrior River and Mobile River. The Arlington Channel dredging contract will take longer due to contamination problems with the spoils. ACOE Notices to Navigation are posted at www.sam.usace.army.mil/ in the Navigation section.

Other Items of Note:

- M/V Wheat is back in port, 120' longer, at Benders Yard #4
- Jordan Pile Driving will be setting bridge girders for the new express bridge to Gulf Shores, 5 miles east of State Road 59, sometime within the next 2-3 weeks. The GICW will be blocked for at least one day while the center span is being placed. The GICW may be closed to one way traffic for 3-4 hours during crane transit to and from the bridge site.
- U.S. Customs national boarding policy changed where they no longer board vessels to grant preliminary entry, however this policy has not been changed in the Port of Mobile. Customs will be scheduling a meeting with agents and industry to discuss.
- More Navy vessels are starting to make stops in the port, and not just for Mardi Gras. Upcoming vessels include the USS Warrior on Feb. 24, USS Tortuga, USS Avenger, USS Gladiator, and USS Osprey on Mar. 2, USS Normandy on Mar. 17, and the Tall Ship Californian on May 20.
- Gulf Coast Symposium takes place April 9-12. An EPA research vessel will be in port.
- May 20th is Port Day at the Alabama State Docks.

Subcommittees: Two subcommittees were formed with the following people volunteering to chair them:

- Vessel Priority Subcommittee: Capt Wildon Mareno, Mobile Bar Pilots
Tadd Willcutt, Crescent Towing
- Broadcast Notice To Mariners: Paul Hartman, Warrior and Gulf Navigation
CWO Steve Seymour, USCG Group ATON

Mobile Maritime Committee Chair and Vice-Chair Election: The following two committee members bravely volunteered to be the Mobile Maritime Committee chairmen for the next year:

Chair: Jeff Mynatt of Strachan Shipping Agency, (334) 433-5401

Vice-Chair: Capt Dave Carey, Harbormaster, Alabama State Docks, (334) 441-7250

MSO Mobile will provide administrative functions as needed.

The next meeting, including a luncheon, is scheduled for Wednesday, April 12, 2000 from 1130 to 1300 at the USCG Anchor and Shield. A fax requesting attendance will be sent in advance.

This meeting was adjourned, on time, at 1130. The meeting minutes are also posted on MSO Mobile's web site at www.uscg.mil/d8/mso/mobile.

Thank you for the participation. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to LT Rich Schultz or PO Wayne Williams at Marine Safety Office Mobile at (334) 441-5121.

Have a Safe and Happy Mardi Gras!