

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY OF THE PORT OF BALTIMORE**  
**HARBOR SAFETY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**December 13, 2023 10:00 AM**  
**Association of Maryland Pilots**  
**3720 Dillon Street**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21224**

***Attendees:***

*Association of Maryland Pilots (MD Pilots):* Captain Eric Nielsen, Captain John Kinlein, Captain Beth Christman  
*Dominion Energy:* Justin Strassfield (via phone)  
*Gahagan Bryant Associates (GBA):* Brian Newbury  
*Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR):* John Gallagher, Ken Choi  
*Maryland Environmental Service (MES):* Stephanie Peters  
*Maryland Port Administration (MPA):* Ryan Barry, David Bibo, Kathleen Pickett (via phone), Rockye Truelove (via phone), Brian Miller, Holly Miller, Rachel Miller (via phone)  
*Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA):* Hua Sheng He, Heather Lowe, Bob McKenzie  
*Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC):* Valerian Riviere  
*Moran Towing Corporation:* Jonathan Steinberg, Mark Deptula  
*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Coast Survey (OCS):* Ryan Wartick  
*NOAA Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS):* Chris DiVeglio  
*NOAA Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS):* Nicole Kruz  
*National Weather Service (NWS):* Kevin Witt (via phone)  
*Ports America Chesapeake (PAC):* John Bevilacqua (via phone), Bennett Creighton (via phone)  
*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District:* Eric Lindheimer, Rachel Kierzewski, Ian Delwiche  
*U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Auxiliary:* Henry Hayes (via phone)  
*USCG, District 5 (D5):* Albert Grimes (via phone), Tom Rader (via phone)  
*USACE, Philadelphia District:* Michael Hart  
*USCG, Regional Exam Center-Baltimore:* Scott Taylor  
*USCG, Sector Maryland–National Capital Region (MD-NCR):* Doug Bullock, Fred Dolbow, Michael Klopp, Jen Luik (via phone), Morgan Merritt, Joshua Motta, Kate Newkirk, David O’Connell, Baxter Smoak  
*US Wind:* Ben Cooper

**Action Items**

**Philadelphia District – USACE**

P2 – Consideration of Arnold Point emergency anchorage/turning basin. *Ongoing. No update.*

**Baltimore District – USACE**

B6 – Deepen one of the Harbor anchorages to 50 feet. *Long-term request – The Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study, which was a three-year, \$3M joint venture between USACE and MPA, to deepen the Seagirt Loop channels started in October 2020 and looked at deepening one of the Anchorages*

*to 50 feet. An economic study conducted as part of the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study did not support a 50-foot-deep anchorage in Baltimore Harbor.*

### **USCG Sector Maryland–National Capital Region**

C5 – Construct upper reach York Spit Channel range lights to be positioned below York River Channel. *On hold due to 50' Widening Study; completion of lights scheduled for 2020. No update.*

C6 – Evaluate traffic separation scheme (TSS) at Smith Point. *Ongoing – Removal of the TSS was published in the Federal Register on August 15, 2023, Docket Number USCG-2023-0330. Public Comment period has ended. Changes to the buoy in conjunction with the TSS removal has also been listed in the Local Notice to Mariners (LNM). Project to convert buoy to a red and white striped buoy (as proposed) being submitted for signature; conversion will coincide with official TSS removal.*

C26 – Rebuild Craighill Channel Range lights. *Cleveland Engineering Unit update dated Dec 1, 2023: Contract award still expected spring 2024.*

C27 – Investigate possibility of replacing Curtis Bay Range with light(s) near the far end of the range line at Sollers Point. *Ongoing – PEL has been purchased. Project is currently pending shipping confirmation. Preliminary installation timeline tentatively scheduled for spring/summer 2024.*

### **MPA**

M6 – Evaluate the possibility of dredging in two (2) areas around the Seagirt Marine Terminal to address areas of concern identified by the MD Pilots as pinch points: an area around 3SW Buoy turning into Seagirt and widening an area off Buoy 1C in Colgate Creek. Priority would be area off Buoy 1C in Colgate Creek. *Ongoing – USCG moved Buoy 3 as part of the Seagirt Berth 3 Dredging project. MPA is widening Colgate Creek in two phases. The first phase of dredging occurred in June-August 2021. USCG relocated Buoy 1C during the first phase of dredging and returned to its post-dredging position on March 30, 2022.*

### **General Action Items**

- MPA, NOAA, USACE, and the Pilots will coordinate to identify locations where the NOAA electronic navigational chart (ENC) does not accurately reflect channel conditions and to determine how to resolve the inaccuracies, and then NOAA will update the ENC with accurate information. *Ongoing.*
- USCG will develop a communication subcommittee to improve coordination and safety between parties relevant to work events on the bridges.
- Captain Kinlein will coordinate with USACE, USCG, and the Delaware pilots regarding communications for ships approaching the C&D Canal from the south.

## **Statements for the Record**

### **1.0 Greetings and Introductions**

**David Bibo, MPA**

- Mr. Bibo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
- Attendees present and those available by phone introduced themselves and stated whom they represent.
- USCG presented a public service award to Maryland Pilot Captain Brian Grube, for efforts to rescue boaters in need.

### **2.0 Approval of Summary for Record**

**David Bibo, MPA**

- Mr. Bibo asked for a motion to accept the September 2023 meeting summary. He noted that the obstruction discussed on page four of the summary was taken care of by the MPA.
- The motion was put forth and the summary was accepted.

### **3.0 Tier 2 Bay Crossing Study**

**Heather Lowe, MDTA**

- Ms. Lowe provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix A**.
- Ms. Newkirk inquired if a tunnel is still a viable option, or if the crossing would most likely be a bridge. Ms. Lowe responded that MDTA is still looking at the possibility of constructing a tunnel. Late next year, MDTA will have a better idea of potential crossing options and may include them in a public notice of intent.
- Mr. DiVeglio asked if the traffic studies were pre-pandemic or during the pandemic. Ms. Lowe stated the traffic studies occurred post-pandemic (2022). She noted that traffic patterns have changed since the pandemic.
- Captain O'Connell inquired how the determination of the bridge height would be made if a bridge is selected. Ms. Lowe responded that MDTA is working with MPA to ensure that any ships that would potentially be coming into the port would not be precluded. The Pilots have recommended a minimum bridge height of 228 ft, but preferably higher.
- Mr. Riviere asked if there is any project planned for the Key Bridge. Ms. Lowe stated there aren't any current plans; increasing the height restriction at the Bay Bridge would create a shipping bottleneck at the Key Bridge.
- Mr. Bibo inquired if anyone in the community has asked for some type of amenity built for their community because of the project impacts. Ms. Lowe stated that the project impacts have not yet been defined, so this has not been requested; MDTA will be coordinating with the communities and talking about mitigation for potential impacts in the future.
- Ms. Lowe stated that the project includes a large consultant team to complete all the necessary studies. The NEPA process should be completed by the end of 2026.
- Mr. Wartick inquired whether a tunnel or a bridge is more capable of responding to future maritime commerce needs, since a bridge would require an air draft restriction and a tunnel would require a draft restriction. Ms. Lowe stated that the tunnels have restrictions pertaining to how wide they could be, while bridges do not have that issue; more studies need to be completed to weigh the pros and cons of the options.

#### 4.0 U.S. Coast Guard Updates

**David O’Connell, USCG MD-NCR**  
**Baxter Smoak, USCG MD-NCR**  
**Joshua Motta, USCG MD-NCR**  
**Doug Bullock, USCG MD-NCR**

- Captain O’Connell noted that domestic ice season has arrived; USCG has kicked off associated internal and external meetings.
- USCG is very short-staffed, especially at the enlisted level; consequently, they are undergoing a force realignment. Station Still Pond will be switched from a seasonal small station to a forward operating base, with search and rescue response out of Station Curtis Bay. Station Oxford and Station Crisfield will be switched to scheduled mission stations, with search and rescue coverage handled by Station Annapolis and Station St. Inigoes, respectively; these changes will take place by late spring. A similar force realignment is also occurring in Sector Virginia. Station Milford Haven and Station Wachapreague will be scheduled mission stations. The scheduled mission stations will work scheduled hours, potentially shifting the hours to when there is more boating traffic; they would not be in any recall status. While USCG will still be held to the 2-hour response time, there will be certain times they won’t be able to meet that response time.
- USCG Training Center Cape May is supposed to take in 4,200 new recruits a year, but this hasn’t been met in the last five years.
- Mr. Kinlein asked if the Aids to Navigation Teams (ANT) will see a similar effect as the stations and be shorter staffed. Captain O’Connell stated that ANT Potomac and ANT Crisfield will not be short-staffed.
- Mr. Motta provided information regarding Aids to Navigation per the presentation provided in **Appendix B**.
- Mr. Bullock noted that this ice season will be a little bit different because USCG will use technology rather than having people go out and do ice reports every day. Ms. Newkirk noted that USCG will still heavily rely on the mariners to make ice reports.
- Mr. Bullock provided information regarding Waterways Management per the presentation provided in **Appendix B**.

#### 5.0 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District Updates

**Mike Hart, USACE Philadelphia**

- Mr. Hart stated that Kokosing began dredging operations in the upper Chesapeake and Delaware (C&D) Canal and the C&D basin on December 4 and are expected to continue through mid-March. Approximately 500,00 cubic yards of dredged material will go to the Pearce Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF).
- Construction at St. Georges Bridge will continue until October 2024. No air gap restrictions or channel restrictions are associated with this work.
- Work will begin on the Reedy Point Bridge in spring 2024. No air gap restrictions or channel restrictions are associated with this work.
- Regarding the lift bridge contract: H&H had to advertise their contract; bids are due back on December 19. Mr. Hart will share bridge closure information as he receives it.

## 6.0 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District Updates

**Eric Lindheimer, USACE Baltimore**  
**Ian Delwiche, USACE Baltimore**  
**Rachel Kierzewski, USACE Baltimore**

- Mr. Lindheimer noted that the previous Navigation Branch Chief Graham McCallister has returned as a program manager for beneficial use. Mr. Lindheimer is now the permanent Navigation Branch Chief for the Baltimore District.
- Mr. Lindheimer noted some recent staffing changes. For surveys of federal channels or debris removal in federal channels: Andrew Payson, lead of the Survey and Debris Section. Ian Delwiche is the new Navigation Section Chief.
- Mr. Delwiche, Ms. Kierzewski, and Mr. Lindheimer provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix C**.
- The Seagirt Loop Modification Project may start physically dredging in 2026. There is some uncertainty with determining a specific date due to timing of authorization and appropriations.
- Mr. Lindheimer thanked the pilots who moved ships as far west as possible when transiting past the construction at Barren Island. Notification of the proximity to the shipping channel will be included in the next construction contract since the work will be occurring even closer to the shipping channel. Captain Kinlein relayed the difficulties of slowing shipping vessels while transiting this area. USACE and the Pilots will continue to communicate with each other regarding this subject.
- Captain O'Connell thanked the USACE survey team for being able to quickly get to the site of a sinking vessel in the channel, which avoided a channel shutdown.
- Mr. Riviere asked if there would be any dredging around Sparrows Point. Mr. Lindheimer responded that a dredging project at Sparrows Point is being conducted by the property owner; no USACE maintenance dredging is occurring there.
- Mr. Grimes asked if he could obtain a copy of the plans pertaining to the Chesapeake Channel realignment due to a possible relocation of buoys. Mr. Lindheimer will send him the plans once completed. Captain Kinlein stated that the Pilots would like the permanent position of the buoys to remain as-is.

## 7.0 NOAA/NOS/NWS Update

**Ryan Wartick, NOAA/OCS**  
**Chris DiVeglio, NOAA/PORTS**  
**Nicole Kruz, NOAA/CO-OPS**

- Mr. Wartick provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix D**.
- Slide 2: Electronic Navigation Chart (ENC) map scales are being converted from 1:40,000 to 1:10,000 or 1:20,000. Additionally, the NOAA custom chart tool can only print a chart at a scale one resolution step higher or lower than the previously existing resolution. NOAA is working with the Virginia Pilots on testing the scale conversion and identifying issues.
- Captain Christman voiced her concern about changing the scale of the maps, requesting a prioritization of its resolution. Due to the changing of the scale of the map, new pilots will have to learn to draw more parts of the map during their training.
- Slide 3: Mr. Wartick mentioned that NOAA has been slowly adding hydrographic survey data to the channels; Fort McHenry and Curtis Bay channels have just been added.
- Mr. DiVeglio provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix E**.

- Slide 8: Mr. DiVeglio asked for feedback during or after the meeting regarding the Bay Bridge-East Second Air Gap figure, noting that the numbers on the figure shown were just placeholder numbers. Mr. Wartick questioned if the chart is going to be updated to contain the two air gap sensors. Mr. DiVeglio stated that the charts don't typically include the air gaps sensors, but NOAA would likely issue a Local Notice to Mariners regarding the change. Captain Kinlein also supported keeping the figure as simple as possible for safety.
- A naming convention must be determined to differentiate the Bay Bridge stations.
- Mr. DiVeglio reminded everyone that since ice season is coming up, that the water level sensors at all the stations are equipped with primary and backup sensor technology.
- The National Harbor Safety meeting will be held in March in Chicago; registration will open after the holidays.

**8.0 Maryland Department of Natural Resources Updates** **John Gallagher, MDNR**  
**Ken Choi, MDNR**

- Mr. Gallagher introduced Dr. Ken Choi, who replaced Ann Williams as the manager for the Hydrographic Engineering Support Branch.
- Three ice breakers are prepared to be used during the ice season.
- DNR has been removing abandoned ships at a rate of about one a week.

**9.0 Maryland Transportation Authority Updates** **Bob McKenzie, MDTA**

- Chesapeake Bay Bridge: The second air gap sensor is operational; Mr. DiVeglio verified that it is operational, but the public products haven't been turned on. For the next six months, repairs will be ongoing on the westbound bridge outside of the navigation channels with no impact on commercial or recreational boat traffic. The gusset plate repairs on the eastbound suspension span will start during the first few weeks of February. Clearance restrictions will be established with USCG before starting the repairs. Repairs to the eastbound bridge main span over the navigation channel will take place within the next several months; the access plan has been submitted to USCG. This work will not reduce the vertical under clearance. MDTA will continue bi-weekly access updates to USCG. The eastbound bridge deck replacement stair tower has been installed on Pier 33 between the main channel and the secondary channel. Installation of temporary scaffolding on the trusses between the main channel and the secondary channel is in progress. Utility relocation and replacements of the truss plates and rivets are ongoing. MDTA's website has a page about the eastbound bridge deck replacement including the construction timeline, alerts to boaters, and frequently asked questions. Bridge work within the next six to twelve months includes routine repairs on both eastbound and westbound bridges outside of the navigation channels; no impact on commercial or recreational boat traffic is anticipated. In the 2024 inspection cycle (occurring all year), there will be the need to put a crew in the main channel about 240 feet from the east tower to inspect the eastbound suspension spans. Inspection may be at night if the visibility can be maintained.
- Mr. Smoak asked if the inspection would involve snooper trucks below the lowest piece of steel. Mr. McKenzie answered that it would, which shouldn't affect marine traffic.
- Francis Scott Key Bridge: The installation of the relocated Key Bridge navigation lights has been completed; there will no longer be contracts in the channel for that work. The design for the additional red margin lights has been finalized and is awaiting approval from Mr. Hal Pitts. After approval construction will begin within six months. USCG and other concerned parties

will be notified two weeks before work begins. The work itself will be expected to take four to six months and take place on the far edges of the navigational lane. There is no contract or task order work scheduled within the next six to twelve months that will affect the navigational lane. The annual inspection is to be completed within three days, sometime in 2024. A snooper truck on the deck will take a close look at the four beams under the main channel stand on the north side near the east pier. There will also be a boat of some kind in the water, one of the three days of the inspection.

- Captain Kinlein stated that USCG D5 must grant permission two weeks before construction, so the notification of work to USCG must occur prior to that. Ms. Newkirk clarified that USCG does not necessarily need to grant permission, but rather indicate that they don't have any safety concerns. The sooner a notice of construction is given to USCG the better, and preferably at least 30 days in advance of the start of work. Mr. Miller recommended coordinating a subcommittee meeting that shares a notice to all relevant parties, to avoid any potential safety issues. Mr. Riviere agreed that notification of bridge work is not reaching all relevant parties (including the shipping companies), which is why he is attending this meeting. Captain Kinlein provided more examples of miscommunication occurring, supporting why more communication is needed to occur between everyone to prevent any future accidents.
- Mr. Smoak mentioned that there used to be a subcommittee that allowed people to communicate with one another and would like a similar subcommittee meeting to occur. USCG will devise a course of action by this committee's next meeting.
- Ms. Newkirk mentioned that there are other ways (besides the Local Notice to Mariners) to get information out in a more real-time timeframe.

## **10.0 Association of Maryland Pilots Updates**

### **Captain John Kinlein, MD Pilots**

- Captain Kinlein complemented the Coast Guard and the local AtoN units for their quick response time.
- Captain Kinlein praised the USCG ANT for their quick response to AtoN needs.
- Pilots are noticing rapid shoaling at Craighill Angle.
- USCG D5 got the approval for the change of the Smith Point traffic separation lanes. NOAA charts will be updated once the approval process is complete.
- Captain Kinlein mentioned potentially revising the protocol used in the event of the loss of steering or propulsion of a ship approaching the Bay Bridge or Key Bridge, due to the unreliability of reaching someone in the current protocol. Ideally the pilots would contact someone immediately by VHF or telephone and say they need to shut down the bridge due to an emergency situation.
- Captain Kinlein inquired about the possibility of USACE gaining navigation traffic management jurisdiction over an additional 12 miles to the west of where it currently is approaching the C&D Canal (which is the "point of no return" for a ship) – so, the area from Town Point to Howell Point. Due to the increasing size of ships, they need more notice to slow down or stop should they not be able to enter the canal due to weather issues or traffic. Captain Kinlein wants the 12 miles to be added to give an earlier notice of the ships' arrival. Mr. Smoak stated that the reality of changing jurisdiction and authority in an area where USACE has no interest is probably not possible. He recommended getting together offline to communicate with USACE and the Delaware pilots to resolve this issue, most likely through a communications procedure.

### **11.0 Maryland Port Administration Updates**

**David Bibo, MPA**

- Mr. Bibo stated that MPA had four private dredging projects this year (Tradepoint Atlantic, Erasmus, Consol, and Amports).
- Fleet Week will be in June 2024; no dredging is associated with the event.
- Future dredging projects: Sail Baltimore will be in summer 2026. USACE will be doing maintenance dredging of the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Channels. Tradepoint Atlantic has scheduled maintenance dredging during the winter of 2025. USCG has two dredging projects planned; one a shiplift (~10,000 cy) and the other channel dredging (~500,000 cy).
- Mr. Bibo noted that, due to limited capacity, the MPA placement sites prioritize accepting only maintenance dredging projects.
- Mr. Taylor stated that some marine companies are in need of manpower; he can assist with any credentialing issues that may limit their manpower capacity, if needed.

### **12.0 Comments/Adjourn**

**David Bibo, MPA**

- Mr. Dolbow gave a brief overview of the Salvage and Marine Firefighting Subcommittee. Over 75 people attended the last exercise, including ten separate fire departments; all three primary salvage and marine firefighting resource providers; both qualified individual companies; federal, state, local agencies; and several local commercial marine stakeholders. Some takeaways include the need for a preestablished communications plan and that there are several mutual aid agreements in place. There is an abundance of firefighting assets in this area and regionally. Another strength is the preestablished stakeholder relationships. The next subcommittee meeting is December 14 at the Baltimore County Fire Department's Fire Academy. The subcommittee is considering working on an exercise geared towards dinner cruise ships. The recommendation to get rid of the waiver that exempts certain boats from pre-installed fire detection and suppression systems will also be under discussion.
- The 2024 meetings will be held on March 13, June 12, September 11, and December 11.