

## BOARD FOR BRANCH PILOTS MEETING

### MINUTES

The Virginia Board for Branch Pilots met on Monday, February 2, 2006, at the Hampton City Council Chambers, 22 Lincoln Avenue, Hampton, Virginia, with the following members present:

Bruce R. Cherry  
Captain J. William Cofer  
Captain Milton B. Edmunds  
William M. Martin, III  
Edgar A. Massenburg  
Captain W. Hugh McCrory, Jr.  
Meade G. Stone, Jr.

Staff present for the meeting were:

Brian Hannigan, Chief Deputy Director  
Mark N. Courtney, Executive Director

Cynthia Norwood, Assistant Attorney General, was present at the meeting.

Board members Robert T. Hasler, Jr., President, and Captain Robert H. Callis, III, were absent from the meeting.

Finding a quorum of the Board present, Mr. Cherry, Vice-President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Call to Order**

Captain McCrory moved to approve the agenda as written. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

**Approval of  
Agenda**

Mr. Martin moved to approve the minutes from the November 1, 2005, Board meeting as amended. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

**Approval of  
Minutes**

Captain McCrory provided the Board with a report of the examinations conducted by the Examination Administrators on February 1, 2006. The following report was made:

**Examination  
Administrators  
Report**

Chadwick M. Jamison

Captain Jamison answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven, Sewell's Point and Newport News, safe vessel speed, the deep water route, naval nomenclature, chain of command on military vessels and port security. Captain Jamison stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain McCrory moved that Captain Jamison be raised from the Hotel classification (725 ship units and a maximum draft of 41 feet or 550 ship units and a maximum draft of 45 feet) to an unlimited branch pilot license. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

Michael S. Eubanks

Captain Eubanks answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven, Sewell's Point and Newport News, safe vessel speed, the deep water route, port security and the characteristics of heavily laden vessels. Captain Eubanks stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain McCrory moved that Captain Eubanks be raised from the Foxtrot classification (550 ship units and a maximum draft of 35 feet or 375 ship units and a maximum draft of 38 feet) to a Golf classification (625 ship units and a maximum draft of 38 feet or 450 ship units and a maximum draft of 42 feet). Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

Clarence M. Young

Captain Young answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven, Sewell's Point and Newport News, safe vessel speed, master/pilot exchange of information, vessel and terminal security, and docking without towboat assistance. Captain Young stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain McCrory moved that Captain Young be raised from the Delta classification (400 ship units and a maximum draft of 31 feet) to the Echo classification (475 ship units and a maximum draft of 33 feet). Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

Torrence A. Rogers

Captain Rogers answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven, Sewell's Point and Newport News, safe vessel speed, master/pilot exchange of information, vessel and terminal security, and docking without towboat assistance.

Captain Rogers stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain McCrory moved that Captain Rogers be raised from the Delta classification (400 ship units and a maximum draft of 31 feet) to the Echo classification (475 ship units and a maximum draft of 33 feet). Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

Jacob R. Johnson

Captain Johnson answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included safe anchoring positions in Lynnhaven, Sewell's Point and Newport News, safe vessel speed, the northeast sea lanes, master/pilot exchange of information, vessel and terminal security, and docking without towboat assistance. Captain Johnson stood a good examination and was found to be qualified. Captain McCrory moved that Captain Johnson be raised from the Bravo classification (175 ship units and a maximum draft of 22 feet or 125 ship units and a maximum draft of 25 feet) to the Charlie classification (325 ship units and a maximum draft of 29 feet). Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

The Board reviewed a letter and accompanying charts from Captain Jacob Johnson dated December 21, 2005, regarding an incident involving the M/V GEYSIR.

**Captain Jacob  
Johnson, M/V  
GEYSIR**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2005, Captain Johnson was ordered to the M/V GEYSIR, which was due at the Cape Henry Pilot Station at 1500. The M/V GEYSIR is a single-screw, variable-pitch ship with a minimal bow thruster. The M/V GEYSIR's length is 295'6" and her breadth is 45'. The draft of the ship was 14'6". Once on board at 1500, the master pilot exchange was conducted and all the vessel's equipment was found to be in good working order. The ship's Captain and Captain Johnson discussed that they would be docking at the Transatlantic Dock in Little Creek Harbor; a docking that Captain Johnson had observed or conducted successfully many times. Captain Johnson discussed with the ship's Captain that there were two barrack barges in the same slip as it had been on the ship's last call and they reviewed the plan for docking.

The dock is approximately 270' long. There is approximately 210' of width in the slip, but that distance was reduced to approximately 90' – 100' with the barges. The wind was out of the west-northwest at 10 to 15 knots and the current off the berth was negligible.

The vessel was off the berth at 1620. Captain Johnson positioned the M/V

GEYSIR to approach the berth at a negative angle with the engine stopped and the vessel drifting at less than two knots. The negative angle of approach was in anticipation of the transverse thrust when the engine is put astern, causing the ship's stern to move to port. As Captain Johnson had noticed from being an apprentice on the M/V GEYSIR and from piloting the ship, this characteristic seems to be exaggerated on this vessel. With the engine stopped, and the ship drifting toward the pier, Captain Johnson used the bow thruster to maintain the ship's heading and the necessary negative angle of approach. As the bow entered the berth, and the pivot point was just clearing the corner of the berth, Captain Johnson ordered the engine to be put dead slow astern to stop the remaining headway. Captain Johnson directed a forward spring line to be passed ashore so that it would be used to check the ship's headway as well as to work against to bring the ship alongside.

As Captain Johnson backed the engines and the stern swung to port, Captain Johnson used the bow thruster to maintain the bow's position off the berth. The swing of the stern brought the ship's heading parallel with that of the pier with the ship being approximately 20' off the berth and 20' off the barge APL 45. With the ship well inside the berth and the headway stopped, Captain Johnson ordered the engine to be stopped. The stern continued to slowly swing to port. The port quarter of the M/V GEYSIR came to gently rest on the port bow of the barge APL 45. The spring line was secured firmly and Captain Johnson ordered the rudder to be put hard to port and the engine dead slow ahead to move the stern away from the barge APL 45 and safely along side the berth.

There was no noticeable damage to either vessel aside from a small area of scratched paint on the barge APL 45. Captain Johnson immediately called the US Coast Guard to report the incident. On December 23<sup>rd</sup> Captain Johnson sailed the M/V GEYSIR from Sewell's Point to sea, and the ship's Captain informed Captain Johnson that the US Coast Guard had determined that there was less than \$1,000 total damage to both vessels and, because of that, no further action would be pursued by the US Coast Guard.

After discussion, Mr. Martin moved that the letter be filed and that the Board take no action, as there appears to be no violation of the Board's rules, regulations, or statutes. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone

Mr. Martin inquired of Mr. Courtney as to whether the Board had a meeting in December as he thought they had previously approved the minutes from the November 1, 2005, meeting at a meeting in December. Mr. Courtney stated that Mr. Martin was correct and he would obtain the draft minutes from the December 12, 2005, meeting for the Board's review. The Board

#### **Other Business**

members took a break from 10:17 a.m. to 10:25 a.m. while Mr. Courtney obtained a copy of the minutes. The Board members reviewed the minutes from the December 12, 2005, Board meeting. Captain McCrory moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which was approved by Messrs. and Captains: Cherry, Cofer, Edmunds, Martin, Massenburg, McCrory, and Stone.

Conflict of Interest forms were completed by all members present.

**Conflict of Interest  
Forms**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

**Adjourn**

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Bruce R. Cherry, Vice-President

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Jay W. DeBoer, Secretary