

**BOARD FOR BRANCH PILOTS MEETING  
MINUTES**

The Virginia Board for Branch Pilots met on March 14, 2024, at the Virginia Port Authority, 600 World Trade Center, Norfolk, Virginia, with the following members present:

Aaron Anseeuw  
Captain E. Waightstill Avery  
I. Vincent Behm, Jr  
Captain Robert H. Callis, III  
Captain J.W. Whiting Chisman, III  
Michael W. Coleman  
Captain January N. Collins  
Patrick B. McDermott  
Christine N. Piersall

Staff present for all, or part of the meeting were:

Kishore S. Thota, Director  
Steve Kirschner, LRPD Deputy Director  
Tom Payne, CID Deputy Director  
Kathleen R. Nobsch, Executive Director  
John Robertson, IV, Communications and Digital Media Manager  
Ecila Williams, Administrative Coordinator  
Jemmalyn Hewlett, BPOR Liaison

Brian Wolford, Chief Deputy Director, was not present with regrets.

Elizabeth Peay, Assistant Attorney General with the Office of the Attorney General, was not present with regrets.

Member of the Audience included:

Mark Coberly, Manager, Maritime Law Department, Representative from Wood Rogers Vandeventer Black PLC

Finding a quorum of the Board present, Mr. Coleman, President, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**Call to Order**

Ms. Nobsch advised the Board of the emergency evacuation procedures.

**Safety  
Evacuation  
Instructions**

Ms. Nobsch introduced John Robertson, IV as the new Communications and Digital Media Manager for DPOR and Ms. Hewlett as the BPOR Liaison for the Board.

**Announcement**

Mr. Coleman informed the Board that a Pilot launch was involved with a rescue of three persons in the water after their 75' motor yacht caught on fire. He reported that Branch Pilot and Board for Branch Pilots member Captain Jan Collins was on the launch at the time and asked her for comments.

Captain Collins shared with the Board that she, launch operator Joel Otroba, deckhand Nick Fillion and Branch Pilot Captain Chad Jamison responded to a mayday call on March 8, 2024, from a motor yacht that caught on fire. Limited Branch Pilot, Captain Austin Capps was assisting from the tower, and after the three people were rescued, they were brought ashore and treated by local EMS. Mr. Coleman thanked them for their quick response and service.

Mr. Behm moved to approve the agenda. Captain Callis seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott, and Piersall.

**Approval of  
Agenda**

Mr. Behm moved to approve the minutes in block for the following dates, with amendments to the December 11, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes:

**Approval of  
Minutes**

- i. Board for Branch Pilots Board Meeting, December 11, 2023
- ii. Board for Branch Pilots Public Hearing Minutes, December 11, 2023
- iii. Board for Branch Pilots Major Incident Response Plan Committee Meeting Minutes, December 11, 2023, 2023

Ms. Piersall seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott and Piersall.

Captain Avery moved to make amendments to the December 11, 2023, Major Incident Response Plan Committee Meeting Minutes: Captain Chisman seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott and Piersall.

There was no public comment.

**Public  
Comment  
Period**

Captain Callis provided the Board with a report of examinations conducted by the Exam Administrators on March 13, 2024. The following committee members were present, Captains: Avery, Callis, Chisman, and Collins; and Director Thota, Mr. Kirschner, Ms. Nosbisch, and Mr. Robertson, DPOR

**Exam  
Administrator's  
Report**

Staff. The following report was made:

Austin C. Capps answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included courses and distances from Cape Henry to Wolf Trap and from Cape Henry to Cheatham Annex, safe anchoring positions in Sewell's Point, Lynnhaven, York River and Cape Charles, anchorage regulations in the Regulated Area, quarantine anchorage, pipeline, cable and restricted areas, opening restrictions and characteristics of the George P. Coleman Memorial Bridge, rules regarding meeting Ultra Large Container Vessels and LNG vessels in York Spit Channel, Cape Charles harbor, safe anchoring distance and under keel clearance, precautions in reduced visibility, local traffic and local knowledge, limitations of bow thrusters and determining the need for tugboat assistance for docking/undocking and safe vessel speed.

After considering the results of the examination, Captain Callis moved Austin C. Capps for a raise in grade to a Charlie license (38,000 gross tons and 34 feet maximum draft), and initial license to include upon the Chesapeake Bay from Sea to Wolf Trap to include Cape Charles Anchorage and from Sea to Cheatham Annex upon the York River. Ms. Piersall seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott, and Piersall.

Matthew C. Morse answered oral questions related to the raise in grade. The subjects included courses and distances from Cape Henry to Wolf Trap and from Cape Henry to Cheatham Annex, safe anchoring positions in Sewell's Point, Lynnhaven, York River and Cape Charles, anchorage regulations in the Regulated Area, quarantine anchorage, pipeline, cable and restricted areas, opening restrictions and characteristics of the George P. Coleman Memorial Bridge, rules regarding meeting Ultra Large Container Vessels and LNG vessels in York Spit Channel, Cape Charles harbor, safe anchoring distance and under keel clearance, precautions in reduced visibility, local traffic and local knowledge, limitations of bow thrusters and determining the need for tugboat assistance for docking/undocking and safe vessel speed.

After considering the results of the examination, Captain Callis moved Matthew C. Morse for a raise in grade to a Charlie license (38,000 gross tons and 34 feet maximum draft), and initial license to include upon the Chesapeake Bay from Sea to Wolf Trap to include Cape Charles Anchorage and from Sea to Cheatham Annex upon the York River. Mr. McDermott seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott, and Piersall.

Director Thota arrived at 10:48 a.m.

**Arrival of  
DPOR Staff**

Ms. Nobsisch informed the Board that there has been no movement at this time regarding fee adjustments.

**Regulatory  
Update**

Ms. Nobsisch informed the Board that public comment for General Regulatory Review ended January 3, 2024, and there were no comments. After a brief discussion, Captain Collins moved to adopt the regulations and authorize staff to file the proposed stage. Captain Callis seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott, and Piersall.

Ms. Nobsisch informed the Board that public comment for Amend the Reporting Requirements ended January 19, 2024, and there were no comments. After a brief discussion, Mr. Behm moved to adopt the regulations and authorize staff to file the final stage. Mr. Anseeuw seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by Messrs., Mme. and Captains: Anseeuw, Avery, Behm, Callis, Chisman, Coleman, Collins, McDermott, and Piersall.

Mr. Payne presented to the Board the final Major Incident Response Plan for information purposes. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus for the Major Incident Response Plan Committee to reconvene along with DPOR staff to review the plan. Captain Avery and Mr. McDermott were appointed to the committee along with the original committee members Mr. Anseeuw, Mr. Behm, and Captain Chisman. A meeting date for the committee and DPOR staff will be confirmed before the next board meeting.

**Major Incident  
Response Plan  
Update**

Captain Chisman informed the Board that a new contract with Acorn Care Primary & Urgent Care has been secured to provide state chemical testing of the branch pilots. Captain Chisman explained to the Board that the new provider will satisfy both federal and state comprehensive drug screening requirements.

**State Chemical  
Testing**

Ms. Nobsisch stated the financial statements were provided for informational purposes.

**Financial  
Statements**

Ms. Nobsisch informed the Board that Board Member Training Conference is scheduled for October 10, 2024, to October 11, 2024, at Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, VA

**Other Business**

Director Thota informed the Board that Ms. Nosbisch was recognize for her contributions to DPOR by the Governor of the Commonwealth on March 13, 2024.

Mr. Kirschner presented to the Board a presentation on the regulatory process.

**Regulatory Training**

Conflict of Interest forms and travel vouchers were completed by all members present.

**Conflict of Interest Forms and Travel Vouchers**

The meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

**Adjourn**

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Michael Coleman, President

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Kishore S. Thota, Secretary