

# Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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## August Highlights

A total of (21) twenty members and guests were registered for the August 12, 2020 luncheon meeting on the Gateway Clipper, Princess. Due to Covid restrictions, the July summer picnic on the Gateway Clipper had been rescheduled for this date.

Mike Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Executive Director, Carole Ann Krelow. She is replacing long-time ED, Cheryll Cranmer, effective immediately. Cheryll will be available to provide support to Carole Ann through the end of 2020.

Covid restrictions limited the amount of time the Coast Guard could spend at the meeting and attendees were not allowed to stay for the luncheon; the meeting order was altered to allow for their restriction.

## Coast Guard News

Coast Guard CDR Aaron Demo was in attendance and after introductions began the Coast Guard portion of the meeting by presenting a **Public Service Commendation** awarded from the Department of Homeland Security and the United States Coast Guard to David J. Podurgiel "Pod". His recognition being due to, "notable services that have assisted greatly in furthering the aims and functions of the Coast Guard". CDR Demo spoke particularly of the effectiveness of Pod's plan of action regarding the dual barge breakaway this year. His plans included safety measures to keep traffic moving and keep essential marine workers safe while managing the emergency. We congratulate Pod on his excellent work and this well-deserved recognition.

ENS William Russell advised:

- ① LT Christy Smith has departed her position as Prevention Department Head. Lt Jim Dunbar now holds this position.
- ① There have been media reports, that the "Floating Cinema" is coming to Pittsburgh Waterways. The Coast Guard has yet to be contacted with any of the details, without proper plan details being submitted, permission or permits have not been made available for this venture.

The **attached** report was reviewed.

The 2020 Pittsburgh Maritime Association Scholarship Recipients were recognized, and certificates awarded.

## Navigation Committee Report

David Podurgiel provided the following report:

- ⌚ WAP COVID-19 Tasks Force update: Meetings have been cancelled till further date/time if the need arises.
- ⌚ We are experiencing below normal operating conditions as local rivers are in pool stage but multiple areas of shoaling especially on the Monongahela River; the USACE has not made any moves to restrict drafts.
- ⊙ **Montgomery Lock: Closure of both the 110-ft x 600-ft primary chamber and the 56-ft x 360-ft auxiliary chamber is tentatively scheduled for:**
  - ⌚ August 13 @ 0700 thru August 14 @ 1700. Restrictions for entering and departing the downstream end of the primary chamber must be followed during the following time periods (tentative): August 14 @ 1701 thru August 15 @ 0700, Restrictions are as follows: When entering and exiting the downstream end of the primary chamber, towboats shall use minimal power as required to reduce prop wash. This low throttle/slow-bell restriction shall be adhered to within 300 feet of the middle wall bullnose when entering and departing the lock chamber. During the 'restriction' period the WAP Navigation Committee will be reaching out to the Port Captains of the vessels in queue so the proper communication is received by their vessel on the importance of these guidelines. A few years back a vessel washed out the new concrete sill at Emsworth and we cannot let this happened again.
  - ⌚ A meeting was held on July 14 between the Navigation Committee and USACE representatives to discuss the upcoming Emsworth Lock closure of the Primary Chamber from August 31 thru November 14, all worked together to develop the NTNI.
    - MAJOR DELAYS TO NAVIGATION: The 110-ft x 600-ft primary lock chamber at Emsworth L/D will be closed from 6:00 AM August 31, 2020 through 11:59 PM November 13, 2020. The 56-ft x 360-ft auxiliary chamber will remain open to navigation, except during the first three weeks and final week of the project the auxiliary chamber will experience intermittent closures of 16 hours or less. PROCEDURES: Throughout the duration of the job, vessels entering and exiting the auxiliary chamber shall be at restricted throttle "slow-bell".

## Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Scott Harshman provided the following report:

- ⌚ The Commission and staff continue to operate, both remotely and with limited office hours, due to COVID-19.
- ⌚ Work continues on the Economic Impact Study. We anticipate the study to be available in September.

- 🕒 The Port of Pittsburgh Commission worked with the Inland Rivers Ports & Terminals trade association on new legislation in Congress, the Coastal and Inland Ports and Terminals Commerce Improvement Act. The PPC worked closely with the IRP&T in helping to secure the sponsorship of the bill by Congressman Conor Lamb and co-sponsorship by Congressman Guy Reschenthaler, both representatives from our region. The bill, H.R. 7416, was introduced on June 29th and we're happy to report that it was included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act that was passed by the full House on July 21st.
- 🕒 A top priority, the PPC continues to advocate for the desired change to the general federal fund and Inland Waterways Trust Fund cost-share adjustment in the WRDA 2020 legislation currently making its way through Congress. Both bodies of Congress have passed their respective WRDA bills that contain a change from 50/50 to 65/35.
- 🕒 The previously planned one-day seminar with USDOT MARAD has not been rescheduled yet due to COVID-19.
- 🕒 The Port of Pittsburgh Commission helped to organize a Listening Session for industry partners with four federal agencies on August 4th on improving infrastructure conditions and the movement of freight on the inland waterways system.
- 🕒 Finally, keep an eye on your inbox for our second issue of the new PPC newsletter coming out this week.

### **Legislative Report**

Dean Marlin presented the following report:

Congress is out of town. Consequently, there are no hearings or routine votes on the Hill. Congress returns after Labor Day leaving only 14 legislative days remaining to deal with 2021 appropriations bills. As a result, we will likely be facing another Continuing Resolution.

#### **WRDA 2020 OR "THE AMERICA WATERWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2020"**

- 🕒 On July 15, The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 with strong bipartisan support. It includes an improvement in cost-sharing from 50% (IWTF)/50% (FED) to a 35% /65% split.
- 🕒 The Senate approved a similar version in May.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE:**

- 🕒 On August 4, we participated in a "Virtual Navigation Stakeholder Listening Session." hosted by the USACE. This was one of five such sessions where IMTS stakeholders received the "ear" of the senior leadership of the US Department of Transportation, US Department of Agriculture, the US Department of Energy, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Our "North East" Session included a number of commercial and industry stakeholders along with WAP and the Port of Pittsburgh. These sessions are providing the opportunity for navigation and industry partners to engage in a candid conversation about the current state of challenges and opportunities faced by our industry. Specific questions posed were along the lines of - 1) the more important areas to on which to focus, 2) the policies and procedures that hinder infrastructure improvements and 3) the

technology and data needed to ensure safe, secure, and efficient waterborne transportation.

## **2021 APPROPRIATIONS**

- ⌚ In early August the House passed a six-bill minibus for funding the departments of State, Interior, Agriculture, and Veterans Affairs.
  - In this package, the Energy and Water Development Bill appropriation will provide another record-level funding for the Army Corps of Engineers - close to 2020s \$7.63 billion civil works mission. Including \$3.84 billion for Operations and Maintenance which is \$48 million over the FY20 budget.
  - An additional 17 billion of this package is allocated for emergency funding to accelerate work on projects - of which at least \$3 billion is for inland waterway projects
- ⌚ The Senate Appropriations Committee has not marked up any of its bills and probably will not till after November elections.

## **THE COMMITTEE FOR SAVING AND REVIVING LOW USE RIVERS**

- ⌚ In support of the Allegheny River Development Corporation and Congressman Glenn "GT" Thompson, we continue to pursue the feasibility of improving the Allegheny River access for recreational, commercial, and socio-economic interests. This past week we had a second meeting with a Penn State Ichthyologist/recognized authority on Pennsylvania aquatic species, along with the US Fish and Wildlife Commission, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Congressman GT Thompson's office. The discussion centers on the status of the 52 aquatic species which were labeled as "endangered" in the 1980's and which contributed to the progressive loss of commercial and recreational use of the Allegheny River. This second meeting was positive, and several action items are in play.

## **AND MORE**

- ⌚ The US House of Representatives passed the "Coastal and Inland Ports and Terminals Commerce Improvement Act which is sponsored by Congressmen Michael Bost (R-IL) and Conor Lamb (D-PA). This historic bill provides a competitive grant matching program for landside infrastructure projects at smaller ports and terminals. This is a "first" as it provides eligibility for privately owned terminals.
- ⌚ The Waterways Association has become an Associate Member of the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Association, which advocates for the entire Inland Marine Transportation System. The IRPT actively engages in business development, marketing, lobbying, and education for approximately 240 members categorized to an 11-river basin organization consisting of ports and terminals, commercial and industrial users and related entities. The IRPT initiated and actively promoted the passing of the Coastal and Inland Ports and Terminals Commerce Improvement Act. Their web site is IRPT.net.

## **Army Corp of Engineers**

John P. Dilla presented the **attached** report.

## **National Weather Service**

The **attached** report was reviewed.

## **Education Committee Report**

The Barge Breakaway Seminar is still on the schedule for October 15<sup>th</sup> at the Floreffe Fire Hall. This event is considered essential training and it is imperative that training be held even with current or future Covid restrictions.

- ⌚ If attendee numbers are restricted, it was suggested the training could be broken down into two groups to reduce the number of attendees at any one training program
  - o Operations & Prevention
  - o Response and Communication; including pre-positioning of drone capability
- ⌚ It was noted that it is important that attendees should be personnel who would have "hands on" during an incident.

It is unknown if the "Who Works the Rivers" event will take place as scheduled this fall due to Covid restrictions currently in place for schools. It is very possible this event may not take place again until Spring 2021. We will be advised as the scheduled date becomes closer.

## **September Membership Meeting**

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9 at Chartiers Country Club. Cost of the luncheon will be **\$30**. Registration will begin at 11:45 a.m. and lunch served promptly at noon. Please email the response form below, or you may call or text your response by Thursday, September 3, 2020 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**Waterways Association of Pittsburgh  
Meeting Response Form**

Chartiers Country Club  
Sept 9, 2020 @ Noon

**Menu:**

Fruit Cup  
Chicken Piccata  
Rice Pilaf  
Sautéed Zucchini and Squash Noodles  
Deep Dish Apple Pie

**Cost: \$30/per member**

\_\_\_ YES, I will be attending

\_\_\_ NO, I will not be attending

**\*\*Special Dietary Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please respond by Thursday, Sept 3 to:***

Carole Ann Krelow  
e-mail response form to: [ckrelow@wapgh.org](mailto:ckrelow@wapgh.org)

**OR**

Call, Leave Message or Text: 724-991-0136