

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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May 8, 2019

www.wapgh.org

May Highlights

A total of (35) thirty-five members and guests were registered for the May 8, 2019 luncheon meeting at Chartiers Country Club. First-time attendees: Eileen Provins of Campbell Transportation; Kevin Mudd of Beemac Port Services and Vincent De Carlo, ACOE Acting Chief of Operations were introduced.

Navigation Committee Report

David Podurgiel provided the following report:

- The Navigation Committee has worked with the USACE during the Montgomery Lock outage to 'tweak' the NTNI. Communication with the lock has been exceptional, yes, there have been a few hiccups but generally all has gone well. They have gotten ahead of schedule a few times which allowed for longer open weekends to clear the queue.
- Navigation Committee updated the Priority Lockage Guidelines; actually the dust was taken off from 20 years ago. The #1 focus is the 'public' and their needs. We have allowed a couple priorities that didn't fit the guidelines; one being an emergency, both priorities only took one hour each.
- Contractor work that will take place to stabilize the Middle Wall Crack at Montgomery: start date is roughly right after repair party leaves in June. This work will run through the 3rd week of September, 10-12 hours per day, 5 days a week. This could all change, more will be known once the work starts.
- A committee has been put together that includes Industry, USACE, and the Coast Guard to address the rash of breakaways over the last couple years. Progress is being made, I feel everyone is on the same page and truly working together.

Note: Last night vessels were asked to pull cuts and they refused since they had 'red flags' in tow. This was a 'loop hole' companies felt they could use to get out of pulling cuts in the past, it has since been removed. Per the NTNI you must pull cuts as long as another vessel is tied off on your tow and/or you're in sight of your tow. All these tows were on the lower cell. Please inform your Vessels ASAP when called by the lock to pull cuts they are to help or move to the end of the tier.

Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Mary Ann Bucci provided the following report:

- The Port hosted a round table discussion with new Representative Guy Reschenthaler on April 22nd. Industry throughout the port district attending the event.

- Peter DeFazio (Chair - US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee) who is on a nation-wide tour to infrastructure-needy sites throughout the US in order to emphasize the importance of passing a national infrastructure bill visited Pittsburgh along with Representatives Mike Doyle and Conor Lamb. They visited approximately seven sites in Pittsburgh including a briefing with the USACE on the Montgomery Lock and Dam. Mike Toohey, Peter Stephaich (Campbell Transportation) and Mary Ann Bucci (PPC) also attended a round-table event and reception with Chairman DeFazio.
- The Port is working with the Congested Waterways Committee and the Safe Boating Council to promote water safety and sharing the waterways at the May 26, 2019 Pittsburgh Pirates Game. Anyone wishing to participate or donate gifts should contact Scott Harshman at the Port's offices.
- Mary Ann thanks CDR Fran Smith and LT Shawn Simeral for all their dedication to our Port during their tenure. This is the last meeting that either will attend. Both CDR Smith and LT Simeral expressed gratitude to the industry members for all their support during their time in Pittsburgh.

Scott Harshman of the Port informed attendees that today was the first gathering of the OSHER class (organized by Richard Lockwood, Jim McCarville and Scott Harshman) held at the Emsworth Lock & Dam with twenty-three participants. These individuals have been invited to attend our June membership luncheon.

Legislative Report

Dean Marlin presented the following report:

- Congress returned April 29 and is in session till May 23/24 - (Memorial Day recess).

□ **FY20 APPROPRIATIONS**

The House Appropriations Committee is beginning mark-up in subcommittee the 1st of 12 measures with an eye toward full House passage by the July 4th recess. The House is suggesting capping discretionary spending at \$1.3 trillion for FY20 with \$664 billion for national defense and \$631 billion for non-defense discretionary spending. The House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee is expected to mark up its bill next week with the Senate later in May.

□ **INFRASTRUCTURE BILL**

This \$1.3 Trillion bill discussed in 2018 has now turned into \$2 trillion - and with no substantive resolution in sight. In Point:

- Last week Donald Trump, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer met in, what was billed as, a historic meeting to start legislation and get something done. Nancy Pelosi apparently talked 1.9 Trillion, Donald Trump suggested rounding things up another \$100 million and Chuck Schumer thought \$2.2 Trillion was even better. The meeting was considered a positive \$2 trillion agreement in principle - but again, with no substantive discussion on how to fund it.

- o Donald Trump seemed to support a federal gas tax increase.

- However, on Monday - Larry Kudlow (Trump's top economic advisor and director of the National Economic Council) stated that he is not interested in a federal gas tax, and if each state wants to increase their own (gas tax) levies "that's up to them".
 - o Chuck Schumer stated that he doesn't want a gas tax increase without the Administration's agreement to roll back the 2017 tax cuts.
 - The argument is that big firms, which cause much of the wear and tear on infrastructure, need to do the heavy lifting.
 - o Both Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer are now positioning the matter of initiating a funding proposal in Donald Trump's court.
- There is another meeting scheduled in 3 weeks whereby lawmakers and the President will discuss "specific proposals and financing methods". The wording of this official announcement from the Whitehouse is being construed as the Administration's possible proposal of a plan similar to that of the funding proposal last year whereby direct source of revenue from the federal government is primarily shifted to non-federal funding (Private/Public Partnerships, State and Local Funding, tolling). In essence the same funding concept that garnered little support in 2018.

ADDITIONAL

Peter DeFazio (Chairman - US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee) is on a nation-wide tour to infrastructure-needy sites throughout the US in order to emphasize the importance of passing a national infrastructure bill. On Monday he visited Pittsburgh and was accompanied by Representatives Mike Doyle and Connor Lamb, Allegheny County Executive Richard Fitzgerald and Mayor Bill Peduto. They visited approximately 7 infrastructure sites in Pittsburgh - including Montgomery lock and dam for which Connor Lamb notably voiced a very strong advocacy.

Coast Guard News

The **attached** report was reviewed.

Army Corp of Engineers

The **attached** report was reviewed.

*Vincent De Carlo was introduced as the Acting Chief of Operations during Kathy Griffin's temporary assignment in Washington.

National Weather Service

The **attached** report was reviewed.

Education Committee Report

The Man Overboard Seminar has been confirmed for July 11, 2019 at the Clarion Hotel. There has been a date change for the Barge Breakaway due to scheduling conflicts. The new date for the seminar is October 17th at

the Floreffe Fire Hall. The "Who Works the Rivers" fall date is October 3rd.

June Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12, 2019 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 call, email or fax the response form below by Friday, June 7, 2019 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**Waterways Association of Pittsburgh
Meeting Response Form**

Chartiers Country Club
June 12, 2019 @ Noon

Menu:

Fresh Fruit Cup w/Honey Cream
Chicken Marsala - with roasted mushrooms and marsala wine sauce
Wild Mushroom Risotto
Steamed Broccoli w/toasted garlic
Coconut Cream Pie
Coffee, tea and iced tea

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 Friday, June 7, 2019** to:

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