**COOK INLET REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**BP Energy Center – Anchorage, Alaska**

**December 1 - 2, 2022**

**Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Gary Fandrei, John Williams, Walt Sonen, Carla Stanley, Deric Marcorelle, Robert Peterkin, Grace Merkes, Scott Arndt, Bob Flint, Michael Opheim, Paul Shadura, Hans Rodvik

**Members Absent:** Rob Lindsey (excused)

**Staff Present:** Michael Munger, Madeline Jamora, Steve “Vinnie” Catalano, Susan Saupe, Shaylon Cochran, Candice Elias, Cassandra Johnson

**Others Present:** Todd Paxton, CISPRI; Captain Leanne Lusk, U.S. Coast Guard; Angelina Fuschetto, Crowley Alaska Tankers; Mary Goolie, EPA; David Blossom, ADEC; Lori Nelson, Hilcorp; Chris Kanyer, Hilcorp; Anna Carey, ADEC; Allison Natcher, ADEC; Captain Paul Mehler, Marathon; Sean MacKenzie, Retired USCG; Mike Donnellan, ADEC; Dave Bronson, Mayor of Anchorage; Melissa Woodgate, ADEC; Jade Gamble, ADEC; Catherine Berg, NOAA; Jonathan Schick, ADNR; Mary-Beth Schreck, NWS; Cindy Kirkham, ADEC; Captain Debra Cobb, Marathon; Heather Crowley, BOEM; Kristine Schmidt, Molloy & Schmidt

***THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022***

***1. CALL TO ORDER/ APPROVAL***

President Gary Fandrei called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Roll was called, establishing quorum.

* **Approval of Agenda**

**Scott Arndt moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Robert Peterkin. Hearing no objection, the agenda was approved.**

* **Safety Minute**

Maddie Jamora provided a safety briefing for attendees.

***2. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES***

Susan Saupe led members of the Council through a review of the strategic plan, accomplishments of the different programs, and committee-suggested revisions to the strategic plan. She reviewed Cook Inlet RCAC’s area of concern and stated that they look at the strategic plan from a programmatic level, so they will support projects that help meet program goals related to the OPA 90 defined areas of responsibility as well as those projects that could have implications for Cook Inlet. The strategic plan helps them to define their priorities based on the mandates of OPA 90 as well as partner with other funding opportunities to help accomplish those tasks. She noted that, in addition to stakeholder groups, OPA 90 requires representation by the following municipalities: Homer, Seldovia, Anchorage, Kenai, Kodiak, and the boroughs of Kodiak Island and Kenai Peninsula. OPA 90 also identifies overall duties for RCACs such as:

* What kind of oversight they should be providing
* How they do scientific work
* How they partner with other researchers and organizations
* How they review the work of other organizations
* Creation of standing committees to accomplish the work.

Grace Merkes asked if CIRCAC was created for this particular purpose, or if they can do other things. Sue Saupe stated that funding is received by the oil industry, and they are required to address OPA 90 mandates. Any work outside of OPA 90 mandates would have to be done with outside funds.

Sue Saupe explained that the first strategic plan was organized around committee structure, but it became clear there was a lot of overlap between the committees. In 2005 CIRCAC built an infrastructure framework that encompasses all of the tasks in OPA 90 in overarching programs. Each program has a purpose, goals, strategies, outcomes, and OPA 90 language that drives the program. By developing these programs, it allows the committees to develop their annual work plans to take advantage of funding and partnership opportunities to work on strategies toward specific goals. Programs and project highlights include:

* Biological and Chemical Environmental Monitoring
* CIRCAC has used a modified sediment quality triad approach that looks at sediment and water chemistry, toxicity, and organism health and has partnered with many other organizations to conduct various projects within this program. With advancements in technology, CIRCAC is now building a database that will allow making comparisons among data from different historical studies. The project is funded by BOEM and will also provide recommendations for how a monitoring project should look in the future. The Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC) is interested in starting a new project on developing a soundscape in Cook Inlet.
* Coastal Habitat Mapping
* In 2001, the ShoreZone project was a pilot project that resulted in information that met information needs for planning oil spill response and understanding habitats in our areas of concern. That information was very useful to many other entities like NOAA, DNR, recreational users, and almost any agency or organization that has interests in coastal Alaska. This project took off and since partnership of dozens of Alaskan organizations was built, and ShoreZone now includes imagery and shoreline data for over 97 percent of Alaska’s coast. As technology has improved, the older imagery needed to be improved in Cook Inlet. In 2009, CIRCAC received funds through Congress to resurvey Cook Inlet, and EMC funded resurveys of a resurvey of the outer Kenai Peninsula in 2022 with the National Park Service providing additional funding to extend the survey area. CIRCAC is still looking to update the Kodiak Island area. They are working closely with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) to get the newest imagery integrated with other data layers. ShoreZone imagery survyes cover every inch of the shoreline, allowing monitoring of Macrocystis kelp expansion into the western Gulf of Alaska.. The ShoreZone project also identifies other unique habitats around which funding, mapping projects, and partnerships have been initiated or built. A project EMC is getting underway is to update the environmental sensitivity index (ESI) maps for Cook Inlet. ESI maps are used all over the country in oil spill planning and response.
* Physical Oceanography and Oil Transport, Fate, and Effects
* These are programs to further understand how currents move at the surface and the subsurface. Without the knowledge of ocean currents, they won’t be able to predict how oil spill and contaminants will be transported to different habitats. In the mid ‘90’s CIRCAC had a desktop oil spill trajectory model that was simple and worked well for tidal currents, and it was a valuable tool for developing contingency plans and setting up drills. The limitations were that it was oversimplified and didn’t capture major features of Cook Inlet that can impact the entire potential fate of oil in an oil spill in, for example, the convergent zones of the tide rips, the seasonal changes, and how strong the current is down the west side of Cook Inlet. Over the years, CIRCAC has put a lot of effort into supporting oceanographic observations to better understand how water moves in Cook Inlet and therefore how oil would move. A current project by CIRCAC, AOOS, University of Alaska, Oil Spill Recovery Institute, NOAA, and Hilcorp is trying to get year-round HF radar systems deployed in Cook. Another project will supports satellite drifter buoy deployments at the same time and coverage areas as the surface current HF radar, for comparisons with the high resolution NOAA model. A lot of the work that CIRCAC has been supporting for over 20 years is coming to fruition and will achieve some of the main goals of the physical oceanography program through leveraged funding and partnerships. The ultimate goal is to use the new hydrodynamic model for particle trajectories and ultimately accessible, high-resolution oil spill trajectories.
* Technical Review
* Past projects in this program have included ballast water discharge summaries, evaluating risks of introduced organisms to the Inlet. Also included in this program were summaries of discharges from oil and gas operation and associated documents. The EMC has budgeted funds to begin these summarizes again and produce monthly or annual reports on discharges into the Inlet.
* Geographic Response Strategies (GRSs)
* CIRCAC funded the development of some of the first GRSs, which are site-specific response strategies in Cook Inlet. Since then, GRSs have been developed all over the state of Alaska. It was a CIRCAC-developed program that was handed off to ADEC, and CIRCAC has had a major role in the outreach component and giving input in terms of prioritizing areas. PROPS committee has a project with other partners to take the GRS data and turn it into geospatial data, which will allow it to be integrated with other oil spill planning and response information like ShoreZone and ESI. Vinnie Catalano added that there are approximately 200 GRSs in Cook Inlet, and there are 749 statewide.
* Prevention and Response
* PROPS Committee has come a very long way with the Geographic Response Information Database (GRID), which is an interactive geographic system database containing resources available for oil spill planning and response. EMC worked with AOOS and Axiom to develop the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) that integrated ShoreZone into multiple other data layers. From the initial development of that website, they are able to build on another set of data layers that can integrate with it. This CIRT model has been replicated by other entities in other areas.
* CIRCAC was involved in the development of the first Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR), and those will eventually be turned into geospatial data because they are very similar to the GRSs. The point of PPOR is to identify areas ahead of time so they are not pulling a disabled ship into a sensitive bay.
* Risk Assessment
* Risk assessment has been a Council priority for many years and included such projects as vessel traffic studies and addendums and the Cook Inlet Mooring Study. The Navigational Risk Assessment was the first formal risk assessment that CIRCAC led in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, ADEC, and contractors at Nuka Research, and it involved a consequence analysis. The formation of the Harbor Safety Committee is an ongoing effort, and this was a direct outcome of the Navigational Risk Assessment. The Ice Camera Network came about after evaluations were completed after the SEABULK PRIDE ran aground, and they would like to integrate the Ice Camera Network into the Ocean Observing System and have it become a permanent part of the information and imagery that people can obtain in Cook Inlet.
* Contingency Planning
* The Protocol Committee’s main task has been to review Contingency Plans, which are designed to help prevent oil spills from happening and then improve response to oil spills. CIRCAC’s participation in the review of Contingency Plans is incredibly important because Cook Inlet RCAC is often the only non-agency input into these plans. There is recognition in OPA 90 of the importance of RCAC’s participation in the review of Contingency Plans. CIRCAC is a named review under Alaska Administrative Code, and they can also review the testing of Contingency Plans by attending drills.
* Public Involvement
* To ensure public involvement, the committees work to make their information available to public portals. The public outreach covers a vast range of materials including newsletters, annual reports, special publications, exhibitions, hosting symposia, and attending other symposiums. This year Shaylon Cochran will be focusing on updating and streamlining CIRCAC’s website. They also want to make Cook Inlet RCAC’s website the go-to website when someone wants to know something about the Cook Inlet environment or the oil industry in Cook Inlet.

John Williams provided the Council with an overview of how far the Council has come since its inception, and he highlighted the vast amount of work that has been done with its original funding amounts and the amount of other funding they have been able to leverage through partnerships to bring its projects to fruition. Vinnie Catalano added that CIRCAC leads in the country, which is feedback he hears nationally.

Committee members engaged in a brief discussion about the need for succession planning for long-term staff with vast amounts of historical knowledge.

***COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS***

Susan Saupe reviewed committee-proposed amendments to the strategic plan that were shown in the document as tracked changes and included:

*EMC*

* Biological and Chemical Environmental Monitoring:
* Agreed they could add work on the soundscape of Cook Inlet based on acoustic data they can gather. Determined there would not need to be any language change.
* Amendment to program outcome by adding a second component:
1. A Cook Inlet sediment water quality assessment partnership that integrates local, regional, state, and national initiatives for monitoring ambient contaminants.
2. An integrated understanding of Cook Inlet's ecosystems and their risks and exposures and impacts from oil industry operations.

*PROPS*

* Geographic Response Strategies:
* Add a program goal to support the Area Committee GRS subcommittee through GRS projects and GRS site data evaluation for inclusion into the GRS catalog.
* GRS program strategy amendments:
* Work with state and federal agencies and OSROs to ground truth GRS sites periodically to ensure changes in topography, bathymetry, or other factors are considered and are appropriately included in the GRS data.
* Continue to participate in the Arctic and Western Alaska GRS subcommittee to guide the GRS protocol development and to vet new and/or updated GRSs as needed.
* Collaborate with state and federal agencies to facilitate completion of a GRS update protocol and data quality control steps via direct or indirect involvement.

Paul Shadura asked a question about the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee and whether or not that fell within CIRCAC’s mandate. Vinnie Catalano stated that Alaska is its region, and within that region, there are four areas. The Arctic and Western Alaska area includes the Cook Inlet.

* Prevention and Response:
* Additions:
* To maintain a Geospatial Resource Inventory Database (GRID) for use by area emergency responders.
* Establish a trajectory modeling program that is accessible to planners for contingency planning and for use during drills and spills by the planning section.
* Amendment to strategy: Provide access to prevention and response management tools.
* Risk Assessment:
* Add program goal:
* Expand ice monitoring capabilities and user groups
* Revised and added a strategy:
* Conduct tri-year vessel traffic studies to track vessel traffic trends.
* Provide limited access to ice monitoring cameras for user groups within the project scope.

Vinnie Catalano explained that ice monitoring camera project participants are the camera hosts, and they provide permissions for who is allowed to access the cameras. The primary operator and control station for the ice monitoring cameras is the NOAA Ice Forecasting desk at the Sand Lake NOAA facility. Vinnie made his computer available for members of the committee to view the system. He noted that they currently have nine cameras.

*Protocol*

* Contingency Plan Review:
* Program goal: Review, evaluate, and comment on legislative and regulatory developments and amendments. Include non-tank vessels and refined product facility operations and transportation as a routine part of Contingency Plan review when alternate funding allows.
* Program strategy amendments:
* Monitor, review, and provide comments for all proposed changes to existing or new regulations affecting the Cook Inlet RCAC area of concern.
* Review all portions of Contingency Plans and provide comments that ensure regulatory compliance and improve industry readiness.

*Public Outreach*

* Amendment to the program name from Public Involvement to Public Outreach.
* Strategy amendments:
* Provide regular correspondence through different outlets, including but not limited to the CIRCAC website, social media, pamphlets, brochures, paid advertising, newsletters, and other outreach opportunities.
* Provide periodic annual reports highlighting the organization's accomplishments and activities. *The EMC may want to revisit this strategy if they want to have something specific called “State of the Inlet Report.”*
* Administer and promote CIRCAC's annual scholarship program to support area students who are pursuing courses of study that can advance our mission and promote future stewardship of Cook Inlet's waters and shoreline.
* Amendment to program outcome: Recognition and participation in Cook Inlet RCAC activities by stakeholders and program activities that are relevant locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Scott Arndt moved to approve all strategic plan updates as presented by Susan Saupe today, seconded by Robert Peterkin. Hearing no further discussion nor objection, a roll call vote was taken:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Pres. Fandrei, yesMr. Williams, yesMr. Marcorelle, yesMr. Peterkin, yes | Mr. Rodvik, yesMs. Stanley, yesMr. Shadura, yesMr. Sonen, yes | Ms. Merkes, yesMr. Flint, yesMr. Opheim, yesMr. Arndt, yes |

**The motion passed unanimously (12 yes, 0 no).**

***COUNCIL PRIORITIES***

Susan Saupe stated that in 2011, the Council decided to elevate certain components of the strategic plan to overall Council priorities, and priorities have been added over the years. In 2020 they reviewed the priorities and identified several priorities that had been accomplished, which were then removed.

Council Priorities

1. Evaluate oil spill risks and potential risk reduction strategies for oil facilities and infrastructure in Cook Inlet, including new risks and potential ecological impacts posed by the expansion of offshore oil industry operations into federal waters of the Lower Inlet.
2. Continue seeking additional funding from other sources for non-OPA 90 issues. CIRCAC often has the expertise to add to non-crude projects to decrease risks and improve knowledge of Cook Inlet.
3. Develop a sustained program to collect and integrate biological and chemical environmental data in the Cook Inlet region and ensure their use for appropriate governmental and private purposes.
4. Host CIRCAC’s “Now and Then” celebration to highlight CIRCAC’s accomplishments and lessons learned.
5. Partner with NOAA, AOOS, NPS, UAF, and others to provide an open-access oil spill trajectory model for Cook Inlet oil spill planning and response, ensuring complex oceanographic processes are captured to effectively model oil spill trajectories.
6. Provide leadership in the oversight and review of any actions potentially impacting state and federal oil spill regulations and laws.
7. Develop an understanding of current and planned activities associated with Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) areas in lower Cook Inlet. Recent interest in the OCS is expanding CIRCAC’s focus to a larger geographic area and a wider range of activities with potentially new risks and environmental impacts.
8. Compile a comprehensive library of Cook Inlet oil industry infrastructure and activities. CIRCAC often gets calls for data and should compile and update comprehensive information to make it more readily available.

*Discussion:*

* Possibly remove priority number 6.
* Possibly add a priority to redo the website.
* Priority regarding retiring platforms. (Covered under number 8)
* Question on number 2 and non-crude issue priority. Doesn’t believe that needs to be prioritized and is outside of their current OPA 90 scope.
* Host CIRCAC “Now and Then,” hasn’t that been done?
* Remove 2, 4, 6 and add a priority about the website.

**Scott Arndt moved to postpone this item to the April 14th meeting, seconded by Robert Peterkin. Hearing no further discussion nor objection, the motion passed.**

Pres. Fandrei noted that the Executive Committee will have further discussions about this topic.

***3. CALENDAR AND MISCELLANEOUS***

* PWSRCAC Science Night – December 1, 2022 – 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
* CIRCAC Board Meeting Day 2, December 2, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.

***4. RECESS***

Hearing no closing comments, Pres. Fandrei recessed the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

***FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2022***

***1. CALL TO ORDER/ APPROVAL***

President Gary Fandrei called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Roll was called, establishing quorum.

* **Safety Minute**

Vinnie Catalano provided a safety briefing for attendees.

* **Approval of Agenda**

**Scott Arndt moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Carla Stanley. Hearing no objection, the agenda was approved.**

**Scott Arndt moved to approve the minutes from the April 2022 meeting, seconded by Robert Peterkin. President Fandrei noted some typographical errors, and the motion passed and the minutes were approved as amended.**

* **Welcome & Introductions**

Board members, staff, and guests introduced themselves. Mr. Munger introduced Mayor Dave Bronson.

* **Welcoming Remarks**

Mayor Dave Bronson thanked the Council for inviting him to attend and remarked on his appointment of Hans Rodvik to the board. He stated that the Cook Inlet itself is the lifeblood of this part of the state, if not the entire state, and protecting it and managing it well is essential to our ongoing success.

He shared that the Port of Alaska has had some structural challenges, and they are working hard to get the financing in place to get the port rebuilt. They recently secured the largest legislative appropriation of any kind in the state last year for $200M. They will be going back to the federal government for more money to complete the $1.8M financial stack they have to do to complete that project. They are just now standing up the new cement petroleum terminal, which is a seismically secure facility, and once that is complete, they will move to get seismically secure cargo docks.

90 percent of the population of Alaska is dependent on the Port of Alaska for everything. The port is in great jeopardy, and if it fails, half the state will have to leave until it’s repaired because there won’t be enough food coming into the state.

Mayor Bronson shared that the port recently experienced a ship engine room fire at the dock. The emergency was handled well, thanks to the U.S. Coast Guard, and the ship was sent out to sea for internal repairs. The event emphasized the importance of the port and the environmental threat the port can pose.

Mr. Munger shared with Mayor Bronson that the last Anchorage CIRCAC meeting was held during the November 30, 2018 earthquake.

* **Agency Ex-Officio Directors’ Remarks**

Department of Natural Resources – Jonathan Schick

The winter Cook Inlet area-wide lease sale opens on December 12th. The last bids will be accepted on December 28th, and the lease sale will be on December 30, 2022. He noted that he could not share any pre-interest information at this time. They will also have a spring lease sale.

United States Coast Guard (USCG) – Captain Leanne Lusk

M/V ATLANTIC LILY: Vessel had onboard 200,000 gallons of jet A fuel when a stack caught fire on November 18, 2022, due to a mechanical issue with the boiler. The fire created a significant amount of smoke that blanketed Anchorage. The Anchorage Fire Department self-deployed to the scene. The ship’s crew were able to knock the fire down themselves by using their protocols. USCG went onboard and ordered the vessel to stay in port until the inspection team could investigate and ensure the vessel’s safety. Communication issues during the event were recognized and dealt with after the fact. This was a very high-risk case that could have been much worse, but it ended well, and there were great learning opportunities from the event. There are subject matter experts in marine firefighting and other skills they believe would be beneficial to the port as they proceed forward, so they are going to connect with people on the East Coast that have courses they can participate in so they do everything they can to make this into the best learning opportunity possible. The A-Team went out the day after the fire with very seasoned inspectors and reviewed the Hong Kong flagged ship thoroughly, and all the ship’s procedures were very tight.

Carla Stanley asked if the marine firefighting course they are putting together will be open to all coastline fire departments in Alaska. Captain Lusk explained that they are at the inception of trying to make this connection, but she would like to see them increase their education. There are currently salvage and marine firefighting capabilities in the state with partners like CISPRI and Resolve Marine, but more would be better. Carla noted that Homer is very interested in having the training, so she hopes Captain Lusk will communicate with all the coastal communities around Cook Inlet.

Hans Rodvik noted that the Anchorage Fire Department crew that showed up on the scene had just finished a marine firefighting course, and the supervisor who was supposed to be there was going to another training. Hans also noted that Anchorage is the largest fire department in the state, and they want to be kept in mind in terms of any additional training opportunities.

Paul Shadura noted that the Coast Guard Authorization Act has not been reauthorized yet. He wanted to know if that had any effect on the safety operations in Cook Inlet in the foreseeable future. Captain Lusk noted that they are on a continuing resolution right now. There was a House version and a Senate version, and they don’t know which version will go through, so they are continuing operations as normal in anticipation of what that might look like. It could change the way oil spill removal organizations work in Alaska. There is potential language that could help in making regions, and regionalizing areas could be helpful in terms of identifying gaps throughout the coastline in Alaska. Captain Lusk has been coordinating with the Office of Marine Environmental Response in Washington, D.C. to figure out what it means for them if either version comes to fruition. If there ends up being a third version, they will process the information and communicate it with all their partners. She appreciated all the support for the USCG in this process.

NOAA – Catherine Berg

NOAA was hoping to work in Cook Inlet with their Detection of Oil in Ice project earlier this year, but they were unable to pull that off. She stated that the Detection of Oil in Ice project started at the lab where they refined protocols and looked at the experimental design before they took it into the field. They had hoped to bring the project to Cook Inlet closer to Anchorage so more people could be involved, but instead, they ended up going to a Department of Energy facility off of Oliktok Point where they do their oil and ice detection work using containers. They were also able to do some of their work over the actual ice-infested waters in the area. The third part of that project was taking a team out on the Canadian Coast Guard Cutter SIR WILFRID LAURIER about 80 miles north of Barrow to do more testing of thermal and camera sensors over water and ice. It was a successful event, and the report should be available soon. They learned a lot about the capacities of what they could or could not detect in that water and ice environment. The next step will be to go to the Great Lakes on a USCG cutter to continue that work.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Mary Goolie

Alaska Regional Response Teams hybrid meeting will be on March 8th, 2023, in Anchorage. The week of September 12th – 14th will be a meeting in Anchorage as well at the Atwood Building. She thanked CIRCAC for the staff help, particularly Vinnie Catalano for all of his work on various committees as well as his work on the GRSs.

She also recognized partners Angelina Fuschetto from Crowley and Allison Natcher from ADEC and thanked Captain Lusk for resources from the sector as they have had vacancies.

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) – Allison Natcher

Thank you to Cook Inlet RCAC for all the assistance with the projects they have been doing. The feedback ADEC receives from CIRCAC has spurred increased information on the ADEC website as well as PowerPoint presentations being made available. If CIRCAC wants any additional information, please let her know, and she will do what she can to facilitate that.

New staff in the Soldotna office include Melanie Hollon and Regina Kincaid.

Heather Crowley – BOEM

The lease sale is scheduled in Cook Inlet at the end of the month. In addition, there will be the annual studies planning process going on, and they have a call out for input and study ideas for their Environmental Studies Program looking to develop studies for FY ’24. She has had some conversations with Sue Saupe about developing some potential studies.

* **CIRCAC Member or Public Comment**

No members of the public came forward to provide public comment.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*PRESENTATIONS ON RELATED ACTIVITIES\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

Mr. Munger introduced today’s presentations on related activities by stating that CIRCAC President Gary Fandrei and Secretary/Treasurer Deric Marcorelle along with Vinnie Catalano, Shaylon Cochran, and himself participated in Marathon’s Pre-Winter Ice Meeting at AVTEC in Seward. This meeting is held annually, and it brings the maritime community involved with crude oil transportation together to focus on the upcoming winter ice conditions. Today’s presentations are a condensed version of that meeting. In response to a request from the September board meeting, they will also receive a presentation on Marathon’s vessel vetting procedures.

* **National Weather Service Alaska: Sea Ice Analysis Program – Mary-Beth Schreck, Sea Ice Program Leader**

Mary-Beth Schreck stated that their office is staffed seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sea Ice Products for Cook Inlet:

* Daily:
* Cook Inlet sea ice analysis:
* Grab satellite imagery and look at the cameras and pull the information into an Arc map.
* Stage/thickness
* Sea surface temperature analysis map.
* Monday/Wednesday/Friday:
* Five-day sea ice forecast:
* Text
* Graphic.
* Monthly:
* Sea ice outlook:
* 1-to-3-month focus
* Posted 4th Thursday of every month.

What goes into Sea Ice analysis:

* Satellite imagery
* Cook Inlet cameras (CIRCAC)
* Overflight reports (CISPRI)
* Mariner reports.

Mary-Beth Schreck demonstrated images of Cook Inlet Sea Ice Analysis – NASA MODIS Satellite Images January 15, 2016 and February 1, 2016.

Cook Inlet webcams that allow NWS to see across the Inlet:

* XTO Platform
* Osprey Platform
* Port of Anchorage to see the variety of ice floe sizes.

When there is no ice to observe, other things they can observe with the cameras year-round:

* Precipitation
* Type of precipitation
* Fog
* Wind.

Sea Surface Temperature Analysis:

* Satellite-derived analysis
* Recently added a zoomed-in Cook Inlet version of this map
* Surface temperatures have a significant impact on sea ice in Cook Inlet.

Sea Ice Analysis:

* Concentration map
* Stage and thickness map.

Sea Ice Forecast for Cook Inlet:

* Text forecast and graphic
* Sea ice advisory
* Text product contains:
* Synopsis
* Sea ice outlook issued 4th Thursday of the month
* Focus on ice changes in the 1-to-3-month range.

Walt Sonen asked about the satellite feed they receive and whether or not the sea temperature information is very accurate. Mary-Beth stated that they receive the satellite feed from NASA, and in general, the feed is very accurate.

Susan Saupe asked about where the imagery is archived. Mary Beth stated that most of the visible imagery is available publicly online, and the analyses are archived at their office and are available by request. Sue clarified that she is speaking more about screen grabs from the webcams. They are in the process of doing some hindcasts and trying to improve the Cook Inlet Ocean Forecasting System, which is an operational model. They are incorporating some freshwater forcing, and they would like to incorporate sea ice into the models, especially when they develop particle trajectory models from it. It would be extremely helpful to have some archived imagery for when they run the hindcasts. Vinnie Catalano stated that they do have the capability for the ice forecaster to record. The initial proposal was for the ice forecaster to go in possibly daily and record 15 minutes from selected cameras. He said the ability is there, but it’s a matter of scheduling and what they can do time-wise and personnel-wise.

Sue Saupe further asked if they can account for shore ice that stacks and can get up to ten meters in thickness. Mary-Beth Schreck said they are to some degree, but if something is less than a tenth of the area, it’s not necessarily accounted for. If it is something that’s not captured in the graphical version, it is something they can put in the text, but they would have to have a report from someone to be able to include it in the text.

Mike Munger asked as the primary user of the ice forecasting cameras, does she have any recommendations for where she would like to see additional cameras placed. Mary-Beth felt they have good coverage between Point MacKenzie and Port of Anchorage for where the ice starts to form up by Knik Arm. The ones in the middle are helpful to be able to get a general idea of what is happening in the main part of the Inlet. The cameras over on the coast are especially helpful when they get the west winds that bring the ice over to the east side. She would have to consult a map and think about any recommendations and get back to him.

* **Cook Inlet Ice Monitoring Network – Vinnie Catalano, Director of Operations**

Cook Inlet RCAC staff responded to a request by the NOAA ice forecaster to the Cook Inlet Navigation and Safety Committee for increased ice observations. Staff prepared a preliminary plan for a simple network of observers to answer the request. That plan included an abbreviated reporting form based on the Sea Ice Observers Guide and a request to include a digital photograph with each report. CIRCAC staff recruited observers from Cook Inlet operators:

* Marine facility operators
* Offshore platform operators
* Port of Anchorage (now Port of Alaska)
* Offshore supply vessel operators
* Charter aircraft operators.

Ice Forecasting Network Expansion Requirements:

* Identify system requirements
* Identify strategic locations for camera placement
* Develop priority hierarchy
* Negotiate location access and use
* Develop an operation plan
* Install the system
* Implement operation plan.

Technical Aspects:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Camera Requirements:* High resolution
* Day/night
* Fixed lenses
* Pan/tilt/zoom lenses
* Exterior enclosures with heaters/fan
 | Location Requirements:* Strategic location
* Power supply
* Internet or satellite phone connection
* Accessible for maintenance
 |

Stand-Alone Control:

* Minimum 2GB memory
* Separate hard drives with a minimum 1.2TB of storage
* 16X DVD +/- RW drive
* High-resolution monitor
* Compatible software
* Image enhancing software
* Complete system maintenance program.

Cook Inlet Network: Camera sites that feed into the NOAA Ice Forecaster:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Port of Alaska
* OSK Dock
* Marathon LNG
* Mouth of the Kenai River
 | * Middle Ground Shoal
* Port MacKenzie
* Granite Point Platform
* Tyonek Platform
 |

Not all of the originally proposed sites became operational for a variety of reasons such as lack of support from the facility owner, lack of infrastructure, or they couldn’t make a data connection.

Location Access:

* Contact strategic location owners
* Negotiate camera type and installation site
* Identify an alternate site if the primary site cannot be utilized.

Network Hierarchy:

* NOAA Ice Forecaster
* USCG
* Commercial Mariners
* Scientific User Groups
* CIRCAC
* Spill Responders

Scientific users generally get access to any archives from the camera host, but access is granted on a case-by-case basis if there is a need for live images. Through discussions with the camera hosts, a laptop was designated strictly for incident command for spill response. That same benefit and usage are afforded to anyone in the unified command.

Proposed Operational Plan:

* Document ice coverage and makeup twice daily
* Conduct an ice survey from the southernmost observation point working north
* Periodically select and record approximately 15 minutes of ice activity
* Track and record outstanding events
* Index video with field observations and still photos
* Utilized pan/tilt/zoom feature to locate and evaluate ice pans, size, and thickness
* Establish the location of the “hard edge”
* Capture vessel movement through the ice when possible.

System Installation

* System installation was accomplished by local contractors
* System preventative maintenance and repairs are performed by the CIRCAC IT contractor and electrical contractors based on location, availability, and familiarity with camera systems.

Mr. Munger remarked that this project came about as a result of the SEABULK PRIDE when they found there were some gaps in the ice information in Cook Inlet. He gave kudos to Vinnie Catalano for putting his heart and soul into it as well as working with the operators to get cooperative agreements and also working with IT with state-of-the-art cameras. He has done a remarkable job with this project. Vinnie thanked the PROPS Committee and the Council for recognizing the need through the Navigational Risk Assessment.

A member of the audience asked if Turnagain Arm is important from an ice forecasting perspective, particularly where one can see across the Arm to the East Forelands. Mary-Beth Schreck agreed that would be a great spot.

Carla Stanley asked what coverage there is at the mouths of the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. Vinnie stated that they have a camera at the mouth of the Kenai River because that ice will make its way up to the docks in Nikiski. He is unsure of the Kasilof River ice making it that far.

John Williams suggested that this would be an excellent area to partner on funding from outside sources for more modern systems. He also noted that after 40 years, armoring of the Kenai bluff will finally be happening, and that would be an excellent place to upgrade the visual support and camera systems as a way to monitor the ice flow from the Kenai River. Vinnie noted that they did partner on this project and also received several state grants. For some of the cameras, the host bore the burden of the installation and maintenance. The hosts are full-on partners as they supply the power and the Internet capability year-round. The City of Kenai was very supportive of the camera at the mouth of the Kenai River, and they share that with the Marine Exchange of Alaska where they installed one of their AIS repeater sites. Homer Electric Association donated the pole and installed it at no cost. There are many good partners in this project, and everyone sees value in it.

Hans Rodvik wanted to know if there was a way the public is able to view these live feeds or photos and if this is something they are considering. Vinnie stated that the camera at the mouth of the Kenai River is public, but they need to approach individual hosts and ask them through a specific request if someone else can have access to any camera. He noted that it took time to build trust with the operators. There are a lot of marine security issues around having a camera on a facility, and they can’t make it available to the public because of those security issues. Captain Mehler noted that there is a conflict with opening these cameras up. MTSA prevents the sharing, and they had to notify the USGC and add into their security plan who has access to it, when there will be access to it, and how it’s controlled.

Hans Rodvik then asked how the City of Kenai is able to share its camera publicly, and Vinnie stated it’s not a marine facility. John Williams added that Kenai is a first-class city with a charter, and they can do anything they want within the purview of the law. Secondly, the City of Kenai owns all the ground beneath the water column of the river. Thirdly, the City of Kenai owns all of the dock facilities, which are extensive; therefore, the city has the right to determine how they use them.

* ***U.S. Coast Guard: Ice Guidelines 2022/2023 – Captain Leanne Lusk, Commander Sector Anchorage***

M/V TORGOVY BRIDGE – On December 14th, 2021, the vessel came into Cook Inlet to deliver jet fuel and felt like it was stuck in the mud. They found the chest was clogged. BOB FRANCO was in the area and retrieved the vessel and returned it to Homer. They determined that the vessel was not an ice-ready vessel. This is a great example of why ice knowledge is important and why coordination and collaboration with all of the partners who work in the Cook Inlet region, particularly in the ice, is so critical to ensure they have safe operations and can continue commerce running through the port system while maintaining the highest levels of safety they possibly can.

Captain Lusk signed the Ice Guidelines on October 25, 2022, and they are a navigation safety advisory for operators within the Cook Inlet region. This was developed through collaboration with SWAPA and Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee and applies to all vessels that are greater than 300 gross tons.

Ice Guidelines:

Within the two regions, Upper Cook Inlet and Lower Cook Inlet, there are specific mitigation factors that the team has set up to provide safety mechanisms:

* Alpha – Ice is present, but there is no immediate impact on the moorings. Risk mitigation strategies include:
* Maintaining engines and other critical machinery on standby.
* Use an ice scout and assist tug, and have them deployed in the immediate vicinity
* Use extra mooring lines or have extra mooring lines immediately available.
* Bravo – Ice is present, and it threatens the integrity of the moorings.
* Have a tug assist, ice scout, underway bridge watch including an ice pilot, and engine room ready.
* Engines and other critical machinery will be running
* If a 4 kt flood is forecasted, cargo operations are shut down at the NOAA and Tesoro pier.
* If a 5 kt flood is forecasted, the hoses are disconnected and wait until the flood recedes.
* If there is greater than 4 kt in ice conditions at the Tesoro and LNG dock, they will discontinue transfer operations, make transfer hoses ready for immediate disconnect, and maintain continued operations to mitigate the effects of the ice conditions. Someone will be monitoring to see if there is a strain on the lines and if they need to get the vessel underway to prevent any other issues from forming. The ice scout would be up-current, and would be calling in any bigger chunks of ice that would be floating down. The master, the pilot, and the person in charge all have the authority to disconnect and get the vessel underway.
* Nikiski Tug & Barge – the difference for them is at 2 kt of a flood, they would have their engines and machinery running under the condition Bravo.
* ***CISPRI: Training and Ice Overflights Update – Todd Paxton, General Manager***

Todd Paxton shared CISPRI’s new website with the sea ice tab and demonstrated the ice observation reports and how reports compare over time. He stated they do sea ice overflights at the request of Marathon. They take off in an airplane from the Kenai Airport and photograph the Kenai River; head south and take pictures looking both north and south; they go up to the East Forelands and take more pictures north; and then they head up to the Port of Alaska and take additional photos. They try to follow the same path so they can get comparable reports over time. The quality of the photos depends on the ambient light and weather conditions.

Todd Paxton stated that they had originally e-mailed the reports to vessels, but that wasn’t practical because of the file size, so instead they maintain the reports on the CISPRI website where vessel masters and pilots can readily access them. This process seems to be working well and is something they will build into next year’s budget as one of the services CISPRI provides.

CISPRI also provides the ice scout duties for the Ice Guidelines. In condition Bravo, they take the CISPRI vessel offshore, which is typically the PERSEVERANCE, and they take direction from the bridge crew of the tank ship. Based on the tide and ice conditions, they will ask the PERSEVERANCE to go a mile upstream so they can have ample time to warn the tank ship of any potential anomalies to the ice floes they are observing.

Walt Sonen asked if the PERSEVERANCE or BOB FRANCO can divert ice that is coming toward the dock and push it away. Todd Paxton explained that they have to be careful with that because technically they are not allowed to force ice. They want the vessel to be far enough upstream to be able to supply good, solid information in plenty of time so people are able to react appropriately in the situation. The scout vessel is typically too far away to physically make any efforts toward changing the direction of the ice.

Mr. Munger shared information about the valuable maritime simulators through AVTEC, which is valuable training for responders. He hopes that in the future they can get more directors to participate in that training.

Paul Shadura asked what the term “ice strengthened” means in terms of CISPRI’s response vessels. Todd Paxton stated that the guidelines broadly state having an ice strengthened vessel, and the vessels that are part of CISPRI’s compliance piece are ice strengthened. CISPRI also has a fleet of aluminum boats that are not ice strengthened, and they typically are not used regularly during the winter.

Paul Shadura further asked if the operational barges are also ice strengthened to some degree. Todd Paxton stated that rules state that if a barge is going to haul cargo for hire, it has to be a double hull. CISPRI has one double-hulled tank barge with an 80,000-barrel capacity. The rest of the tank barges are single skin and are kept in Homer.

Carla Stanley asked what kind of techniques CISPRI uses to remove oil in ice. Todd Paxton stated that they have specific tactics they have developed for skimming on ice with oleophilic CRUCIAL disk skimmers.

A question from the audience was whether or not CISPRI had considered using drones instead of flying for ice scouting. Todd Paxton stated that the existing ice cameras are better than using drones.

* ***Marathon Petroleum Corporation: Review of Ice Checklist and Ice Operations – Captain Paul Mehler, Senior Port Captain***

*2021/2022 Highlights*

* Improved communication between pilots, masters, port captains, and tug captains sharing environmental conditions.
* NOAA – more “mariner specific” information to assist forecasters.
* Mooring computers are more consistent.
* Ice cameras at LNG dock.
* Continue the use of BOB FRANCO as an ice scout in Alpha.
* SWAPA – increased input on transition conditions to NOAA and industry.
* Vessel mates to partner with PICs when mooring computers are inoperable.
* Ice overflights captured valuable information.
* Gangway security.
* Managed COVID.

*Prearrival Self-Examination Checklist*

* Complete rewrite of the ice examination.
* The process and the policy are it’s done on the first vessel's arrival in Alaska waters in the winter.
* Foreign flag vessels have to send the exam to the Coast Guard on their prearrival notice.

*Marathon, KPL Standards*

In addition to the Ice Guidelines, the following is completed by Marathon:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Condition Alpha: * Engine Room:
* Continuous watch, main engine available in less than 10 minutes
* Lower sea chest heat via re-circulation of cooling water
* Sea chest steam connected
* Bridge Watch – not required
* Cargo stoppage current greater than 4 kts. Not required
* Ice Mate – As needed
* Mooring – 16 lines

Pilot – Not requiredTug - YesIce Scout – Tug actively scouting as needed, CISPRI vessel standing by in the area | Condition Bravo:* Engine Room – Same as Alpha
* Bridge Watch - Continuous; deck officer/ master and/or pilot on the bridge
* Pilot – On bridge during flood current
* Crew – Deck officer/master on bridge
* Cargo stoppage flood current greater than 4 kts. – Yes
* Flood current greater than 5 kts. – Disconnect cargo hoses and prepare to tend gangway and mooring rope/wire release
* Ice Mate – Yes
* Mooring – 16 lines
* Pilot – minimum 1 onboard always, will be increased as conditions change
* Tug – Yes
* Ice Scout – CISPRI vessel actively scouting at the direction of the bridge team
 |

*Ice Forecasting*

Captain Mehler talks to the ice desk at least once a week during the winter and provides them an update on what Marathon is seeing.

*Tug Operations – BOB FRANCO, Cook Inlet Tug and Barge*

Captain Mehler stated that the BOB FRANCO is a great asset for Cook Inlet, and they are great mariners. He learns a lot from them on a daily basis in the winter as they forecast for him. When it comes to Anchorage, Cook Inlet Tug & Barge are the experts when a recommendation needs to be made to turn the Ice Guidelines on or off.

*CISPRI – MV PERSEVERANCE, Ice Overflights*

Captain Mehler stated that this program is a great success in terms of ice management in Cook Inlet.

*Team:*

The team is a three-tiered system, and communication is the key. He is appreciative of what CISPRI has put up on their website, and he loves the ice cameras up. As part of their readiness, they hold the pre-winter meeting, which he believes is a best practice and he hopes continues.

Robert Peterkin asked if having a harbor in Kenai similar to Homer would help. Mr. Mehler and Mr. Paxton both agreed. Robert Peterkin stated that he’s been advocating for a harbor in the City of Kenai for years.

Carla Stanley asked what the term “critical equipment” during Bravo means. Captain Mehler stated that first and foremost it’s the engines, both in standby and up and running if they need them immediately in Bravo.

Paul Shadura asked if some of the vessels have the capacity to take a snapshot of the bridge so they can look out on the bow even at night. Captain Mehler stated that they have received pictures from pilots who will take pictures on their phones and share what they are encountering, and he is then able to share that real time information with NOAA. There are no cameras on the tankers, but it’s safe to do on the bridge, and they have received those photos.

Captain Mehler stated that years back, the pre-winter meeting used to be two meetings, industry and public. He made the decision that for the sake of transparency, they will hold one meeting for all.

* ***Marine Vessel Vetting Process – Captain Debra Cobb, Global Marine Assurance Manager***

Mr. Munger reminded directors that there was a question at the last full Council meeting about Marathon vessel vetting, and Captain Cobb provided an introductory story about surviving a ship explosion and how it gave her a passion for safety on tankers. She reported to the Council as follows:

*Marathon Vessel Vetting*

Vessels are required to be vetted and approved before calling at a Marathon dock or carrying Marathon cargo. A scheduler or charterer nominates a vessel to be vetted for specific business/date windows utilizing a dedicated corporate vetting software Tanker Assessment and Ship Clearance (TASC).

Vetting required:

* + Time Charter – Long-term agreement
	+ Voyage Charter – Marathon owns cargo from the load port to the discharge port
	+ FOB vessel loads cargo a Marathon dock
	+ DES vessel discharges cargo at Marathon dock.

A vessel is required to be vetted if Marathon has an interest in the cargo anytime it's onboard a vessel. Marathon reviews all past and present information on a vessel and the company that’s managing the vessel to ensure the vessel is in compliance with all international, state, and local regulations. They continue to ask questions until they are satisfied; and if not satisfied, they will reject the vessel to do Marathon business. Vetting begins with a business requirement for refineries to buy or sell petroleum cargo utilizing the vessel for transportation. A Marathon scheduler or charterer will nominate the vessel for that specific business need including the cargo, grade, type, volume, port, berths, and timing.

*Ship Inspection Report Program (SIRE)*

SIRE is a uniform inspection protocol developed and maintained by Oil Company International Marine Forum (OCIMF) members predicated on the following:

* + Vessels Particulars Questionnaire (VPQ) – completed by vessel’s technical operator
	+ Vessel Inspection Questionnaire (VIQ) – completed by the SIRE inspector
	+ SIRE – final report published on the SIRE website available for purchase by OCIMF program recipients: Oil/chemical/gas company marine assurance teams, global Coast Guards, and marine terminal operators.

An industry best standard is a ship has a SIRE inspection at intervals every six months. They have eight Marathon Petroleum port captains who are SIRE accredited to inspect tankers, barges, and tugs. So far this year they have inspected 130 tankers, 30 barges, and 30 tugs. The only thing that trumps a SIRE inspection is a Marathon part captain’s report on a vessel that was at one of their docks.

Vetting required documentation, Alaska-specific:

* + Mooring Line and Tail Certificates
	+ Safe Manning Certificate
	+ Emergency Towing Booklet
	+ Cargo Piping Plan
	+ SOPEP Equipment List/Inventory
	+ Bunker Oil Transfer Procedures per USA Code of Federal Regulations 33CFR 155.720 and 155.750
	+ Cargo Transfer Procedures per USA Code of Federal Regulations 33CFR 155.720 & 155.750
	+ Training and Drill records: Oil spill
	+ QI notification and SOPEP last 12 months.

Marathon makes about 2,000 vetting decisions a year, and its rejection rate is about 4.5 percent. Reasons for rejecting a vessel include: Poor maritime port captain feedback experience at one of Marathon’s terminals, poor SIRE inspection, crew experience does not meet criteria, the vessel is too old, unsuitable Coast Guard inspection history, sanction violation, and mooring system not adequate.

In 2017 there was a decision made by the OCIMF membership to complete a SIRE improvement project, and in 2023, SIRE 2.0 is going live and will focus more on human factors. There will also be an algorithm that creates dynamic questions for particular vessels at the time based on all the data about the vessel. This will allow for good marine assurance vetting decisions. It will also allow inspectors to take real time pictures and upload them to the report.

Captain Cobb closed her presentation with a reminder of Marathon’s Principles of Operation:

1. Do it safely or not at all.
2. There is always time to do it right.
3. We operate at the pleasure of the community.
4. Always report promptly all incidents and near-miss events.

Robert Peterkin asked how far in advance they vet a vessel before Marathon contracts with them. Captain Cobb stated that they can turn around a decision in approximately 24 to 48 hours.

John Williams asked when they have multiple visits of the same ship to the same port, do they gather data each time the vessel comes in? Captain Cobb stated that they would love to have a port captain go on every ship that comes into the berth, but sometimes it’s not possible.

Vinnie Catalano mentioned that he understood that during these active SIRE inspections, inspectors will be carrying tablets so they will be able to take pictures and make observations. He wondered if it was to see how they are going to operate at the next port. Captain Cobb stated that the process was changed for ships with SIRE 2.0. Vessels will need to do a lot more pre-work than they did before, and one of the asks is that there are photos taken at 25 different locations on the vessel and uploaded prior to the inspection. Right now they don’t have photos in the SIRE report, so it will be helpful to have inspectors verify that the photos in the upload were accurate.

Vinnie Catalano asked if the focus on equipment and the human factor will be equal time to each. Captain Cobb reported that the additional focus on the human factor will provide data help to identify problems with staffing and come up with solutions. The equipment and human focus will be equal.

***PRESENTATION WRAP UP***

Mr. Munger thought it was important for the Council to see firsthand how seriously Marathon takes its wintertime operations. As Captain Mehler pointed out, this is a year-round commitment to doing things right in Cook Inlet, and they are fortunate to have a responsible operator like Marathon. The commitment to stewardship has been passed down from the various oil companies, and the citizens of Cook Inlet are extremely fortunate.

Carla Stanley added that one of the things that impress her most is the mutual loyalty, respect, and sharing of information between all of the partners that have an interest in protecting Cook Inlet.

Robert Peterkin stated that having a tug like BOB FRANCO available 365 days a year in Cook Inlet is a direct result of a great relationship and a great commitment.

***2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT***

President Fandrei reported the following activities of the Executive Committee:

* Met twice since the September board of directors meeting.
* Reviewed and accepted the fiscal year ‘20/'21 findings with the Audit Committee.
* Reviewed the statement of financial position on November 1st.
* Reviewed the current administrative and program operating budgets on November 1st.
* Reviewed and approved the 2023 board meeting schedule.
* Reviewed and recommended forwarding to the Council for the adoption of the proposed 2023 operating and program budgets along with the FY20/'21 undesignated fund allocation.
* Received updates from staff on matters pertaining to industry, funding, contracts, the annual financial audit, tax return filings, CPA services contracting, meeting logistics, appointments, projects, and regulations.

Pres. Fandrei thanked fellow committee members John Williams, Deric Marcorelle, Grace Merkes, and Robert Peterkin for their hard work.

* **CIRCAC Board Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Munger referred directors to the packet and highlighted the upcoming full Council meetings:

* April 14 – Kenai
* August 25 – Homer
* November 30 – December 1, 2023 – Anchorage
* **Review of FY2021 Financial Audit Findings**

Mr. Munger stated that the audit was unremarkable. There were some very minor discrepancies in accounting practices that they have since rectified.

CIRCAC has been notified that their long-time auditors Lambe Tutor & Associates will no longer be doing audits, but they will continue to work with the Council doing their tax returns and providing other miscellaneous bookkeeping guidance as needed. Staff is currently securing a new contract with an auditing firm in Anchorage.

* **2022 Statement of Financial Position and Operating Budget Through November 1, 2022**

Mr. Munger stated that the budget is tracking where it needs to be this time of year, and everything seems to be in order.

* **Review of Proposed 2023 Operating and Program Budgets with FY2021 Undesignated Funds Allocation**

Mr. Munger directed board members to the proposed 2023 operating budget and the proposed allocations of the FY’21 unallocated funding. He noted that they typically do this in the fall, but the audit had not been completed by the September meeting, so now they will do the allocation distribution in FY’23, the bulk of which will be going primarily to the committees.

Mr. Munger stated that their 2023 budget experienced a CPI increase of 7.6 percent. He then did a cursory review of the budget items with directors.

**Robert Peterkin moved to approve the budget, seconded by Scott Arndt.**

John Williams remarked that he believes the red text in the budget should be colored green because it is money being added to the budget. He also had to clarify questions regarding the layout of the document and the way it was balanced.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pres. Fandrei, yesMr. Williams, abstainMr. Marcorelle, yesMr. Peterkin, yes | Mr. Rodvik, yesMs. Stanley, yesMr. Shadura, yesMr. Sonen, yes | Ms. Merkes, yesMr. Flint, yesMr. Opheim, yesMr. Arndt, yes |

**The motion passed (11 yes, 1 abstain).**

* **Proposed Amendments to CIRCAC Bylaws**

Mr. Munger reminded directors that the first presentation of the bylaw revisions took place at the September meeting. He reviewed the reasoning behind the bylaw amendments and read the description in the packet verbatim to the Council.

**Scott Arndt moved to approve in the second reading amendments of the bylaws in sections 3 and 4, seconded by Carla Stanley.** A roll call vote was taken:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pres. Fandrei, yesMr. Williams, yesMr. Marcorelle, yesMr. Peterkin, yes | Mr. Rodvik, yesMs. Stanley, yesMr. Shadura, noMr. Sonen, yes | Ms. Merkes, yesMr. Flint, yesMr. Opheim, yesMr. Arndt, yes |

**The motion passed (11 yes, 1 no).**

***3. Executive DIRECTOR’S REPORT***

*Alternative Planning Criteria (APC)*

Mr. Munger reported that as far as he is aware, the Senate version of the U.S. Coast Guard reauthorization legislation has not passed. He was recently made aware that the authorization act is going to be incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). He has not been able to see the draft language of the Senate version, but he was assured by Senator Sullivan’s staff that the Cook Inlet exemption that is included in the House bill language is also included in the Senate bill. Mr. Munger anticipates it will pass before the end of the year.

*Skill Bridge Program*

Mr. Munger stated that he has begun work on getting CIRCAC certified as eligible to participate in a Department of Defense program called Skill Bridge Program that allows qualified enlisted military personnel to intern, at no cost to the organization, for up to 180 days as they transfer into civilian status. He will keep the Council abreast of any progress the organization makes toward certification.

*Recertification*

Mr. Munger reported that they have begun work on their triannual recertification. Every third year they have to go through a more comprehensive process that also includes letters of support from organizations and individuals that support CIRCAC. Staff will be reaching out to those representative organizations for those letters of support.

*Election Process*

Mr. Munger stated that seats are expiring in April, and they will soon begin the election process for next year. Seats coming up for election include Kodiak Island Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska Native Groups, and Environmental Groups. He has spoken to the current directors holding those seats, and all want to remain in those seats.

*Repurposing Proposal for Offshore Platforms*

Mr. Munger stated that just this week he was asked to support a repurposing proposal for offshore platforms in the Middle Ground Shoal area of Cook Inlet. This is a proposal by HEA to ultimately construct approximately 30 megawatts of wind energy generation located on Platform A, Platform C, and platforms Baker and Dillon. This is an effort to study the proposed project along with a feasibility stage effort to collect and process one year’s worth of offshore wind data by installing a vertical profiling LiDAR. It’s a bit outside of CIRCAC’s mandates, but the Council had a discussion at the last meeting about repurposing the old platforms. He believes the Council should support this by writing a letter of support. Hilcorp is involved with this project since they own the platforms.

Mr. Munger concluded his report by thanking Council members who participated in yesterday’s strategic planning process, and he appreciated his staff for all their hard work.

***4. sTAFF REPORTS – STATUS OF PROGRAMS & pROJECTS***

* **Public Outreach – Shaylon Cochran**

Shaylon Cochran highlighted that the partnership scholarship with AVTEC and Marathon was awarded to Carly Ness. He also highlighted that he was able to get Vinnie Catalano on the radio for an hour-long recorded interview. He would like to post it online and would be happy to share it with anyone interested. Pres. Fandrei received positive reports about the radio program, and he congratulated Shaylon Cochran on a good job.

Carla Stanley suggested they come to Homer and do an interview with Sue Saupe. Shaylon noted that they have talked about that, and it’s something they can consider in the spring when they start looking at fieldwork next year.

John Williams asked what it would cost to do a 15 or 20-minute video to put on television. Shaylon noted that this is a project he and Vinnie talked about, getting a video made of CIRCAC and an introduction to Cook Inlet. They discussed gearing it toward Coast Guard members and operators who are coming into the Inlet and need background information. They have had some preliminary discussions about cost, which is budget dependent. With the new website they are working on, they will have more capability to host video content. Getting the new website is key to some of the new outreach methods they are looking to do with more visual and multimedia content. Vinnie Catalano added that in preliminary outreach they have done with industry and agencies, this concept is being well received, and people are anxious to participate. This will be a project that will build slowly with partner participation, and they are going to focus on getting a good product without overspending. He reiterated that the target audience will primarily be the Coast Guard because their staff turns over approximately every three years.

* **Environmental Monitoring Committee – Susan Saupe**

Sue Saupe encouraged directors to access the links in the packet related to interesting archived webinars from Exxon Mobile Oil Spill Response Knowledge Transfer and NOAA.

Cook Inlet RCAC has submitted study plan ideas to BOEM most years. Over the last three or four years, BOEM has focused on study plan ideas for Cook Inlet due to Lower Inlet lease sales. Some of CIRCAC’s study plan ideas have come to fruition over the years the BOEM has funded through request for proposals, inter-agency agreements, or sole-source agreements. The goal for BOEM to request study plan ideas is to help identify projects that would fill gaps in our knowledge of Cook Inlet and potential impacts of oil industry activities. Several study plan ideas that CIRCAC has submitted have been funded either directly or through partnerships, and CIRCAC will continue to submit them when the opportunities arise. If anyone has suggestions on data gaps they see, please let Sue know.

Senator Murkowski put out a request for comments on the Working Waterfronts framework. This is funding she is bringing to Alaska with a big focus on coastal communities and filling gaps in training, infrastructure, and expertise. One of the projects listed is a Coastal Vegetation Inventory Pilot Project, and Sue will be putting together information explaining that the ShoreZone mapping system contains coastal vegetation, and this is a great opportunity to use that as a pilot project.

The Alaska Marine Science Symposium will be held in person at the Hotel Captain Cook in late January. This conference encompasses many different fields and allows for sharing of ideas across groups.

HF radar is a project CIRCAC is currently working on with UAF, NOAA, AOOS, and Hilcorp. They are hoping it will get deployed sometime this winter and will be up year-round for however long they can keep it maintained.

* **Prevention, Response, Operations, and Safety Committee (PROPS) – Vinnie Catalano**

Firefighter training is an issue they have been discussing at the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee. They have completed the Marine Firefighting and Salvage Plan for inclusion in the Harbor Safety Plan.

Vinnie also noted that in conjunction with Prince William Sound RCAC, CIRCAC helped fund and facilitate a marine firefighting symposium, which provided marine firefighting training for coastal community fire departments around the state. PWS RCAC was no longer interested in continuing the symposium, and Vinnie has been working with the Harbor Safety Committee to try to bring that back.

Vinnie noted that he recently attended a Regional Stakeholders Committee Task Force meeting, which is a task force from the External Communication Subcommittee of the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee. This task force deals with how public stakeholders and non-agency stakeholders will interact with incident command during an incident. CIRCAC staff have long had an excellent relationship in this regard and are invited into the command center to assist where they can. As the organization looks toward succession planning, they need to be aware that incoming staff may not be afforded the same luxury.

* **Protocol Control Committee – Vinnie Catalano**

Vinnie Catalano had no additional information other than what was contained in the written report.

* **Administration – Maddie Jamora**

Maddie Jamora had no additional information other than what was contained in the written report.

***5. CALENDAR AND MISCELLANEOUS***

* AK Marine Science Symposium – January 23 – 27, 2023 – Anchorage
* AK Forum on the Environment – February 6 – 10, 2023 – Anchorage

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*CLOSING COMMENTS\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

Paul Shadura thanked the Council for allowing him to participate in the Pacific Marine Expo. He was able to talk with aides for Representative Peltola and Senator Murkowski. He was able to meet the new outreach coordinator for PWS RCAC, who he is looking forward to working with in the future.

Scott Arndt wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He enjoyed seeing everyone these last two days.

Grace Merkes thought it was a good meeting. She appreciated all the refreshers from Sue Saupe. She appreciates all the cooperation and partnerships with other groups.

Deric Marcorelle said it was great to see everyone face to face, and it was a good meeting. He enjoyed PWS RCAC’s Science Night last night.

John Williams thanked the staff for making his travel arrangements and for all the work they do.

Robert Peterkin thanked everyone and felt it was a great meeting with great presentations. He thanked the staff.

Carla Stanley thanked Candice Elias for arranging her trip here.

Walt Sonen noted that PWS RCAC is having a party tonight, and they are anticipating CIRCAC members to come. He appreciates staff efforts for all they do.

Bob Flint thought it was a good meeting, and he appreciates all the work and presentations provided during the meeting. He also appreciated Mr. Munger’s leadership and for allowing staff the room to work and do their jobs. He’s very proud to be associated with this organization.

Hans Rodvik thanked Vinnie Catalano for showing him the ice cameras. He appreciated being able to see the budget and participate in the vote on it. He appreciated getting to know people on the board, and he thanked everyone for coming to Anchorage for the meeting.

Mr. Munger stated that the staff is the greatest asset this organization has. Part of the success of the organization is the long-term relationships and trust developed with industry and agencies.

Vinnie Catalano wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thanked everyone for their support. He enjoys the time he gets with his committees.

Shaylon Cochran thanked all the Council members for their time, dedication, and continued support over the years.

Candice Elias wished everyone Happy Holidays and reminded everyone to submit their expense reimbursement request within 30 days.

Sue Saupe thanked Council members for their support and for moving forward with the strategic planning process. She thinks they have the best staff team they have ever had, and she appreciates the administrative staff in the Kenai office. Everyone works very well together.

Cassandra Johnson expressed her appreciation for being able to work for CIRCAC and attend these meetings. She wished everyone Happy Holidays and looks forward to seeing everyone in April.

Maddie Jamora thanked Vinnie for being everyone’s chauffeur, and she thanked the rest of the team. It was good to see everyone in person.

**Robert Peterkin moved to adjourn, seconded by Scott Arndt. Hearing no objection, the motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.**