**COOK INLET REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Hybrid Meeting - Seldovia, AK**

**Friday, September 9, 2022**

**Approved Minutes**

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

**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; David Duffy, Hilcorp; Captain Leanne Lusk, U.S. Coast Guard; Captain Marc Bayer, Marathon; Jade Gamble, ADEC; Angelina Fuschetto, Crowley Alaska Tankers; Mary Goolie, EPA; David Blossom, ADEC; Jonathan Schick, DNR; Alan Bailey, Petroleum News; Lori Nelson, Hilcorp; Anthony Strupulis, DNR; Tim Robertson, Nuka Research; Emily Mailman, Chugach Regional Resources Commission; Anna Carey, ADEC; Cindy Mom, Seldovia Oil Spill Response Team; Louis Flora, Homer; Kurt Gibson, Hilcorp; Allison Natcher, ADEC; Lt. Nicholas Capuzzi, U.S. Coast Guard; Alisha Chartier, Nuka Research; Mark Nielsen, Marathon; Paul Mehler, Marathon; Jeremiah Campbell, Seldovia Mayor; Tania Spurkland, Cook Inletkeeper; Jesse Endert, Seldovia Village Tribe; Stephen Payton, Seldovia Village Tribe, Erin McKittrick, Seldovia

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

President Gary Fandrei called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Roll was called, establishing quorum.

* **Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

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

**Robert Peterkin moved to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2022 board of directors and annual meetings, seconded by Scott Arndt.**

Walt Sonen noted a correction to the minutes.

**Hearing no objections nor further discussion, the motion passed, and the minutes were approved as amended.**

* **Safety Minute**

Vinnie Catalano provided a safety briefing for attendees.

* **Welcome & Introductions**

Board members, staff, and guests introduced themselves. Seldovia Mayor Jeremiah Campbell welcomed the council to Seldovia, and on behalf of the City of Seldovia and its citizens, he offered thanks and gratitude for the work this council does.

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

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) – Allison Natcher

Allison stated that they are actively working to create subcommittees related to Regional Contingency Plans and Area Contingency Plans, and RCACs are welcome to join.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) database has been converted and will be live on the Internet soon. They will be sharing administration with UAF and partnering with the Alaska Geospatial Office. They are encouraging the public to take a look at that and make recommendations on how they can improve the Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) once it goes live.

United States Coast Guard (USCG) – Captain Leanne Lusk, Nicholas Capuzzi

Captain Lusk thanked CIRCAC for the support of the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee. These efforts have led to significant contributions to their Contingency Plans and overall improved oil spill preparedness.

The efforts to create a comprehensive GIS layer for the GRS are significant and are establishing a national standard for the USCG.

The next Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee meeting will be on November 1st where they will focus on the role of non-governmental organizations in oil spill response preparedness.

Captain Lusk highlighted some personnel changes including Scott Farr, Chris Svencer, and Lt. Nicholas Capuzzi. As the Coast Guard is taking a significant role in cyber in the maritime community, they have hired Mike Wills in a new civilian position. Mr. Wills will be doing a presentation with personnel from headquarters at the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators in Nome the week of September 26th. If it is the will of this council, she can arrange for a presentation on the cyber efforts at a future meeting. Mr. Munger noted that the board will be meeting in Anchorage on December 1st and 2nd, and they would welcome that presentation.

Lt. Nicholas Capuzzi introduced himself to the board and provided some background on his experience.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Mary Goolie

Mary Goolie noted that they will be in person at the next CIRCAC meeting in Anchorage December 1 – 2 and she highlighted the following upcoming meetings:

* Alaska Regional Response Team meeting in Anchorage on September 22nd that will be held as both a hybrid and in-person meeting at Alaska Pacific University from 9:00 to 4:00.
* Alaska Inland Area Committee meeting September 20th in Anchorage at the BP Energy Center from 9:00 to 12:00.
* Prince William Sound Area Committee meeting October 13th.
* Arctic Western Alaska Area Committee meeting November 1st.

Department of Natural Resources – Jonathan Schick

DNR announced a potential oil and gas lease sale in Cook Inlet at the end of this year. The deadline for the call for new information on the Cook Inlet lease sale is September 23rd at 5:00 p.m.

Carla Stanley asked if one of the lease sales was down near Augustine Island. Jonathan Schick explained that there is currently a geothermal prospecting permit on Augustine. What he is talking about is an oil and gas lease sale for the Cook Inlet area stretching from Anchorage down to Anchor Point and across. It’s the standard annual Cook Inlet areawide lease sale. They have five areawide lease sales every year, and the Cook Inlet and Alaska Peninsula areawide lease sales are typically in the spring. The commissioner wanted to consider the possibility of having an additional Cook Inlet sale at the end of the year, and in order to do that, they have to call for new information and take another hard look at the best interest finding they have for the Cook Inlet.

Paul Shadura asked if there were any types of discussions involving near-shore facilities in Kachemak Bay. Johnathan Schick stated that Kachemak Bay is still excluded from that.

Paul Shadura further asked if they are seeing any interest in new lease sales along the east side beaches spanning from Anchorage to Anchor Point. Jonathan stated that he doesn’t know what the industry is looking at in terms of one side or the other, so he cannot speculate on that.

Tony Strupulis introduced himself as the state pipeline coordinator for DNR.

* **CIRCAC Member or Public Comment**

Todd Paxton discussed an aggressive lobby effort underway in Washington, D.C. to create a third federal planning standard. CISPRI meets the National Planning Criteria (NPC), which is a high bar to reach; and those who cannot reach the NPC criteria are allowed to seek an Alternative Planning Criteria (APC). This lobby effort is trying to create a third standard, the Western Alaska Planning Criteria. He believes this effort is to reset the bar from the NPC to a much lesser standard. He stated that Mr. Munger has been involved, and he welcomes the CIRCAC board support in trying to defeat this language.

Cindy Mom shared that Seldovia is very dependent on a healthy Cook Inlet ecosystem. She shared the food sources found in the bay as well as the ecotourism opportunities. She voiced her concerns over the upcoming lease sale 258 and the potential for more oil infrastructure and development.

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

* **Hilcorp Alaska: Tidal Energy Concepts – David Duffy**

Mr. Munger introduced David Duffy to present a concept he previously presented to the PROPS Committee regarding repurposing abandoned oil platforms and exploring tidal energy.

David Duffy explained that Hilcorp has been in Cook Inlet since 2011 operating 15 platforms. Four of the platforms are currently idle, Spark and Spur in North Trading Bay, and Baker and Dillon in the Middle Ground Shoal. They are actively in the process of plugging and abandoning the wells. Dillon will be completed this year, next year they will move to the Baker and in the fall, they will plug and abandon Spark and Spur.

In the meantime, they have been looking at what has been done and what could be done with the platforms if they are no longer producing but are still being maintained in lighthouse mode. They have explored various concepts for repurposing the platforms, and the one concept they kept going back to was tidal energy, which is a tremendous resource in Cook Inlet and has been talked about for a long time. Hilcorp has approached the concept of tidal energy as if they were doing exploration to validate what the resource is, determine if it exists at the platform locations, and then explore the state of technology available on the market. The next step is to determine if it can work in the current locations with the specific environments relative to those locations. They also realized that the evaluation of tidal energy required special expertise and third-party validation, so they partnered with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), and the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF).

NREL produced a heat map of the tidal potential in Cook Inlet, and the practical resource they believe is available is approximately 2 gigawatts worth of power. PNNL took an existing model and applied that model to the platform locations to demonstrate a full 24-hour tidal cycle. Mr. Duffy demonstrated the model that showed the world-class tidal resource in Cook Inlet, particularly around the platform locations.

They explored the state of the current technology available and found that turbines and power systems are decades behind wind and solar, but through the partnerships with NREL, PNNL, and UAF, there is consensus that Cook Inlet is the nation’s greatest tidal resource and is a key location for a demonstration project on a mega-watt scale to advance the technology. Hilcorp has applied for a TEAMER grant to support the national labs and the university to help them measure tidal velocities, waves, turbulence, and some bathymetry in the vicinity of the platforms. This is a public source of funds, so the data will be public and will be published, and they are targeting that data collection will happen this fall. The collaborative has an internal goal to do the first short-term, in-water, small-scale demonstration project on the Dillon platform with a vendor sometime next year.

Mr. Duffy stated that through this process, they have become very interested in the idea of collaborative research, particularly on mammals. There is a need for basin-wide, community-level research toward that end. Many governmental entities would have involvement in that, and Hilcorp would like to be able to foster the research to understand the ambient or static conditions of the habitat so that as the technology develops, they can mitigate or design it around those conditions.

Carla Stanley asked if they had done any evaluation of the amount of noise or decibel levels of a tidal turbine. David Duffy stated that they haven’t yet, but there are a couple of vendors that have preliminary FERC licenses and are looking to do demonstration projects in different areas.

Paul Shadura asked if Hilcorp has further plans to dismantle these platforms in the event the tidal project isn’t feasible. Mr. Duffy explained that Hilcorp is responsible for the plugging and abandonment of wells and pipelines, making the top sides spillproof and safe, and eventually removing and dismantling platforms. There are no specific plans or a timeline to do that. When Hilcorp came into the Inlet, most of the platforms weren’t producing. Their work and efforts have been to repurpose the platforms for producing oil and gas. Some of them have reached the end of their productive lives for oil and gas, but that doesn’t mean they have lost a productive potential for new ideas or concepts. Hilcorp is going to continue to work with the platforms, as they are the steward of those assets, and there is potential for future opportunity.

Sue Saupe stated that the Cook Inlet Operational Forecasting System (CIOFS) developed by NOAA produced some tidal power maps for Cook Inlet, and she wondered if the national labs and the university used the CIOFS throughout the process. Mr. Duffy would need to defer that question back to the national labs and the university. Sue stated she would like a copy of that data when it is available. David reiterated that all data that has been used has come from public sources, and the results of this study are public and published.

Paul Shadura asked if there is information available to the public on how long the platforms will maintain structural integrity to be able to consider using them for a future purpose. Mr. Duffy said he doesn’t have the answer to that question, but there is a lot of public information available regarding the design and construction, and the platforms have undergone continuous maintenance and evaluation.

Sue Saupe further asked if they have had any discussions about what type of system they will use to grab the imagery from the water. Mr. Duffy stated that there are many different designs and they have had conversations with multiple vendors, but at this time they don’t have a formal relationship with a vendor. Putting this information out has created a great deal more interest from vendors and communities than they anticipated.

* **Marathon Petroleum Company: Marathon Maritime Operations Update – Captain Marc Bayer, VP Marine Operations; Mark Nielsen, Manager of Marine Operations**

*Principals 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.

*Stop Work Obligation*

As an employee or contractor for Marathon Petroleum, you should always comply with our Tenets of Safe Operations. You have the responsibility and the authority to stop any work that does not comply with these tenets, and there will be no repercussions.

*Tenets of Safe Operations*

1. Always operate within design and environmental limits.
2. Always operate in a safe and controlled condition.
3. Always ensure safety devices are in place and functioning.
4. Always follow safe work practices and procedures.
5. Always meet or exceed customer requirements.
6. Always maintain integrity of dedicated systems.
7. Always comply with all applicable rules and regulations.
8. Always address abnormal conditions.
9. Always follow written procedures for high-risk or unusual situations.
10. Always involve the right people in decisions that affect procedures and equipment.

Captain Bayer stated that the collective sea time of their group is 350 to 450 years of combined sea experience.

The BOB FRANCO tugboat was modified purposefully to operate in Cook Inlet. They have added 50 barrels of recovered oil storage on it, and it is used by CISPRI. Marathon has made a variety of enhancements to it, and it is the only tug in Lower Cook Inlet with these kinds of capabilities.

Marathon has the most modern fleet of tanker ships in the United States, and they have an average age of a little less than five years. Marathon is in a joint venture ownership with Crowley Maritime for the TEXAS, LOUISIANA, WEST VIRGINIA, and OHIO. These ships are eco-class and are a Hyundai Mipo design. The ships have all been moved over to the West Coast and operate between Long Beach and Alaska. The AMERICAN FREEDOM and AMERICAN ENDURANCE are sister ships.

Marathon entered into a long-term time charter agreement for six additional ships, also Hyundai Mipo design, operated by a foreign flag with their partner Synergy out of Mumbai. All of the ships have been modified to work in Cook Inlet year-round.

*Cook Inlet Winterization Enhancements*

* Arctic PPE for the crew.
* Sea-Chest – Hard pipe connection to sea-chest for injection of air, steam, and recirculated hot water.
* Insulation/heat tracing:
* Ability to drain manifold/top lines/MARPOL after completion cargo
* Insulation with steam tracing and/or steam hose wrapped around piping.
* 12 mooring lines on winches with a minimum BS of 60 MT.
* Insulation/heat tracing on IG and the deck non-return valve and deck isolation valves to protect electronics and pneumatic valves.
* Electric heater in the deck house.
* Additional heating in the wheelhouse, steering gear, emergency diesel, paint locker, forward storeroom, and engine control room.
* Class-approved connection from engine room bilge to deck slop tank.
* Deck runoff Wilden pumps modified for cold weather.
* Deck air compressor - Air dryer.

Captain Bayer demonstrated a map showing how the ships move in and out of the Inlet when they are going to Valdez. He stated that they stay a minimum of 25 miles offshore in all locations where they can.

In referencing the invasive green crab, Paul Shadura asked if Marathon monitors their ballast water and if that information is publicly available. Captain Bayer thought that information is part of the ships’ logs. It’s problematic to exchange ballast water in Cook Inlet because of the silt. If they have to do an exchange, it would be done well offshore. Marathon very carefully monitors ballast water treatment. Sue Saupe stated that they have done some ballast water work in Cook Inlet, and it was clear that the concerns in Valdez don’t translate to Cook Inlet. Crude oil carriers are not dumping ballast in Cook Inlet. They did find that LNG tankers were, and scientists were able to compare results before and after treatments. Captain Bayer added that Marathon doesn’t typically bring ballast into Cook Inlet, and they are either coming in loaded or leaving loaded.

Paul Shadura further asked if there is a maintenance schedule and how they deal with the silt in Cook Inlet in the intricate workings of the vessels’ propulsion systems. Captain Bayer explained that they have keel coolers, which is critical to operating in Cook Inlet. They pull the boats once a year, and they have a very extensive maintenance program that is not taken lightly.

Carla Stanley asked if it is a concern with larvae or algae on the outsides of the boats. Captain Bayer stated that the paints they use are very slick, and organisms are not able to attach to the hull. If they do get buildup after sitting on anchor, they will do a hull cleaning and propeller polishing. Mark Nielsen further explained that the Jones Act ships are running at 90 percent, and they are up and down the West Coast, which is very strict on hull husbandry regulations. Those vessel hulls are pretty clean, and buildup would only happen when ships are sitting on anchor for a long time.

Based on a question from Paul Shadura, Captain Bayer stated that since the first day of the war, Marathon has made a concerted effort to stop moving fuel for Russia. Paul further asked if Marathon is monitoring spot vessels. He wondered if they do the same tremendous scrutiny now on those vessels that are contracted to Marathon. Captain Bayer stated that he doesn’t believe they have ever done a presentation to the Council on marine assurance, but he would be happy to if it is the will of the Council.

Captain Bayer continued in his presentation to note that there were two port captains in Kenai, and now there is just one. They don’t have any intention of backfilling that position and explained some of the reasons:

* The current port captain is very capable.
* Ships are no longer loading at Drift River now that the pipeline is in place.
* Vessel attendance is supported from the Lower 48.
* The ships are the most modern, and the crews coming up here are experienced.
* Winter modifications have been performed on the ships.
* Procedures for operating in the Inlet are specific and proven, and they have operational discipline.
* They conduct pre and post winter meetings and include all stakeholders.
* Training once or twice a year is conducted at AVTEC.
* BOB FRANCO is a tremendous asset.
* **U.S. Coast Guard: Sector Anchorage Overview Update – Captain Leanne Lusk, Commander Sector Anchorage; Lt. Nicholas Capuzzi**

Captain Lusk detailed recent cases as follows:

*F/V ST. PATRICK*

A response was conducted last year on this ship that sank in the ‘80s in Women’s Bay. It was an extensive response that has been used as a case example to demonstrate to Congress how expensive a response is in Alaska, even in a location as well prepared as Kodiak. Captain Lusk opened the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, and completed a congressional notification. The cost topped out at $4.8 million with $4.6 million used for the recovery of fuel onboard. They did not bring up the vessel itself.

On June 15, 2022, a light sheening was reported. A boom was placed around the sheening, which was captured. They will continue to monitor.

*Passenger Vessel OCEAN EXPLORER – June 22, 2022*

The vessel had an engine fire in Marmot Bay, the two people onboard abandoned ship 10 nautical miles northeast of Kodiak, and the vessel sank with a max potential of 3,000 gallons onboard. No observable sheen, and the vessel was not recovered.

*F/V PROVIDER – August 16, 2022*

This 38-foot vessel sank in Shelikof Strait in 700 feet of water near Harvester Island after striking a rock. It’s estimated to have 500 gallons of diesel onboard. Four people were onboard and were being towed by a good Samaritan, but due to weather, the vessel needed to be released and sank. No sheening was observed or reported.

*F/V SONDER – September 4, 2022*

58-foot fishing vessel took on water, and two people abandoned ship and were recovered by F/V RED RIDER. It has an estimated 700 gallons of fuel onboard, and it sank in Kennedy Entrance in approximately 100 to 500 feet of water. No observable sheen, and no plans to recover the vessel.

*Gas Pipeline in the Inlet*

During a remote operated vehicle observation, Marathon discovered an anchor wrapped around the gas pipeline in the Inlet near Turnagain Arm. It appeared both shanks were underneath the pipeline with the anchor and chains going over the top of the pipeline itself. Original estimates were that the anchor was 6,000 pounds, which would be a reportable marine casualty, yet there was no report. They are grateful to Cook Inlet RCAC for obtaining the AIS feed to try to identify the vessel that might have been in this location. This summer saw a great deal of collaboration between Marathon, CIRCAC, NOAA, and other agencies to obtain the permits to do the anchor recovery. Upon initiation of the recovery, the anchor was 750 pounds, which is obviously from a much smaller vessel than initially thought, and the incident remains unreported. Captain Lusk appreciated the responsibility of Marathon and their regularly scheduled scans along the pipeline, and there was no damage to the pipeline as a result of this incident.

*M/V MAUNALEI – August 5, 2022*

This 645-foot Matson container ship used as a backup reported a decrease in pressure at one of the head tanks for the controllable pitch propeller lubricant. While still outside of Vancouver, Canada, they were losing biodegradable, environmentally acceptable lubricant at a rate of approximately six gallons per hour. Working with NOAA, they determined that the lubricant had low toxicity that brought a minimal threat to the environment, wildlife, and resources within the region. The concern was a full loss of pressure and total loss of 600 gallons of lubricant, which although dissipation was likely, the coats of birds and furred animals would be affected. Captain Lusk decided to place a Captain Of The Port (COTP) order on the vessel requiring a tug escort and a response vessel. Matson hired the BOB FRANCO, and they hired CISPRI to follow the ship inbound, and they all met outside of Homer. There was no report of sheen during their inbound transit. When at the pier, they were required to put a boom around the vessel even though the systems were shut down, and there was no sheen during the time they were at port. They completed their offload and went to Portland to dry-dock. The vessel was repaired and is back in operation.

*U.S. Coast Guard Authorization Act*

Captain Lusk appreciated the public comment from Todd Paxton. She is watching this very closely and has concerns about it. The Coast Guard is working with members of Congress, and they appreciate any additional feedback CIRCAC might have to advocate for maintaining NPC and APC standards in Alaska.

Based on questions from the Council about recovering any of the sunken boats, David Blossom stated that ADEC is involved in every vessel that sinks, and unfortunately, depth is a factor. After a certain depth, it is just too difficult to go down there and recover, and is not cost-effective for the 500 to 700 gallons of fuel onboard.

***2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT***

President Fandrei reported that the Executive Committee met twice since the last board of directors meeting. They discussed board meeting formats and meeting safely in person in Seldovia. They also reviewed the financial position and administrative and program operating budgets through July 31st. They reviewed proposed bylaws amendments, and received updates from staff on matters about industry and funding, the financial audit, the USGC Alternative Planning Criteria, annual reports, conferences, meeting logistics, and other projects. He thanked board members John Williams, Deric Marcorelle, Robert Peterkin, and Grace Merkes for their diligence and hard work throughout the summer.

* **Annual Recertification**

Mr. Munger directed the Council to the annual recertification letter, which is critical to Cook Inlet RCAC remaining operational. He is very proud that they have received this recertification each year without exception since the organization’s inception. They are already beginning to work on next year’s recertification effort, and staff will be reaching out for letters of support from municipalities and special interest organizations.

* **2022 Statement of Financial Position & Operating Budget through July 31, 2022**

Mr. Munger stated that everything is tracking as it should be for this time of year. Last year’s audit is just about wrapped up, and they will have the results at the December meeting. Cassandra Johnson shared that there is nothing significant to highlight on the operating budget, and at seven months into the year, things are tracking as projected.

Pres. Fandrei noted that the board expressed concerns about encumbered funds from previous years, and he noted in this budget review that staff are doing a good job of spending those monies down.

* **Proposed Amendments to CIRCAC Bylaws**

Mr. Munger noted that a unique issue arose during the last election cycle whereby the Recreational Interest stakeholders did not submit a nomination for their representative director on the CIRCAC board. As such, the council elected to retain Bob Flint for another three-year term. On the advice of legal counsel Kristin Schmidt, this update to the bylaws codifies the procedure for the future.

**Scott Arndt moved to forward the amendments to CIRCAC’s bylaws to the December meeting, seconded by Deric Marcorelle.**

John Williams remarked that as a member of the executive team, he has reviewed the changes in the bylaws and concurs with their being forwarded to the December meeting.

Paul Shadura asked if an interest group comes forward at some future time to propose someone to fill the seat, will they be allowed to forward that person? Mr. Munger explained that the groups have adequate time and opportunity to participate in this process, and the interest groups will be notified of the council’s decision. They are allowed to choose a representative after the three-year cycle has completed. Robert Peterkin added that in his experience, staff go above and beyond in recruiting for these seats, and organizations have ample time to respond.

Paul Shadura referenced 4.1.2 of interest groups where the last sentence says if there is no incumbent, the council may elect a competent person to fill their vacancy. He asked what would happen if they have two or three? Mr. Munger stated that they will pass them on and pick the most qualified.

Scott Arndt suggested the council have a refresher on the full bylaws at the December meeting.

John Williams referred to section 3.1.5 and shared that according to their present bylaws, they are mandated to fill their seats in a timely manner, which is six months. He believes this is the primary reason they need to amend the bylaws.

**Hearing no further discussion nor objection, the motion passed.**

***3. Executive DIRECTOR’S REPORT***

Alternate Planning Criteria

Mr. Munger addressed the APC issue and noted that as they know, House Bill 6065 passed and is now in the Senate. The Senate is working on their version of the act, and they have their version of the APC issue. He has had a brief review of the marked-up version that Senate committee members commented on, and it’s a completely different approach than the House version. If there is an opportunity to provide public comment and it’s appropriate for CIRCAC to do so, he will take it to the Protocol Committee to develop comments to submit to the congressional delegation.

Director Seats Expiring

Three director seats are expiring this year.

Upcoming Meeting

December 1 – 2 in Anchorage. They will be staying at Embassy Suites with the meeting held at the BP Learning Center. Prince William Sound RCAC will be having their Science Night and Volunteer Appreciation around the same time, so Cook Inlet RCAC might be able to get an invitation to that if the board is interested. Paul Shadura reiterated his interest in hearing a presentation from Marathon on assurances. Mr. Munger stated that it has already been arranged for the fall.

Other Information

Mr. Munger appreciated the efforts of staff as they are able to do a considerable amount of work as a small staff.

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

**Protocol Control Committee – Vinnie Catalano**

The Protocol Committee has reviewed three plans since the April meeting: Cook Inlet Energy, Harvest Alaska, and Endeavor. All three of those plans are in the first part of the review process known as the request for additional information (RFAI) phase. This is very important work of this committee as always the reviews is done in collaboration with Nuka Research. Many times CIRCAC’s comments are the only non-agency comments provided to the state.  Our comments are often acted on and the plans are revised accordingly.

The Protocol Committee also addressed the allocation of their 2021 undesignated funds. Vinnie

Catalano thanked committee members for their time and for being responsive on short notice.

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

Vinnie Catalano highlighted the following from his written report:

Subcommittee Participation

* Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee - continued participation to ensure Cook Inlet’s interests are addressed in this very large area plan.
* Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee – after three to four years of work, they now have a functional committee. Recent work accomplished includes:
* Cook Inlet Marine Firefighting Plan, which was approved and will be put into the overall Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Plan.
* Working on resurrecting the Marine Firefighting Symposium.

Drilling Exercises

Participated in a Hilcorp functional exercise to assist with the planning and then attend the drill. Vinnie attended a Marathon drill with Shaylon Cochran, and the drill went off very well. These exercises are always very good learning and collaborating opportunities.

Geographic Response Strategies (GRS)

Vinnie Catalano explained that CIRCAC created 26 new GRSs in 2020. That he is working with the GRS Workgroup to use GRS project funds to aid in the facilitation of the implementation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to access and display GRSs. The

GIS platform will allow someone to come into the command center see the GRS displayed on an electronic map. Then the GRS details can be queued up by hovering the cursor over the GRS on the electronic map.

He stated that they will be signing a contract with UAF to create a process for this information to be updated and implemented into the GIS so it’s a repeatable process. There are approximately 700 GRSs statewide, with more than 100 of those being in Cook Inlet. John Williams asked if was there ever any discussion between the borough and CIRCAC about stream crossings and this GRS program. Vinnie responded by saying that they visited most of the stream crossing sites, and they located 26 anadromous streams that the highwaycrossed between the BlueCrest facility up to the refinery. They photographed the streams, took data and recorded the GPS coordinates. They turned over all of the data to ADEC for inclusion in the GRS catalog. It is GIS-ready and Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA) compatible. When GRS work is complete, it will fold right into it. John Williams shared that the Borough’s interest was more along the lines of road planning and culverts and the responsibility falling back on the taxpayers through the borough.

* **Public Outreach – Shaylon Cochran**

Shaylon Cochran highlighted the following:

* Op-ed piece in the local newspaper regarding HB 567 regarding oil spill prevention and response regulations.
* Clean Pacific drill.
* Website redesign.
* Scheduled radio spots.

Paul Shadura asked how they chose Sundog Media as their web host. Shaylon explained that they are CIRCAC’s current web host, and they have had good luck with them. They shopped around for costs of a project of this magnitude, and Sundog Media was very competitive for a project of this scope. He also talked to Kenaitze Indian Tribe, who hired Sundog Media to redo their website, and they were very pleased with the work they had done.

* **Administration – Maddie Jamora**

Maddie Jamora highlighted the following from her written report:

* FY’21 financial audit is nearly complete. Audit and Executive Committees will meet soon to go over the findings of the auditors and review the 2021 tax return.
* Bylaws and policies – staff have been working with Mr. Munger and Kristine Schmidt on bylaws and policies and keeping things up to date.
* Shout out to Candice Elias for coordinating their first in-person meeting as well as other committee meetings and events.
* Recertification process will begin late fall for next year’s application, so people should keep an eye out for calls for letters of support.

Carla Stanley asked who the recipient was of the joint CIRCAC and Marathon AVTEC marine training scholarship. Maddie Jamora stated that AVTEC completes the interviews and selection process, and she believes it will be awarded later in the fall.

* **Environmental Monitoring Committee – Susan Saupe**

*BOEM Grant*

The project has been moving forward. BOEM has asked that they track any COVID-related issues so they can potentially put in an extension for some of the deadlines.

Sue Saupe provided the council with background information on how they obtained the grant. She stated that the first year of the grant is focusing on compiling and synthesizing data, interpreting it, and using that to develop recommendations for future monitoring programs in Cook Inlet. The other component is developing more effective and better ways than currently exist for serving out data with a focus on contaminant data in Cook Inlet, both recent and historical. As they are evaluating all of the reports, they will find the data they feel can be collated, compiled, and merged to try to build a bigger database of contaminants data in Cook Inlet. Lastly, they will take those data from the database and do some comparisons to see if they can find ways to show trends and then ultimately make some recommendations about what kind of data are missing or should be included in environmental contaminant studies in Cook Inlet, or identify locations that are lacking data. Along the way, each of those levels of detail will have a data portal associated with it for ease of access. They are currently in the report gathering stage of the process.

BOEM is happy with the current study plan and released a second round of funding for Years 2 and 3 of the project.

*ShoreZone Mapping*

EMC completed a ShoreZone survey along the outer Kenai Peninsula coastline in June after having cancelled the surveys in 2020 and 2021. The survey will be part of a larger Alaska ShoreZone program to image and map shoreline habitats along every inch of the coastline. CIRCAC started the program in 2001, and helped build the Alaska ShoreZone partnership that includes most state and federal agencies that have any environmental responsibilities in coastal Alaska. About 97 percent of the entire state of Alaska has now been imaged and mapped. She noted that technology has improved over time, so EMC’s goal is to re-fly some of the areas that were done early in the program for new imagery and subsequent re-mapping to higher resolution digital shorelines. She showed the council some examples of poor imaging and noted that some areas have had imaging redone including the outer Kenai Peninsula which was re-imaged in June.

Vinnie Catalano asked if there is any discussion about getting imaging using unmanned aircraft. Sue stated that there has been a lot of discussion about that over the years, but that technology has a very limited range, and a significant field effort would still be required since they still need an operator. Vinnie noted that drones are being used for some GRS work, and they are getting very good images. Sue said similar work has been doned with unmanned aircraft in very focused areas, but at this time, drone technology won’t match with the ShoreZone imaging techniques that include biologicsl and geomorphic observations to go along with the imaging.

*Macrocystis Kelp*

Sue Saupe explained that the three types of canopy kelps in Alaska are *Nereocystis luetkeana* or bull kelp, *Eularia fistulosa* or ribbon kelp, and *Macrocystis pyrifera* or giant kelp. She showed a map of macrocystis distributions in Alaska, noting that all three are very common in Southeast. During ShoreZone imagine surveys in 2002 and 2005, the survey teams discovered three macrocystis kelp beds on the west side of Afognak Island, five plants in Morning Cove, and one small kelp bed near Old Harbor. During this year’s June survey, new beds were discovered along the outer Kenai Peninsula coast that were not present during the 2002 ShoreZone survey. The importance of this is that once kelp beds become established, they may have impacts on other species, and there could be shifts in the natural habitat. She stated that she received a photo from a water taxi operator of a macrocystis kelp bed inside Kachemak Bay and is hoping to have the kelp identification verified

*Physical Oceanography Program*

Sue Saupe explained that the reason for this program is to get a better understanding of how water moves in Cook Inlet, and what they ultimately want to do with this data is test and know how well computer models reflect real conditions in Cook Inlet. Repsonders rely on the models for oil spill planning and response and one problem has been that some of the fine-scale features of the Inlet are difficult to model though they can have an overwhelming impact on the fate of oil in the Inlet. We also need to have a better understanding of how fresh water impacts the net currents and other oddities of the Inlet to improve the models by testingthem against real observational data. She noted that freshwater also drives ice formation, so they would like these models to be able to also model ice.Sue displayed a map for the council that demonstrates the channel rips being convergent and divergent, noting that the convergence zones collect log debris and oil. Those zones will also suck the oil down where they will then pop up downstream as was documented in the 1987 GLACIER BAY oil spill.

Most recently, NOAA developed their Cook Inlet Operational Forecast System (CIOFS) model, which is a regional ocean model (ROM) that ranges from tens of meters of resolution up to kilometers. This is orders of magnitude better than models of the past, and they feel they can start testing how well it has captured the convergence, divergence, and outflow. The CIOFS is producing output every six hours and generates water level, wind, water temperatures, salinity, and current conditions. In the event of an oil spill, NOAA’s Office of Restoration and Research (OR&R) would put its oil trajectory model on top of this model. She noted, however, that they still don’t know how well this accurately models some of the unique features of Cook Inlet’s oceanography.

Sue explained that EMC worked with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) and other partners to put in a proposal to the Coastal and Ocean Modeling Testbed (COMT) projectto identify where the CIOFS model has weaknesses. This would help identify where new data need to be collected to improve oil spill trajectory modeling capabilities in Cook Inlet. Though that proposal was not funded, a group of organizations is working together to move portions of that project forward. Sue gave a summary of some of the efforts that are underway, including projects funded by BOEM and OSRI to do model-to-data comparisons and develop a particle trajectory model; the deployment of satellite drifters; the deployment of HF Radar systems. CIRCAC is participating in all of these efforts, including funding portions of each project.

***5. CALENDAR AND MISCELLANEOUS***

* CIRCAC Board Meeting – December 1st and 2nd, Anchorage

Paul Shadura commented that he would like approval from the Council to attend the conference and show in Seattle in November as he thinks it is important.

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

Scott Arndt was glad to finally meet everybody and is looking forward to the December meeting.

Captain Marc Bayer agreed it was nice to see everybody and is looking forward to December.

Michael Opheim was happy to have everyone in Seldovia. He enjoyed all the reports and presentations.

Robert Peterkin thought it was a good meeting and hopes they have a smooth ride home. He thanked staff for their efforts.

Grace Merkes enjoyed the detailed staff report because it gives the entire council an opportunity to hear about everything that is happening.

Paul Shadura agreed with Grace. He appreciated all the staff and felt this was great information today. He feels people get more out of an in-person meeting because it’s easier to see people and their expressions. He thanked Seldovia for hosting them.

Carla Stanley agreed with Paul and added that she also appreciated the sunshine. She thanked everyone for their hard work putting this meeting together.

Walt Sonen thanked staff for getting the presenters to Seldovia for their interesting presentations. He appreciates being kept abreast of what is happening. He was thankful everyone made it to Seldovia, but he noted some regret from staff and board members that they didn’t allow any time to explore Seldovia. It was suggested that next time they maybe come earlier or stay later.

Hans Rodvik thought it was great to meet everyone at this in-person meeting. He enjoyed the USCG presentation on the vessels that sank in Cook Inlet over the summer. Great meeting, and he is looking forward to the ride home.

President Fandrei appreciated everyone’s efforts to come to the meeting in person. He felt it was worthwhile. He appreciated the hospitality of Seldovia, and he looks forward to the next meeting.

John Williams complimented staff on putting this meeting together and apologized for not being able to meet in person. He appreciated Sue Saupe for her presentation.

Bob Flint thanked staff for being able to attend by Zoom so he could see the presentations, which were excellent. He apologized for not being able to meet in person because a two-day spill drill conflicted with his travel plans. He thanked staff for the great job.

Maddie Jamora appreciated the conference center for hosting them, and she thanked Peninsula Reporting for being live to transcribe the meeting.

Cassandra Johnson enjoyed her first in-person meeting with everyone and looks forward to December.

Shaylon Cochran appreciated being able to meet everyone in person finally.

Vinnie Catalano thanked Seldovians for sharing their time with the board.

Candice Elias appreciated working with the board members on their travel. She will be reaching out to everyone for the December meeting.

**Scott Arndt moved to adjourn, seconded by Deric Marcorelle. Hearing no objection, the motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.**