

# **Aleutian Islands Waterways Safety Committee**

## **Managing Board Meeting Summary**

**February 27, 2025**  
**10:00 am – 11:00 am**

**Board Attendees:**

Captain Buddy Custard (USCG, Ret.), President  
Peggy McLaughlin, Vice President/WSC Chair  
Shari Coleman, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mayor Joe Bereskin, Board Member

**Ex-Officio:**

MST2 Elizabeth Burges, USCG

Bernie Nowicki, ADEC

Bridget Crokus, USFWS

Aaron Poe, ABSI

Dan Payne, USCG

**Others:**

Sierra Fletcher, Nuka Research

Haley Griffin, Nuka Research

### **Call to Order and Approval of Agenda**

The February meeting of the AIWSC Managing Board was called to order at 10:01 am by Captain Buddy Custard.

**Motion Ms. Peggy McLaughlin, Mayor Joe Bereskin to approve the amended agenda as presented. Motion approved by non-objection.**

### **Approval of Meeting Summaries August 15, 2024, December 10, 2024, and January 27, 2025**

**Motion Ms. Shari Coleman, Ms. McLaughlin to approve the August 15, 2024, meeting summary minutes. Motion approved by non-objection.**

**Motion Ms. Coleman, Ms. McLaughlin to approve the December 10, 2024, meeting summary minutes. Motion approved by non-objection.**

**Motion Mayor Bereskin, Ms. Coleman to approve the January 31, 2024, meeting summary minutes. Motion approved by non-objection.**

### **Financial Report**

Captain Custard reported that the AIWSC's bank account currently has \$1,638 and that the Alaska Chadux Network will be making a contribution. Aaron Poe stated that because of changes in D.C., funds from the EPA SWIFR Grant were frozen, but he'll keep the Board apprised of any new information or changes. (ABSI was also a sub-awardee to this grant.) Some federal funding had been unfrozen earlier in the week. Mr. Poe replied that he would need to check in with Nadine Kochuten, about potential ABSI funding.

The Board agreed that they will split up calling or emailing Committee members to solicit additional contributions. Mr. Poe added that, generally, when an ask comes from a Board Member it helps to get smaller non-profits more traction. Ms. Kochuten has connections in the region and may potentially know of additional sources. Ms. Fletcher will contact Captain Custard about the payment upcoming for the AIWSC website hosting.

### **Facilitator's Report**

Ms. Griffin reported supporting the work of the Waterways Safety Plan (WSP) work group and a meeting of the Storm Avoidance work group. The Storm Avoidance work group is getting closer to having a draft document ready for the Committee to review. Ms. McLaughlin stated that she would like the next Committee meeting to focus on this effort. Ms. Fletcher reported that she needs to evaluate what level of support Nuka Research can continue to provide and would like to see what happens with the funds from the EPA SWIFR grant.

### **Ex-Officio Member Roundtable**

The Ex-Officio members expressed continued appreciation for the committee's efforts but didn't not have specific updates to share. appreciation for the group's efforts to make progress on good work in the region. Captain Custard thanked the Ex-Officio members for their continued support and participation.

### **New Business**

Captain Custard reviewed Martha Grabowski's application to the Board, expressing that her knowledge and talent would be an asset to the Committee, but may fit better in the vacant At Large seat on the Committee. Ms. Coleman restated the sentiment that while an effort has been made to select Board and Committee members that are Alaska based, the Board seat has been open for a significant period of time. Reading her experience and interest, Ms. Coleman wondered if the benefits of filling the vacancy with an individual outside of Alaska is beginning to outweigh having an empty position. The concern may arise where candidates might not understand region specific issues and operations, however, this could be a missed opportunity to bring in experience from other places.

Mayor Bereskin agreed with Ms. Coleman and suggested that Ms. Grabowski may be able to serve in both roles to keep perspectives open. Ms. McLaughlin stated that she doesn't question Ms. Grabowski's qualifications, experience and knowledge, but her not being based in Alaska is a significant factor in that she doesn't have the same level of experience with local operations to inform something like the WSP. She does not want to, however, hinder Board processes by denying Ms. Grabowski's application.

Captain Custard prefaced with his bias in favor of Ms. Grabowski since he's worked with her in the past. He stated that while she doesn't live in Alaska, she knows the process for assessments and could help the Committee through certain processes with her experience. Ms. Griffin offered to reach out to Ms. Grabowski and ask her to participate in an interview. Captain Custard and Ms. McLaughlin concurred and expressed their interest in attending the meeting. Ms. Coleman and Mayor Bereskin stated their approval and that the interview should be kept small, so they will not participate.

Captain Custard reviewed John Silva's application, stating that Mr. Silva has an extensive knowledge base, and his company frequently works in Alaska. Ms. Coleman expressed that as long as a candidate meets the criteria and has some Alaska knowledge base, she has no concerns. Ms. McLaughlin and Mayor Bereskin also expressed no concerns.

<p><b>Motion Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Coleman to appoint John Silva to the alternate Oil Spill Response seat. Motion approved by non-objection.</b></p>
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After the interview with Ms. Grabowski, an email will be sent out announcing the newly appointed individuals as appropriate.

Captain Custard added that a representative from the International Group of P&I Clubs, William Wright, participated in the Western Alaska Oil Spill Planning Criteria workshop in February. He

suggested soliciting Mr. Wright's interest in filling the AIWSC's primary P&I Clubs position. No concerns were raised by the other Board members. Captain Custard will reach out to Mr. Wright.

### **Next Committee Meeting**

The next meeting of the AIWSC will take place on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 2pm AKST via Microsoft Teams.

### **Closing Comments**

Ms. McLaughlin stated her intent to catch up on what she missed from the last Committee meeting and to make the work of the Storm Avoidance work group a focal point of the April meeting. Mayor Bereskin thanked Ms. Griffin for the meeting reminders. Captain Custard reiterated the goal of raising funds for the Committee. He stated that he has submitted a request in the Alaska Legislature's system for \$200,000 of funding through the cruise ship head tax fund.

### **Review Action Items & Next Steps**

- Ms. Fletcher will coordinate with Captain Custard to pay for the AIWSC's website renewal.
- Ms. Griffin will create an invoice for Alaska Chadux Network to make a contribution.
- Ms. Griffin will distribute an email to the committee to solicit additional contributions.
- Ms. Griffin will distribute the Committee list to the Board asking Board members to identify which contacts they will reach out to for soliciting contributions.
- Ms. Griffin will reach out to Ms. Grabowski to solicit her availability, then find a time Captain Custard and Ms. McLaughlin are available for an interview.
- Captain Custard will reach out to William Wright to solicit his interest in the P&I Clubs seat.
- Captain Custard will continue discussions with the Alaska legislature on AIWSC funding.

### **Set Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Managing Board will take place on May 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-11am AK time.

### **Adjourn**

Motion Ms. Coleman, Ms. McLaughlin to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 am. Meeting adjourned.

### **Meeting Materials:**

1. Meeting Summaries – August 15, 2024, December 10, 2024, January 27, 2025
2. Managing Board Vacancy Application – Martha Grabowski
3. Committee Vacancy Application – John Silva (Alternate Oil Spill Response Seat)
4. Committee Vacancy Application – Branden Kroon (Alternate Assist Tugs Seat)