**COOK INLET REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Videoconference**

**Friday, December 3, 2021**

**Approved Minutes**

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

**Members Absent:** Rob Lindsey (excused), Scott Arndt (excused)

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

**Others Present:** Capt. Leanne Lusk, USCG; LCDR Matthew Richards, USCG; Brooke Taylor, Prince William Sound RCAC; Sierra Fletcher, Nuka Research; Sarah Moore, ADEC; Anna Carey, ADEC; Jade Gamble, ADEC; Zuzana Culakova, ADEC; Dianne Munson, ADEC; Rebecca Spiegel, ADEC; Tiffany Larson, ADEC, Commissioner Jason Brune, ADEC; Catherine Berg, NOAA; Angela Fuschetto, Crowley Alaska Tankers; Tony Strupulis, DNR; David Fitz-Enz, USFS; Capt. Marc Bayer, Marathon Petroleum

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

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

* **Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

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

**Robert Peterkin moved to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2021 meeting, seconded by Carla Stanley.**

Paul Shadura referenced page 5 of the minutes regarding oil wells being decommissioned. CIRCAC was supposed to receive a response from Jonathan Schick from DNR, and Paul asked if a response had been received. Mr. Munger responded that they have not heard anything back.

Pres. Fandrei noted some corrections to the minutes. Deric Marcorelle noted his absence was excused for that meeting.

**Hearing no objections, the motion passed, and the minutes were approved as amended.**

* **Welcome & Introductions**

Mr. Munger welcomed guests and asked that they introduce themselves to the Council.

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

*United States Coast Guard (USCG) – Capt. Leanne Lusk*

Capt. Lusk thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend. She discussed the case with the F/V ST. PATRICK stating it was a vessel that sank in the early ‘80s, and because the master passed away, the vessel was no longer owned. It began seeping petroleum product and created a sheen just outside of Kodiak in Women’s Bay. The response took about three weeks to remedy, and she appreciates the great communications with CIRCAC in that response.

Another case also in Kodiak was the F/V LAURA that ran aground off of Black Rock in heavy seas. Everyone was rescued from the vessel, including the dog. It was interesting that the vessel weathered significantly over the course of a few days because of wave action as it laid on top of the rock. The owner was able to hire a contractor to remove contaminants. The vessel remains aground as wreckage, although there isn’t much left of it, and there are plans to recover what remains in the spring.

Paul Shadura asked the total cost of the F/V ST. PATRICK response. Capt. Lusk stated that they approved up to $4.3M, but she will need to double check what they ended up spending. She stated that cases require Congressional notification when they go over $4M for use of that fund, and they did conduct a Congressional notification.

*Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) – Sarah Moore*

Sarah Moore introduced new Soldotna ADEC staff member Darcy Balcarce. She thanked the Council for allowing her to participate in today’s meeting.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) – Heather Crowley

Heather Crowley was unable to attend the meeting but forwarded the following written remark: Comments regarding BOEM’s proposed Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 can be submitted at [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov/document/BOEM-2020-0018-0049) through December 13th, Docket ID: BOEM-2020-0018-0049.

* **CIRCAC Member or Public Comments**

John Williams stated that comments have been received that there isn’t sufficient public notification for CIRCAC meetings. He stated that public notice for this meeting was published in the Peninsula Clarion. Pres. Fandrei added that the notice was in the Clarion multiple times.

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

* **Update on ADEC Regulatory Review**

Commissioner Jason Brune reported that on November 18th, the above-ground regulation changes became effective with the updated prevention requirements for regulated above-ground storage tanks by incorporating current industry standard versions for field-constructed and shop-fabricated tanks. The updates are for standards that cover the installation, operation, and maintenance of above-ground oil storage tanks.

Commissioner Brune stated that Article IV regulations went out for public comment, and Director Tiffany Larson presented an update to this Council at the last meeting about what ADEC was going to be moving forward with. ADEC made a commitment to keeping the public comment period open for 90 days through the holiday season and will conclude at the end of January. No comments have been received to date. The previous comments received in the scoping process are available on ADEC’s website. They have received some questions that they have updated in their FAQ section, also available on the website. All questions received are posted to the FAQ for transparency purposes.

Mr. Munger shared that while CIRCAC staff hasn’t completed their comprehensive review of the entire document, he was cautiously optimistic that the changes proposed are fairly reasonable and certainly not the worst-case scenario. He thanked the commissioner and staff for the incorporation of many of CIRCAC’s recommendations, but they still have some concerns and will continue their review. Some of the highlights he wanted to note for ADEC staff that CIRCAC is concerned about include:

* Some of the proposed changes in the reduction of drills and exercises for crude oil operators in Cook Inlet
* The removal of the commitment to ensuring that the RCACs receive timely notification of plans and updates
* Eliminate any effort by the State of Alaska to stay abreast of new technology and developments that could improve response here, specifically best available technology
* Specify that a change in plan ownership be treated as a major amendment affording the opportunity for public review prior to approval
* To not allow plan holders to reduce their response planning standard through the use of an intentional well ignition during the blow out
* Include a statement to the effect that plan holders should comply with all state and federal requirements
* Require agency information germane to the plan as vetted for accuracy prior to the acceptance of the plan application
* Ensure the submittal and review of timelines described in regulations are clear and adequate to avoid forcing operators or agencies to accept less than desirable circumstances in an effort to avoid project interruption or plan expiration.

Commissioner Brune noted that he is unable to respond to those concerns at this time because they are in the middle of an open comment period. Tiffany Larson thanked Mr. Munger for the comments and the thoughtful review so far. Unfortunately, they are unable to address concerns outside of a transparent view for all of the public. She directed the Council to the opportunity to submit public comment through the website and noted that they will be able to respond once it closes.

Mr. Munger noted that he offered the above comments as a preview to the comments CIRCAC will be making officially once they complete their thorough review.

John Williams thanked Commissioner Brune and his staff for the job they’ve done.

Commissioner Brune encouraged meeting participants to offer their comments and to review the other comments made by others. They hope to have the regulation package done by November of next year.

Other

Commissioner Brune noted that Governor Dunleavy will unveil his budget on December 15th. The proposal put forward by ADEC is for consistent funding for SPAR for the next fiscal year. He also committed to coming to all future CIRCAC meetings.

Pres. Fandrei asked what the next steps are in terms of regulatory reviews for ADEC. Commissioner Brune stated that they’ve done a lot in the last three years across the four divisions that oversee human health and the environment at ADEC. They have had a number of air, environmental health, water, and SPAR regulatory modifications. From a SPAR perspective, he is interested in looking at the contaminated sites regulatory package, but they are not yet on a pathway to do that. He stated that there is significant interest in food freedom, so they are looking at those regulatory packages. He committed to being transparent about activities of the department and answering any questions the Council may have as they come forward with any potential changes. He noted that potential issues with Article I have come up during the Article IV process, but he doesn’t have anything planned as of yet.

Commissioner Brune noted that he is concerned about the spills from the fishing vessels that Capt. Lusk described earlier. The last two sinkings they have seen in the fishing industry have yielded more spills to the environment than the oil and gas industry has in recent spills of theirs. He wants to be sure they are looking across industries to ensure the environment is protected and that they are putting precautions and appropriate measures in place so that when these types of accidents happen, there are responsible parties that will cover those costs.

* **Update on Operations – Capt. Marc Bayer, Vice President of Marine Operations - Marathon Petroleum**

Capt. Marc Bayer thanked the Council for the opportunity to present today and shared his background with the Council. He reviewed his presentation and highlighted the following areas:

*Types of Clean Product Tankers Coming into Cook Inlet*

* Medium Range (MR) 2 – 300,000 – 330,000 barrels – clean product/chemicals/edibles and fit at most clean product terminals. 50,000 dead-weight tons commonly called “MR.”
* Long Range (LR) 1 – 450,000 – 500,000 barrels – clean product/chemicals. More efficient long haul than MRs due to greater volume.
* LR 2 Aframax – 550,000 – 800,000 – clean product. More efficient for long haul due to large volume. Relatively rare and does not fit at many clean product terminals. 105,000 – 117,000 dead weight tons.

Because of the contingency plan in Cook Inlet and what CISPRI is able to provide, tankers are limited to a maximum volume of 500,000 gross barrels onboard the vessel at any given time. They typically see in the 310,000 - 320,000-barrel range.

*IMO Ship Type*

* Product Tanker: Tanker designed for the carriage of refined petroleum products whose cargo tanks are usually coated with epoxy-based paint to facilitate the cleaning of the tanker between the carriage of different cargos and to prevent product contamination and hull corrosion. A product tanker typically has multiple cargo tanks capable of handling different cargos simultaneously.
* IMO Ship Type 3: Chemical tanker intended to transport products with sufficiently severe environmental and safety hazards. These products require a moderate degree of containment to increase survival capability in a damaged condition. There is no filling restriction for chemicals assigned to Ship Type 3.
* IMO Ship Type 2: Intended to transport products with appreciably severe environmental and safety hazards which require significant preventive measures to preclude escape of such cargo. The quantity of cargo required to be carried in a Type 2 ship should not exceed 3,000 m3 in any one tank.
* IMO Ship Type 1: Chemical tanker intended for the transportation of products considered to present the greatest overall hazard. The quantity of cargo required to be carried in a Type 1 ship should not exceed 1,250 m3 in any one tank.

Capt. Bayer noted that Marathon only uses IMO Ship Types 2 and 3. They are for the transport of clean product and typically are fully coated, have heat, and they have more than one system so they can carry different grades of cargo without concern of them coming in contact with one another.

Marathon has engaged with Crowley Maritime and American Petroleum Tankers to time charter different vessels. All the ships that Marathon has are the most modern, most recent, and newest tankers available. They are also the most efficient and environmentally friendly when evaluated against all the different Jones Act tankers that are out there in the MR size.

*U.S. Flagships: MT50 Product Tankers*

The AMERICAN FREEDOM and AMERICAN ENDURANCE have been on time charter for a number of years. Marathon owns 50 percent with Crowley Maritime on the TEXAS, LOUSIANA, WEST VIRGINIA, and OHIO. These ships are sister ships that are eco class and are LNG ready. They are designed by Hyundai Mipo and built in Philadelphia. They have external heat exchangers as opposed to heating coils inside the tanks, and they also have ballast water treatment. The LOUISIANA, WEST VIRGINIA, and OHIO have been repositioned from the U.S. Gulf and are now in Alaska. They are in discussions about bringing the TEXAS over.

The BOB FRANCO, Marathon’s dedicated tug, is a Jensen 120 built for service in Cook Inlet. It is ice strengthened, has heated decks, double drum tow winch, and has been recently modified to add 50 barrels of recovered oil storage so it can respond in the event of an oil spill.

Pres. Fandrei asked Capt. Bayer to elaborate on the ballast water treatment. Capt. Bayer stated that it’s a UV system that treats ballast when loaded, and it’s treated again when discharged.

*Marathon Foreign Flag Time Charters*

Three years ago, Marathon was in talks with Sinokor in South Korea and recognized it would be nice for all of their ships to have a similar footprint. They entered into a building program for a five-year time charter with six Hyundai Mipo ships similar to the other ships. These ships were delivered to Alaska March through July of 2021. They have modified the ships to operate in Cook Inlet just like the Jones Act ships. They now have ten ships with Crowley as their strategic partner on the Jones Act. Crowley provides the crews, training, and they work with port captains so they can efficiently manage these ships throughout the system. The new ships include: FRONTIER MARINER, LONE STAR MARINER, REDWOOD MARINER, EVERGREEN MARINER, BLUE GRASS MARINER, PELICAN MARINER

The technical manager for the foreign ships is Synergy Group out of Singapore, which operates about 400 ships with a dedicated staff for Marathon’s six time-chartered vessels. Synergy Group’s core values are very similar to Marathon’s and include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Integrity 2. Safety 3. Transparency | 1. Empathy 2. Empowerment 3. Respect |

Vinnie Catalano asked what the crews experienced if they came down with COVID and how that was managed. Capt. Bayer stated that the most recent issue was on the REDWOOD MARINER that just departed Anchorage. One crew member was being repatriated and tested positive but was asymptomatic. They stopped the ship in Homer and tested the entire crew, which came back negative. Everybody on board immediately went into full isolation and mask mode for at least 30 days onboard. They also stop the ship and bring a cleaning team onboard, isolate any positive individuals and get them off the ship, and replace those crew. He estimates they have spent approximately $10M in ship cleaning during the pandemic. Before someone comes back aboard, they isolate for two weeks, test, go on board, and while onboard for the first ten days, all wear masks and take meals in their cabins. If after ten days they test negative, they are allowed out in the general population.

Vinnie Catalano further asked the percentage of vaccination across the Marathon’s fleet. Capt. Bayer stated that on the Crowley tankers, it’s well over 90 percent. Crowley has taken the position that come January 6th, people who are unvaccinated will lose their jobs. On the foreign ships, it was difficult at first because the vaccine was not readily available, but as it’s become more available, they are approaching approximately 90 percent. For the ships that are time chartered that have been to Marathon terminals, Marathon has offered free vaccination to everyone. A good proportion of the ships have 100 percent of crew vaccinated. Capt. Bayer noted that Marathon has had 20 people on their workforce pass away.

*Winterization Enhancements for Operating in Cook Inlet*

* Arctic PPE for personnel
* 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
* Twelve mooring lines on winches with a minimum breaking strength of 60 metric tons
* 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, wheel house, steering gear
* Additional heating in wheelhouse, steering gear, emergency diesel, paint locker, forward storeroom, 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.

Capt. Bayer discussed the LION OF CALIFORNIA, a steamship operating in Alaska in the ‘80s, and remarked on the differences between that ship and today’s modern ships. Of note is that operating at the same speed, the newer eco class ships use half the fuel than older steamships.

John Williams asked what the greatest distance is that one of Marathon’s ships has to travel in order to bring crude to the refinery. Capt. Bayer stated that typically the refinery subsists mainly on A&S, which is a 36-hour run between Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. They have been bringing ships up from the Anacortes area, which is about four-and-a-half days. There have been some Russian crudes that have come in, and that’s probably about eight to ten days. John commented that in the earlier days, there were great expectations that there would be deliveries of crude from Sakhalin to the refinery. He often wondered how that relationship worked out and whether any of the anticipated Russian crude ever made it to the Tesoro refinery. Capt. Bayer stated that it did. There was a time when they ran more of it, and right now they may be running some. He noted that it has to be the right price, and being so close to Prince William Sound, it’s hard not to run what’s right there.

Vinnie Catalano thanked Capt. Bayer and the rest of the Marathon team for the ongoing marine training program. He asked how teaching the self-arrest technique with the simulators is going. Capt. Bayer stated that the training is held every year, and they have opened it up to Crowley, Synergy, and others. The training has been going very well. When it comes to operational safety and environmental stewardship, that’s something they all have to share together, and he gladly shares the information with the industry and peers.

Paul Shadura asked if when Marathon is outside of Prince William Sound proper and is outside of state waters on the way to Cook Inlet, what happens if there is a situation that happens in this area beyond state waters? Capt. Bayer stated that they have plans to respond anywhere. For outside of state waters beyond the EEZ, they still have the ability to respond, but it would be a different response. Between SERVS and CISPRI, there is some overlap, and both of them would cover response. APCs are really more about the Bering Sea. Marathon’s policy is to not transit the Bering Sea with ships that carry persistent oil, and ships stay 200 miles south of the Aleutian Chain.

Carla Stanley asked if all Marathon’s ship hulls are painted red. Capt. Bayer stated that the foreign flag ships do have a red hull, but the Jones Act ships have a black hull with a red deck, which is typical for Jones Act ships. Foreign flag ships can be different colors. Carla further asked about a red-hulled ship that came into Homer and stayed for quite some time. She asked if it was a ship that had to isolate due to COVID. Capt. Bayer stated that it was not, and typically their boats don’t stay in Homer for more than a couple of days.

Carla Stanley appreciates how Marathon has handled business operations during the pandemic, particularly with vaccinations.

Mr. Munger stated that Capt. Bayer’s approach and environmental stewardship has carried through from Tesoro to Andeavor to Marathon. Cook Inlet RCAC and the citizens of Cook Inlet are very fortunate for his proactive approach in keeping the waters pristine. He appreciates the relationships and successful partnering CIRCAC and Marathon have accomplished together. He asked if Capt. Bayer can give the Council any information about the company that will acquire the Marathon operations in Alaska. Capt. Bayer reciprocated the sentiments about their organizations’ relationship. In terms of the sale, all he can share is that they are exploring a couple of buyers for the refinery. Mr. Munger stated that it is of the utmost importance to CIRCAC who will be acquiring Marathon’s Cook Inlet assets as Marathon is CIRCAC’S biggest funder.

***2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT***

Pres. Fandrei shared that the Executive Committee has met three times since September. They have reviewed the 2021 administrative program and operating budgets through October 31st; reviewed the financial position and report through October 31st; reviewed the FY 2020 federal tax return filing; reviewed the 2022 board meeting schedule; and they discussed the board meeting formats, virtual or in-person. The committee also reviewed the proposed 2022 operating and program budgets, and they received updates from the staff on matters pertaining to industry and funding, personnel, staff training, the annual audit, appointments, projects, regulations, and more. The committee went into executive session on several occasions to discuss sensitive personnel issues.

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

John Williams remarked that because of the new Omicron variant, he would like to continue the virtual meetings until they know it’s a safe situation. Pres. Fandrei believes Mr. Munger can keep abreast of the situation and can inform the Council when it is safe to begin meeting in person again.

Paul Shadura asked for an update on the ongoing personnel issue. He realizes the issue was dealt with in executive session, but he wondered if any actions were taken after executive session. Mr. Munger stated that no action was taken outside of executive session regarding that issue.

* **Proposed 2022 Operating and Program Budgets**

**John Williams moved** **that they present the proposed 2022 operating and program budgets to the full board at this time for discussion purposes, seconded by Deric Marcorelle.**

Mike Munger reviewed the budget as approved by the Executive Committee for consideration by the full Council. The budget reflects an increase of a little over $85,000, which is due to a 5.7 percent Consumer Price Index (CPI) of Anchorage, which is written into their contracts with the funding companies. The increase was distributed in the administrative budget; however, they will also see increases to the committees after completion of their audit mid December. At that time, unallocated carryover funds will be distributed to committees and programs accordingly. He also noted that he tries to ensure that his valued staff receive modest wage increases each year.

Mr. Munger directed attendees to the budget in the packet, reviewed the items within, and answered questions about budget items from members of the Council.

Paul Shadura asked about the ongoing issue with CIRCAC not receiving funding from Furie. He wondered if the budget included the expectation of receiving their share of expenses. Mr. Munger stated that the way the contracts are structured, CIRCAC’s funding is based on the requirement of OPA 90, so whether it’s one company or ten companies or more operating in Cook Inlet, they divvy up the OPA 90 requirement based on a formula that the funding companies use. CIRCAC does not have any involvement in how the funding is divided. This budget reflects the totality of what is due to the organization whether Furie participates or not.

**Hearing no objection to approving the budget as presented, the motion passed.**

* **2022 Board Meeting and Annual Meeting Dates**
* Friday, April 8, 2022 – Kenai – Board of Directors and Annual Meeting
* Friday, September 9, 2022 – Seldovia – Board of Directors Meeting
* Thursday – Friday, December 1-2, 2022 – Anchorage – Board of Directors Meeting.

***3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT***

* **Alternative Planning Criteria (APC) Proposed Regulation Changes**

Mr. Munger explained that he has spent considerable time working on proposed changes to the current regulations regarding the APC. There could be a lot of impact on Cook Inlet if these regulations are not revised, so he has been working with the Congressional delegation and has been in contact with the Coast Guard. There is a working group that is gathering proposed recommendations to change the current APC regulations. Recommendations are not anticipated until December 2022. Mr. Munger is concerned about the impact to Cook Inlet’s OSRO CISPRI and the potential to diminish CISPRI’s response capability. He will continue to report on this issue as additional information becomes available.

* **Furie Funding**

Mr. Munger stated that he has also been working with the Congressional delegation on the Furie funding issue. He is awaiting a long overdue letter from D17 to Furie. He has informed the Congressional delegation that there is an issue, and since it may involve multiple federal agencies for the enforcement of the OPA 90 violation, he wanted to get them involved.

* **Strategic Planning**

Mr. Munger noted that they did a review and an update to their Strategic Plan last year. Since they have been fairly static this year without a lot of changes, he has elected to put off any revisions this year, and they will do a review next December.

* **Council Member Seats**

Mr. Munger reported there are numerous seats up this year including two municipality seats, Molly McCammon for Anchorage and Walt Sonen for City of Seldovia. Robert Peterkin representing tourism groups and the recreational group director Bob Flint are both up this year as well. Staff will be sending out letters, and they will go through a comprehensive review of the special interest group seats to see if there are any other groups that have been formed or want to participate as a member of CIRCAC. Existing directors will either be reappointed by approval of the Council, or they will welcome new directors if there are any changes.

* **Goals and Accomplishments**

Mr. Munger stated that this has been a very challenging year because of industry and staffing issues. He is very pleased to be fully staffed with the addition of Cassandra Johnson and Candice Elias. Next year they will be focused on getting new employees trained in their respective positions as well as getting tenured employees trained into any new roles and responsibilities. He also shared how pleased he is with Maddie Jamora stepping into her new role. Susan Saupe and Vinnie Catalano continue to do a stellar job. He is looking forward to 2022 and is hopeful that they will be able to meet in person again once it’s safe.

***4. STAFF REPORTS***

* **Public Outreach**

Shaylon Cochran supplemented his written report by highlighting that he is looking forward to next year as well. He stated that in 2021 they reduced some of their paid advertising campaigns in the hope they would be able to get back to doing in-person outreach. For 2022 they will be leaning more into the paid advertising campaigns because of the uncertainty of doing outreach in person.

Shaylon stated that they have begun a comprehensive review of the website to make sure it’s still functioning as needed. He has also been taking inventory of the various marketing materials so that when they do return to doing events, they have fresh, up-to-date marketing materials.

Pres. Fandrei asked if CIRCAC is involved in social media. Shaylon Cochran stated that they are to a limited degree. Social media is a valuable tool, but it’s only useful for activities of the organization that can be shared visually. As they get back into in-person events and activities, people should tune into those CIRCAC social media outlets of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

* **Environmental Monitoring Committee**

Susan Saupe referred to her written report in the packet and highlighted that they got a contract signed with Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for a contaminants compilation project that includes not just compiling historical data but to also do a meta-analysis of that data. Based on what they find, they will determine what datasets can potentially be combined or analyzed together to assess what background conditions may be in Cook Inlet in natural sources. They will use that information to do a report on how they would recommend moving forward with environmental monitoring in Cook Inlet associated with oil and gas activities.

Susan Saupe stated every year BOEM puts out a call for study plan ideas with the goal of identifying data gaps or learning things BOEM needs to take into consideration when they are doing environmental assessments or risk assessments. Over the years, CIRCAC has submitted many study plan ideas. Once those plans are received by BOEM, they are assessed and prioritized and then an action plan is developed by BOEM. Some of the work is done internally by BOEM, other times requests for proposals are released, sometimes projects are sole sourced, or they can also do projects through interagency agreements with entities with expertise and interests. In 2016 she submitted a study plan idea to compile the historical contaminants data to do a more thorough evaluation of contaminants in Cook Inlet, and last spring BOEM decided to move forward with the project and in doing so could justify a sole source contract to CIRCAC, which was signed in September. CIRCAC has since submitted a detailed study plan and hosted a meeting with BOEM personnel from Virginia and Anchorage. They are moving forward with their scope of work and final contracts with partners.

Sue explained that study plan ideas for this year are due this coming week, and she will be making submittals. Last year she submitted ideas for Cook Inlet Ocean Observing based on some of the needs identified from the draft five-year plan she developed for Cook Inlet Ocean Observing System to be submitted with the Alaska Ocean Observing System’s (AOOS) five-year budget plan. The funding that AOOS received did not include some work for Cook Inlet. Based on the study plan idea submitted as well as requests from other people that have submitted and identified needs, they hope BOEM is going to fund a Cook Inlet Oceanographic and Modeling study that will bring together CIRCAC, AOOS, NOAA, and others as partners in moving that forward.

Susan Saupe stated that they had submitted a large proposal with a group of people through AOOS that did not get funded, but since then they have identified a subset of organizations that are going to pool their funding to try to move forward with components of that proposal. One of the partners is CIRCAC, through both EMC and PROPS funding, to develop the online accessible Oil Spill Trajectory Model based on the operational Cook Inlet Oceanographic Forecast System. OSRI has identified $125,000 for potentially three years in a row, and they have put out an RFP for a component of that larger proposal. She stated that they feel that their partnership with BOEM will allow them to do almost all of that original proposal that was submitted and not funded.

Susan Saupe also highlighted that the draft General Permit - Oil and Gas Exploration, Development, and Production in State Waters in Cook Inlet has been issued and will go into effect January 1st. She stated that she was disappointed with the way they responded to almost all of the comments that were submitted, but it went through the public process and has moved forward.

Pres. Fandrei commented that he is always amazed at how much work Sue does and how well she does it. She has a big job, and he really respects the work she is doing.

John Williams appreciated the format in which Sue prepared her written report.

* **Prevention, Response, Operations, and Safety (PROPS) Committee**

Vinnie Catalano highlighted his written report by stating that they are seeing quite a bit of movement in the Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) project. He presented on the stream crossing GRSs developed last year. There continues to be a lot of work going on in the GRS workgroup at the Area Committee level. The USCG and ADEC conducted a deployment in Kodiak and ground-truthed the use of remote arial surveillance systems, which is very promising in the development of the GRSs.

Vinnie stated that he attended a webinar on 21st Century Maritime Challenges in the U.S. Arctic. He found it interesting that at least one of the attendees said that while many foreign flag operators chose to use the new routes that are opening in the Arctic, the U.S. flagships chose not to use them based on unreliable nautical charts and the lack of response assets. They also spoke about the lack of U.S. icebreakers in the area compared to Russian icebreaker availability.

Vinnie Catalano stated that COVID-19 awareness has prompted another project that will focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Alaska and the U.S. and the impact to operations, drills, inspections, et cetera.

Vinnie stated that CIRCAC was a key part of getting Marathon’s Annual Pre-Winter Meeting started, and they continue to support that. Marathon has done a great job with it. Vinnie presented on the Ice Monitoring System, and he received positive feedback from the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association.

He stated that another project is the Vessel Traffic Study, which is currently in draft form and out to the Harbor Safety Committee for vetting. This project is a 10-year culmination of AIS and other data to get a holistic view of vessel trafficking through Cook Inlet. The intent is to update that every three years. Once the Harbor Safety Committee concludes their review and offers feedback, he will present it to the full Council for approval.

Vinnie stated that he hopes the information that comes out of modeling work as described by Susan Saupe will provide the needed data to develop a white paper for the Trajectory Modeling Program. They are hoping to develop a modeling program that is portable and is easily used by operators and modelers in their planning processes.

Paul Shadura asked if there was any follow up on what happened on the Sterling Highway with the tanker rollover as it wasn’t on the list of incidents and items of interest in the report. Vinnie offered his apologies for omitting it from the report. He stated that there was a small amount of crude that spilled in that incident, and it was all cleaned up. Fortunately it wasn’t at a stream crossing area and did not make its way to any waterways, including the Inlet.

Paul Shadura also asked if they will be able to ascertain what is being moved through Cook Inlet through the Vessel Traffic Study. Vinnie responded that crude carriers will be identified, but they can’t identify specific products on the other tank vessels. This project is for vessel movements, not their exact cargos.

John Williams asked if they have any data on how much crude the Blue Crest project is moving, how many trucks per day and what their production rates are. Vinnie responded that he will get back to him on that as he doesn’t have the data available right now, but he estimated it is something less than 1,200 barrels a day, and they seem to average about two tankers a day.

* **Protocol Control Committee**

Vinnie Catalano stated that in addition to the information in his written report, the Protocol Committee also reseated the chair and vice chair and approved the 2022 budget.

Paul Shadura asked if there will be many more comments on the ADEC regulation changes. Vinnie stated that he is maybe a third of the way through his review, and so far, nothing significant has popped out at them. They are only seeing a few areas of concern as was discussed by Mr. Munger earlier. Vinnie stated that they are going through it very carefully as to not miss anything. They are not seeing anything that would be a diminishment in response capabilities. That said, he plans on scheduling at least one Protocol meeting in January to allow the committee time to completely digest the information.

Paul Shadura was curious what kind of towing apparatus ADEC has and would use in Cook Inlet as they have in Prince William Sound. Vinnie stated that the PROPS Committee took a tour of the Chadux facility and saw one of the lightweight towing bridles. The one the State has is lightweight, and there is one in Anchorage that can be helicoptered and deployed to a stricken vessel as needed. Most of the Prince William Sound vessels already have their own systems onboard. Jade Gamble provided a link to some information on the emergency towing system in the meeting chat.

* **Administration**

Maddie Jamora highlighted the following from her written report:

* Elections and appointments: Work on filling the public member and board member seats will begin this month.
* Scholarships: The 2022 scholarship program is about to launch. Staff have participated in Kodiak’s recent virtual scholarship fair. Interviews with the scholarship committee will begin in late spring.
* Audit: Still in the midst of conducting the audit, but the tax return has been reviewed by the Executive Committee and e-filed. Executive and Audit Committees will meet about mid December to go over the audit report once completed.
* Funding calculations for next year have come in, and staff will have those invoices sent out to the funding companies later this month.
* CIRCAC is in the midst of renewing employee benefits and insurance as well as commercial lines.
* 2021 saw 19 committee meetings and three board meetings, all held virtually. Appreciate everyone learning as they have adapted platforms along the way.

Maddie welcomed and thanked Cassandra Johnson and Candice Elias. She is thrilled to have them on staff, and they are doing great.

**5. CALENDARS & MISCELLANEOUS**

* Alaska Marine Science Symposium – January 25 – 27, virtual
* Alaska Forum on the Environment – February 7 – 10, virtual

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

Mr. Munger thanked staff as they are what makes this organization function the way it does. He also commended Pres. Fandrei as he is doing a remarkable job as president. Pres. Fandrei appreciated the encouragement from Mr. Munger and other directors.

Vinnie Catalano thanked directors for their participation. Staff appreciate the support of the directors.

Carla Stanley feels it’s a pleasure to serve on the board, and she always learns a lot from the different speakers. She also believes the staff is fantastic.

Shaylon Cochran stated that when they are able to get back together in person, everyone should be ready to have fresh profile photos taken.

John Williams complimented Mr. Munger on the choice of presenters for this meeting. The Marathon presentation was excellent, timely, and informative.

Robert Peterkin thanked everyone. Staff are doing a great job, welcome aboard Cassandra and Candice, and he looks forward to meeting in person.

Deric Marcorelle reminded everyone of the meeting in Seldovia four years ago where the fast ferry hit a rock and dropped Council members off in Jakolof Bay, and they had to take water taxis back to Homer. He also remarked on the Anchorage meeting at the Sheridan Hotel three years ago. He looks forward to meeting in person again.

Molly McCammon noted that she is working on a project in the Bering Strait region and looking to develop a similar tool to the Cook Inlet Response Tool. In discussions with community members, USCG, and others, Cook Inlet is very lucky to have CIRCAC. It provides a great forum for hashing out these kinds of issues and working with partners. She thinks the rest of the state that doesn’t have an RCAC is really at a loss for not having a venue like this. Kudos to staff and board members. She appreciates being a part of this.

Bob Flint felt it was an excellent meeting facilitated by the great preparation by staff.

Walt Sonen appreciates the professionalism of the staff and fellow board members. He looks forward to seeing the CIRCAC comments on the ADEC revisions. He asked if they will need to go to the ADEC website to view the CIRCAC comments. Pres. Fandrei noted that the comments will go through the Protocol Committee, and they will ensure staff includes Walt in being able to participate.

Paul Shadura remarked on Molly McCammon’s comments by saying there won’t be an RCAC or something similar until history repeats itself, unfortunately, for Western Alaska and the Arctic. Hopefully that doesn’t happen, but pre-planning would make a lot of difference. He also remarked on the issuance of the general discharge permits, and noted that CIRCAC’s and others’ comments weren’t taken much into consideration, which is disturbing to him and believes warrants a review or discussion in Protocol. He thanked the Council for his ability to travel to the Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle, and he wore CIRCAC’s tag and discussed CIRCAC’s issues with at least two of the exhibitors, Resolve 1-Call and Chadux. He asked Resolve if they would be interested in coming to CIRCAC and providing a report. *(Paul Shadura’s internet connection dropped, and the remaining comments were not captured).*

Pres. Fandrei reiterated that it’s the staff that makes the board look good. He appreciates the staff contribution to these meetings as well as the mission, and he also appreciates the board member contributions. He was reluctant to take over the position as president, but it has been a very rewarding experience so far. He enjoys working with Mr. Munger and continues to learn something new every day.

Directors and staff wished everyone Happy Holidays.

**John Williams moved to adjourn, seconded by Deric Marcorelle. Hearing no objection, the motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.**