LOWER COLUMBIA REGION
HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Lower Columbia Region Harbor Safety Committee
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 9th, 2026 | 1420-1524hrs
Columbia River Pilots & Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

Officers:
Chair: Larry Landgraver, *Port of Longview*
Vice Chair: Ross McDonald, *Sause Bros.*
Secretary/Treasurer: Carl Bertapelle, *Merchants Exchange*
Association Account Specialist: Yalin Li, *Merchants Exchange*

1. Welcome
    a. Meeting was called to order at 1420 hours by Carl Bertapelle.

2. Safety Moment
    a. Safety moment was provided by Captain Nielsen who illustrated the location of the emergency exits in the new River Pilots office.

3. Additions/Corrections to Agenda
    a. No additions or corrections to the agenda were offered.

4. Review Meeting Minutes from May 13th, 2026 *(attached)*
    a. The minutes of the May 13th General Membership Meeting were presented.
    b. No amendments were offered.

5. Board of Directors Meeting Update—*Presiding Officer*
    a. Carl Bertapelle outlined that the Board of Directors meeting in November is a significant meeting as voting of new Board members and the budget will take place. No additional comments were presented to the general membership.

6. Subcommittee Assignments & Discussions
    a. Membership Outreach Subcommittee *(Carl Bertapelle)*

i. Carl Bertapelle reminded everyone to notify him if anyone is aware of any organization that would benefit from being a part of the committee.

b. Navigation Subcommittee *(Capt. Joe Sohlberg on behalf of Capt. Steve Ackerman)*
   i. Captain Sohlberg reported there was frustration in regard to how the Buoy 10 Fishery was handled. Members expressed that the Coast Guard usually makes an announcement of established rules and norms, and the announcements this year were made on a different radio channel than usual, causing increased confusion (Channel 16 to 22 Alpha).
   ii. There were mentions that seemingly no Coast Guard escort was provided to anglers to- and from the Buoy 10 Fishery as done in years prior.
   iii. Promotional material present in previous years was notably absent this year, which is critical as they outlined safety rules and guidelines.
   iv. The Coast Guard commented that auxiliary members have been out on the boat ramps throughout the entire season, and were present at five different ramps conducting regular patrols.
   v. The Coast Guard noted that they have requested a large cutter to be used for Buoy 10 for the last three years, but the request has been denied.
   vi. The Coast Guard encouraged members to reach out via email to voice concerns so they can make continuous improvements.
   vii. Captain Nielsen reported that the Columbia River Pilots released an update to their Vessel Movement Guideline for inbound loaded vessels. The update was made to keep ships safe by addressing ships getting larger and incidents of flight tankers evading rules.

c. Harbor Safety Plan Subcommittee *(Ross McDonald)*
   i. Ross McDonald had no updates at this time.
   ii. Secretary Bertapelle reported that the National Steering Committee put out a template and guidance on what they believe a Harbor Safety Plan should include based on their review of all existing Harbor Safety Plans.
   iii. Next year, the Harbor Safety Plan Subcommittee would like to bring the LCRHSC plan into alignment with the template and will be asking for additional members at the next meetings. This is to address a few gaps and to improve the plan to continue to make it a useful resource to others.
   iv. Noel Jones, USCG, noted that template is aimed to help the Harbor Safety Committees that do not currently have an existing plan establish one.

d. Nominating Subcommittee *(Carl Bertapelle)*
    i. Secretary Bertapelle reminded the Board that elections are coming up in November and to reach out if any member is interested in joining the Board. Chair Landgraver has offered to chair the Nominating Subcommittee and Board members Kate Mickelson and Dena Horton volunteered to join the Subcommittee alongside the Executive Board at the Board meeting.

7. Regular Committee Reports & Agency Updates
    a. Columbia River Bar Pilots Updates
        i. No additional comments.
        I:\Associations\LACBFFA\06 Programs and Events\2026
    b. Columbia River Pilots Updates
        i. The Columbia County Sheriff continues to participate in rides with the Columbia River Pilots every year to gain perspective on the river and be effective with handing out tickets to fishermen.
        ii. The Mooring Buoy that was out of service has been put back into service by the Army Corps with handholds, new buoys, and a stopper. A test platform has been out, and will be expanded by the Army Corps if it is successful.
        iii. Captain Nielsen noted to remember that the river is currently in low water season and that the river might begin seeing the business of ammonium nitrate cargo, which the USCG confirm they are aware of.
        iv. The State of Washington is supposed to be releasing a study about the low bridge to outline exact dimensions.

    c. MARAD – West Coast Update *(Xochitl Castaneda)*
        i. Xochitl Castaneda was not present at this meeting to provide an update.

    d. US Army Corps of Engineers Update *(Casey O'Donnell)*
        i. Casey O'Donnell was absent, but sent Jessica Stokke as the representative from the Corps.
        ii. Hopper dredge Bayport started on the mouth of the Columbia River but had an incident and needed repairs. The repair should take roughly 30 days.

iii. Corps committed to dredging the mouth of the river before the end of the season.
iv. Dredge Oregon is working by Puget Island and will spend the rest of the season at Longview at the mouth of the Cowlitz.
v. Dredge Yaquina will be back on the Coast mid-September but will be back on the Columbia to finish the season.
vi. Clamshell dredges have received a lot of funding this fiscal year.
vii. Corps will be dredging deep water ports to make sure they stay clear.
viii. Dredging overall received lots of funding.
ix. Regarding the Bar, dredging may be completed later than normal.
x. Corps will be replacing 40 missing marker piles on the pile dikes all along the river. Construction will begin in 2027. Pile dike detailed analysis is available upon request. LCRHSC will post the files and meeting minutes for this meeting on their website.

e. NOAA – Office of Coast Survey Update *(Laura Pagano)*
   i. Laura Pagano, Navigation Manager for the Northwest and Pacific Islands, outlined the following report:
      1. Big modernization effort for surveys and Marine charting division. Surveys have officially been completed along with the entire suite being done. Should see better scales in most areas. Charts are in a grid now and processes should be much quicker and streamlined for the Columbia River area.
      2. One of NOAA's biggest developments in recent years is the advanced bathymetry system. It is the best bathymetry system in the US. System will serve as the primary system for bathymetric updates. It is national and public. Charting division is creating an engine to upload and compile for more detailed bathymetry. Nowcoast.noaa.gov has a layer and filter that will have bathymetry available. Website is still slowly being built out, and Northwest region will be active soon, as the charts for the Columbia River are completed.
      3. NOAA data all public. Mouth of Columbia all the way to Bonneville dam is mapped. They can be downloaded and used by anyone. NCEI- Bathymetric Data Viewer is the site for these surveys.
      4. PICREP Update: This will be embedded in the ENCs. Been working back and forth with the Columbia River and the community to

figure out how to get this done for the Columbia River. This type of survey is very new and advanced. Only 5 are on the Mississippi river. PICREP maps and information should all be released by September 30th. Lewis and Clark bridge will also have a PICREP along with Astoria-Metzger bridge with revised clearances. Channel realignment is complete.

5. NOAA is also charting DTON (Dangerous to Navigation).
6. There will be charting for 14 power lines. No safe clearance number known for power lines crossing the Columbia yet even in the face of the incident. Once safe clearance can be gathered by someone, then it can be reported in NOAAs charts.
7. References: Nauticalcharts.noaa.gov & Nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/assist/

f. United States Coast Guard – Sector Columbia River Update *(USCG Personnel)*
   i. USCG outlines that the District Commander just changed to Admiral Campbell.
   ii. Admiral Campbell could not make it to today's meeting but is supposed to be present for part of COBALT.
   iii. USCG will try to get the Admiral to a LCRHSC meeting in the next couple of months.
   iv. USCG wanted to thank everybody for their patience on the Longview channel realignment. Along with this, USCG thanked everyone involved in Rose Fest Fleet Week, it was very successful and safe.
   v. Anyone tracking Board of Inquiry about Baltimore Key Bridge, it was just released, but Columbia port area was not included in that. Most of the changes are focused on internal Coast Guard processes. Not a lot of mandates on external regulations for everyone else.

8. Old Business
   a. 2026 Regional Conference – July 8, 2026, Newport, OR
      i. Carl opened the floor up to discussion of positives and negatives of the Conference. It was mentioned that the venue was great and it went very smoothly.
      ii. Carl mentioned that one of the strains this year was asking people to attend another destination conference soon after the destination National Harbor Safety conference.

iii. Carl outlined how the Executive Board is exploring alternating years for the LCRHSC conference to avoid conflict with the National.
iv. Budget is a consideration for the conference too. Staging the conference is a large part of the LCRHSC budget and even though it is comparatively not much, it is an important aspect to consider.
v. Differences between Newport and Astoria as locations were mentioned. Carl mentioned that there were several people present in Newport who likely would not have been present in Astoria.
vi. LCRHSC is open to suggestions for Harbor Safety Conference locations for next year.

9. New Business
    a. Next Meeting – November 18th, 2026
        i. Location: Merchants Exchange
    b. Volunteers for 2027 Meeting hosts
        i. January 13, 2027: Clean Rivers Cooperative
        ii. March 10, 2027: Port of Kalama
        iii. May 12, 2027: Port of Vancouver
        iv. July 14, 2027: Regional Harbor Safety Conference (tentative Astoria)
        v. September 8, 2027: Columbia River Pilots
        vi. November 10, 2027: Merchants Exchange

10. Good of the Order
    a. No additional items for Good of the Order.

11. Adjourn
    a. Meeting was adjourned at 1524 hours by Carl Bertapelle.