



Minutes

Dare County Oregon Inlet Task Force Meeting

USCG ANT Wanchese

9:30 a.m. June 11 , 2024

Attendance: Steve House, Harry Schiffman, Russ King

Staff: Barton Grover

Others in Attendance: Jordan Hennessy, Brad Rosov, Adam Preiser, Patrick Tallant, Erin Weller, Michael Flynn, Bill Daniels

1.0 Welcome guests

- Meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Chairman House.
- Bill Daniels introduced himself and spoke about the need for a designated warning system for the Oregon Inlet Bar to notify mariners in advance of forecasted adverse conditions. Also, virtual buoys would assist in helping boaters safely navigate the channel when storms shift buoys off station. Patrick Tallant noted the virtual aids to navigation have just been established at the Bar.

2.0 Review Minutes- May 14, 2024

- No quorum

3.0 USCG ANT Wanchese Update

- Patrick Tallant reported buoys 4, 6, and 8 will be relocated next week with the 49. They will be spread apart evenly so there is not a big gap between 8 and 10. 4 will be shifted north to open the channel up.
- For buoy 8, the light was replaced and intensity was increased and more retro was placed. The lantern stand was bent, so the light was not focused where it should have been.

- 1H and 3 in Old House were moved to allow for dredging by the Miss Katie. Miss Katie is now complete with dredging, so buoys will likely be moved after a new survey. Light 4 became 3A in the channel.
- The Coast Guard has been investigating prototype buoys which are larger but also lighter so they can be maintained by the 49.
- Buoys 3 through 9 have been turned on for virtual ATON. The Coast Guard wants feedback in the next 90 days on if people are using it and if it is helping. There are limited towers for these virtual ATON, so if they are not being used here then they will be turned off and used elsewhere. The feedback they have received so far from charter and commercial vessels are that they are turning AIS off completely so their fishing spots cannot be found. Patrick said AIS can be easily turned on and off and these virtual ATON can improve safety during rough conditions. Steve House commented that boaters can turn it on coming in and out of the inlet and turn off once offshore. Russ King said he will send an email and ask how many of the guys are using it at the fishing center.

4.0 EJE Dredging Update

- Jordan Hennessy reported the Miss Katie dredged over 80,000 cubic yards during May. 32,104 from the Bar and Alternate Channel, 20,184 from the Crack & Walter Slough, and 27,904 from Old House Range 2.
- The Miss Katie has removed a couple loads from the entrance to Wanchese, but it is a slower process due to distance. They will likely average 4 loads a day rather than almost 16 a day at the Bar. The Miss Katie will be on 24 hours for the next couple of weeks, so will focus on the entrance to Wanchese channel. This channel retains the most remaining funding. The Old House 2 channel funding has been exhausted. Approximately \$240,000 of the \$379,658 remaining funds for Oregon Inlet has been expended so far this month.
- Harry Schiffman commented that it would be more efficient to dredge Wanchese when the Miss Katie goes to dock to refuel or receive maintenance, especially since the Miss Katie is paid based on cubic yards and not hourly. Jordan Hennessy commented that the Miss Katie does not return to Wanchese very often due to anchoring west of the bridge or working 24 hrs. Steve House and Harry Schiffman commented the Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park would be happy to hear the channel is being dredged so that it will be in good shape during the fall months. Russ King reported he would relay this information to the industrial park board.
- Steve House noted Hyde County is still waiting on permits and funding for their requested project. Barton Grover confirmed that to be the case. Barton stated the Corps of Engineers informed the Waterways Commission last night that the

Merritt would be arriving in early July to dredge Sloop Channel as requested by the Ferry Division.

5.0 U.S. Army Corps Update

- Erin Weller reported the Environmental Assessment for Oregon Inlet was signed last week and posted yesterday. The Corps is continuing with the contract that includes Old House 1 and 2 that would be awarded in September.
- Michael Flynn informed Erin that the Park Service has received the EA and FONSI. The Park Service will review then send to Region. That process will take 2 to 3 months. Michael encouraged the Corps to submit a special use permit application as soon as possible for the Park Service to review.
- Harry Schiffman asked if there was an update on pipeline dredging the entrance channel into Wanchese. It was discussed at the last meeting if reducing the cubic yards dredged would reduce the Corps concerns with Island H needing to be repaired. Erin said she had internal discussions after the meeting and there would be no material placed at Island H until repairs are completed. Erin suggested another meeting could be held with Corps personnel to discuss. Harry and Steve House concurred that a meeting should be held and that Island H had sufficient capacity. Erin stated she would coordinate a meeting.

6.0 CPE Update

- Brad Rosov said we have been waiting on the Corps EA to be finalized before being able to modify the Dare County permit to allow for the Miss Katie to dredge best water and to 12 + 2ft within the expanded Oregon Inlet corridor. Now that the EA has been published, that modification will be submitted within the next week.
- Brad reported we are still waiting for the special use permit to dredge near the entrance to the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center. The last update was that the permit would be received at the end of June. Michael Flynn said he checked in with Sabrina Henry and they are looking at early August, maybe sooner. Russ King indicated there was shoaling from the transient dock to the peninsula that could be dredged. The Task Force and Brad Rosov reviewed maps of the fishing center area. Jordan Hennessy commented they would be mooring on the southeast side of the fishing center. Brad said we could T the channel at that point where the Miss Katie could dredge to the Coast Guard Station and to where the Miss Katie will moor. He stated we will need to be mindful of the distance from SAV when making adjustments to the channel.

- Barton Grover asked if now that the EA is finalized, will the Miss Katie be able to return to dredging under the original permit to 12 ft. The Corps had informed us previously that the change could be made within a day. Brad Rosov said he would check with the Corps.

7.0 Administrative comments

7.1 Current Budget

- 7.1.1 Miss Katie DEQ Contract Remaining Funds
 - 7.1.1.1 Oregon Inlet – \$379,658
 - 7.1.1.2 Wanchese to 17ext. - \$592,570
 - 7.1.1.3 Crack & Walter Slough - \$170,912
 - 7.1.1.4 Old House 2 - \$115
- 7.1.2 Federal Funds (Pipeline Dredging & Operations & Maintenance)
 - 7.1.2.1 Earmark - \$5,706,600
 - 7.1.2.2 IJJA – \$4,067,100
 - 7.1.2.3 O&M - \$300,000

- Barton Grover stated the budget reflects invoices up to the end of May and what is available until the end of June.
- Funds from the new budget will be available on July 1st. We have received the cost share contract for Oregon Inlet. Currently waiting on the cost share contract for the interior channels.
- Jordan Hennessy reported they have approximately \$3.8 million in savings so far in this fiscal year.

8.0 Additional Comments

- Harry Schiffman asked what we are doing to promote the virtual ATON so boaters are aware that they have been turned on. Patrick Tallant said it has been placed on the local notice to mariners and he has sent an email to local stakeholders. Barton Grover stated Public Relations may be able to send out if the Coast Guard supplies a narrative. Steve House said he would speak with Dorothy Hester about sending a press release out.
- Adam Preiser stated they do send a Hazardous Bar broadcast and the Coast Guard is out on the Bar at first light during rough conditions. Every three hours they will drive across the Bar to get an update and if it is hazardous, they will generate a broadcast that goes out hourly on station 16.
- Steve House stated we've had several conversations over the years regarding keeping the inlet open and navigable and following best water. Over quite a few

conversations with Corps Navigation, they have utilized the terms deep water and deepest water. We have asked for definitions of this language, but we have not received an answer. We have drafted a letter to Corps Navigation to again request this information. This is a dynamic inlet that shifts and we need definitions for these terms because that can regulate where the channel goes and where dredging can occur. Harry Schiffman says best water, deep water, and deepest water have different meanings. Barton Grover commented the FONSI references existing or naturally deep water, but the Corps has often referenced deepest water. Harry Schiffman said we need the authorization for Oregon Inlet to review.

9.0 Adjourn

- Steve House motioned to adjourn