

**OHIO WATERWAYS SAFETY COUNCIL MEETING
MAUMEE BAY WATERCRAFT FIELD OFFICE
OREGON, OHIO
MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2007**

<u>Waterways Safety Council</u>	<u>Division of Watercraft</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Tom Pascoe, Chairman	Mike Quinn	Tony Celebrezze
Jack Hern, Vice Chairman	Bill McGarity	
Ann Swain	Janet Wolfinger	

CALL TO ORDER: Council Chairman Tom Pascoe called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Council Chairman Pascoe called for approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on March 19, 2007 at Fountain Square, Columbus, Ohio.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Vice-Chairman Jack Hern, seconded by Councilwoman Ann Swain, and approved by a quorum of the Council.

Chairman Pascoe made the opening statement welcoming Deputy Director Tony Celebrezze to the meeting.

Bill McGarity gave the following updates:

Division of Parks Dredging Update FY 2006 – Frank Meravy provided a breakdown of expenses for the Division of Parks and Recreation dredging projects. Payroll expenses were \$2,336,505; maintenance expenses were \$1,140,260; and equipment expenses were \$238,900 for a total of \$3,715,665. They spent approximately \$76,000 less than budgeted. Vice-Chairman Hern asked how much comes out of the Division of Parks budget for dredging. Bill said he was unaware of the Division of Parks funding but will look into it and report back. Mike Quinn said he had spoken to Dan West, Chief of the Division of Parks and Recreation, and Dan will provide us with a percentage of what they spend on dredging projects. Mr. Celebrezze reminded council that the Division of Parks and Recreation budget continues to be cut and they try to stay updated the best they can and continue to stay competitive.

Bill reported we will receive \$4.3 million from USCG.

Motor Fuel Tax revenue is running slightly ahead of FY 2006 at the end of May even though there was no increase to the tax rate for the first time in four years. Assuming June's tax collections are credited to the division on June 29th as is supposed to happen, we will need approximately \$1.3M for June to end ahead for the full fiscal year. There will be no increases next year.

Registration numbers are just a little behind. This may be due to a delay receiving numbers from agents. Mail renewals and e-renewals are up. Field offices renewals are 17,865. Handpowered registrations are at 5,280 approximately 30%. Alternative registrations are 49%. Vice Chairman Hern asked how many are new registrations vs. renewals? Bill will send numbers to Jack.

Bill reports Alternative registrations are now being sold at a few field offices making it more convenient for the boating public.

Bill reports payroll is approximately 3.5% higher this year. There is no current freeze in effect therefore step increases are being honored. Payroll will be higher when new officers are hired.

Bill attended a meeting, along with Director Logan, with the Ottawa County Commissioners regarding shutting down the Middle Bass Marina. Bill stated the Director was very clear saying not shutting down the marina would continue to delay the project and environmental issues would have to be readdressed. The project will move forward.

Field Office Updates – We are currently on schedule with new office projects for Sandusky, Portsmouth and Ashtabula. Portsmouth is moving along. This property was given to the Division of Watercraft by ODOT. The Division of Engineering is working with the Sandusky office. The office will be East Harbor Park. Watercraft will share space with the Division of Parks. There was some discussion about site location within East Harbor. Building plans will all be similar for all offices. The Cleveland boat house is under construction.

Julie McQuade and Dave Kieffer have completed site visits for the CBFG program applications and will be sending their recommendations to the chief and administration.

Chairman Pascoe inquired about his request for Harbor Lagoons. Bill responded reminding him to have the committee apply for a RHEP grant.

Bill reported we pulled the grant for the City of Toledo project as they are not able to move forward with the project at this time. No funding is budgeted from the Corps of Engineers and Michigan has not provided any funding. They have been encouraged to reapply for the next grant cycle.

Watercraft Cadet Applications - Human Resources Section reports receiving over 1100 applications. 363 applicants are being scheduled for physical fitness testing which starts next week. Those that pass will be scheduled for the swim test in July. Those that pass the swim test will be scheduled for an interview.

Deputy Director Celebrezze asked if we have demographics on the applicants. Bill said the Division of Human Resources can pull that information but we do not have access to it.

Mike Quinn gave the following updates:

PI&E - Confluence will only be a 2 day event this year in November. Council members were provided with a copy of the agenda.

We have received a qualifying bid for the new Ohio Boat Operators Guide and it will be sent for printing.

Mike gave a brief update on activities by the LE/SAR Section: Gallia County Sheriff Deputy drowned in the Ohio River after chasing a suspect into the water.

LE/SAR assisted the Ohio Highway Patrol with a human bone discovery. It was determined to be an archeological site and not a crime scene.

Mike advised we have submitted changes to the wording as requested by Council for the Skiing in Harbors legislation.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Council Chairman Pascoe asked where we stand on motions made from the March 19, 2007 meeting.

Mike responded saying we have submitted the changes requested for the Skiing in Harbors legislation.

Director Logan and Governor Strickland have said we will not increase fees right now. Chairman Pascoe said the idea is to start now asking for fees because it is a timely process for passage. Deputy Director Celebrezze responded indicating the Governor's concern with our current economy and when the economy is in better shape we may look at fee increases at that time.

Mike distributed copies of his response to Director Logan regarding council's following motion: ***“The process of determining the recipients and amounts of Cooperative Boating Facility Grants be reviewed in light of the current decisions to fund most project requests from the Division of Parks and Recreation at an average 50% more than requested, while most awards made to non-Parks applicants were not granted on a similar basis which has resulted in other deserving grant applications being denied entirely for lack of available funds”.***

Mike responded saying the Division of Parks and Recreation does not receive preferential treatment. All projects are evaluated and scored on a fair and equal basis. Based on the information provided, the Division of Parks received an average of 2% less than requested. Mike has asked Dan West, Chief of Parks and Recreation, to submit no more than five (5) grant requests for the Division of Parks.

Vice-Chairman Hern voiced his concern saying the Division of Parks and Recreation do not adequately charge for their services, therefore not being able to help fund their own projects.

Again, Mr. Celebrezze responded saying the Division of Parks works very hard to stay within their budget and their budget continuously receives cuts. They have to stay competitive with local vendors and businesses to keep business coming in. Camping fees are competitive.

Chairman Pascoe asked for an update on the Ottawa Tribe lawsuit. Deputy Director Celebrezze responded saying ODNR filed a summary judgment in early June. The tribe has until the end of the month to answer the judgment. The Division of Watercraft has supplied information to counsel.

Chairman Pascoe asked for an update on efforts to hire a new chief. Deputy Director Celebrezze responded by saying the director will be moving forward with seeking a new chief. Deputy Director Celebrezze said he did not know why other division chiefs were chosen first. Bottom

line is they will develop a selection process. Deputy Director Celebrezze will recommend to Director Logan that major stakeholders will be asked for recommendations.

Vice-Chairman Hern commended Emily King for her efforts with the OBEC course. His staff recently provided an OBEC course within his store. He was pleased to see so many sign up for the course and 5 received 100% on their tests. He said no one received less than 82%. He estimates 90% that signed up showed for the class.

Vice-Chairman Hern said his new sales are from many that have never owned a boat before and wanting to stay in Ohio for vacationing.

Councilwoman Swain asked about paddlesport classes. Ann said it would be beneficial to offer a paddlesport class. Boating Safety Education Grants are available to qualified applicants for use to establish, develop, expand, maintain and promote boating safety programs.

Bill mentioned we are providing OBEC courses in the nine Gander Mountain stores in Ohio. Information can be obtained on Gander Mountain's website.

Vice-Chairman Hern voiced his major concern over a news release from the USCG over licensing boaters to fight terrorism. His concern is more fees for the recreational boating will continue to affect boating affordability moving interests to less costly events. Jack has forwarded his concerns to Jeff Hoedt of the USCG.

Deputy Director Celebrezze thanked council for inviting him to attend this council meeting.

OTHER ITEMS – COUNCIL: Council set the next quarter meeting of 2007 for September 12, 2007, at the Cleveland Boat Show at Cedar Point. Janet will forward further information regarding the meeting as details are finalized.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The group met at the Maumee Bay Lodge for lunch then took a boat trip provided by Watercraft Officers to the new Glass City Marina.