

**Board of Pilot Commissioners for Harris County Ports
Pilot Board Investigation and Recommendation Committee
Hearing Minutes**

December 15, 2016

A hearing of the Pilot Board Investigation and Recommendation Committee (the "PBIRC") was convened on December 15, 2016, 13:00, at the Port of Houston Authority Executive Offices, Fourth Floor Boardroom, at 111 East Loop North Houston, Texas 77029. The following members, U.S. Coast Guard (the "USCG") advisory members, and staff were present:

Captain Marcus Woodring, Chairman
Captain Robert Shearon
Captain Sean Arbogast
Captain Michael Curtiss
Paul Caruselle
Captain Richard Ford
Tom Marian
Bruce Davies, USCG Sector Houston – Galveston, Chief Investigations
Erik Eriksson, Board of Pilot Commissioners for Harris County Ports (the "Pilot Board")
General Counsel
Captain Mike Usher, PBIRC Compliance Coordinator

Chairman Woodring called the hearing to order to hear the following matter:

M/T AFRAMAX RIVER allision with mooring dolphins, in the vicinity of ITC Terminal on September 6, 2016, in the Houston Ship Channel.

1. Summary of Hearing re M/T AFRAMAX RIVER allision with mooring dolphins, in the vicinity of ITC Terminal on September 6, 2016, in the Houston Ship Channel

- a. Statements by PBIRC members, staff, and USCG advisory member identifying themselves and describing their maritime expertise.
- b. Statement by Chairman Woodring as to the conduct of the hearing.
- c. Introduction as Exhibit "A," Incident Materials of the PBIRC investigation gathered by Captain Usher regarding the above-referenced incident, and Exhibit "B," Submissions of Houston Branch Pilots Captain Michael McGee and Captain Michael Phillips.
- d. Testimony by, and questions put to Captain McGee and Captain Phillips.
- e. Concluding statement by Pilots' counsel, Mr. Jim Brown.
- f. Executive Session.
- g. Announcement by Chairman Woodring of Proposed Findings and Recommendations and description of appeal rights.

2. Proposed Findings re Captain McGee. Following its deliberations, by a vote of 8-0, the PBIRC proposes the following findings:

Captain McGee acted with prudent and heroic seamanship in the handling of the AFRAMAX RIVER.

3. **Proposed Recommendations for Captain McGee.** Following its deliberations, by a vote of 8-0, the PBIRC proposes the following recommendations to the Pilot Board:
 - a. Issue a Letter of Commendation to Captain McGee for his heroic actions in minimizing a potentially large loss of life, property, and environmental damage by exercising superb seamanship in piloting the AFRAMAX RIVER following a runaway engine and ensuing fuel oil fire that engulfed the Houston Ship Channel in close proximity to numerous vessels and facilities laden with dangerous cargoes.
 - b. To Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston – Strongly recommend Captain McGee be recognized, at the highest level, for his superb seamanship and heroic actions.
4. **Proposed Findings for Captain Phillips.** Following its deliberations, by a vote of 8-0, the PBIRC proposes the following findings:

Captain Phillips acted with heroic leadership onboard the AFRAMAX RIVER.
5. **Proposed Recommendations for Captain Phillips.** Following its deliberations, by a vote of 8-0, the PBIRC proposes the following recommendations to the Pilot Board:
 - a. Issue a Letter of Commendation to Captain Phillips for his heroic actions in minimizing a potentially large loss of life, property, and environmental damage by exercising superb leadership in communicating and coordinating all response resources while onboard the AFRAMAX RIVER following a runaway engine and ensuing fuel oil fire that engulfed the Houston Ship Channel in close proximity to numerous vessels and facilities laden with dangerous cargoes.
 - b. To Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston – Strongly recommend Captain Phillips be recognized, at the highest level, for his superb leadership and heroic actions.
6. **Hearing Adjourned 14:23**