

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee  
Thursday June 24, 2004**

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all Public Health Service Engineers and Architects. Those who are not able to attend in person may attend via conference call. Please contact the EPAC Recorder, LCDR Hilda Scharen, at 301-827-6795 for the place and conference access number.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

CDR Kathy Poneleit, EPAC Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM ET in Rockville, MD. The April minutes were approved with editorial changes and will be held for two weeks. The next meeting will be held at 2:00 PM on July 22, 2004. All EPAC and EPAC Subcommittee meetings are held Eastern Time (ET) unless otherwise specified.

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE):** RADM Williams was not present.

- No report

**B. EPAC Chair:** CDR Poneleit reported the following:

- The DC-COA summer awards luncheon buffet is scheduled for July 22, 2004 from 11:15 AM to 1:30 PM. Cost is \$24 per person. Reservations are to be received by July 16, 2004.
- The Engineer Literary award certificates and speaker thank-you letters have been completed for both the COA and SAME conferences.
- The 2005 SAME conference is scheduled for May 17-20, 2005 in Louisville, KY.
- The 2005 COA conference is scheduled for June 5-11, 2005 in Philadelphia, PA.
- EPAC nominations are due by June 30, 2004. A few nominations have been received from IHS engineer officers, but no Civil Service nominations have been received to date.
- The CPO PAC and SG PAC meeting was cancelled.
- Changes are being made to the manual circular on readiness which is set to expire June 30, 2004. There may be an ad-hoc meeting between RADM Babb and members of the EPAC to discuss. More information will be provided, as it becomes available.
- There is an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirement that 50% of officers meet the basic level of readiness by the end of September. Last year that goal was 30%. Next year that goal will increase to 75%. Approximately 30% of officers in the engineering category meet the basic level of readiness. Overall only 24% of officers are meeting the basic requirements again. Also, the EPAC was requested to provide suggestions and comments on how to improve our numbers to meet the goal. Please provide them to the EPAC Chair.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

- None

### **IV. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. Awards:** CDR Meredith Bond was not present:

- No report

#### **B. Building Design and Construction:** Mr. Brian Kong reported the following:

- Subcommittee's monthly meeting was held on May 11, 2004 and June 15, 2004. The next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2004 from 2:00-3:00 PM.
- The committee for the Surgeon General Workshop on Healthy Indoor Environment continues to move forward, and is tentatively scheduled for late 2004 or early 2005. It continues to obtain funding, and is coordinating efforts with speakers. On this issue, the Institute of Medicine published a report on "Damp Indoor Spaces and Health" May 5, 2004. National Public Radio noted this and reported that mold has been blamed unfairly for a range of health problems...finds no good evidence that molds are responsible for things such as fatigue and memory loss. The study says molds are associated with less serious symptoms, such as coughing and wheezing."
- Subcommittee agreed to investigate sharing Environment of Care (EC) information for Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) among HHS health care facilities <http://www.jcaho.org/> & <http://www.jcrinc.com/>. Focus will be on utility systems including life safety issues. It appears that this subcommittee could use more membership. As such, it will try to recruit more members in the field at HHS, and designate alternate to the chair.
- NIH continues to work with HHS on sustainability issues, and hopes to provide additional information next month.
- NIH continues to move forward with a BL-4 facility at Ft. Dietrick, MD. Peer review was recently performed with representatives from other BL-4 facilities. This type of project is supplemented by a new NIH focus group on bio-containment.

#### **C. Career Development:** LCDR Jennifer Mosser reported the following:

##### Engineer Category Day at COA

- The Category Day program at COA went very well. It was not as well attended as last year's in Scottsdale; there were approximately 40 engineer participants, most of which were IHS folks from Alaska. The presentations were excellent and several participants expressed their appreciation of the variety of presentation topics. The subcommittee thanks all those involved in program planning, the presenters and CDR Ken Sun who did great job as moderator.
- The lunch agenda included presentation of the Burgess and Lynch Young Engineer of the Year awards, Engineer Literary awards, and two IHS

awards. The Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary of Health made a quick visit and VADM Carmona presented CDR Kathy Poneleit with the Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal.

- Additionally, the subcommittee is working on making the COA Category Day presentations available on-line.

**D. Rules:** LCDR Jennifer Mosser reported the following:

EPAC Self-Nominations

- The deadline is June 30. There are four terms expiring: CDC, HRSA, IHS, and At-Large. The subcommittee is looking at the engineer distribution to determine the correct number of slots for each agency.
- EPAC members whose terms are expiring but are interested in continuing must submit a self nomination.
- The self nomination packet is on the EPAC website. Please encourage your colleagues to apply.
- We have received 10 EPAC self nominations so far, all but two are from IHS officers, no self nominations from civil service. One of the nominations is for a renewal.

**E. Emergency Preparedness:** CDR Poneleit reported the following (for CAPT Rodenbeck):

- The Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee met on May 12 and June 9. Both meetings were devoted to developing and redrafting the Response Roles for Engineers (General Environmental Health Officer, Hazardous Waste/Materials, Occupational Hygiene and Engineering, Health Care Facilities Engineer, Biomedical/Clinical Engineer, and Disaster Response Engineer). We anticipate that many of these roles will be ready for the full EPAC review and approval by the July EPAC meeting.
- The next Subcommittee meeting will occur on July 14 from 3:00-4:30 PM. Please contact CAPT Sven Rodenbeck for the conference call information.

**F. Information:** CDR Michael Coene reported the following:

- Subcommittee did not meet this month.
- Committee has been working on a new look and feel for the EPAC website <http://usphsengineers.org/newsite/>. Please send comments on the new website to CDR Coene.

**G. Mentoring:** CDR Scofield reported the following:

- Two committee members provided a brief overview of the mentoring program during the 2004 COA conference.
- The JOAG has contacted a subcommittee member for assistance in possibly mentoring COSTEPS's.
- Committee is still looking for new advisors
- Last meeting was on June 08, 2004 at 11:00 AM
- Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 11:00 AM; next call is July 06, 2004 11:00 AM

**H. Recruiting & Retention:** CDR Ludington reported the following:

- Last meeting was on June 1, 2004

- Next call is July 6, 2004 at 1:00 PM
- Originally the committee was having 2,500 copies of the “Engineering Career Opportunities” handbook printed. There has already been a request for 1,700 of the handbooks. A new total of 4,000 handbooks will be printed. Please send requests for these handbooks to LCDR Carol Rogers.
- The committee is trying to combine recruiting efforts with the JOAG to encourage the recruitment of COSTEP’s.

## V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A. **DCP Liaison:** LCDR Claire Karlson:

- General Duty Applications received in January - May 2004: 17
  - Sr. COSTEP applications: 8
  - Jr. COSTEP applications: 75
  - Total Applications from January - May = 100
- Calls to Active Duty (CAD) March - May 2004 : 10
  - March = 3
  - April = 4
  - May = 3
  - Fiscal year 2004 October 1 - May 2004 = 20
- Current status of category as of June 24, 2004:
  - Retirements in the month of March - May 2004
    - March = 4
    - April = 3
    - May = 1
  - 416 current active duty engineer officers in all agencies
- LCDR Karlson has been assigned to OCCO/DCCR (Division of Recruitment). At this time I am the only officer that has been assigned to recruiting and will need the help of the Associate Recruiters to attend conferences and recruit for the CORP. Budget has not been discussed, but no decision has been made. I am still working in my present position, but also traveling to conferences.

### B. **TISP Liaison:** CDR Dan Beck:

- Not present

### C. **COA Liaison:** CDR Nate Tatum:

- Last Meeting Monday 7, June 2004
- Newly Elected Board Officers:
  - Pharmacy Category - CAPT Tim Ames
  - Therapist Category - CDR Susanne Pickering, (Atlanta)
  - Veterinary Category - CDR Hugh Mainzer, (Atlanta)
  - Retired Category - RADM Sue Dahlman, (Seattle)
  - Field Rep - CAPT Latricia Robertson, (Dallas)
  - Inactive Reserve Rep - CAPT Max Koppel, (Philadelphia)
- New Board Executive Committee Officers:
  - CAPT Margaret McDowell, Chair Elect
  - CDR Lynn Slepski, Treasurer
  - CAPT Tim Ames, as the Board Chair

- Next Meeting of the Board will be the annual board Workshop here in DC Area in August.
- I would like to point out that one way that the engineering category could have a greater influence on the board and therefore the COA lobby would be through increasing our presence on the board. While we do only have one seat for a rep from the category, we do have one other engineering officer on the board; CAPT Rich Rubendall field representative. It is interesting to note that the field representative elected on this ballot ran unopposed. I highly encourage the EPAC to find and even encourage other engineers to run for next year's open field representative positions. While most of the business of the board is category generic, there are times when I feel outgunned by clinical categories.
- Major congressional issue right now is the elimination of the widow's tax. This is the number one initiative of the military coalition this year. There are still significant obstacles to passing this issue into law, but the matter seems promising.

**D. SAME Liaison:** CDR Kathy Poneleit and CDR Randall Gardner reported the following:

- Need to begin identifying speakers for the 2005 SAME conference.
- The next liaison service meeting is June 30, 2004. Randall Gardner will be attending the meeting and discussing any changes to the PHS service awards.
- The Awards subcommittee may be asked to review any changes to the PHS service awards.

**E. Junior Engineer Report:** LCDR Matthew Martinson (not present) reported the following:

- My term on JOAG will be ending in September. Consequently, we need to identify a new engineer category liaison to the Junior Officer Advisory Group. I will work on that "succession planning", but any help that EPAC can offer would be appreciated. Presently, LT Katherine Jacobitz is the only other engineer "voting" member sitting on the JOAG.

## **VI. VACANCIES**

- SAMSHA is looking for a computer security expert. Please contact CAPT Carol Rest-Minberg if you are interested.
- Announcements will be made through the Office of the Chief Engineer.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

CDR Poneleit adjourned the meeting 1:55 PM.

## **VIII. AUTHORIZATION**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

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LCDR Ramsey Hawasly  
Recorder, EPAC

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Date

I have read the above minutes, which accurately describe this meeting, and on behalf of the EPAC approve their distribution:

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CDR Kathy Poneleit  
Chair, EPAC

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Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

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RADM Robert C. Williams, P.E.  
Chief Engineer, USPHS

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Date