

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee
Thursday March 25, 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 EST in Rockville, MD. The January minutes were approved with editorial changes and will be held for two weeks. The next EPAC meeting will be held at 1:00 PM ET (Eastern Time) on April 29, 2004.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE): CDR Poneleit reported for RADM Williams who was not available for the call.

B. EPAC Chair: CDR Poneleit reported the following:

- A list of conferences/talks are taking place some of which are:
 - The Commissioned Officers Association (COA) annual conference
 - The Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) annual conference
 - Obesity and the Built Environment – Washington D.C., May 24-26. Sponsored by NIH
 - Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
 - National Capital Region Chapter AMSUS Dinner Meeting on Ricin and the Game of Bio-Terrorism
 - There is an AMSUS meeting held in Colorado which may be of interest to some engineers
- Two items have been updated/added on the EPAC website:
 - (1) A listing of all members and subcommittees
 - (2) A summary of subcommittees and points of contact for each
- RADM Robert Williams provided a document regarding the EPA P3 Award Student Design competition for sustainability. EPA is looking for reviewers to assist on 2 day panel. EPA will pay for travel and is looking for environmental/civil engineers. This will probably happen in late May or early June.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- CDR Bond reported on a project she initiated regarding the role of EPAC Members At-Large

IV. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Awards: CDR Meredith Bond reported the following:

- The awards subcommittee is working on finalizing award nominations.
- Engineering Literary Awards are being reviewed and finalized.

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

- The Healthy Indoor Environment Initiative (HIEI) is moving forward. Briefing for the Surgeon General's Workshop on Healthy Indoor Environment was provided to the Office of the Surgeon General on March 24, 2004, and was well received.
- Initiatives for 2004 were discussed. The following items were briefly presented as a basis for initiatives.
 - National Institutes of Health (NIH) Design Policy and Guidelines
 - NIH Commissioning Guide
 - Construction Industry Institute (CII) toolkits
 - Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) Environment of Care (EC) information sharing among HHS health care facilities
- NIH is currently undergoing changes within the Office of Research Facilities. Real Property Management's incorporation of the Most Efficient Organization is part of this change. The general organizational structure will be forwarded to the Chair.

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

The 2004 COA Engineer Category Day agenda has been finalized. The subcommittee decided to split the day between invited speakers and paper presentations. The morning is composed of invited speakers who will talk on the issues of:

- Whole Building Commissioning
- Indoor Environments Component of the Joint Urban 2003 Atmospheric Dispersion Study
- Energy Efficiency in 7 Alaska Hospitals
- Fuel Cell Technology
- Presentation of the Engineering Literary Awards, Burgess and Lynch Young Engineer of the Year Award will occur during the COA luncheon.
- The afternoon session is dedicated to paper presentations by PHS engineers. There were 15 abstract submissions for 9 available slots. (Abstracts not accepted for Category Day will be presented in the overflow session on Monday morning.) The subcommittee looked for speakers from as many agencies as possible and on a variety of topics. There are speakers from CDC, IHS, EPA and FDA and the topics cover the areas of:
 - Environmental Clean-up
 - Occupational Safety Research
 - Sanitation Facilities Construction Program
 - Facilities Design and Construction
 - Drinking Water Regulations
 - Biomedical Engineering

- The agenda will be posted on the COA conference website and the Engineers website. Please help us advertise the agenda. If anyone has comments or questions about Category Day, they may contact LCDR Mosser.
- The next subcommittee meeting is April 8 at 3:00 pm ET. The subcommittee will be addressing other details of Category Day and getting back to designing a career development page for the Engineer's website.

D. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Sven Rodenbeck reported the following:

- Reviewing engineering response (previously termed "deployment") roles.
- Will be looking at and reviewing ASTM standards.
- Meetings held on the second Wednesday of every month at 3:00 PM ET; next call is April 14 from 3:00-4:30 PM ET

E. Information: CDR Michael Coene reported the following:

- Website has been updated with information provided by subcommittees and the EPAC membership.
- Subcommittees interested in increasing their presence on the web should contact CDR Coene.
- Subcommittee continues to post the Chief Engineer's announcements.
- Meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month at 4:00 PM E(S)T, next meeting is April 6, 2004 at 4:00 PM ET.

F. Mentoring: CDR Biddle reported the following:

- Currently, there are fourteen active Mentor-Protégé teams.
- Continue to update mentoring handbook.
- Not very much response to the request for Agency Advisors for the Mentoring Program; they are needed to oversee Protégé/Mentor teams.
- Last meeting was on March 2, 2004.
- Meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month at 11:00 AM ET; next call is April 6, 2004 11:00 AM ET

G. Recruiting & Retention: CDR Ludington reported the following:

- Last meeting was on March 2, 2004
- LCDR Carol Rogers is compiling an IHS engineering vacancy list which can be used by CAPT Dave Koski and the Associate Recruiters to assist previous COSTEPS or others interested in employment with PHS.
- CDR Haag is working on a comparison sheet between private sector and commissioned corps career pay issues.
- Working on instruction booklet "Guidelines for Recruiting."
- Next call is April 6, 2004 1:00 PM ET.

H. Rules: LCDR Mosser reported the following:

- The subcommittee did not meet this month.
- We will convene next month to begin updating the EPAC Bylaws, readdress the issue of modifying the model charter, and preparing for solicitation of nominations for EPAC membership. Meetings are held on an ad-hoc basis.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. DCP Liaison: LCDR Claire Karlson:

- Not present

B. TISP Liaison: CDR Dan Beck reported the following:

- New Chairman of TISP, Ralph Johnson
- Third annual TISP conference November 7-10, St. Louis, MO.
- TISP conference is sponsored by SAME.
- ASCE came out with a web seminar titled "Guidance for Protecting Buildings from Airborne Chemical Biological and Radiological Attacks". The seminar is now available on cd-rom.
- Department of Homeland Security and FEMA recently released their new building science guidelines for enhanced terrorism resistance.

C. COA Liaison: LCDR Nate Tatum:

- Not present

D. SAME Liaison: CDR Kathy Poneleit/CAPT Sven Rodenbeck reported the following:

- Currently in the process of collecting papers and presentations for the SAME conference. Deadline is April 15, 2004.
- SAME members can vote for national officers via the SAME website.
- March 31, 2004 is the annual Service Chief's brief. CAPT Larry Reed from NIOSH will cover for the USPHS Chief Engineer this year.
- Golden Eagles dinner Washington, D.C., April 3, 2004. Reservations can be made on the SAME website.
- The annual national SAME conference will be having a PHS track. There will be a special opportunity for junior members to get together and discuss mutual items of interest. In addition, the junior members will have lunch with the chief engineers.
- During the SAME conference a junior officer from each service will carry their respective service flag before the evening ball. Junior officers who will be attending the conference and are willing to volunteer to carry the PHS flag should contact CAPT Sven Rodenbeck.

E. Junior Engineer Report: LCDR Matthew Martinson reported the following: On February 13, 2004 the Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) had the opportunity to meet with the Surgeon General and the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). Below are some of the issues/topics discussed:

We, the Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG), sincerely appreciate the opportunity to comment on the many changes occurring to the Commissioned Corps. Your invitation to hear from us conveys to us that you understand that these changes will impact our service to the Nation more than any other group of Active Duty Corps Officers. We are encouraged by your effort to reach out to us. We support a transformation effort and believe we can help the Corps adapt to the 21st century and the needs of "one HHS".

We are committed public servants who are passionate about our particular missions. We receive our Commissions earnestly, take The Oath seriously, and perform our respective missions diligently.

Two universal sentiments engender the following comments we share:

Commitment to serve the mission of our Agencies as part of “one HHS,”

Desire to be part of an honorable Uniformed Service, recognized by the Nation for our critical contributions.

As you probably know, the JOAG was chartered “to provide advice and consultation on interests and concerns specific to junior officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.” We hope we can continue this dialogue directly with the Department both during this time of significant change, and thereafter.

TOPIC #1: Communication

TOPIC #2: Agency Impacts

There is a general concern amongst Junior Officers that the requirements for readiness, deployments, and contributions to the Corps will have a detrimental impact on the mission of the Agency that pays their cost as Commissioned Officers. Their “regular job” at the Agency serves the greater mission of DHHS, and their Agency’s budget bears the cost of them as Officers.

Often, the Agencies hire Commissioned Officers because they are value-added: The Officers work as many hours as necessary to get the work done for no additional cost to the program, and they can be sent anywhere the Agency needs them. Frequently, Officers take on additional duties and roles to cover job vacancies or critical staffing needs.

How will the Department and the Agencies reconcile these competing demands?

TOPIC #3: Readiness and Training

TOPIC #4: Billet Management System

The December 18, 2003 Federal Register statement includes discussion about a “billet management system,” and the Lewin Group Project “Statement of Work” also discusses it. The concept raises apprehension in Junior Officers for several reasons.

The Lewin Group Transformation Project statement of work seems to neglect, through what the “Statement of Work” does not say, considerations of non-clinical categories. Public health, by definition is preventive and proactive.

TOPIC #5: Management Structure

TOPIC #6: Deployments and Mobility

TOPIC #7: Promotion Policies

TOPIC #8: Uniforms

TOPIC #9: Healthcare Changes

TOPIC #10: Quality Assurance of the Process

VI. VACANCIES

There will be an announcement coming out in the next Chief Engineer's announcement looking for a permanent SAME service liaison.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

CDR Poneleit adjourned the meeting at 2:10 PM ET.

VIII. AUTHORIZATION

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

LCDR Ramsey Hawasly
Alternate Recorder, EPAC

Date

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

CDR Kathy Poneleit
Chair, EPAC

Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

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

Date