

**Minutes of the Meeting
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee
Thursday, December 7, 2006**

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, LT Roger N. Dahozy at (602) 364-5081 or roger.dahozy@ihs.gov, for the phone and conference access numbers.

I. CALL TO ORDER

CAPT James Ludington, EPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM EST. Attendance was taken and a quorum of EPAC members was present. The October minutes were approved with editorial changes and will be held for two weeks and then posted on the Engineers website. This is the last EPAC meeting of the year and the next meeting is to be determined. All EPAC and subcommittee meetings are stated for Eastern Standard Time (EST) unless otherwise specified.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE): RADM Rick Barror reported the following:

- RADM Barror thanked CAPT Ludington for his work as the 2006 EPAC Chair and all the EPAC subcommittees. Job well done!
- At the begging of the year the subcommittees were asked to review the strategic plan and to provide an evaluation of parts of the plan that effected a particular subcommittee. Not all subcommittees have done there evaluation of the strategic plan. If you've had a chance to see what CDR Nuerath and her subcommittee has done, that's the format that your evaluations should be submitted.
- Everyone needs to be sure that they are basic qualified. The rules and regulations are changing and at the end of December this is going to be an accounting for all of us. RADM Barror checked his status this morning and found that he was not basic qualified. Further investigation revealed that it was a mistake by OFRD. Nonetheless, this is an important reminder for everyone to check his or her status.
- OFRD is very concerned because their initial investigation of officers based on the new standards drops the total basic qualified percentage dramatically. Reasons like officers not completing the FEMA courses, or officers not completing other courses contribute to the problems. All EPAC members need to spread the word about this issue in your particular agencies.
- RADM Babb has sent a memo regarding this issue to all officers.
- The EPAC is doing a tremendous job. A lot of people are working hard to make things happen. RADM Barror is very appreciative for your efforts.

- B. EPAC Chair Announcement:** CAPT Ludington reported the following:
- The isolated hardship, hazardous duty precept is not going to be put in place this year.
 - All officers in the Washington DC area please try to attend the Everett Koop lecture given by former Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona on January 12, 2007. Tickets are on sale now.
 - According to the DCP website, we are now down to 390 commissioned corps engineers and continue to fall.
 - Those subcommittees that haven't submitted their end of year reports please make an effort to do so.
 - Thank you to everyone on the EPAC!

III. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. No old business

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. 2007 Engineer Leadership Development Seminar:** CDR Hilda Scharen reported the following:

- CDR Scharen met with RADM Barror, CDR Longstaff, and CDR Ausdemore to discuss the plans for the next Leadership Seminar.
- The plan is to build on last year's seminar but also adding the Environmental Health Officers.
- The goal is to try and get several people involved early in the planning process.
- The seminar is planned to be in early August. No date or place has been determined.
- Anyone who is interested to lead or serve on the subcommittee, please contact CDR Scharen.
- RADM Barror has contacted CAPT Shepard who is the CPO of the Environmental Health Category and he is very excited about this collaboration.
- The next meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, December 12th from 2:00 to 3:00PM EST.

- B. EPAC Charter:** CDR Ausdemore reported the following:

- CDR Ausdemore emailed a copy of the EPAC charter to all voting EPAC members for review and comment.
- There were not a lot of major changes. The biggest change was for officers assigned to the Office of the Secretary or the Office of Public Health and Science, in paragraph 2, section 5 for membership, they may now serve on PACs as actual voting members. Other changes were very minor.
- CDR Ausdemore asked for questions and comments regarding the changes. CDR Ausdemore motion that the 2006 revised charter be approved by the EPAC. If approved, the next step would be to forward the document to the acting Surgeon General for his endorsement.

- The motioned was seconded with no one opposing. Therefore, the 2006 revised charter was approved.
- The charter that was online available to the public was dated 1977.

C. Commissioned Corps Transformation: RADM Robert Williams reported the following:

- RADM Williams wanted to provide a brief update of the transformation process. Please feel free to ask questions.
- The transformation has been ongoing since 2003. In July of 2003, Secretary Thompson announced that he wanted to transform the Commissioned Corps and primarily wanted to increase the number of officers in the Indian Health Service.
- During this process it was discovered that while we were trying to increase the number of officers in the IHS, there were many “institutional issues” that needed to be overcome. Even if we were successful in meeting the Secretary’s goals, we felt that there were many things that needed to be changed in terms of processes, policies, and calls to active duty issues.
- At this time the LOUN group was brought in to help investigate the issues that were important for transforming the Commissioned Corps. RADM Williams and RADM Knouss were co-project officers in leading this effort. Some of you were probably active in helping further define the issues identified by the Surgeon General and the Acting Assistant Secretary for Health. These issues included classification, training, selection of individuals, education, and size of the Commissioned Corps, to name a few.
- At the end of the workgroups deliberations, a paper was developed that summarized the findings of the working groups. This paper was circulated to all the operating divisions for their vote and consensus of approval or disapproval.
- Consequently, the operating divisions were very supportive of the issues. This was at the end of Secretary Thompson’s tenure and so the paper went forward to Secretary Michael Leavitt. He reviewed the paper and was somewhat familiar with the Commissioned Corps with his experience working for the EPA and he met with each OPDIV and determined that the Commissioned Corps was an essential part of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Therefore, Secretary Leavitt set out to create a new vision for the Corps based on the previous work of the LOUN group. He established various things that he wanted to be addressed. He announced these issues on January 18th in front of the press where he basically said we’re transforming the Commissioned Corps because its important to the DHHS. It was at this meeting he was sworn in as the ASH.
- Part of the actions following was to establish 5 workgroups who would begin to provide more detailed plans on how to implement his transformation decisions. These workgroups focused on Readiness, Recruitment training and career development, assignments and

classifications. Those workgroups developed a 180 page document that were submitted to the operating division heads for them to review.

- For the most part, the operating divisions were in agreement with what was recommended in terms of the concepts of where the Secretary was headed.
- The Secretary took this as a firm sign that we needed to make changes.
- The transformation process today has involved hundreds of officers with involvement of agency heads. We also have coordination groups that include representatives from all the agencies, CPO reps, JOAG, OCCFAM, OFRD, and OCCO who are involved with making the transformation happen.
- We are ultimately staged right now to move forward very quickly over the next two years with everything we need to happen.
- There are currently 12 people within OCCO and OCCFAM who have the expressed assignment to make transformation policy and to help develop those policies. Each month of the Commissioned Corps bulletin there will be an article that describes a certain aspect of the transformation process. So, you will be able to keep up with the changes.
- Most of you should have received a hard copy of the transformation implementation plan.

D. Nominations for the 2007 Chair Elect:

- CDR Harris and CDR Nuerath gave a 10 minute presentation regarding their goals and visions for the 2008 EPAC Chair.
- Ballots with each nominee's goals and visions summary document (attached) will be sent to the voting members of the EPAC by tomorrow afternoon. Please submit your votes to LT Roger Dahozy, EPAC Recorder. LT Dahozy will tally and send the result to all EPAC members soon after.
- On December 18, 2006 LT Dahozy counted the votes from all EPAC voting members and CDR Neurath was elected as the 2007 EPAC Chair Elect. Congratulations CDR Neurath!

V. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. **Awards:** CDR Bradley Harris reported the following:

- 19 members presently makeup the Awards subcommittee. We have a very health membership, however we are always happy to have more.
- The subcommittee has completed the review of the Engineer of the Year award. The results will be submitted to the OCE soon.
- We are still in the process of completing the Responder of the Year award.
- The engineer literary award nominations are due December 15, 2006. The remaining engineer category awards are due on January 15, 2007.
- The Cuning award/plaque has been a very difficult award to gather nomination write-ups for. This award is a unit award. Please consider a unit in your particular area who may deserving of this award and submit a write-up.

- The subcommittee wants to start writing bio-sketches of the award winners and getting them publicized through organizations like COA, ROA, and SAME.
- Amongst several other goals, the subcommittee would like to create an award history record and web page.
- CAPT Ludington asked about if the Awards subcommittee has investigated if the number of awards should be lessened or increased based off of past nominations and overall opinions.
 - The subcommittee has not done this yet, but have been discussing the fact that there is a growing perception that certain awards target certain specialties in engineering. This will be addressed in 2007.
 - Marketing the awards is better this year, because more new qualified candidates have been nominated.

B. Building Design and Construction: CDR Natour reported the following:

- Our last meeting was held on November 14, 2006. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2007, from 2:00pm-3:00pm
- We discussed details of some of the projects in which we are each involved.
- Our presentation on the HHS Facilities Assessment Guidelines has been postponed to sometime in early 2007.

C. Career Development: CDR Sue Neurath reported the following:

- Engineer Survey - David Mazorra was not available. He previously reported that the last test of the survey went well. David will write a short intro about the survey and submit it to Sue to be submitted to the Announcements from the Chief Engineer and the Engineer List Serve.
- Career Tracks; Recent Retirees - Sue reported that the formatting issues still needed to be addressed (font, spacing, etc) to standardize the bios, then they can be submitted to the full EPAC for approval to add to the Website.
- Engineer Certification – Sue reported that the workgroup is working by email to review a list of possible certifications. Please contact Sue if you'd like to join this effort.
- Joint Career Development Committee Paper Review - During the Aug meeting, we discussed our comments on the “Advanced Training Requirements of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and Lack of Current Training Support/Opportunity” position paper. The paper needs to be formally presented to the full EPAC with our recommendations on its applicability to PHS engineers.
- Previous discussion on the paper indicated that:
 - There is a need to develop a centralized location to find training opportunities
 - It would be helpful to also have centralized information about funding opportunities.

- The IHS training facility - environmental health support center - might be a helpful model for advanced degree programs
- Sue reported that the cover paper was not completed this month, and is looking for to help draft this paper.

- Professional Guidance Documents - Jim Simpson previously submitted a Journal of Professional Activities as a template to organize/track continuing education accomplishments. The subcommittee agreed this could help with organization and could be used as an OPF summary tool. Jim is working on a draft a cover letter to describe the relevance and use of the document.
- Career Tracks Discussion: At last months meeting we discussed potential follow on projects to compliment the work we've done with the CV, CV Cover Sheet, Journal or Professional Activities, and Engineer Recognition. Based on what we have done and the ideas that were proposed there seem to be three 'pillars' that we can build on.
- Transformation Workgroups - After a brief discussion on possible projects for next year, it was suggested that we may be asked to address issues related to Transformation. It was then suggested that it may be helpful to find out if/how the subcommittee could submit career development related comments to the Transformation Workgroups. Varsha volunteered to contact the chair of the Joint Committee of Career Development Chairs and Sue volunteered to contact the EPAC chairs and ADM Barror to see how we can support the Transformation Workgroups.

D. Emergency Preparedness: CDR Ausdemore reported the following:

- Based on the Lessons Learned document following Hurricane Katrina, subcommittee investigated aspects of this document. One important item that came out of this investigation was the engineer deployment playbook. This book is not completed, but CDR Ausdemore will have this done by the end of the calendar year.
- The other big accomplishment of the subcommittee was the talking paper "Are you ready?" forwarded and approved by the EPAC last month.
- The other significant accomplishment was the fact that the subcommittee worked with the readiness transformation tier 1 and 2 teams.
- Goals for next year include going back to the lessons learned paper and focus on issues that were found significant by the subcommittee.

E. Information: CDR Mitch Constant was absent. For him, CAPT Darrell LaRoche reported the following:

- The subcommittee presently has 14 members.
- 2006 accomplishments:
 - Updating the existing website. The subcommittee has been doing regularly scheduled updates since the spring of 2006.
 - The EPAC website newsletter has had two editions. Thank you to everyone that contributed this.

- The new listserve was created, but still needs improvement.
- The design of the EPAC website and to coordinate the design with all PACs to make sure they are similar in design and functionality.
- Goals for 2007:
 - Continuing to update and reformatting the website to come into compliance with the common PAC template.
 - Continuing to improve on the listserve.
 - Working on the newsletter so that it can be distributed on a quarterly basis.

F. Leadership Development Seminar: CDR John Longstaff reported the following:

- CDR Hilda Scharen will provide updates for the 2007 year.

G. Mentoring: CDR Tom Heintzman reported the following:

- For 2006 the subcommittee had 17 mentoring teams established. This was the highest in any one-year since the program began.
- This year we also established a formalized feed back process. This is done on a quarterly basis by which each mentoring team gives there feedback to the Chair.
- A broacher has been developed and been provided to the COA conference and leadership seminar.
- For 2007 we need more mentors! So, we'll be asking for more mentors.
- We will be working with the career development and awards subcommittees very closely in the future.
- This concludes CAPT Heintzman's tenure for the EPAC.
- Thank you to CAPT Ludington and LT Dahozy for your hard work representing the 2006 EPAC.

H. Recruiting & Retention: CDR Churci Kardous reported the following:

- As of November 30, 2006, the engineer category stands at 390 engineers.
- There are 241 PHS engineers in the IHS with the FDA at 43 PHS engineers.
- There are 30 applications for general duty assignments and 41 COSTEP applications.
- There were 9 conference calls this past year with 30 total members and 3 new members joining in 2006.
- There were two major accomplishments this year which included:
 - Civil Service to Commissioned Corps Conversion Initiative.
 - Development of the engineer applicant database, which tracks applications and job openings and matches them according to various criteria.
- There were 7 engineers commissioned to the PHS in 2006.
- The main objective this year was to get the tracking system in place so that future plans could have a solid foundation to begin, working closely with OCCO and Associate Recruiters.

- Plans are still developing to update the R&R website.
- The R&R subcommittee has plans to work more closely with the Mentoring subcommittee this coming year.
- Presently there are 75 IHS and 30 Non IHS Associate Recruiters. The subcommittee is trying to increase these numbers.
- A system is being developed so that the various Associate Recruiters can be held accountable for their accomplishments and requirements.
- The subcommittee is also developing a career path document/plan to help new engineers with their career planning.
- Please see the end of year report for other goals and achievements.
- If you aware of an engineer opening, please contact CDR Kardous.

I. **Rules:** CDR Ausdemore reported the following:

- Getting the charter approved and updated was a major accomplishment of the Rules subcommittee.
- The other major goal of the subcommittee was to review and revise the bylaws. This task will be forwarded to next year's subcommittee.

VI. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. **OCCO/DCCR liaison:** LCDR Rhondalyn Cox reported the following:

- There are 30 applications for general duty.
- There are potentially another 30 more applications that are in process now, however LCDR Cox is presently working the R&R subcommittee to see if the applicants are still interested. Some of the applications are old.
- There were no calls to duty of the month of November.
- The current PHS engineer status is 390.

B. **TISP Liaison:** CDR Dan Beck was absent.

- No report.

C. **COA Liaison:** CDR Geoffrey Wachs reported the following:

- The Commissioned Officers Association (COA) of the U.S. Public Health Service is dedicated to improving and protecting the public health of the United States by addressing unmet health needs and providing support for our members.
- USPHS Commissioned Officers Association (COA) information of interest to EPAC in general and more specifically to Engineer Officers:
- Official PHS Commissioned Officers Association (COA) information
- <http://www.coausphs.org/>
- Stay informed by reading the COA Frontline
- <http://www.coausphs.org/members/membersfrontline.cfm>
- Anchor & Caduceus Dinner - Dr. Richard Carmona Speaker
- January 12th, 2007 - Washington, D.C.
- Proceeds will benefit the Educational Programs of the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation

- <http://www.coausphs.org/docs/news/AC%20Dinner%202007%20-%20Announcement.pdf>
 - 2006 Health Leader of the Year Award – collecting nominations, possible selection in January 2007
 - <http://www.coausphs.org/wwewards.cfm>
 - Global Health Summit II 2007: "Improving Global Health and Safety Through Diplomacy"
 - will be held June 3, 2007 Cincinnati Ohio
 - <http://www.globalhealth.gov/>
 - 42nd Annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium
 - (formerly the USPHS Professional Conference/COA Meeting)
 - The theme of the Symposium is "The Many Faces of Public Health."
 - June 4-7, 2007, Cincinnati Ohio
 - Call for Paper/Poster Submissions Announced
 - <http://www.coausphsconference.org/>
 - The Luther Terry Lecture, which will be delivered by
 - RADM W. Craig Vanderwagen, Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness.
 - <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/history/bioterry.htm>
 - Online Registration for 2007 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium (COA Meeting) Now Available
 - Online registration is now available for the 2007 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium, including the discounted speaker registration. Just a reminder that if your being compensated by COA for any registrations those will need to be handled differently. Please contact COA directly. Registration is available off the home page of the Symposium web site at www.coausphsconference.org
 - The PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) for the Advancement of Public Health was created to provide support for public health professionals nationwide. The foundation is an affiliate of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service.
 - PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) information of interest to EPAC in general and more specifically to Engineer Officers:
 - Official PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) information
 - <http://www.phscof.org/>
 - Frontline's latest issue and back issues information
 - <http://www.coausphs.org/members/membersfrontline.cfm>
- D. **SAME Liaison:** CDR Randall Gardner reported the following:
- CDR had nothing to report.
- E. **Junior Engineer Report:** LCDR Jonathan Rash reported the following:
- A JOAG voting membership planning meeting was held on November 9, 2006. The following summarizes this meeting and other JOAG issues since the last report sent on 10/23/06.

- CAPT Dean Coppola, JOAG Senior Advisor, brought an issue to JOAG's attention. Some guidance is being prepared for civil service employers to explain the roles of a PHS officer, including the responsibilities officers have (e.g. maintaining readiness, potential for deployment, committee or PAC involvement) and the benefits a PHS officer brings to the agency/OPDIV. JOAG has been tasked to brainstorm and provide a list of the value-added benefits of employing a PHS officer. LCDR Rhondalyn Cox is chairing a task force to gather input on this issue and compile the results. Input will be transmitted to CAPT Coppola 2nd full week of December.
- JOAG members encouraged to contribute to myCCstory.org and to participate actively at COA Conference.
- Every committee or workgroup required to prepare a list of at least 3 primary goals or objectives for the 2006-2007 operational year. These are due by the December meeting.
- JOAG Recruitment and Retention Committee to meet with CAPT Coppola to talk about how to strengthen its COSTEP program. Currently, working with category PAC's, JOAG sends informational materials and provides junior officer mentors for COSTEP officers (if desired) to help them understand what it means to be in the Commissioned Corps, help understand application process, etc.
- JOAG Awards Committee to meet with CAPT Coppola to discuss how it can assist OCCO with publishing and maintaining a database of successful awards write-ups to have a single-site source of aid for writing Commissioned Corps awards narratives.
- All JOAG committees continuing to work on SOP's. Draft SOP's are expected by December.
- Next regular JOAG meeting: December 8, 2006, 1300-1500 EST
CALL IN NUMBER: 888-322-1791, PASSCODE: 83301
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VII. VACANCIES

- No vacancy announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Any officer that missed the roll call, please submit your contact information to LT Roger Dahozy at roger.dahozy@ihs.gov.
CAPT Ludington adjourned the meeting at 2:31 PM EST.

IX. EPAC MEETING PARTICIPATION

Participants: (Members in bold)

CDR David Ausdemore (CDC), LTJG Bradley Cunningham (FDA), CDR Bradley Harris (NPS), CDR Tom Heintzman (IHS), LT Vivian Iskander (IHS), CDR Allen Jarrell, CDR Churci Kardous (CDC), , CAPT James Ludington (IHS), LCDR Jennifer Mosser (OS), CDR Jamie Natour (HRSA), CDR Sue Neurath (CDC)

LCDR Hilda Scharen-Guivel (At Large), CDR Adam Scully (FDA), RADM Richard Barror (CPO, ex-officio), , LT Roger Dahozy (Recorder, ex-officio), LCDR Rhondalyn Cox (OCCO/DCCR). CDR Randall Gardner (SAME), CDR Geoffrey Wachs (COA),

Members Absent:

CDR Meredith Bond (At Large), CDR John Longstaff (IHS), LT Varsha Savalia (FDA), CDR Mitch Constant (IHS), LCDR Emil Wang (FDA), LCDR Jonathan Rash.

Official Alternates Present:

CDR Darrell LaRoche, CDR Carol Rogers

Guests:

CDR Foto, RADM Robert Williams, LCDR Mathew Martinson, CDR Keith Foy, CAPT Keith Shortall, CAPT Bryan Fischer

X. **AUTHORIZATION**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

LT Roger N. Dahozy
Recorder, EPAC

Date

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

CAPT James Ludington, P.E.
Chair, EPAC

Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

RADM Rick Barror, P.E.
Chief Engineer, USPHS

Date