

**Meeting Minutes of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee  
Thursday, December 11, 2008**

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all Public Health Service Engineers and Architects.

Next meeting date: Will be determined by the new EPAC Chair

Conference Line Information:

**Toll-free: 1-866-614-6551**

**Passcode: 8768444**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

CAPT Neurath called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM EST. Attendance was taken and a quorum of EPAC members was present. Tab A shows the EPAC meeting attendance to date.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

CAPT Neurath stated that the November minutes will remain open until the end of the following month. If no modifications are submitted, the minutes will be considered finalized.

**III. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE):** RADM Barror provided the following:

Thanks to CAPT Neurath for her leadership.

Thanks to CDR Longstaff for becoming our next chair. Let's all give him our support.

Thanks to the PAC members that will rotating off this year for all of their outstanding efforts.

The new Commissioned Corps fact sheet is available; it provides good general information about the Corps.

Tom Daschle is expected to be named as the next HHS Secretary. The Surgeon General position is undecided, but a neurosurgeon from Chicago may be a candidate.

It appears that the Assimilation Board will not meet in 2009 as the Regular Corps population has essentially reached the ceiling level.

Readiness is important this time of year for promotions. Officers not achieving the required readiness status will be referred to a retention review board and may be recommended for involuntary separation. As of December 5<sup>th</sup>, 86% were ready and the 59 that were not qualified were contacted. Ensure that you will be Basic Qualified on Dec 31<sup>st</sup>.

Nominations for the ADM Michael Award are being sought. The criteria are in the OCE announcements.

Nominations are still being sought for the Engineer of the Year Award from EPA and CDC.

**B. EPAC Chair:** CAPT Neurath provided the following:

- CDR John Longstaff and CDR Hilda Scharen joined me on the PAC Chair call
  - Forum for discussing how various PACs approach common opportunities and challenges
  - For your EPAC career planning, you should know the chair of the PAC Chairs group is selected in December and serves January through December the following year
  - One big issue for a number of other PACs is the website transformation
    - A separate call will be considered for Chairs of each PAC's Information/Communication Subcommittee
  - The second issue concerns Corps longevity recognition (ie 5, 10, 20 yr of service)
    - Some Categories make these awards themselves
    - Issue is being considered by a JOAG group by looking at policies of other services
    - We will likely have an opportunity to comment in the future
  - The third issue concerns a recently developed 'PHS Chat' website
    - Apparently the site was founded by a current or previous PHS officer
      - But no one knows who he/she is
    - Most PACs are not taking advantage of this site. Some are considering it for educational/social announcements
    - The Engineer Category has the USPHSEngineer.org website (temporarily), newsletter, Sitiescape, and the regular announcements from the Office of the Chief Engineer – please do not use the 'PHS Chat' site until we receive further guidance from OSG.

**C. Update on Website Transformation:** CDR Hilda Scharen and CDR Eric Shih:

Background – The Information Subcommittee has reviewed the information on the current engineer website to identify 'public' versus 'private' information, developed the structure of the new Commissioned Corps 'public' site, and populated it with the intended information. The CC contract wasn't reviewed – which is likely to leave much work to the PACs. The subcommittee is working with CDR Eric Shih (OCCFM) to discuss options for an EPAC 'private' site.

CDR Shih background on the potential HHS portal that is being tested:

- free for our use
- can use with HHS email address, others are possible but require an initial set-up
- allows posting and sharing documents
- subscribe to get updates on certain projects
- just started testing site

-the main worry is account management

Will need account management to:

- authorize HHS and non-HHS users
- address questions on email changes, removing users, etc.
- address password protection issues

More information is expected after the first round of testing is complete.

#### **IV. Subcommittee Reports:**

Reports were received from the following subcommittees and are available on Sitescape

- Awards
  - Nominations for the ADM Michael award is December 31<sup>st</sup>
  - Submission dates for other award are on the engineering website.
- Career Development
  - Activities are winding down for the year. Updated curriculum vitae guidance is on the website. Approximately 50 officers attended the promotion preparation call. Considering making this call an annual event. Future efforts include: guidance on advanced degrees, leadership development call series, new engineer orientation program.
- 2009 Leadership Development Seminar
  - The subcommittee will begin meeting in January.
- Public Health Engineering Practices
  - The subcommittee will have a meeting December 18, 2008. They will come up with a plan for 2009 at the January meeting.
- Recruitment and Retention
  - LCDR Dahozy will take over in Jan. Any interested can participate in the call.
  - The ARP program is still under 're-development'. Would like to have 2 AR leads per region, each to manage 20 AR's.
- Rules
  - A lingering question from the last meeting was addressed: Can members exceed 6 years in the PAC? Answer: If the member gets appointed prior to 6 years of service, the member can serve longer than 6 years.
- USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium
  - Engineering category day will be held in June in Atlanta, GA. CDR Dieser is working on a keynote speaker. The agenda will be out in January.

#### **V. Liaison Reports:**

Reports were received from the following subcommittees and are available on Sitescape

- COA

2009 Training Symposium to be held June 2009. COA is briefing Tom Daschle.

- JOAG  
JOAG Planning Meeting was held in November.

## **VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- 2009 COER

Background:

- The current COER has been in use since 1980, before that we had the "COPR".
- Changes to the COER are based on addressing grade inflation.
- The first version proposed by the contractors is very similar to the old COPR – there are concerns that changing the format will not successfully reduce grade inflation. After significant discussions and some testing, this version has been submitted, and it was approved by the ASH.

-Things to consider:

- Within the PHS most raters only rate 1 officer
- Few raters rate more than 5 officers
- Within the Military most raters rate about 15 officers
- Due to the great variability in our raters, simplicity was considered to be very important

-Bottom Line:

- The new COER is expected this fall
- Supervisor web-based training will be available to provide guidance
- Officers will be expected to provide input on their position

- Assignment Opportunities: CAPT Kardous and CDR Foy

-FDA wishes to hire a few engineers with a mechanical or electrical background for the DC area  
-Usually when a position is announced, the hiring manager gives out contact information. In this case, the hiring manager doesn't want direct involvement. Essentially, FDA is asking CDR Foy to function as an HR/hiring department.

- There was some discussion and concerns were noted as to whether this is an appropriate hiring policy; however, no decisions were made.

- Awards:

- Special Assignment Award – available to voting EPAC members after the 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 2<sup>nd</sup> term.
  - Eligible EPAC members are encouraged to provide LCDR Varsha Savalia with:
    - Copy of the appointment letter
    - List of 30 days with participation in EPAC/Subcommittee meetings

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

CAPT Neurath adjourned the meeting at 4:57 PM EST.

TAB A  
2008 EPAC Member and Guest Attendance


Rank	First	Last	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ADM	Richard	Barror	x	x	E	x	x		x	x	x	E	x	x
CAPT	David	Apanian		x	x	E	x		E	E	x	x(alt)	x	x
CAPT	Dan	Beck		x	x	x			x	x			x	
CAPT	Steven	Bosiljevac	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
LT	Bradley	Cunningham		x	x	x	x		x	x	E			x
CDR	Mary	Dahl	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	E	x
LCDR	Roger	Dahozy	x		E	x			x		x		x	x
CAPT	Bradley	Harris	x	x		x	E		x	x	x			
CDR	Charles	Hayden	x	E	x	x	E			x	x	x	x	x
CDR	Churci	Kardous	x	x	E	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
CDR	John	Longstaff	x	x	x	x	x		x	E	E	x	x	x
CAPT	James	Ludington	x		x	x			x	x(alt)	x	x	x	x
CDR	Michael	MarcAurele	x	x	x	x	x		E		E			E
Mr	Vijay	Nathan												
CAPT	Susan	Neurath	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
LCDR	Vivian	Porter							x	E	x	x	E	
LCDR	Varsha	Savalia	x	x	x	x	x			x(alt)	E	x	x	x
CDR	Hilda	Scharen	x	x	E	E	x		E	x	E	E	x	
CAPT	Adam	Scully	x	x	x	x			x			x		
CDR	James	Simpson	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	E	x	x	
CDR	Emil P.	Wang	x	x	x	x	x			E		x	x	
Dr.	Tonia	Burk	E	x	x	E	x		x	x	E		x	
CDR	Keith	Foy	x	x	x	x			x	x		x		
CAPT	Raelene	Skerda	x											
CAPT	Randy	Gardner		x					x	x				
LCDR	Jonathan	Rash	E	x	x	x	x		x		x			
CDR	Geoffrey	Wachs		x	x	x			x			E		x
LCDR	Jennifer	Caparoso		x		x			x		x	x	x	
CDR	Ed	Dieser		x		x			x			x	x	x
	Nazmul	Hassan		x										
LTJG	Kim	Love		x	x	x	x			x		x		x
LCDR	David	Mazorra		x										
CDR	Jamie	Natour	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
CAPT	Kathleen	Downs					x							
LCDR	Thomas	Pryor					x							
LCDR	Jennifer	Proctor							E	x			x	x
LCDR	Steven	Sauer							x	x				
LCDR	Nathan	Epling							x	x				
LT	Jill	Hammond								x			x	x
CDR	Peter	Nachod								x	x			x
CDR	Carol	Rogers									x			
LCDR	Kurt	Kesteloot									x			
LCDR	Alex	Dailey												
	Jay	Crowley											x	
LTJG	Quynh Nhu	Nguyen								x	E	x		x

2008 December EPAC Minutes

CDR	Ed	Cayous	x
CDR	Eric	Shih	x
CDR	Paul	Ritz	x


**VIII. AUTHORIZATION**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Tonia Burk  
EPAC, Recorder

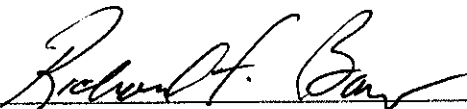
1/22/09  
Date

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CAPT Susan Neurath, PE  
EPAC, Chair

1/22/09  
Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RADM Rick Barror, PE  
Chief Engineer, USPHS

1-22-09  
Date