

## MICHIGAN SMALL HARBORS COALITION

Minutes of Meeting May 12, 2009

Soaring Eagle Casino, Mt. Pleasant, Mi.

Summary of Decisions: At this meeting the attendees decided the following:

- 1) The Coalition retains the term “Small” in its identity and reflects that we represent the interest of all Federally Authorized Harbors except the 13 Great Lakes Port Authorities. The latter are represented by the American Great Lakes Ports Association—Steven Fisher, Executive Director.
- 2) The Coalition will officially become a member of the Realize America’s Maritime Promise (RAMP), and thereby join their effort to “firewall the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund” and to use the full annual tax revenue of the fund as the budget to maintain all authorized harbors.
- 3) The Coalition will reach out to all authorized harbors of the Great Lakes (except Port Authorities as notes earlier) and, henceforth, become the “Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition (GLSHC)”.
- 4) The Coalition has reached a point in its growth and mission where a more formal structure is needed. The essence of that structure would be for the GLSHC to formally become a sub-structure to the Great Lakes Commission (GLC). The GLC would officially be the Secretariat to the GLSHC (GLC does this for a number of other Great Lakes organizations). The GLSHC would adopt a governance framework outlining a Board of Directors, voting membership, determination of supporting dues, pursuit of supporting grants, sub-committees to execute Board directives, etc. The attendees supported this action, but requested a copy of the proposed framework in order to review more thoroughly and to offer any changes and support. Therefore, a copy of the draft framework is attached and all delegates of authorized harbor communities having signed Resolutions of Support are requested to respond with comment and support by June 12, 2009.
- 5) A subsequent press release (copy attached) reflecting the decisions reached on items 1, 2, and 3 above was sent out on May 20, 2009 to the national press services for use in the Great Lakes states. All members of the GLSHC are encouraged to also contact their local newspapers to encourage spreading the news throughout our harbor communities.

The following is the more detailed minutes of the May 12th meeting:

Welcome & Introductions: Chuck opened the meeting by thanking the approximately 60 people in attendance for making room on their calendars and for showing support for the mission of the Coalition. He acknowledged representatives from Senators Levin and Stabenow; Wayne Schloop (Detroit) and Keith Jones (Buffalo) of the USACE; Steve Fisher, Executive Director of the American Great Lakes Port Authority; Tim Frame and Daniel Hoepf from Michigan City Indiana Port Authority; Ken Alvey of the Lake Erie Ohio Marine Trades Association; and Bill Boik and Paul Peterson of the Michigan DNR. Further, Chuck recognized and thanked the individual members of the Coalition’s Technical and Leadership Teams who have been so instrumental in helping the Coalition achieve its success to date.

After introductions of the balance of attendees, Chuck took a few minutes to define the various other organizations that the Coalition is cooperating with in our mission to achieve equitable, sustainable, and needs based budgeting for our harbors. These organizations are the Lake Carriers Association (James Weakley), Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (James Weakley), Realize America’s Maritime Promise

(RAMP – Barry Holiday), and American Great Lakes Port Association (Steve Fisher)—further information on each of these organizations is contained on the accompanying powerpoint presentations.

Status of the Coalition: Chuck reviewed the Coalition’s Vision and Mission Statements to help ensure everyone had an equal understanding of our foundation documents. He shared various powerpoints highlighting that 1) 74% of Michigan’s authorized harbors are now members and represent counties of over 1.5 million citizens; 2) 15 harbor communities (out of 57) have not yet joined the Coalition; 3) a number of positive actions and results had taken place since our last meeting in January, 2009—topped off by an agreement with Lakes Carriers Association, RAMP, Great Lakes Commission, and MSHC on a joint letter to the Administration’s Office of Management and Budget. This letter will petition for the use of the annual tax collected by the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to be used as the proposed budget for maintaining all authorized harbors (approximately double the present budget). Further, a total of \$45 million in Michigan harbor funding has been authorized in the past few weeks from the 2009 Operations and Maintenance Budget (\$20 million), 2009 Omnibus Bill (\$6.1 million), and the Economic Stimulus Bill (\$18.9 million).

Overview of Issues: Putting the Coalition’s progress in perspective, Chuck stated that we are absolutely moving forward and gaining momentum in our stated mission. He warned, however, that we have no reason to become complacent since we still rely on “earmarks” which are under attack from all corners and not to be relied upon beyond this year (2009). Therefore, we must expand our collective voice in partnership with the Lake Carriers Association, RAMP, the Great Lakes Commission, and all of the other harbors of the Great Lakes. Further, we need to establish a more permanent Coalition structure to support our mission, formalize our reliance on the Great Lakes Commission as our Secretariat, decide on member dues, pursue sustaining grants, increase the publicity for the Coalition, become much more active in USACOE stakeholder meetings, and raise the voice for the Coalition to millions of citizens and their elected Senators and Representatives.

Update by USACOE: Wayne Schloop (Detroit District) presented a recap of the funds approved in 2009 for Michigan harbors (\$45 million) and the specific harbor projects supported by the three pieces of budget (2009 Operations and Maintenance Budget, 2009 Omnibus Bill, and the Economic Stimulus Bill). Wayne again explained the present funding process by the Administration and Congress. He further shared concerns about the reduced number of contractors available in the Great Lakes over the past decade or so (due to low funding) and the tight timing to have contracts for dredging and infrastructure in place by the end of July. Wayne then closed his time by answering a number of questions from the attendees.

USACOE Buffalo District: Wayne introduced Keith Jones, Engineer from the Buffalo District. Keith provided a brief overview of the projects facing the Buffalo District. He congratulated the Coalition on its progress to date, supported the Coalition’s reach out to the rest of Great Lakes harbors, and offered to help us make contact with the stakeholders in the Buffalo District. Keith’s appearance was very timely and welcome, particularly given the discussion later in the meeting on expanding the Coalition Great Lakes wide.

American Great Lakes Ports Association: Steve Fisher, Executive Director of the American Great Lakes Ports Association shared his organization’s role in supporting its members—the 13 port Authorities on the American side of the Great Lakes. Steve briefly explained the common and unique issues faced by his member Port Authorities, the patience required to work within the federal system, and the belief that finding common ground and coalition building are fundamental to success in making our

government system work. He congratulated us for our efforts in building such a coalition among not only the Michigan harbors, but by reaching out to the rest of the Great Lakes harbors, to the Lakes Carriers, RAMP, USACOE, and Congress. He indicated a strong interest in working with us and encouraged the Coalition to become more active in building alliances and support at the state government level. Steve's presence and support for the Coalition were greatly appreciated.

Status of Federal Funding: Brandon Fewins (Senator Stabenow) and Dusty Houser (Senator Levin) again reflected both Senators' support for the Coalition and its mission. They spoke of the recent good news regarding funding for 2009. They shared that, while this funding definitely is significant for our harbors, the underlying process of "earmarks" is under increased pressure to be eliminated or at least minimized as early as 2010 Appropriations. They indicated support for the Coalition's approach to firewall the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, petition the Administration to use the tax receipts into the HMTF as the annual Operation and Maintenance budget for all authorized harbors, and to continue building partnerships with the Lake Carriers, RAMP, American Great Lakes Port Association, and harbors throughout the Great Lakes in order to accomplish this mission.

Who Does MSHC Represent? Jen Read led a brief discussion regarding who the Coalition represents and whether we should retain the term "Small" in our Coalition name. It was agreed that the Coalition represents all authorized federal harbors, with the exception of the 13 Port Authorities (eg. large harbors) represented by Steve Fisher and the American Great Lakes Ports Association. In comparison, the rest of our harbors, whether termed commercial or shallow draft, should be appropriately referred to as "small harbors." Further, since the Coalition was originally founded to support shallow draft harbors that had no collective voice, we should continue with the term "small harbors."

Should the Coalition Join RAMP? Chuck May and Dave Knight reminded everyone that at the prior meeting in January, the attendees authorized contact with Barry Holiday to determine the appropriateness of the Coalition joining RAMP. Chuck outlined that RAMP is an acronym for the national organization Realize America's Maritime Promise, is headed by Barry Holiday, and its mission is to seek a legislative fix to the maintenance dredging crisis facing the nation's ports, harbors, and waterways. RAMP, with its over 150 members, seeks to accomplish this legislative fix by having the taxes collected under the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund used for their original intended purpose-- maintenance dredging of our nation's ports and harbors. Chuck and Dave indicated that RAMP is very supportive of having the Coalition become a member and would very much welcome such a grassroots, citizen driven organization to join voices with them in this mutual cause. Dave shared his knowledge of Barry Holiday, and joined with Chuck in recommending the Coalition join as a member of RAMP. After a brief discussion and agreement not to list the individual members of the Coalition, the attendees gave unanimous support to joining RAMP. Dave and Chuck will notify RAMP in writing of this decision. (Subsequent letter dated May 26, 2009 was forwarded to Barry Holiday.)

MSHC Becoming Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition? Dave Knight led the discussion regarding expanding the Coalition to include all authorized harbors throughout the Great Lakes. This was a follow-up to a discussion of this proposal at our last meeting on January 27, 2009. The proposal centered on the fact that the harbors throughout all the Great Lakes are facing the same issues as those in Michigan, have the need for a unifying voice, and all would gain strength from a greater number of harbors, citizens, and related Senators and Representatives working together to succeed in the mission—an equitable, sustainable, needs based budget process. After discussion, attendees unanimously approved reaching out to all Great Lakes authorized harbors and to, effectively immediately, change from Michigan Small Harbors Coalition to the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition (GLSHC).

Coalition Structure: Dave Knight led the discussion for the need of the Coalition to have some structural framework in order to sustain growth and to have greater opportunities for grants that could help finance our mission. Dave presented a governance framework that would not require costly and time consuming application as a stand along 501-C3, but rather would be a formal entity under the Great Lakes Commission (Secretariat). The Great Lakes Commission has provided this “umbrella” structure for a number of other organizations with missions centering on the Great Lakes. Dave proposed a framework covering a GLSHC Board of Directors (election, duties, responsibilities, etc., voting and associate memberships, meetings, etc. After discussion, the attendees indicated support for the proposed structural concept, but requested a copy of the proposal be provided to all attendees and members not present for further study. In support of this decision, the powerpoints containing the draft governance framework are attached. All attendees of the May 12 meeting and all harbor communities and advocate organizations that are members (signed Resolutions of Support) will be invited in a separate email to review the draft framework and to provide their vote of support and/or proposed changes to Dave Knight ([dknight@glc.org](mailto:dknight@glc.org)).

Press Release: Subsequent to the meeting, a press release was issued on May 20 to the news services covering the Great Lakes Region. That release was then sent to all the GLSHC email list, with a request that it be provided to their local newspapers.

Next Meeting: MARK YOUR CALENDAR. The next meeting of the GLSHC is expected to be held in September, 2009 and to include new contacts/members Great Lakes wide. The date and location will be firmed based on the progress with other Great Lakes harbors and the evolving issues we need to address in such a meeting.

Thanks to all that attended the meeting and a special thanks to Steve Fisher and Keith Jones for their time and for traveling considerable distance to support us.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck May, Chair Pro Tem  
Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition