U.S. Coast Guard District Formal Investigation Team

Small Passenger Vessel SPIRIT OF NORFOLK

27 January through 3 February

I ask those in attendance to please silence cell phones at this time and please exit the hearing room to make or receive phone calls.

For those interested, my opening statement from the first day of this hearing is posted on the livestream and Coast Guard external affairs web site which provides an expanded explanation of this hearing for the benefit of the public.

My name is Commander Randy Waddington, United States Coast Guard, Chief of the Analysis and Compliance Division located at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

 I am the Lead Investigating Officer for this District 5 Formal Investigation and the presiding officer over these proceedings.

The Fifth District Commander has convened this investigation under the authority of Title 46, United States Code, Section 6301 and Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations Part 4.

Our purpose is to investigate the circumstances surrounding the fire and subsequent total constructive loss of the small passenger vessel SPIRIT OF NORFOLK on June 7, 2022, while transiting the Elizabeth River near the Norfolk Navy Base in Norfolk, Virginia.

The investigation will determine as closely as possible the circumstances and factors that contributed to the incident so that proper recommendations for the prevention of similar casualties.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is also participating in this hearing. Mr. Michael Karr is the Investigator in Charge for the NTSB’s SPIRIT OF NORFOLK investigation and he is here with us today.