

Friends of Casco Bay Community Engagement Committee meeting minutes

Monday, March 2, 2020, 5-6:30 PM

Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Second floor conference room, Portland, ME

In attendance

Board: Sandy Marsters (Committee Chair), Steve Bushey, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, David Kauffman, Seb Milardo, Malcolm Poole, Joan Samuelson, Jack Thomas

Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Will Everitt, Sarah Lyman

Operating Plan and Budget Workshop, Monday, March 9, 3:30-7:30, GMRI

The FY21 Operating Plan and Budget is out to Board and Staff for feedback ahead of the Operating Plan and Budget Workshop. Malcolm noted that the plan is shorter than last year. Cathy hopes all Board and Staff will attend and reminds everyone to RSVP. The workshop will start with a financial primer, move right through the plan as efficiently as the group allows, and, hopefully, spend more time on budget than in previous years. The budget looks different this year. There are places in the budget, such as the campaign expenses and additional monitoring station equipment, where money comes in and then will be spent, going right back out the door. This inflates the budget total. Cathy created a new way of looking at the budget to help clearly identify these unusual expenses.

Our four spendable funds are important, and the budget proposes using over \$400k from these funds. Spendable funds work well for us; when fundraising on top of annual operating costs, raising money for visible, tangible items is easier, and when we raise more than the direct costs, it offsets our budget for years.

Upcoming events

- Thank you to Sandy and Seb for covering the family friendly **Eco-celebration, Jewish Community Alliance of So. Maine**, on Sunday, February 9, 3-5 pm in Portland. This is the first time we have taken part in this family-focused event. Most of the children were under 6 years of age. The audience was not a great match for our activities and message, though Sandy and Seb did have a handful of folks interested in volunteering. Sarah followed up with them. Because of the audience, this is the wrong event for us. We will continue blunt/candid assessments of event opportunities. Board members suggested that it is important to have a very high standard for using Staff time on outside events, and instead allow Board and Volunteers to cover events that seem worth it. The visibility can add up and is a good practice for Board Members. The Maine Boat Builder's Show is another event that we were invited to take part in. We may do this in the future, if there is a clear use for us organizationally, and it is a 3-day commitment, so we'll weigh it carefully.
- **Green Neighbor Family Fest**, Saturday, April 25, 8:30-12:30 am, Deering High School (after Urban Runoff 5K) Thank you to Pat for volunteering for this event. Steve will also come by. An additional Board Member would be helpful; if interested, please let Sarah Lyman know (slyman@casco bay.org)
- **Sustainability Fair at IDEXX**, Wednesday, June 3, noon to 3pm, IDEXX, Westbrook, ME Thank you to Pat for volunteering for this event. A second Board Member could be used for this event. If interested, please let Sarah Lyman know (slyman@casco bay.org)
- **Cleanups and Storm drain stenciling**: The following groups are scheduling coastal cleanups and stenciling events: Allagash Brewing Company and Luke's Lobster, Covetrus (Stenciling and Cleanup), Woodard & Curran, Maine Camp Experience, with more inquiries that have not settled on a date. In the future, we may consider hosting or collaborating on an art-based Storm Drain Stenciling event.

Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund campaign update

Of the \$1.5 million goal, we have raised about \$1,139,000. Fundraising slow while we complete the Operation Plan and Budget. Now it is ramping back up with new upcoming donor meetings. Cathy and Will will continue meeting with donors through and even past the public launch of the campaign. They met with Adam Baske, from whom we expect a campaign gift before the public launch. In addition, Adam will be encouraging an annual operating gift from his company, Running Tide, an aquaculture company. We met with the Holbrook Foundation, a community organization, not a funding foundation, that bought and refurbished the Cundy's Harbor wharf we are considering for our Harpswell Continuous Monitoring Station. Many on their board are Friends of Casco Bay members and many attended the meeting. Nancy West and Geoff Feiss, two such people, are amazingly supportive. Everyone in attendance was excited about the prospect of having the station there, and they want to do what they can to ensure it ends up there. It looks like a great location that will work at all tides, and we will also have easy access by boat or truck. We will consider a celebratory event after the station goes in the water there.

Will solicited opinions about swapping one of the photos in the Case Statement for a photo of the eastern end of the Bay for the upcoming reprint planned for the Public Launch. We will be printing 7,500 copies of the document for the mailing, on lighter weight stock to cut back on mailing costs. Opinions varied greatly, but the group seemed to land on leaving the dynamic image of Portland and South Portland and swapping a different image for one of a captivating image of the eastern part of the Bay. We will also consider changes for the website version of the case statement.

For future documents, we will consider educational images that share the impact of runoff on the Bay, and we will be sure to consider all areas of the Bay. We will try to get Kevin Morris up in a flight to capture the brown plume after a major rain event.

30th Anniversary Event, Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 4:45-8 pm, Ocean Gateway

Testimonials Thank you to those who helped track down testimonials. They are amazing quotes. Staff will be cautious about length. This week, Staff will send out quote confirmation emails, including the image and excerpt to those that provided the testimonials. These will be a part of the 30th slideshow at the event and included on the website.

Timeline Mary created a comprehensive list of the organization's accomplishments over 30 years, and then worked with Sara Biron to find images for each. Sarah Lyman then laid it out on the website. It is going through final revisions and will be shared soon. Board Members at the meeting got to see a preview. This timeline will live on our website. We'll be adapting the highlights for signage and the slideshow at the Anniversary event. Staff will add a forward-looking section to the timeline as well. There may be other images to consider, such as Casco Bay Lines and Eimskip.

Preparing for the Unexpected

Moving the Office

Cathy had a very short meeting with the current President of Southern Maine Community College, our landlord; he gave us notice that they would like us out of the building within 18 months, ideally less, because they have plans for the building. In an ideal world, they would have us out this summer, but Cathy negotiated more time.

A building at 408 Broadway, South Portland, a mile closer to the bridge, is available for lease. Cathy, Malcolm, and Jeff Fetterer looked at the building about a year ago. The new agent reached out just before the college gave notice. Jeff, Cathy, and Malcolm are working on a letter of intent and plan to submit it this week. There are allotments in the budget for a move and increased rent. It is a simple long rectangular building with lots of parking and is just one mile from the boats. Malcolm shared that the

economics are in the ballpark (even though that means a tripling of our occupancy costs). Cathy, Jeff and Malcolm will continue to negotiate and work the numbers, and there will be a resolution proposed at the board meeting to allow them to continue the process.

Covid-19 preparedness

Cathy, as a population biologist, has been tracking numbers of Covid-19 since mid-January. We have pandemic preparation and response files on the server, thanks to preparation for the H5N1 outbreak that happened shortly after Cathy joined the staff. She has amassed a folder on our server of up-to-date preparedness guidance, including CDC guidelines for when to stay home if you or a family member have certain symptoms. It is good to prepare other ways of managing business, including working from home and remote meetings. If quarantines are issued, folks can do more work from home than a few years ago.

Cathy asked additional important questions: If we got to the point where we really are in quarantine, will we continue to issue compensation at full rates? What might be the long-term impact on the organization financially? What would we do if people are discouraged from attending public events, such as our April 29th event? Let's plan to discuss all future events, as this situation continues to develop.

Malcolm acknowledged Cathy's very methodical approach and the importance of putting the annual plan together, and things always change. The organization plans economically for staff for 12 months and people on the team should feel secure for 12 months, no matter what comes up within this time frame.

It is good to prepare, even if that thing you worry about never has an impact, because it still helps prepare for other unknown events.

Bud shared that his prediction is that this is going to be another virus that we are going to be testing for and treating, as part of the mosaic of colds and flus. His expectation is that infected folks will be asked to stay home and recover.