

**Friends of Casco Bay
Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 19, 2021, online via Zoom**

Board: Board President Sandy Marsters, Steve Bushey, Mark Green, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, Peter LeBourdais, Althea Bennett McGirr, Seb Milardo, Tollef Olson, Malcolm Poole, Joan Samuelson, Ann Thayer, Lori Thayer, Jack Thomas

Staff: Sara Biron, Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Sarah Lyman, Cathy Ramsdell

Welcome, *Sandy Marsters, President*

Sandy welcomed everyone. He congratulated staff and board members for crossing the finish line on our Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund; we reached the goal on January 6, 2021.

Board Consent Package: *Action Item*

Motion: The minutes and financials were accepted as presented: PASSED.

Resolution to Consider: Round 2 of SBA Payroll Protection Program (PPP2) funding: *Action Items*

Cathy shared that we saw slippage in our funding in December, but we had the foresight to apply for PPP funding. It is currently sitting on our balance sheet as a loan, but will likely be forgiven. Board members asked a number of questions regarding PPP rounds 1 and 2.

Resolution 1: The Board of Directors authorizes and directs the Executive Director to apply for funds available through the second round of Payroll Protection Program (PPP2) funding, according to the rules established by the Small Business Administration. The estimated value of this application will likely be in the neighborhood of \$100,000.

The resolution was adopted as written.

Resolution 2: In the interest of assuring our March 31, 2021 year end operating income results reflect our real condition and acknowledge the use of the Small Business Administration Payroll Protection Program (SBA PPP1) funding, the Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to draw up to \$130,600 from the Unrestricted Undesignated Net Assets account at Key Bank, to be applied to the FY21 operating income statement, to offset a projected operating deficit on March 31, 2021. The total of the SBA PPP1 loan advance is \$130,600, and the anticipated operating deficit at January 19 is projected to be more than \$80,000. The application of undesignated unrestricted funds is in anticipation of SBA PPP1 loan forgiveness of the \$130,600 at a date expected to be after March 31, 2021. With forgiveness of the loan, the funds drawn from the unrestricted undesignated account will be returned.

The resolution was adopted as written.

Jack and Cathy clarified that the funds will not be used to fund depreciation. Bud thanked Cathy, Jack, and Malcolm, for leading us through financially unstable times.

Community Engagement Committee *Seb Milardo, Chair of Community Engagement Committee*

We had an energetic CEC meeting in December. The major topic for the meeting was an exploration of ideas to celebrate crossing the finish line on the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund. We need to thank and honor the donors once the equipment is in the water. This is significant—having three Continuous Monitoring Stations around the Bay. We want to bring donors, partners, and community leaders out to the sites. The point is not about the funds received, but what those mean for our work, the data and what they will provide. Staff will report back on how we may use some of these ideas to celebrate reaching our goal.

Talking about Illicit Discharges *Malcolm Poole*

A group of Board and Staff met on December 14, and the board package has a memo of highlights from that meeting. The board is instructing the staff to look at pumpout operations as part of something bigger in the operating plan: look at illicit discharges at all levels around the Bay. The Pumpout Boat provides us with a lot of visibility and Cathy and staff will come back to us about re-starting the program when the time is right. Cathy suggested that at the next strategic planning session we consider deeper questions about pumpout boat operations.

Baykeeper Update *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca*

Ivy updated the Board about the MS4 permit. There were important provisions that are required by the Clean Water Act that were left out of the state's MS4 [Municipal Storm Sewer System] final permit (even though they were in the final draft). We appealed through the Board of Environmental Protection, and the federal Environmental Protection Agency supported our appeal. The BEP will issue a ruling 30 days after a 30-day comment period. It is possible that the BEP will remand the permit back to the DEP to fix the provisions. Ivy shared that many municipalities know that our appeal is legal, but they would prefer to not have to meet the terms. On January 22, comments are due. CLF will write comments in support of us. DEP has never addressed why the provisions were left out even though they had been included in the final draft. Ivy couldn't guarantee a result but feels good about the appeal given the EPA's support of our appeal.

Ivy updated everyone on our work on the Maine Climate Council's Coastal and Marine Working Group. We made a big push for updating our laws with regard to climate change. We cannot adapt to climate change unless our laws are more adaptable. The Governor will submit a bill to require that sea level rise planning is considered in our laws. Ivy asked if they would broaden that bill to include more climate change factors than just sea level rise. This will be a big focus of our work this year. Representative Lydia Blume submitted a companion bill. The bills, combined, will focus on changing our land use laws and our stormwater laws. These laws, if passed, will help us adapt to changes looming; this is cutting edge policy work.

Ivy gave the board a heads up about off shore wind projects. The state intends to apply for an experimental wind farm lease in the Gulf of Maine. This would be the first floating wind farm in the nation. It will be a research array. We need to support development and transition to clean renewable energy and we cannot support decisions to harm our marine environment and so must work to minimize that. We will be looking at many issues around this proposal. The location will likely be in southern Maine, somewhere between Casco Bay and Wiscasset, 15-20 miles off shore. One connection point that is possible is Wyman Station on Cousins Island, and another is Wiscasset (Maine Yankee). It will likely take five years to go through permitting. Bud encouraged Ivy to share educational materials with him and the board. We have a lot to learn as we look at this issue. Ivy will share information and webinars as they become available. Cathy shared that as an environmental community we have not done a good job at figuring out tradeoffs that we will need to make to make various moves to renewable energy. We have an important role to play in this.

What We Do to Assure Data Quality *Staff Scientists Mike Doan*

Mike shared his excitement about how we ensure that we have the highest quality data possible. Our Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) ensures we are collecting data that reflect actual conditions in the Bay. The QAPP allows us – and others – to be confident in the data.

To assure data quality, we stick to the three C's: cleaning, calibration, and checking. Calibration and cleaning happen before deployment of our equipment in the water, and then we check the equipment after deployment.

Our Continuous Monitoring Station has two pieces of equipment: a YSI data sonde and a pCO₂ sensor.

For our sondes, calibration involves having our sensors measure known reference solutions. When calibrating pH, for example, we use buffer solutions of 2 and 10, known reference points of pH levels we see in the Bay to measure against.

We keep track of calibration levels to track how the sensors are doing over the course of their lives to see when they may be going bad. Calibration may last 6-8 weeks but we recalibrate every 2-3 weeks. When we take them out of the water, we check the calibration to see what the drift has been over that time. We keep good records of these calibrations.

Unlike our sondes, which are calibrated every two or three weeks, the pCO₂ sensor is calibrated once a year at a lab in California.

Our equipment is under siege by seawater. Sealife builds up on our equipment and we need to take good care of it to ensure good data. Cleaning involves using q-tips, a mild detergent, air pressure, a final rinse, and lubrication.

We have an operating plan procedure that is in our Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Our QAPP is an EPA and DEP certified document. It is not easy to have a QAPP accepted by these agencies. We are always updating our QAPP to keep it up to date. We compare our practices and data to those of other organizations, agencies, and researchers. We go well beyond the standard. After we upload the data, we look closely at the data. We take water samples for lab analysis to compare to our sensors.

All of this provides confidence in high quality data.

Executive Director Update *Executive Director Cathy Ramsdell*

Cathy congratulated Ivy for her 5-year anniversary with Friends of Casco Bay!

We are deep in Operating Plan planning mode. Cathy has begun drafting the budget. We received 80 applications for the staff writer position and have invited six to 1st round interviews. We will likely invite two of the six to 2nd round interviews. We are doing interviews online but will do a socially distanced-walk as a final 3rd round interview. Cathy thanked Will for helping lead these interviews.

Cathy shared two pieces of bad news regarding people close to us. Pumpout Coordinator Jim Splude's mother passed away from COVID. He has a Go Fund Me page to support her funeral. Another partner of ours, Ed Suslovic, a former Portland City Councilor, shared that he has hairy cell leukemia.

Cathy reflected that the MS4 permit shows that we are fulfilling our watchdog roll well.

Reflection time

Sandy asked board members to share their wishes for the Bay or Friends of Casco Bay for this year.

Steve: Higher success with Portland to reduce CSO activity. The city is still dumping 200-300 million gallons into the Bay. They have a long way to go.

Ivy: The City has finished its Integrated Plan, is in the process of closing some CSOs, and will launch a webpage showing all this work. Their integrated permit will cover both their stormwater and the Portland Water District's sewer overflows.

Mark: Cooler waters in Casco Bay. Alternative energy will be key. There's no silver bullet—all alternatives have issues, but they have to be weighed against climate change and acidification.

Bud: I wish for a new, stable, permanent home for Friends of Casco Bay.

Pat: I wish we all could learn to minimize our impact.

Althea: With the new administration that we will feel more comfortable and have more support.

Seb: That we make more *Friends* for Friends of Casco Bay.

Tollef: A new level of proactivity in the ocean, grow more rockweed and seaweeds as ways to take up excess carbon dioxide.

Malcolm: As the tide of vaccines come in, that financial support comes through for us.

Ann: A free-flowing Royal River!

Lori: I wish for increased awareness about our impact on the environment. People don't listen to science, so we need to find another way to grow awareness.

Jack: First, time travel! I want to be able to chase Mike and Ivy around in my boat—with dignitaries so they get to see your work. No more Zooms! More house parties so we can share our stories!

Joanie: We haven't seen any ice in the coves! Lori took my idea of building awareness. There's a Master Gardner program, we should have something like that for the marine environment.

Peter: Last summer's tragedy brought home to people how much warmer our waters are (even though water temperatures have nothing to do with the sharks).

Sandy: Increasing our membership!