

Friends of Casco Bay
Board Meeting – Minutes
Online via Zoom
Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 4:00p.m.

In Attendance

Board: Sandy Marsters (President), Stephen Bushey, Mark Green, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, Malcolm Poole, Ann Thayer, Jack Thompson.

Staff: Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Robby Lewis-Nash, Sarah Lyman, Cathy Ramsdell

Welcome – President Sandy Marsters

Sandy began the meeting at 4:02p.m., acknowledging the news that Cathy has announced her retirement. Sandy noted that there will be upcoming board events this summer and he will keep board members updated and informed via email.

Board Consent Package (minutes) Action Item

Motion by Jack, seconded by Pat, to accept the minutes as presented: PASSED.

Reminder: Water Reporter Trainings – Sandy Marsters

Sandy reminded board members that there are two Water Reporter trainings for new Water Reporters next week, [June 28](#) and [June 29](#).

Transitions and Reactions – Executive Director Cathy Ramsdell

Cathy shared that it has been a substantial process to roll out the announcement of her retirement. She shared how this is a good timing for her, personally, to retire, and great timing for the organization, as we are stronger than ever, staff-wise, balance-sheet-wise, and visibility-wise.

Cathy, Will, and Sandy have been calling key partners to tell them the news. Cathy reflected that the conversations she is having with key partners this week may be her most important work as she leaves the organization. Heading into July and August, Cathy will be delegating her responsibilities to staff members. Cathy said that Will is going to take over decision making responsibilities as she phases out of her leadership.

Cathy shared that she has become more ecstatic about her retirement as she has realized that this is an ideal moment for her to leave. Our organization is in a very strong place and ready to consider who we would like our leader to be in the future. Cathy encouraged the board and staff to think big and creatively throughout the transition. She hopes that the board and staff have dynamic conversations about what we need next in an executive director. Cathy said that she will be available to offer her expertise and opinion in the coming weeks, adding that the staff is handling the transition very well and that our program work has never been stronger. Speaking with partners in the community, Cathy has been reminded that so many of our partners hold us and our work in very high esteem.

Cathy shared that Will is making arrangements for her retirement party on August 26, from 5-7 p.m. at Portland Yacht Services, and that there will be a final reception at Jack's house on September 2, where Sandy will officially relieve Cathy of all duties and responsibilities as Executive Director.

Cathy shared that we will host our annual meeting online on July 20, at 5:30.

Sandy invited anyone to share their reflections on Cathy's retirement.

Malcolm saluted Cathy, sharing that they had talked about her retirement for years. He thinks the transition will roll out well for Cathy and our organization. He wished her the best for the future.

Bud shared that he has participated in more transitions in his life than he can recall, and that Cathy is handling this transition with much grace. Cathy's service to our organization and timing of her retirement is a complete win for everyone, including Cathy.

Pat echoed Bud's comments, saying she could not have put it better herself. She wished Cathy the best for the future.

Jack said that Cathy prepared us well for this transition. Our staff is more than capable to pick up the slack in the interim, and the board believes that Cathy and the staff will make this transition go smoothly. Jack wished for the wind to be at Cathy's back, that she encounter no wrinkles in her chart, and that she have a great voyage ahead.

Althea shared that it has been an incredible experience to work with and know Cathy for the past 19 years. She gave Cathy her love, and expressed her deepest thanks.

Will shared that he feels incredibly lucky to have worked with Cathy, and thanked her for her leadership and mentorship over the past 16 years. Will said that Cathy is the best executive director he has ever worked with and appreciates her commitment to the mission, sound ethics, and conducting our work with common decency. Will thanked Cathy for her work and wished her the best. Cathy, in turn, thanked Will for his and the staff's efforts to ease this transition.

Sarah offered her congratulations, and thanked Cathy for her thoughtfulness in the timing of this transition, noting that Cathy was here to finish our capital campaign, bring Robby on board, and leave us when our organization is in great condition. Sarah wished Cathy the best moving forward.

Steve thanked Cathy and added that lines of communication between the board and staff should be well maintained. He knows that Cathy has been that line of communication and wants it to remain strong.

Ivy shared she deeply appreciates Cathy's leadership in the pandemic. When so many other Waterkeeper organizations felt that they had to put their staff on part-time, Ivy knew that Cathy's sound leadership would keep us afloat. With Cathy's leadership, we successfully navigated untested and unknown dynamics.

Mike shared that it is easy to take for granted how well this organization is run. Mike thanked Cathy for her two decades of leadership, and shared that he cannot imagine where we would be now without her. Cathy responded that our current work is the best legacy she could ask for.

Robby thanked Cathy for her leadership, noting that while her retirement caught him off guard, it truly is an ideal time for her to leave as our organization is in such good condition.

Sandy said that very little happens by accident at Friends of Casco Bay. Cathy has been so careful and methodical – even graceful, as Bud said – and that it has been such a pleasure to work with Cathy. Sandy thanked her for all she has done.

Cathy shared that her recent calls with donors and partners have reflected the quality of the relationships we have cultivated over the years. They are honored to be on the short-list of people to be notified of Cathy's

retirement, which speaks to the importance of connecting over conversation. Cathy noted that Will has been integral to maintaining and enhancing these strong relationships with our donors. Many donors and partners believe our organization is vitally important to the community, and Cathy holds that this only happens when we work on these relationships; we really are about reaching out to the community and it shows. Cathy expressed her gratitude for everyone's thanks, and shared that she felt very seen in that moment. Working with this organization has been very fulfilling, and Cathy feels that she has made a difference.

Sandy said Cathy's comment that she has made a difference is the understatement of the evening.

Baykeeping – *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca*

Ivy shared some exciting news regarding two Beekeeping victories.

Ivy said that our top legislative priority this year was to shape and pass the sea level rise resolve, in part because we have heard from municipalities that they need the state's laws and guidelines to be revised first, to inform local action on climate change and in part because we need the state laws to project forward. The resolve was passed last week, and Ivy noted that it was passed by the house on World Ocean Day. The resolve now directs state agencies to adopt uniform sea level rise projections. They will also have to account for increasing stormwater loads, which is good news because stormwater is a major threat to the health of Casco Bay. The stakeholder process to draft and implement these changes will begin this summer and we will be very involved. Ivy shared that this was a very satisfying victory, additionally noting the resolve's broad support.

Ivy shared that the second Baykeeping victory was the Board of Environmental Protection's (BEP) hearing on the appeal of the MS4 permit. Ivy argued the appeal in front of the BEP last week and their decision came down yesterday. The BEP's decision is favorable to us, but the path forward will be complicated. The actions we wanted added back into the permit included including provisions for already impaired waterways and requiring best practices for low impact development. These were both included in the order, which remanded the permit back to the Department while directing DEP to reinsert those terms back into the permit. At the hearing the BEP was very concerned about how hard it would be for municipalities to draft ordinances that would require low impact development, which was one of the most important points for us to get back into the permit. Ivy was able to prevent the BEP from removing that requirement from the order. The BEP ultimately ruled in our favor.

There is a 30-day appeal period, during which time the BEP decision can be appealed to the Superior Court. Then, if no one appeals, DEP will revise the MS4 permit consistent with the BEP Order. It will then go out for a 30-day comment period, and then be made final again. We have made some good changes to the permit that will benefit water quality, and we did very well in this round of the appeal.

Sandy asked about the nuanced, behind-the-scenes efforts that went into the success of this appeal, and Ivy provided some detail.

Sandy asked where the MS4 process would be if we had not been involved. Ivy responded that no one would be working on this. That reality is frustrating, and highlights the importance of our work.

Malcolm said this is great work, and thanked Ivy. Ivy thanked Malcolm for his support. Bud echoed Malcolm, noting the importance for us to be involved and commended Ivy's excellent work. Ivy said that we will be able to celebrate a full victory at some point, but that this is a process which will continue to evolve.

Sandy thanked Ivy for her patience and tenacity throughout this process.

Casco Bay Matters event debrief

Malcolm shared that he cannot wait for us to do events in person again, noting that two-dimensional meetings are not the same. Steve enjoyed the presentation of the data, sharing that he “just eats that stuff up.” Bud said he thought the event went really well. In the new normal of meeting virtually, we have done a good job of debriefing events and using that feedback to improve our next event. Bud agreed that the data was riveting, adding that everyone who spoke was well connected to it. Sandy thought it was a very professional event, noting that everyone seems to become more natural with each successive event.

Sandy thanked the board, staff, and Cathy once more.

Bud shared that he is very proud to be on the board of our organization. It is a very special organization to be involved with.

Malcolm shared, “whoever thought keeping stuff out of the Bay would be so much fun.”

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 4:47 p.m.