

Friends of Casco Bay
Board Meeting – Minutes
Online via Zoom
Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 5:30 p.m.

In Attendance

Board: Sandy Marsters (President), Steve Bushey, Deb Debiegun, Howard Gray (board nominee), Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Peter LeBourdais, Malcolm Poole, Joan Samuelson, Jack Thomas, Lori Thayer

Staff: Sara Biron, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Robby Lewis-Nash

Guest: Glenn Page

Welcome – President Sandy Marsters

Sandy began the meeting at 5:32 p.m., opening with a welcome to Howard Gray and Glenn Page. Sandy shared a Minute for the Bay, saying that the water is quiet these days and the mooring fields are emptying as activity winds down in anticipation of winter.

Board Nomination, Howard Gray – President Sandy Marsters

Sandy shared that he is thrilled to nominate Howard Gray to our board. Howard's experience with the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and Acadia Center, financial background, and forward thinking mindset make him a great candidate for our board. The board and staff introduced themselves to Howard, each naming where they live and why they are a part of our work at Friends of Casco Bay.

The board voted in favor of electing Howard Gray to the board of Friends of Casco Bay.

Action Item: Board Consent Package (minutes and financials)

Bud moved and Jack seconded, to accept the consent agenda as presented. *PASSED*

Malcolm commented that the Payroll Protection Plan grants have helped us a great deal, and that we should be aware of this financial support from the government.

Executive Director Search Committee Update – Committee Chair Seb Milardo

Seb said that he, Sandy, Joanie, Mark, and Bud are serving on the Executive Director Search Committee. So far, all staff and board members have been involved in the search process, where Seb and Sandy have held meetings with both groups to brainstorm and define the desired characteristics of the next Executive Director. The notes from these meetings are included in the materials for tonight's board meeting. Seb said the meetings with staff and board members had very similar outcomes, so in a sense both groups arrived at an unintentional consensus.

Seb shared that the Search Committee then worked with staff to draft a job description, which has been posted to our website and multiple job boards. Seb said we will continue to look for other people and organizations who can share the posting with their networks. Seb implored all board members to help with this effort by spreading the word and passing along the job description to potential candidates and relevant parties. Will clarified that we should point people to the job posting on our website, as opposed to directing them to the job boards.

Howard asked Seb to clarify if the next Executive Director should have some balance between administrative and scientific expertise. Seb replied that we are primarily looking for a leader, and that the next Executive Director does not need to have a science background. Seb said that being environmentally savvy and aware are important characteristics for all candidates, but that neither are deciding factors. Pat asked Seb why we are not posting on Indeed.com, and Seb clarified that the format of that platform does not accept writing samples which we are requiring.

Interim Director Update – *Interim Director Will Everitt*

Will shared that he met with Joe Cassidy, President of Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), and that we now have until June of 2023 to find a new office space. Will and Joe also discussed creating an SMCC-specific internship at Friends of Casco Bay. Heading into the fall, Will noted that half of our annual giving (from individuals and foundations) usually comes in November, December, and January. Will also noted that our budget accounted for expenses that we do not have, such as moving offices and hiring a science assistant.

Will said he hopes to pick up signed Annual Fund letters from board members this week. Will announced that we received a grant from the Waterkeeper Alliance to train a staff member to become a licensed drone operator, and to purchase a drone for our organization. Will shared that he and Ivy met with leadership at the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, and that we are looking forward to future collaborations that strengthen both of our organizations. Lastly, Will shared that the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice Workshop Planning Committee held its first meeting. The committee is planning to hire an outside facilitator and will hold the workshop for staff and board members sometime in January.

Ivy commented that our future use of a drone has many potential applications, such as helping us to monitor and assess oil spills, algal blooms, coastal erosion, and other phenomena. Will clarified that having a Federal Aviation Administration licensed drone operator will also enable us to use the drone in more places. Joanie shared that Kevin Morris has some experience operating drones, and that she could put us in touch with Kevin or another person who could share some drone photography expertise.

Sandy and Joanie reflected on the good news that our deadline to move out of our SMCC offices has been pushed back. They both encouraged the board and staff to continue to look for office space, knowing that we still have to move out eventually.

Baykeeping Update – *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca*

Ivy debriefed the board on the field work she and Mike conducted this summer. Ivy said this summer was different because other staff members often joined them in the field and that board members began accompanying them as well (both Seb and Sandy joined them for a seasonal sampling day). Ivy explained that our field work occurred in three week rotations. Every three weeks Mike and Ivy spent two days in the field for seasonal sampling, one day by land and one day by sea. Another week, Mike would spend a day swapping out our Continuous Monitoring Stations, and another week one day would be used to visit locations around the Bay that we do not visit often or to meet up with Water Reporters. Ivy said she and Mike are considering altering the schedule next year, where they would conduct their seasonal sampling work by going to the eastern side of the Bay one day and the Western side of the Bay on another. Ivy said water temperatures continued to be warm this year. She and Mike think that the lack of snowpack and drought conditions led to the high levels of salinity we observed. There was very low biological productivity this summer, where the water was very clear and we witnessed few phytoplankton blooms (even after large rain events when we would expect runoff to carry nutrients into the Bay).

Joanie asked if we have seen a rise in membership from the Cundy's Harbor area now that our new Continuous Monitoring Station is in the water there. Will replied that we are focusing on that area in our Annual Appeal.

Ivy shared that at the next Casco Bay Matters event there will be a video of Mike and Ivy conducting seasonal sampling work. Ivy also shared that she will be using the boat as an office at the end of the month, meeting with officials from Climate Maine and the Department of Environmental Protection, the Piscataqua Riverkeeper, and Curtis Bohlen from Casco Bay Estuary Partnership. Ivy said discussions with partners like these will help us all work together to design policies that will keep the Bay cleaner. For example, all groups are working on addressing nitrogen pollution.

COBALT Organizational Consulting offer of pro bono assistance – *Glenn Page*

Glen opened by noting that he has been working with Cathy on a case study about our work at Friends of Casco Bay. Glen said he is here tonight to tell us about that case study and to offer his help (pro bono) in using it as a starting place for a reflective process that will inform future planning and organizational goals moving forward.

Glenn is the President of SustainaMetrix, which includes the COBALT program (Collaborative for Bioregional Action, Learning, and Transformation), located at the New England Ocean Cluster, in Portland. Glenn shared that he has a background in ecological restoration, but that his current work revolves around the challenge of focusing on environmental issues: whether focusing on a scale from the local to global, or on time frame from short term to long term. Glenn works with groups around the world to help them with this type of focusing, including indigenous peoples of the Amazon headwaters, and people in Ghana, Costa Rica, and of course Maine. Part of Glenn's work is to understand differences and commonalities that communities face across these different bioregions. Here in the Gulf of Maine, Glenn noted that there are robust science programs studying climate

change, and that the current and predicted impacts are well understood. However, Glenn has observed that the ways our governments can use this scientific knowledge to respond to climate/ecosystem change are not well understood. Considering Casco Bay specifically, Glenn noted that the ecosystem has undergone eight distinct periods of change over the past 400 years. This historical case study has been used to deepen his organization's understanding of how communities respond to ecosystem change. Glenn worked with Cathy to conduct a case study of our organization to better understand contemporary responses to ecosystem change. Like other effective organizations Glenn has worked with, our organization has repeatedly adapted its goals, which can be seen in distinct generations of how we do our work. Glenn's case study identified that we are nearing the end of our organization's fourth generation of this kind of strategic adaptation, and Glen said he would like to offer his scorecard services (a process he has conducted with other groups) to help us reflect and reassess where we want to go moving forward as we head into our next strategic planning phase. Glenn's case study about Friends of Casco Bay that he worked on with Cathy can be accessed, here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/78a4e230e7254a569735bdebb4959412>.

Will asked Glenn for an example of how the scorecard process helped a group. Glenn responded that the process allows for reflection on where your work is heading. For example, the folks working at the Amazon Headwaters had identified strategic goals they wanted to achieve, and the scorecard process helped them assess how they could achieve those goals. Making the time to look at our issues together is critical, but we do not always take the time to do it. Seb asked Glenn what our (board and staff) involvement in the scorecard process would look like. Glenn responded that it would involve a few dedicated days to work on the scorecard together, and that everyone should arrive to those conversations having done some personal thinking on the identified topics ahead of time. Ivy asked Glenn if this process could help us implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice concepts in our work, and if there is a benefit for mature organizations like ours to take on the scorecard process. Glenn responded that this work does include considering what communities we are working with and engaging, and that doing the scorecard process with mature organizations is extremely beneficial for sequencing and prioritizing goals.

Sandy closed the conversation saying that we would get back to Glenn about his generous offer in the coming months.

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.