

**Friends of Casco Bay  
Board Meeting – Minutes  
Online via Zoom  
Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance**

Board: Sandy Marsters (President), Mark Green, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Peter LeBourdais, Seb Milardo, Kirsten Piacentini (board nominee), Malcolm Poole, Jack Thompson, Lori Thayer

Staff: Sara Biron, Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Robby Lewis-Nash, Sarah Lyman

**Welcome – President Sandy Marsters**

Sandy reminded us that the board will not meet in December and that the next board meeting is in January. Sandy announced that Sara Biron's last day on staff will be December 10th, as she is moving to Germany. The board expressed their gratitude for Sara's contributions to our work and wished her the best. Sandy then noted that Jack will be leaving the board after nine years of service. During his tenure, Jack served terms as the board's President and Treasurer. Jack thanked everyone for their work together, and said that his dock, barn, and beer fridge are always ready for *Friends*.

**Board Nomination, Kirsten Piacentini – President Sandy Marsters**

The board and staff introduced themselves to Kirsten and welcomed her to the board.

**Minute for the Bay** – Bud shared that he is on Nantucket right now. It is beautiful there, but Bud said Casco Bay beats Nantucket by a mile, without a doubt.

**Action Item** – Board Consent Package (minutes and financials)

Motion by Jack, seconded by David, to accept the consent agenda as written. PASSED

**Action Item** – *Nomination of Kirsten Piacentini to Board of Directors*

Kirsten introduced herself to the board. She said has lived in Maine for 27 years and is originally from the midwest. Kirsten loves living by the ocean and Casco Bay; it is one of her favorite places in the world. Kirsten said she is excited for the opportunity to work with us, support our efforts, and expand her own horizons.

The board voted in favor of electing Kirsten Piacentini to the board of Friends of Casco Bay.

**Action Item** – *Nomination of Malcolm Poole as Treasurer*

Jack motioned, Bud seconded, to elect Malcolm to be Treasurer. PASSED

**Community Engagement Committee Update – Committee Chair Seb Milardo**

Seb shared that the Community Engagement Committee reviewed development metrics from FY21 and debriefed the most recent Casco Bay Matters event. Seb said that individual giving went up by approximately 300 donors and that we have a high renewal rate. He noted that corporate revenue went down in FY21, but that we saw more corporate donors overall. Seb shared David's suggestion to reach

more people in the watershed by working with the media more. Seb said that the Committee was enthusiastic about the last Casco Bay Matters event. The Committee had some ideas for future events, including bringing in a panel of outside experts like people from marine resources or fishermen to compare observations and data, and to have Ivy host an event to break down her policy work. Seb said that Bud also emphasized the importance of finding opportunities to host events and meet with community members in person.

#### **Search Committee Update – *Committee Co-Chairs Sandy Marsters and Seb Milardo***

Seb said that the Executive Director Search Committee has received seven resumes and the candidates are solid. Seb expects to see more resumes coming in and that they may begin interviews in December. The Committee has shared the job posting with more organizations, including Waterkeeper Alliance, Association for the science of Limnology and Oceanography, and Seven Seas Media. Seb said the Committee has also contacted other adjacent organizations like Portland Trails and Bigelow Labs to solicit interest in sharing the job posting further.

Bud shared that we are getting amazing candidates and that Seb's support in analyzing the applications has been invaluable. David asked where the applicants are from. Seb responded that three are from California and that the rest are local. Kirsten asked if a scientific background is required for the job. Seb replied that it is not required, but applicants need to have an aptitude and appreciation for science. Will encouraged all board members to share the job posting on our website with their networks. Peter asked Seb how long we will keep the application open. Applications will close on January 2.

#### **Interim Director Update – *Interim Director Will Everitt***

Will began by noting that our Baykeeper boat is out of the water for the winter. Financially, we are eight months into FY22 we are doing okay thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and individual giving. Will said he hopes to keep costs low and have a strong year end, which may allow some PPP funds to rollover and accommodate increases in our budget, including cost of living adjustments, a new Executive Director, and perhaps a new staff position. Will thanked Sara Biron for her seven years of service and asked everyone to mark their calendars for her goodbye party at Andy's Old Port on December 7 from 3-5 p.m. Will said that we will begin searching next week for a new Development Assistant. This is one of the only entry level positions we have. We are stripping the position requirements to the bare bones, knowing that once we have a great candidate aboard we can see what other talents they have (for example, we found Sara was talented at design work). Will shared that more funding from the Estuary Partnership is expected in the new year. Will said that we remain committed to protecting the Bay for everyone, and that the Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workshop ad hoc committee met in October to design a training for board and staff. Will thanked Sandy, Pat, Deb, Sarah, and Robby for serving on the Committee, and Sarah and Robby for reaching out to potential workshop facilitators. Will said we hope to have a list of prospective facilitators for the Committee to consider by December, and that the workshop may be hosted in January or February. Will addressed the email about the UN climate council talks that was sent out to our members this afternoon, saying that it speaks to the important role we play in highlighting the impacts of this global threat on the Bay and how we work with partners at the state, national, and international levels to help bring about positive change. Will said the outcomes of the talks were disappointing, but that exciting work is being done on the local and regional levels. Will shared that we will be hosting another Casco Bay Matters

event soon that will feature Ivy breaking down her advocacy work. Will concluded by thanking the board for their support.

Malcolm commented that we usually host a major donor appreciation event at this time of year. He asked Will if we plan to host an event this year. Will responded that we are only holding virtual and outdoor events now, but is he open to talking about it. Will said that the upcoming Casco Bay Matters event with Ivy will be a meeting style event (where participants are on screen with Ivy) and will allow for more conversation. The event will be capped at 100 participants and we are making a special appeal for major donors to participate. Malcolm commented that we should at least write a letter to our major donors thanking them for their support. Will thanked Malcolm for the idea and plans to implement it with Board Members signing the letters.

Sandy commented that we are trying to get back into the conference room at GMRI to host board meetings. However, GMRI requires that masks be worn indoors and we want to have our meetings unmasked. Will said that looking ahead to 2022 we should plan to host hybrid events, where people can participate in-person or remotely to accommodate everyone's comfort and availability.

#### **Baykeeping Update, Q&A – *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca***

Ivy shared a breakdown of the public comments included in the Board package. With regard to the MS4 permit comments, the municipalities had a valid concern regarding Low Impact Development techniques. Ivy convened a meeting with the Department of Environmental Protection and the municipalities to work out a deal. Ivy said the deal is good and the permit will likely be enacted as is, which is great news. Ivy then spoke to our comments in support of upgrading the water quality classification for the Presumpscot River. The biggest source of pollution to the Bay is stormwater, primarily from its major tributaries like the Presumpscot. Friends of the Presumpscot has done an amazing job cleaning up the river, and they asked us to help support the upgrade. The Department of Environmental Protection is not in favor of the upgrade, but Ivy hopes that the Board of Environmental Protection will rule in favor of the upgrade considering all of the comments that support it.

Seb and Sandy both commended Ivy for her work on the MS4 permit and Ivy thanked the board for all of their support throughout the legal process. Mark asked for a quick review of the data behind the Presumpscot River upgrade. Ivy responded that the question at hand is if the classification will rise from class C to class B. In the water quality data collected from the river, there was one day when levels of dissolved oxygen dipped below the class B threshold. Ivy said that DEP argues there will be dips like this due to natural fluctuation. Ivy and Mike believe the dip is not statistically significant, yet the DEP is afraid that upgrading the river classification would reduce its assimilative capacity. Kirsten asked to clarify if upgrading the classification would hold water quality in the river to a higher standard, and Ivy confirmed that is the case.

Ivy then reflected on our comments to the Maine Climate Council's Equity Subcommittee, where Ivy, Robby, and her current legal intern (who has a masters degree in gender and equity studies) worked together to draft comments. Ivy said the Climate Council asked us to review the Subcommittee's recommendations. We are doing the best we can with the knowledge that we have and continuing to ensure that we are taking action on Environmental Justice and not just saying words. Malcolm

commented that we should keep our focus on the Bay, with so much energy in general circling around justice issues. Ivy agreed, saying that we must bring the lens of the Bay to all of the work that we do. She also said that we should think about what it means when we say that Casco Bay belongs to everyone, and that is a part of moving our equity work forward.

**Water Reporter Community Collaborations** – *Community Engagement Coordinator Sarah Lyman*

Sarah opened with an overview of how the Water Reporter program works. Water Reporter is our community volunteer effort where volunteers (called Water Reporters) use the Water Reporter app on their smartphones to document evidence of pollution and other concerning conditions seen on the Bay. Using the app for this process allows us to capture the time and location of any Water Reporter observations. Sarah said that we have 297 followers on Water Reporter. Since the program launched, Water Reporters have contributed over 2,274 posts. This year we have 58 active Water Reporters (people who participate regularly), and so far they have contributed more than 550 photos.

Sarah shared that GMRI also has a similar citizen science initiative focused on sea level rise and that we are collaborating with them via our Water Reporter program as sea level rise is an issue that many Water Reporters post about. We are working together with GMRI to promote our respective volunteer citizen science programs with shared messaging. This collaboration will help both programs grow and it will help our organizations and volunteers understand where our programs differ.

GMRI's program prompts volunteers to go to a *specific* coastal flood monitoring site and asks questions about that site to be submitted via an app. This information is then passed on to policy makers in Portland and South Portland. With Water Reporter, volunteers post *anywhere* around Casco Bay to document evidence of sea level rise—and *any other phenomena*—and to share their observations about what they are seeing. Our shared communications with GMRI tell volunteers to use GMRI's app when they are at specific GMRI coastal flood monitoring sites, and to use Water Reporter when they are anywhere else on the Bay or seeing evidence of a concerning marine issue other than sea level rise.

Sarah said that Water Reporters are supporting our Baykeeping work. They help us document algal blooms (which the Department of Environmental Protection is interested in), identify impaired streams, and track evidence of sea level rise, which Ivy has used to support testimony. As we think about the future, Sarah said that other municipalities and organizations are considering using Water Reporter to track other issues, which may present more opportunities for collaboration. We are also going to hold more trainings for Water Reporters to help them become better observers.

Sandy asked if there is a plan to standardize the way that various groups are photographing images for Water Reporter. A consistent style could have data value for a library of photographs that more clearly tell a story about how the watershed is changing. Will responded that the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership has a data monitoring committee and that Ivy has been supportive of the Partnership creating an observational data committee. Sarah added that part of the conversation with GMRI is pulling in our historic Water Reporter data on sea level rise to share with municipal leaders. Sandy encouraged board members to participate in the [12/8 waterfront walk event with GMRI](#). He said it was great to hear the information and even better to be with and meet other people.

Will highlighted that Ivy will be on a [panel hosted by the Portland Museum of Art and GMRI](#) on the night of 12/2, and that board members should be on the lookout for invitations to our upcoming Casco Bay Matters events.

Ivy added that every year our work with Water Reporters grows and that she and Sarah have exciting ideas to help the program grow heading into 2022.

Sandy reminded everyone that there is no board meeting in December, but that the Community Engagement Committee will meet.

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.