

**Friends of Casco Bay  
Board Meeting – Minutes  
Online via Zoom  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 5:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance**

Board: Sandy Marsters (President), Steve Bushey, Deb Debiegun, Howard Gray, Megan Hallett, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Peter LeBourdais, Seb Milardo, Kirsten Piacentini, Malcolm Poole, Joan Samuelson, Lori Thayer

Staff: Susan Bosco, Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Jeff Fetterer, Ivy Frignoca, Robby Lewis-Nash, Sarah Lyman

**Welcome – President Sandy Marsters**

Sandy thanked everyone for attending and noted that this meeting, when the board reviews and votes on the Operating Plan, is perhaps the most important board meeting of the year. Sandy added that the GMRI conference room has been reserved for an in-person, May board meeting. The conference room is equipped to allow anyone who is uncomfortable meeting in-person to call in via Zoom. Sandy asked everyone the check in question: what are you looking forward to this spring?

**Financials Update – Will Everitt**

Will said we are optimistic about the financial year ahead. With the Paycheck Protection Plan loans forgiven, the fact that we did not expand our staff in FY22, and our exceptional fundraising year place us in a strong position. Malcolm added that we will have a decent amount of cash available for many needs this year (such as funding new office space). Will and Malcolm, as Treasurer, worked together to propose the strategic use of \$200,000 of unrestricted surplus funds raised in FY22 in next year's budget. Malcolm noted that the amount of net income listed on the budget could impact donors' perspectives on our financial need. Regardless, he thinks we have a good plan.

**Action Item: Board Consent Agenda**

Seb motioned, David seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented. *PASSED*.

**Action Item: Proposal to give staff \$400 bonus**

Given the excellent work of staff continuing to build a strong and resilient organization during this time of our leadership transition, the Board proposed to give a \$400 bonus to each staff person.

Malcolm motioned, Seb seconded, to approve the proposal as presented. *PASSED*.

**FY23 Operating Plan and FY23 Budget Discussion – Interim Director Will Everitt**

Will said that staff have put a lot of work into the FY23 Operating Plan. It will be a watershed year, with the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the 30th year of our Seasonal Sampling program, the first full year of Continuous Monitoring Data from all three of our Stations, our continued work to move climate policy forward, new staff hires, relaunching our Pumpout Program, and returning to hosting in-person community events. Sandy asked staff and board to share what they are excited about in the Plan.

- Will is excited to celebrate the Clean Water Act. It is an important tool that has made Casco Bay healthier and, yet, it is always under attack at the federal level. Will is also excited to relaunch the Pumpout Program. We put so much work into buying a new pumpout boat and had a community naming contest to christen the boat, and then we put the program on hold for the past two years. With so many new boaters on the Bay, relaunching this program is particularly exciting.
- Susan is excited to get back to hosting in-person community events.
- Robby is excited about in-person events and learning to use our drone.
- Jeff is excited about relaunching the Pumpout Program; it is an amazing boat that should be in the water. We have already received a lot of positive feedback from the community about the relaunch. Jeff is also excited about the Nitrogen Nab.
- Mike is excited about having a full year of data from all three Continuous Monitoring Stations. He is also excited to work on our Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).
- Sarah is excited about building and deepening relationships with community members in new and old ways. She is also excited about the Nitrogen Nab.
- Ivy is excited to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and work on the upcoming cycle of Clean Water Act permits (which renew every five years). She is also excited to hire a program assistant. We have worked hard to integrate our programs and that has prepared us to hire this new staff person.
- Sandy is excited to continue working with everyone. He is also excited about the drone because he loves all things photo and video.
- David is excited about the potential for collaborations moving forward.
- Malcolm is excited about using David's communications expertise to communicate with the public.
- Peter is excited about the whole plan.
- Deb is excited about our environmental justice, diversity, equity, inclusion work and that it was given specific actions in the plan.
- Lori is excited about more people waking up to the reality of environmental issues. She thinks that *Friends* may see increases in donors, volunteers, and visibility.
- Megan is excited to see how FY23 unfolds as a new board member. She likes the Clean Water Act focus, and is excited to learn about it and help boaters learn about it. She is also excited about the Pumpout Program; "the harbor needs it!"
- Howard is excited about all of the activities in FY23. He thinks the FY23 Operating Plan is an excellent document for a transition to the future.
- Seb is excited for us to pay more attention to the rivers flowing into Casco Bay. This kind of collaboration is exciting, and perhaps will shift our mission.
- Kirsten is excited to have a full year on the board. She said the FY23 Plan is very well done. She is excited about the Nitrogen Nab.
- Steve is excited for coastal cleanups; there is so much trash out there. Cleanups are an effective and tangible way to engage the public.
- Pat has always thought that the combination of science and policy makes for the most effective change, and she sees much of that approach in this plan. She is excited about the Program Assistant, diversifying our community, and moving our work up the watershed (including coastal cleanups).

- Joanie is excited about the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. She also thinks we should conduct a fish count – all waters should be fishable and swimmable, per the Act.

### **Discussion of the FY23 Operating Plan**

Kirsten asked if the Pumpout Program generates revenue. Will said that it does generate revenue. The program is 90% grant funded and we do charge a small fee for a pumpout. It is one of the few programs we run that more than pays for itself.

Howard noted that there are many references to “our community” and “the community” in the plan. He asked who those terms refer to. Malcolm replied that they refer to the watershed. Will said that historically, our community has included the towns that surround the Bay. Moving forward, we are looking up the watershed. We are recognized as an important organization, as there are not many marine advocates out there. The Casco Bay region serves as a laboratory for the rest of the state, where many of the solutions that we have helped to craft over the years have been adopted in other parts of the state. Sarah said that “our community” and “the community” are used in various ways, sometimes interchangeably. Sometimes they refer to our members, volunteers, and supporters and other times to people who are not involved in our organization but who have a relationship to Casco Bay. Ivy said that this is a good question to consider in our environmental justice, diversity, equity, inclusion work. Howard said that from the outside looking in, one could interpret that our community is more exclusive than inclusive. Pat thinks this is a good equity-inclusion question, and a good donor question. She has signed many letters that are sent to donors out of the state. How do they fit into our community, and what is their connection to Casco Bay?

### **Action Item: Vote on accepting FY23 Operating Plan and FY23 Budget**

Howard moved, Seb seconded, to approve the FY23 Operating Plan and Budget as presented. *PASSED.*

Will noted this is a living document. Staff will continue to reference it in the year ahead. This plan also helps our development work, where it is transformed into a 4 page General Proposal and is shared with donors, foundations, and prospective event sponsors. While this is an internal document, it has external utility.

### **Baykeeping Update – Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca**

Ivy said that we worked hard to upgrade the Clean Water Act classification for the lower Presumpscot River. The upgrade amendment was not approved by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee of the Maine Legislature. Their decision came down to a debatable interpretation of a single data point. Ivy met with the Department of Environmental Protection and they agreed to collect more data from the river this summer. We will also deploy a sonde in the river so we can compare data. The Portland Water District is also going to work on reducing their impact on the river. Ivy said that if the new data shows the river meets Class B standards, there is a legislator who will propose the upgrade again next summer. Ivy said that this is a good outcome, and that it has been great working with Friends of the Presumpscot River. She acknowledged it is rare to prevail on the first attempt, especially on advocacy issues like this one.

Sandy asked where our sonde will be located in the river. Ivy said it will be above head of tide. We will access the river from Sean Mahoney's home (an attorney at the Conservation Law Foundation). Will said staff worked a lot on this issue, and reminded us that Clean Water Act upgrades come with legal protections. Once a water is upgraded, back-sliding is not allowed.

Howard asked if Ivy's vision for upgrading the river next year assumes a continuation of the current administration. Ivy said she has not factored that in. The legislator will propose the upgrade either way. Anecdotally, a Republican representative told Will Plumley that if we get the data, we get the upgrade.

Sandy asked what data the sonde will give us. Mike said that the sonde provides the same data as the Continuous Monitoring Stations, excluding the carbon dioxide data. Ivy added that for regulatory purposes, only dissolved oxygen data will be considered. Will read a portion of [Ivy's testimony](#), speaking to the specifics of the data point that prevented the upgrade. Will said it highlights why it is important that we also collect data, especially because the validity of our data cannot be disputed due to our Quality Assurance Project Plan.

Howard commented that there is increasing attention on the polluting influence of rock salt as a road deicer. He asked if our instruments can collect data on this. Mike said that the conductivity data might give some information, but not much. Ivy said that use of rock salt is an issue we are working on through the Long Creek General Permit.

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

Seb shared that Will has applied for the Executive Director position. The Search Committee is reviewing his application. They will speak with Will and update all of us in the coming weeks.

#### **Questions, clarifications, concerns, comments**

Pat asked about our June board meeting. Will said that historically, we have a board-staff social in June. Will said it is his and Sandy's hope to host a dinner outside where we can all spend some time together. Will added that if we have a meeting at GMRI in May, it will be a hybrid meeting with the option to call in remotely.

Lori asked if we have set a date for the Annual Meeting. Will said it will likely be a Wednesday in July or August, and held outside. We are working with a tent company and trying to find a location for the meeting.

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.