

**Friends of Casco Bay
Board Meeting – Minutes
Online via Zoom
Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 5:30 p.m.**

In Attendance

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

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

Welcome – President Sandy Marsters

Sandy reminded everyone of the upcoming board and staff social on June 21 at Jack Thomas' barn in Cumberland. He noted there will be a short piece of board business at the event. Sandy said he will also send out a reminder to board members to give to Friends of Casco Bay, adding that an anonymous donor has offered to match 100% of increases to board member's pledges (for new board members, 100% of their total pledge will be matched), up to a total of \$4,000. Sandy reminded all board members that they should give what they can afford while keeping in mind that Friends of Casco Bay should be at the top of their giving schedules.

Financials Update – Treasurer Malcolm Poole

Malcolm said that it is hard to know if we are under or over budget this early in the financial year. He said he assumes Maine Community Foundation is having a tough time with this volatile market, but that he is not concerned; you have to enjoy the ups and the downs.

Action Item: Board Consent Agenda

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

Baykeeping Update Q&A – Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca

Ivy gave the group an overview of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). When the CWA was passed in 1972, it was intended to literally get poop and toxic pollution out of our water by regulating wastewater treatment facilities and industry. One genius aspect of the CWA was the creation of a federal revolving fund to support upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities. The CWA did not begin to address stormwater pollution until the late 1980s by regulating construction, municipal discharges, and an additional category that allows EPA the discretion to recognize and regulate additional sources of stormwater pollution. These stormwater regulations have only been partly successful. At the *Casco Bay Matters* Event tomorrow, Curtis Bohlen will give an overview of the State of the Bay Report similar to the presentation he gave to the board in January. After his overview, Mike and Ivy will join him to discuss the CWA, how it has helped us and what still needs to be done for clean water.

Ivy clarified that the CWA is a federal law, though individual states have to set their own water quality standards while the federal government sets the permits that reduce pollution into U.S. waters. The CWA functions like a cooperative program between states and the federal government, but it is ultimately a federal law.

Seb asked if Ivy knew anything about the lawsuits against the CWA out west. Ivy did not. Will added that there are frequent attacks on the CWA and that we have often called on our congressional delegation to push back against them.

Ivy shared staff's enthusiasm for the series of [CWA events we are planning for the summer](#). The events include a walk along the Presumpscot River with our partners at Friends of the Presumpscot River, and a visit to Long Creek where it passes the Maine Mall. Long Creek is one of the only waterbodies in the nation that has a unique designation from the federal Environmental Protection Agency to regulate pollution in its waters. Sarah clarified that staff have not set dates for the Long Creek event.

Action Item: Hiring Will Everitt as Executive Director with the employment terms shared with the Board

Sandy shared his enthusiasm for Will taking on the role of Executive Director. Having worked with Will for the past nine months, Sandy believes he is qualified, talented, and the right person for the job. Will thanked Sandy, and shared his enthusiasm and dedication for our work ahead. Even after working with our organization since 2006, serving as Interim Director for the past has helped Will understand the importance of our work on a new level. With climate change, pollution, and political division, there is much to be done. But Friends of Casco Bay is rising to meet these challenges. Will reflected that growing up on an apple orchard taught him it takes 5 years for a young tree to bear fruit after planting. Will wants to bring this long term perspective to our work, knowing that planting seeds now can help us achieve the results we need down the road. Seb echoed Sandy's sentiments that Will is a terrific candidate for Executive Director and he fits all of the criteria we were looking for in our next leader. Will is team oriented, listens well, knows how to lead, and shares his leadership. He understands our finances, is a great writer, and a great person to work with. Seb also shared a parable that exemplified his experience in the search process: while it was a long and challenging search, he is happy that the search committee eventually looked in the right place and found the perfect person who was standing right next to them all along.

The board voted unanimously to elect Will Everitt as Executive Director of Friends of Casco Bay.
PASSED.

The board and staff shared their enthusiasm and congratulations with Will. Sandy dismissed the search committee with gratitude.

Community Engagement Committee Update – Committee Chair Seb Milardo

Seb shared summaries of the two topics discussed at the last Community Engagement Committee meeting:

- With Will coming on as our new Executive Director, the committee discussed if there are ways that the board can help get the message out. Staff have a communications plan that includes a letter to members, a short video, and a media release about Will's hire. Board members will help staff to call key partners and donors before we send out the media release to tell them the big news. Howard mentioned the importance of nominating Will as alternate management committee member at the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership. Seb said he is willing to host an event at his home

for people on Little Diamond Island to introduce them to Will and hopes other board members will do the same.

- The committee discussed a recent survey of Water Reporters that asked questions about why are they involved in our work, what issues they are interested in, how we could improve programs or events to work better for them. The results showed that Water Reporters really like the email reminders from Sarah to take photos at unusually high tides and other significant events. Some Water Reporters expressed complaints about the app and Sarah is working to improve them. The committee noted that the Nitrogen Nab event in August will be a great opportunity to recruit more Water Reporters, as will getting more marinas and boatyards involved in the Water Reporter program.

Bud asked for more information about board members calling key partners and donors. Will said board members who are interested will be asked to make ten to twelve calls and to complete them by Monday. Sandy, Seb, Bud, Pat, and Malcolm volunteered to make calls.

Strategic Planning Process – *President Sandy Marsters and Will Everitt*

Will said our strategic planning process is a big deal as this document will guide our work for the next five years. Will emphasized it is a living document that staff return to repeatedly for guidance. Sandy said the last strategic planning process was fascinating and that he wants every board member to participate in this one. Sandy made clear that nothing in this process is preordained or preconceived. We are all learning together and our participation is essential to making this a success. Sandy read the proposed planning process document from the board package.

Kirsten asked if the two-hour strategic planning process planning meetings are in addition to board meetings, and if the strategic planning process committee meetings would be in addition to both of those meetings. Sandy said yes. Will clarified that the committee meetings will be held ahead of the start of the official planning process in September.

Kirsten asked if there would be any division of meetings, where constituents and outside experts would be separate from other meetings. Sandy said last time all the same constituents were invited to all the meetings. Will said that in the past, we are sometimes joined for specific topics by specific people, but that practice can be developed as we go.

Seb said there are advantages and disadvantages to doing two, two hours meetings every month. He emphasized it will be difficult for all board members to get to all of the meetings and suggested hosting 4 hour meetings that encapsulate all of the meetings (board meetings and strategic planning meetings). He also suggested holding the strategic planning process in fewer, longer sessions (two, six hour meetings, for example). Overall, Seb thinks there's an advantage in having fewer, yet longer meetings.

Bud said the strategic planning process is important and that the last one was very productive. The strategic planning process needs to be a board priority. If the board is going to prioritize it, we need to think about what we can give up during the process. Bud suggested suspending Community Engagement Committee meetings until the strategic planning process is over. He also suggested that the only reason to have a board meeting during this time would be to address issues as necessary. If we expect and need full

board participation, we need to carve out as much time as we can. Lastly, Bud said the strategic planning process needs to meet in person if at all possible. There is increased creativity when we work together in-person.

Deb asked about the reasoning behind monthly, two hour meetings proposed in the planning process document for the strategic planning process. Sandy said they are an artifact of the previous process. Kirsten said from her experience with strategic planning projects, she agrees with Seb that fewer, longer sessions are more productive. If we schedule longer days now, board members can get the days on their calendars and plan their lives around it. Pat likes the idea of longer sessions for deep dives and immersion into ideas. She also thinks hosting sessions on weekends is a good idea. Pat asked that everyone remember the importance of thinking critically about who we need from outside the organization in this process. Those people help us learn so much.

Peter agreed with Bud, that if we need board participation we also need to reschedule or suspend other board responsibilities. Howard asked about the creation of a drafting committee (a term from the planning document). Will clarified that in the past our facilitator would pull together all of the notes from the meetings, then they and the Executive Director would distill the notes into a more digestible format. At the end of the strategic planning process, the facilitator, Executive Director, and communications director would pull it all together into a final document that the board then approves.

Malcolm added that in the drafting, it is crucial that the tone and cadence of every comment is captured in the draft. There should be no words in the strategic plan that were not specifically prioritized by the process. Howard asked if there will be a finalized process document presented to the board for this process. Sandy said yes.

Malcolm asked if there is anyone on the board who wants to be on the planning group. Howard and Kirsten volunteered. Malcolm said he would be delighted to lead the process again. Pat commented that the planning committee might consider changing the schedule of the process so that we can meet in-person safely, perhaps outdoors.

The board discussed facilitation for the strategic planning process. Bud said Malcolm has done a great job in the past and Seb agreed. Bud cautioned against getting too complicated in this process, noting it has worked so well in the past. He trusts the planning committee to come up with a good plan. Howard commented that the strategic planning process is quite complicated and that to assume it is not does a disservice to the outcomes that we can achieve. We should think about how we can do the best job to get this done, and that if that becomes complicated we should be ready for it. Sandy added that if anyone thinks of ideas or questions after the meeting, they should contact him.

Howard commented that there are many bleak analyses for the future with respect to the pandemic. When we think about facilitation, we should consider the scenario where we need to meet virtually. Malcolm said that if we do the process virtually, there will be a lot of polls and follow-up after meetings, but that it can be done. Will thanked Malcolm for offering to facilitate. Will has thought that it was an important organizational strength of ours that we facilitated our own strategic planning process instead of hiring someone from outside our organization.

Action Item: *Authorization of an ad hoc committee comprising Sandy, Kirsten, and Howard, staffed by Will as Executive Director, to work with Malcolm as facilitator to develop a strategic planning process for Friends of Casco Bay's next 5-year plan.*

Malcolm motioned, Bud seconded, to approve the proposed planning process as presented. *PASSED.*

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.