

**Friends of Casco Bay**  
**Minutes – Board Meeting**  
**In person at GMRI (and via Zoom)**  
**Tuesday, January 15, 2024**

**Attendees**

Board: Sandy Marsters, President, Steve Bushey, Ellen Grant, Mark Green, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Seb Milardo, Anthony Moffa, Malcolm Poole, Janna Rearick

Staff: Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Sara Freshley, Ivy Frignoca, Heather Kenyon, Sarah Lyman

**Sandy welcomed** everyone to the meeting and asked the check-in question, *What is one way you plan to make the world better in this new year?* Board members also shared a minute for the Bay about the recent storms.

**Treasurer's Report** – *Malcolm Poole*

Malcolm shared that Will and Jeff put together excellent financial reports each month. He shared that our assets exceed liabilities by 14:1. In addition, we have another \$750,000 of restricted assets for specific operating plan projects. We are in an excellent financial position. Ellen asked if we know anything about year-end giving and if we are on course for meeting our goals there? Will answered yes, individual giving was strong at the end of December. We have exceeded our annual goal for individual giving. Will has met with many donors individually which helped increase their giving. Foundation grants income has also exceeded our annual goal. No matter what our government income will be lower than anticipated mostly because we stopped the Pumpout Program a little early. We will be on track financially barring something catastrophic happening in February or March.

**Action Item:** *Acceptance of Consent Agenda*

Motion: the minutes, financials, and documents in the consent agenda were accepted as presented. PASSED.

**Nominations to the Board of Directors and recruitment and board leadership moving forward,** *Sandy Marsters and Ellen Grant*

Ellen gave up date about governance work. We have been in a process of trying

to fill the gaps identified in the board assessment, specifically trying to improve age and gender diversity as well as racial diversity and increase our knowledge of science and climate change. Based on those priorities we prioritized the list of potential candidates to the board and sent them out to you all. Then we started to meet with these candidates. The three that we are sending forward just had so much passion for Casco Bay and for this organization. We learned a lot about them. We approached them for specific gaps but then each of them were so much fuller than what we knew about them. As the process proceeded it was clear that the three would all be excellent candidates and were all interested in participating.

**Sam Bengs** some of you met during the strategic planning process. She works at Gulf of Maine Research Institute. One thing that is really compelling about her is that she studied music but she always had this love for marine science and decided to put her music career aside to pursue it. She applied to SMCC which is what brought her to Casco Bay. She credits Casco Bay for supporting her itch on marine science and affirming that this is what she wants to do with her life. She works in the area of environmental DNA which is cutting edge work. She also works on fishing boats. She has a great breadth of experience.

**Nathan Davis** works at Gateway Community Services. He was referred to us as someone who could help us recruit more diverse board members. In this meeting it became apparent that he himself might be a candidate. He is very connected to the Black leadership community in Portland. He has a background in international relations and China but put his career there on-hold because of COVID. He came back to Portland and realized what a deep love he has of this place and Casco Bay.

Both Sam and Nathan are young and this is both of their first non-profit board experience.

**Fiona Wilson** has been a longtime donor. She was also on the board of the Wolfe Neck Center for Agriculture and the Environment. She is a very seasoned board person. She brings a lot in terms of her volunteer work and work as Director of the Sustainability Institute at University of New Hampshire. She's incredibly accomplished and has a lot to bring around sustainability and climate. She fills a gap as far as bringing more women on the board and climate

knowledge.

Sandy asked for motion to elect Sam Bengs, Nathan Davis, and Fiona Wilson to the Board of Directors. Malcolm moved, David seconded. Motion PASSED unanimously

We have another nominee coming in the spring but we ask that folks keep funneling names in. We are still working towards a board of 18 people and we will have a good backlog of folks too!

**Community Engagement Committee Update** – *Sandy Marsters* We skipped this agenda item in the interest of time.

**Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee update** – *Committee Chair Pat Ianni*

We did not have EJDEI meeting in December or January. We are looking for interested board members to join. We have three staff and two board members. The matrix we are working on is an action plan in a matrix format of how we see strategic government on the board side and operations on the staff side of how we meet our goals within the EJDEI statement. On January 23, we are meeting with Cross Cultural Community Services for advice and mentorship on our plan as well as to talk about training that we will be doing for staff and board on April.

**Baykeeping Update: PFAS Data and Our Plan This Summer**– *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca and Science and Advocacy Associate Heather Kenyon*  
Ivy shared that at a prior board meeting we shared with you a comprehensive memo of the science of PFAs in Maine and the status of the policy and law of PFAs in Maine. We do this whenever we dive into a new topic. We have been part of two grants as part of our PFAS work. One that was completed this past calendar year and one that is upcoming. As we expand our Program Team and as Heather becomes more well-known there are projects where she is stepping up as a lead. Because this is a project where Heather is in a leadership position she will talk about it.

Heather confidentially shared embargoed data for the board's eyes only. The Program Team has a meeting coming up with Bigelow to plan a joint press

release to provide this data to the public.

In 2023 we were part of an effort to find out if PFAS are found in Casco Bay. We collected samples for PFAS analysis at our seasonal monitoring sites, collecting surface samples. The protocols and analysis are developed by Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences staff, who used an EPA-approved quality assurance protocol. We found PFAS at all of our sites. As a quick overview, after looking at it, results were in some ways similar to the Nitrogen Nab, as there are higher sources of PFAS near the land. Even though Casco Bay is tidally flushed twice a day we are still finding PFAS. We do not have the raw data yet so we do not have a comparison yet as far as levels.

Mark pointed out that these concentrations are really low but of a very toxic substance. Would be interesting to compare the drinking water standard. Heather added that our understanding is changing from year to year and that drinking water levels are changing and we need to know numbers before we can pursue policy. Janna asked if we know how it behaves in the water? Heather answered that this is unknown and that we are hoping to hone in on a little bit when we take sediment samples to see what the relationship is between PFAS in water and sediment.

Our plans in 2024: after the 2023 effort, Bigelow approached us about collaborating on a two year grant project. This grant is from EPA's Restore America's Estuary Program. The purpose of this grant is to fill critical data gaps to determine PFAS distribution and sources. After the data is analyzed by Bigelow, Ivy, Mike and Heather will analyze it to inform any further policy steps we think we should take.

This year, our PFAS water sampling regiment will consist of 60 sites sampled three different times. We will also collect 50 sediment samples. Location may be honed in year 2 based on where we are finding PFAS samples in the water samples. There is a data gap that we are filling. Ivy and Heather sat down and came up with a list of people that may have knowledge that we need. They asked those folks to be part of a stakeholder group, including staff at DEP, EPA, the Towns of Brunswick and Harpswell, and others. We asked everyone based on their knowledge of what sites we should sample at and if they knew of PFAS contamination at that site and if there was detection how that would help them

make decisions. Heather is making a map of sites and we will decide which ones are feasible to test and take it to the stakeholder group before we decide our final 60 sampling sites. Ivy anticipates that we will test outside of treatment plants because they are required to address PFAs. Steve pointed out that it's a lot of work and asked if we will have interns to help out this summer. Will noted that our operating plan takes this into consideration and is grateful for Heather's added capacity. Ivy shared that Bigelow sent a scientist out with us last year and will do that again.

Bigelow will continue to do PFAS analysis and come out with a report that summarizes the results. All of this will be available and submitted to EPA's Water Quality Exchange Database. We will conduct the sediment sampling in mid to late summer. Hopefully, we will have some of the results from water sampling work to inform site selection. We will gather the advisory committee together as a group to look at that and decide where sediment sites should be. Friends of Casco Bay and Bigelow will present webinars to the public and more discrete audiences to discuss policy implications and next steps. This will probably happen in 2025. Ivy and Heather will likely write a paper on it that they hope to submit to a journal. Will added that he emailed out a one pager that Heather put together on the sampling that we are doing and the goals so check that out.

Pat asked how much Friends of Casco Bay and Bigelow are communicating with DEP on the regulatory piece? Maine is ahead of the game when it comes to regulating PFAS. Heather said that we have two folks from DEP on an advisory committee who are going to help us with site selection. We also plan on presenting analysis with DEP once it is done. Seb noted that this info when it gets out publicly may impact the economy on the Maine coast. How this comes out and the job that it does, it's important for the public to know and important that it is done in an objective sense. Ivy pointed out that what the amounts mean is going to be critical. Also, none of what we are doing implies that PFAS are in fish tissues. Malcolm encouraged a mindful pace in putting it out in the public. Ivy said that the next meeting with Bigelow is to discuss this. Janna asked if we know anything about whether these levels are historical or whether there are continued sources of this? Heather said there are certain types of PFAs that are banned but are still being detected. There are also still new PFAs that are being manufactured to replace the old PFAs that are being detected. In Harpswell, off

the old Navy fueling station we know there is a known source but in terms of specificity we hope that next year's study helps us begin to understand.

**Executive Director Update** – *Executive Director Will Everitt*

We had a strong December in terms of year end giving. He gave his thanks to our development staff Sarah and Susan for setting us up for year-end success.

New office: Our new lab is built out as we speak. The lab walls are studded and will be dry walled this week. There are a lot of logistics involved in the move, including contractor calendar days, utility set up, including internet, and furniture set up. We plan to move in March.

Communications Coordinator: we had approximately 50 applicants. We interviewed seven top candidates in the first round and two top contenders in the second round. I will be making an offer to our top candidate this week. Stay tuned!

All staff have begun working on our operating plans for this year. We have a lot of exciting work planned in the upcoming year: from working on stormwater and climate change policy, to collecting more data on PFAS, to launching our new Water Reporter app, to celebrating our 35th anniversary, and much much more. We plan on having the draft operating plan and the budget that supports it to you, the board, by March 1 and have our workshop before the March board meeting. Will expects that this year's operating plan will be formatted a little differently, using the strategic plan as our overall guide. FY25 is year two of our strategic plan.

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 6:47pm.