

**Project Oceanology
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Sept 11, 2025- 4:00 p.m.**

Attendance:

BOARD MEMBER	ORGANIZATION	OFFICERS	ATTENDANCE *
Joshua Fish	Bozrah		Present
Eleanor Mariani	Community Mbr		Present
Kate Biddle	Community Mbr	Secretary	Present
Robin Harris	Community Mbr		Present
Tom Gardiner	Community Mbr		Present
Annaliese Spaziano	East Lyme		Present
Jason England	Groton	Treasurer	Present
David Bednarz	Ledyard		<i>Excused</i>
Kathy Howard	MSMHS	Chair	Present
Jenn Hills-Papetti	New London		Present
Monica Swyden	NFA		Present
Lisa England	Preston		Present
Penny Phipps	Salem		Present
Suzanne Scorza	Sprague		Present
Nat Trumbull	UConn		Present
Mike O'Connor	Waterford		Present
J. Andrew Ely	Project O	Ex-officio	Present
PUBLIC			
Lesley DeLabry	Project O		Present
Allison Keck	Project O		Present
Callie Scheetz	Project O		Present
Janet Farquar	New London		Present

*20 present including 16 board members

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Kathy Howard, Chair. A quorum was established.
2. Reviewed minutes of May 29, 2025 meeting. **Motion to accept the minutes at 4:06 p.m. by Eleanor Mariani/2nd Josh Fish. Unanimous**
3. Public comments – Lesley DeLabry welcomed everyone back to the new school year. Allison Keck introduced herself to the Board.
4. Chairman’s remarks to the Board – Kathy Howard, Chair, said she was lucky enough to go on the first boat trip out this year. She said it is a great opportunity for students to experience the world in a very personal way and wonder about the environment.
5. Executive Director’s report –Andrew briefly highlighted the following information from his Executive Director’s Report for the Board:

Budget/Finance: Andrew went through Enclosures 1 and 2. For 2024-2025, there were higher-than-expected costs for professional services; mainly because of necessary vessel and seawater system repairs. The annual audit for this fiscal year is scheduled for early October. He pointed out that for 2025-2026, Project Oceanology needs to spend the remaining Revolution Wind money by the end of September.

Grant activities: Project Oceanology has several pending grant applications. Andrew specifically mentioned the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, which would fund programming at Norwalk Public Schools. As well as the Community Program Funds and Congressionally Directed Spending that have passed the House and Senate but are awaiting the final FY26 Budget. Current grants mentioned included the LISCIF grant with the MSMHS in Groton, the Claire C. Bennitt Watershed Fund to support Branford Public School programming, the Enstructure donation supporting New Haven Middle School programs, and the VIMS grant to continue recovery of abandoned and lost lobster traps.

School Year Programs: For the second year in a row, Project Oceanology employees and local high school students attended Capitol Hill Ocean Week, and microplastics was a common topic of interest among the high school students. Project Oceanology is awaiting funding for after-school programs in Norwich and New London. Lastly, the Quahog Bowl is scheduled to return to UConn Avery Point on February 14, 2026. This event will again be co-hosted by UConn and Project Oceanology; and 2 new schools from Rhode Island have expressed interest in attending.

Public events: Project Oceanology operated 5 successful Oceanographic Cruises this summer and is planning 6 Seal Watch Cruises for this upcoming March and April. Enviro-Lab II was well visited at the Maritime Heritage Festival in New London earlier this month. At the end of September, Project Oceanology will be featured as a Showcase Vendor in the Connecticut Building at the Big E.

Summer Camps: Summer Camp at Project Oceanology was a success with 433 campers and 9 interns. The first of the 8 weeks of camps had the lowest attendance.

Staff: Haylie Schwarzenbach is working on a paper using Project Oceanology's data on Atlantic Harbor seals. Project Oceanology interviewed 16 applicants from Grasso Technical High School for internships. Allison Keck has started her role as Marketing and Communications Specialist, and Kelsy Gillen has been painting pictures of marine animals and seabirds in Project Oceanology labs. Lastly, our part-time custodian, Tremaine Swinson, is doing a great job, including catching up with maintenance projects around the building.

Administration/logistics: The seawater system has been repaired and a plate was installed for access if needed in the future and separately, new hoses to draw seawater into the pumphouse were installed. There were several repairs to the Project Oceanology building over the summer. Project Oceanology's liability insurance policies were renewed with a new carrier without a reduction in coverage or increase in price. Lastly, Project Oceanology transitioned to Anthem as the new employee medical insurance carrier.

Outreach: Project Oceanology attended many outreach events over the summer, including one with the Encore Fellowship meeting with UConn's School of Public Policy. We were invited to work with an Encore Fellow on strategic initiatives this fall; these interviews are upcoming.

6. Committee Membership and Reports:
 - a. Executive Committee – n/a
 - b. Personnel Committee – n/a
 - c. Program Committee – n/a
 - d. Budget Committee – n/a
 - e. Vessel Search Committee – n/a

7. The Board confirmed the following meeting dates for the remainder of the year:
 - a. October 9, 2025
 - b. November 13, 2025
 - c. January 29, 2026
 - d. February 19, 2026
 - e. March 26, 2026
 - f. April 30, 2026
 - g. May 28, 2026

8. Establish Committee meeting dates:
 - i. Personnel Committee: TBD
 - ii. Budget Committee: September 30, 2025, at 4 pm
 - iii. Program Committee: TBD

9. **Motion to Adjourn was made at 5:04 p.m. by Josh Fish/2nd Lisa England. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Biddle, Board Secretary