

**Project Oceanology  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
October 9, 2025 - 4:00pm**

**Attendance:**

<b>BOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>OFFICERS</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE *</b>
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		Excused
Kathy Howard	MSMHS	Chair	Present
Jenn Hills-Papetti	New London		<i>Absent</i>
Monica Swyden	NFA		Excused
Lisa England	Preston		Present
Penny Phipps	Salem		Excused
Suzanne Scorza	Sprague		Present
Nat Trumbull	UConn		Present
Mike O'Connor	Waterford		<i>Excused</i>
J. Andrew Ely	Project O	Ex-officio	Present
<b>PUBLIC</b>			
Lesley DeLabry	Project O		Present
Callie Scheetz	Project O		Present
Janet Farquar	New London		Present
Michael Matthais	Project O		Present

\*16 present including 12 board members

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Kathy Howard, Chair. A quorum was established.
2. Reviewed minutes of September 11, 2025 meeting. **Motion to accept the minutes at 4:04 p.m. by Josh Fish/2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Gardiner. Unanimous.**
3. Introduction of Dr. Michael Matthais – Welcome to Michael “Mike” who will be working with Project Oceanology for the next few months as an Encore Fellow. He most recently worked at Yale School of Medicine and has nearly 30 years of applied science experience.
4. Public comments- None.
5. Chairman’s remarks to the Board – Kathy Howard, Chair, stated that we had a lot to cover in the current board meeting.

6. Executive Director's report –Andrew briefly highlighted the following information from his Executive Director's Report for the Board:

*Budget/Finance:* Andrew directed us to see Enclosure 1 with the Comparative Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet as of September 30, 2025 and the proposed revised 2025-2026 Budget as Enclosure 2. Overall, our income has decreased. Income decreases primarily stem from: the end of Revolution Wind funding, the loss of one member school (Columbia), a reduction in supplemental programs purchased by Thames River Magnet School, and the compounding effects of multiple years of the CSDE Interdistrict Grant program being capped at \$100K per year. The total bank/investment account is smaller because we had to use Revolution Wind Fund money that had been previously invested. Finally, this year's annual audit went well, and the results will be presented at the January board meeting.

*Grant activities:* Project Oceanology has received a grant from the Bonnell Cove Foundation earlier today for \$3.5K to support travel to Capitol Hill Ocean Week. The grants section of the report has been revised to show pending grants, upcoming grant applications, and approved grants.

*School Year Programs:* There are 10 schools that are interested in participating in the upcoming Quahog Bowl on February 14, 2026.

*Staff:* Eight (8) Grasso Technical High School Marine Science Interns have started working in the Seawater Lab. Special thanks to Lisa Colon for her work preparing for our annual audit.

*Administrative and logistics:* There was fire in the mechanical room earlier today, which was due to an electrical failure. An employee smelled the fire and made notifications, 911 was called, and the fire was put out with a towel prior to the fire department arriving. No students were in the building at the time of the event. The building was declared safe to occupy by the fire department and appropriate follow-up was planned for the following day with the UConn Fire Marshall. In addition, the steam pipe and condensation pipes that connect Project Oceanology to the Marine Sciences Building will need to be replaced. When this is done, the building will not have heat for 2-3 days; Project Oceanology will plan accordingly for any impacted programs and housing for the resident supervisor.

*Outreach/Upcoming Events:* On October 29, 2025 the Governor's Chief of Staff, Department of Revenue, and state legislators including Senator Somers will visit Project Oceanology. On November 12, 2025 there will be an Art Opening featuring works of internal and external artists. This event is open to the public and will take place at Project Oceanology from 5:30 to 7:30 pm; a program to thank the artists will be at 6 pm.

7. Committee Membership and Reports:
  - a. Committee membership-Andrew Ely- Welcome back Suzanne Scorza as the voting Board member for Sprague and thank you to her for resuming her role on the Programs Committee.

- b. Executive Committee – n/a
  - c. Personnel Committee – Nathaniel Trumbull, Committee Chair and Andrew Ely- This Committee worked on the Whistleblower, Conflict of Interest, Document Retention and Destruction, and Vehicle Fleet Policies. Kathy Howard expressed thanks to this committee for all their hard work. The policies will be presented to the Board after the Executive Directors Report.
  - d. Program Committee – n/a
  - e. Budget Committee – Tom Gardiner, Committee Chair- Stated that the proposed revised budget only includes approved funding and income sources that Project Oceanology has high confidence in; some promising funding possibilities are pending. The final Revolution Wind money went to good causes such as seawater system repairs, EnviroLab II repairs and maintenance, other equipment, the new website, marketing, and hiring a firm to help find, submit, and acquire more grants. We are facing challenges created by loss of continued Revolution Wind Funding and the \$100K cap on the CSDE Interdistrict Grant program per year (formerly \$463K in 2022). The Committee considered including more types of programming, so we are eligible for more varied grants.
8. Review and Vote on Policies:
- a. Whistleblower Policy- This is a new policy that gives staff a venue to address anything that they think might be unethical.
  - b. Conflict of Interest Policy- This is a new policy that will be taken back to the Personnel Committee for further discussion before the board votes.
  - c. Document Retention and Destruction Policy- This is a new policy being put in place on an official basis but is already in practice.
  - d. Vehicle Fleet Policy (Revised)- Proposed improvements ensure information required by insurance is gathered in the event of a vehicle accident and create standard vehicle checklists that track vehicle use and maintenance.

**Motion to accept the Whistleblower Policy and Document Retention and Destruction Policy at 4:51 p.m. by Jay England/2<sup>nd</sup> Josh Fish. Unanimous.**

**Motion to accept the Vehicle Fleet Policy at 4:58 p.m. by Jay England/2<sup>nd</sup> Suzanne Scorza. Unanimous.**

9. Review and Vote on Revised 2025-2026 Budget- Andrew Ely reviewed the proposed revised budget in more detail, explaining many individual line items. Several expenses that are increasing are beyond our ability to control including building expenses, guest parking fees, food provided by UConn for camps and overnight programs, and health insurance benefits. We want to continue offering living wages and continuing education opportunities for the benefit of the staff. Revolution Wind closeout raised some of our expenses, especially Professional Services for vessel

repairs, equipment maintenance, and equipment replacement. Overall, our total expenses are estimated to be more than our total income, so we need to continue to seek new ways to bring in funding. Andrew noted that as Project Oceanology receives new funding sources, the income portion of the budget will be adjusted accordingly.

**Motion to accept the revised 2025-2026 Budget as written at 5:15 p.m. by Tom Gardiner/2<sup>nd</sup> Suzanne Scorza. Unanimous.**

10. The board established the following meeting dates:

a. Board meeting dates:

- a. November 13, 2025
- b. January 29, 2026
- c. February 19, 2026
- d. March 26, 2026
- d. April 30, 2026
- f. May 28, 2026

b. Committee meeting dates:

- i. Program Committee- October 14, 2025
- ii. Personnel Committee- TBD
- iii. Budget Committee- TBD

**11. Motion to Adjourn was made at 5:17 p.m. by Josh Fish/2<sup>nd</sup> Lisa England. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Biddle, Board Secretary