

**Project Oceanology  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
March 7, 2024 - 4:00pm**

**Attendance:**

<b>BOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>OFFICERS</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE *</b>
Joshua Fish	Bozrah		Present
Jennifer Andrews	Columbia		Present
Eleanor Mariani	Community Mbr		Present
Kate Biddle	Community Mbr		Present
Robin Harris	Community Mbr		Present
Tom Gardiner	Community Mbr		Present
Lisa Vaudreuil	East Lyme		<i>Excused</i>
Jason England	Groton	Treasurer	Present
Bill Linski	ISAAC		<i>Absent</i>
David Bednarz	Ledyard		<i>Absent</i>
Kathy Howard	MSMHS	Chair	Present
Jenn Hills-Papetti	New London		<i>Absent</i>
Monica Swyden	NFA		Present
Lisa England	Preston		<i>Excused</i>
Laura Runkle	Salem		<i>Absent</i>
Suzanne Scorza	Sprague	Secretary	Present
Nat Trumbull	UConn		Present
Mike O'Connor	Waterford		Present
J. Andrew Ely	Project O	Ex-officio	Present
<b>PUBLIC</b>			
Callie Scheetz	Project O		Present
Janet Farquar	New London		Present

\*15 present including 13 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 February 1, 2024 meeting. **Motion to accept minutes as presented at 4:04 p.m. by Suzanne Scorza/2<sup>nd</sup> Mike O'Connor. Unanimous.**
3. Public comments. None.
4. Chairman's remarks to the Board – It is great to have such good attendance and meaningful discussion in Board and committee meetings. Kathy discussed the Southeastern CT Youth Climate Summit that was held today at the Port N Starboard in New London. This event was organized from a group started by 3 juniors at MSMHS and was attended by students from NFA, Fitch, MSMHS, and Norwich Tech. Monica Swyden commented that she was also at the event today with 32 of her NFA students. Both Kathy and Monica had positive things to say about the presenters including Callie Scheetz and the student engagement.

5. Executive Director's report – Andrew started with a discussion of the current fiscal year budget. He reviewed Enclosure (2) to the Executive Director's report in detail which provided the current approved budget and a proposed new budget for the board to adopt. Andrew explained the changes to income and expenses, here is a summary of key points: Many income projections made in the fall have been adjusted based on actual performance, the overall net change is an increase of \$5.8K. Expenses have also been adjusted to reflect actual costs. Notable changes include a projected \$33.3K reduction in salaries primarily due to operation of one boat instead of two, a \$25K increase in supplies for purchases of small instructor equipment which was source from a \$26K reduction in large equipment purchases that were not made. There has also been a reduction in legal costs to near \$0 with free legal support we are receiving from the Pro Bono Partnership. There was one question about the content of budget category 8150, Other Income. Andrew explained that this was primarily the sale of Enviro-Lab 3 (\$75K of the \$76+K in that category). **A motion was made at 4:22 p.m. to accept the proposed budget revision for FY24 as presented by Eleanor Mariani/2<sup>nd</sup> Jay England. Unanimous.**

Andrew highlighted the following information from his written report for the Board:  
*Grant activities:* A NOAA B-WET grant application was submitted in partnership with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and CT Sea Grant as Co-PI's for approximately \$100K late in February. Thanks to Callie Sheetz for her significant work to draft the application narrative and coordinate with the Co-PI's. Grasso Tech Welding students will be supporting our Abandoned Lobster Recovery efforts by fabricating 3 lobster trap crushing machines for Project Oceanology, Save the Sound, and The Maritime Aquarium. Funding for this work is being provided by a grant managed by The Maritime Aquarium

*School Year Programs:* Quahog Bowl 2024 was a good event. Andrew thanked Fitch and Ledyard for their participation and the members of the Board who volunteered to support this event; Mike O'Connor, Robin Harris, and Suzanne Scorza.

*Summer Camps:* Registration is filling in, Andrew encouraged member schools who had not yet done so to submit their names for summer camp. Currently at 53% capacity there will be very few spots left by late April based on current enrollment rates. Andrew also discussed summer staffing and our work with other organizations like Eleven+ to identify and hire a diverse staff with varying backgrounds as well as the added benefit that interns from these programs often come with partial funding for their salary which helps us keep our expenses down.

*Administration/Logistics:* Andrew provided an update completed repairs in the pumphouse and continued work to repaint and refresh spaces in the building.

*Staff:* Project O was selected as the non-profit of the year, we will be recognized at an event at the Mystic Marriot on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Outreach:* Andrew discussed attendance at Ocean Week, June 4-6 in Washington, DC. The Board discussed sending 2-4 high school students to the event with Andrew and Amanda as chaperones funded by Project O. Students will be selected from member high schools. Project O will be reaching out to the high schools to solicit nominations with a question for student applicants to answer. Project O will select the students to attend out of the applicants.

6. Committee Membership and Reports:
  - a. Executive Committee n/a
  - b. Personnel Committee – Eleanor Mariani (committee chair) provided an overview of changes to the Employee Handbook and noted that the committee agreed with this version for publication. She reviewed key changes harassment policy, mandated training, PTO, FMLA, paid paternal leave, and remote work. **Motion to approve the revised Employee Handbook as presented at 4:58 p.m. by Mike O’Connor/2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Gardiner. Unanimous.**
  - c. Program Committee
  - d. Budget Committee – n/a
  - e. Vessel Search Committee – Andrew provided an update on the M/V Keyport Princess. A survey is being conducted today by a surveyor with experience in fiberglass over wood vessel construction. Once the results of the survey are received Ian Morisson (Committee Chair) will convene a meeting of the committee to review the results and to discuss next steps.
  
7. The Board agreed on the following meeting dates for the remainder of the current school year:
  - a. April 18, 2024
  - b. May 9, 2024
  - c. June 7, 2024
  
8. **Motion to Adjourn was made at 5:03p.m. by Jay England/2<sup>nd</sup> Josh Fish. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Scorza, Board Secretary