

**Project Oceanology  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2025 - 4:00pm**

| <b>Attendance<br/>BOARD MEMBER</b> | <b>ORGANIZATION</b> | <b>OFFICERS</b> | <b>ATTENDANCE<br/>*</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Joshua Fish                        | Bozrah              |                 | Excused                 |
| Jennifer Andrews                   | Columbia            |                 | <i>Absent</i>           |
| Eleanor Mariani                    | Community Mbr       |                 | Present                 |
| Kate Biddle                        | Community Mbr       | Secretary       | Present                 |
| Robin Harris                       | Community Mbr       |                 | Excused                 |
| Tom Gardiner                       | Community Mbr       |                 | Present                 |
| Annaliese Spaziano                 | East Lyme           |                 | Excused                 |
| Jason England                      | Groton              | Treasurer       | Present                 |
| 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             |                 | Present                 |
| Penny Phipps                       | Salem               |                 | Present                 |
| Cassidy Corey                      | Sprague             |                 | Present                 |
| Nat Trumbull                       | UConn               |                 | Present                 |
| Mike O'Connor                      | Waterford           |                 | Present                 |
| J. Andrew Ely                      | Project Oceanology  | Ex-officio      | Present                 |
| <b>PUBLIC</b>                      |                     |                 |                         |
| Lesley De Labry                    | Project Oceanology  |                 | Present                 |

**\*13 present including 12 board members**

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm by Kathy Howard. A quorum was established.
2. Reviewed minutes of January 30, 2025 meeting. **Motion to accept minutes as presented at 4:04 p.m. by Mike O'Connor/Tom Gardiner 2nd. Unanimous.**
3. Public comments: None
4. Chairman's remarks to the Board: Though it may not have felt like it in New England, this past January was the warmest on record. Thank you for working to support the ocean and environment and continuing to do so during difficult times.
5. Highlights from the Executive Director's report –
  - a. Financial – LPL Financial Investment Account balance continues to improve.
  - b. Grants – Project Oceanology will partner with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and for grant consulting has selected to work with Richard J. Miller & Associates (All funded by Revolution Wind); Andrew recently completed a grant application for the Cliff

Family Foundation (\$25K) as they support funding for environmental causes which includes support of operating costs.

c. School year – Mike O'Connor was at the Quahog Bowl and reported that students had a great time. Project Oceanology is developing a checklist to help organize this yearly event with UConn.

d. Public Programs – Seal watch trips on EnviroLab II began this week and are starting to fill up.

e. Summer Camp – Summer camp registration is ongoing and one summer camp session is already full. The application status is already ahead of where it was at this time last year which is due to targeted marketing by Emily; There appears to be a high demand for the new spring camp as it already has kids on a waitlist; Hiring for summer positions has started and there are already several applicants with some offers and/or acceptances.

f. Staff/Volunteers – A former board member, Suzanne Scorza, has kindly volunteered to help with custodial and maintenance tasks in the building; The lobster trap crusher is working very well for disposal of abandoned traps recovered from the Long Island Sound.

g. Administrative and logistics – A break in the pipe for the seawater system was discovered on February 14, 2025. It was found early and secured quickly. A contractor has been hired to investigate the pipes with a camera after which Project Oceanology will attain contractor bids to repair the system; The security assessment by the UConn Police Department has been completed and the results will be used to apply for grants to improve building access, exterior lighting, and/or to control building access. Suggestions from the police lieutenant were to install multipoint cameras and install swipe cards to limit door access within areas and buildings. These would tie into UConn's existing systems so after installation UConn would manage and maintain these systems and information; EnviroLab II just underwent routine engine maintenance and resumed operation this week. Later this spring additional welding repairs will be made to the exhaust system; Progress continues the on new artwork for the Project Oceanology building being created by staff of Mystic Museum of Art. When the paintings and sculpture are completed and onsite there will be an open art showing at Project Oceanology.

h. Outreach – Currently, there are 4 fundraising events that are scheduled for Project Oceanology this year. The newest event is a "Celebrity" Bartenders event from which 10% of sales will benefit Project Oceanology on May 29, 2025, from 7-9 pm at Mix Restaurant and Rooftop Bar in Mystic. Please consider attending this after the last board meeting of the year and the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Project Oceanology Staff & Board of Directors Dinner; Callie Scheetz and Andrew recently met with the Science Department Head at New Haven Public School System to discuss Project Oceanology programming (onsite in New Haven and/or a bus trip to Project Oceanology to go on a boat trip) for New Haven Public Schools; Andrew attended an Executive Steering Committee meeting with faculty and staff from URI and other community partners to evaluate proposed plans for a center at URI to offer marine science education.

6. Committee Membership and Reports:

- a. Executive Committee n/a
- b. Personnel Committee – n/a
- c. Programs Committee – n/a
- d. Budget Committee – n/a
- e. Vessel Search Committee – n/a

7. Proposed or confirmed board and/or committee meeting dates:

a. Committee meeting dates:

- i. Budget Committee –confirmed date of March 4, 2025, at 4 pm; meeting will be in person and Andrew will follow up with an email about the location.
- ii. Personnel Committee – new proposed date of March 12, 2025, at 4 pm or later; Andrew will email committee members to confirm date and time.
- iii. Programs Committee – proposed date of March 6, 2025; Andrew will email committee members to confirm date and time.

b. Board meeting dates:

- i. March 13, 2025
- ii. April 24, 2025
- iii. May 29, 2025; note this will be followed by a Project Oceanology Board of Directors and Staff Dinner from 5-7 pm at Project Oceanology and a “Celebrity” Bartenders event to benefit Project Oceanology from 7-9 pm at Mix Restaurant and Rooftop Bar in Mystic.

**8. Entered Executive Session at 4:38 pm. Monica Swyden/Mike O’Connor 2nd. Unanimous.**

**Out of executive session at 4:49 pm. Mike O’Connor/Jay England 2nd, with no motions to file. Unanimous.**

**9. Motion to Adjourn was made at 4:49 pm. Lisa England/Monica Swyden 2nd. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Biddle, Community Board Member and Secretary