

**Project Oceanology
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2024 - 4:00pm**

Attendance:

BOARD MEMBER	ORGANIZATION	OFFICERS	ATTENDANCE *
Joshua Fish	Bozrah		<i>Excused</i>
Jennifer Andrews	Columbia		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		<i>Excused</i>
Jason England	Groton	Treasurer	Present
David Bednarz	Ledyard		<i>Excused</i>
Kathy Howard	MSMHS	Chair	Present
Jenn Hills-Papetti	New London		<i>Absent</i>
Monica Swyden	NFA		<i>Absent</i>
Lisa England	Preston		Present
Penny Phipps	Salem		<i>Absent</i>
Cassidy Corey	Sprague		Present
Nat Trumbull	UConn		Present
Mike O'Connor	Waterford		<i>Excused</i>
J. Andrew Ely	Project O	Ex-officio	Present
PUBLIC			
Callie Scheetz	Project O		Present
Leslie Labry	Project O		Present
Janet Farquar	New London		Present

*14 present including 11 board members

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Kathy Howard, Chair. A quorum was established.
2. Reviewed minutes of June 7, 2024 meeting. **Motion to accept minutes as presented at 4:05 p.m. by Jay England/2nd Lisa England. Unanimous.**
3. Public comments: Callie Scheetz welcomed everyone back.
4. Chairman's remarks to the Board – Chair, Kathy Howard, she had been out on the Project O boat all day. Her class had a great time and wonderful weather which was a great way to start the school year.
5. Andrew Ely presented the following new board members for acceptance to serve on the Board of Directors: East Lyme – Annaliese Spaziano, Assistant Superintendent; Salem – Penny Phipps; Sprague – Cassidy Corey (Note: Cathy Fontaine from Sprague may also join sometimes in place of Cassidy Corey). **A motion to accept Annaliese**

Spaziano to represent East Lyme, Penny Phipps to represent Salem, and Cassidy Corey to represent Sprague was made at 4:09 p.m. by Lisa England/2nd Robin Harris. Unanimous.

6. Executive Director's report – Andrew Ely started with a discussion of the last fiscal year budget. He reported that our income was up from what we expected although we spent more than we earned; we sold the boat which kept our budget net positive for the year end. He reviewed Enclosure (1) to the Executive Director's report in detail which provided the current budget. He noted that he has not yet included money for grants which have not come through, so this amount is expected to increase but so are several of the costs listed in the budget (food and meals, boat maintenance, supplies, student transportation, etc.). He explained that summer camp was net neutral this year because costs have increased and as we plan for camp next year need to think carefully about our camp prices. He let us know that the LPL financial account is doing well, and there will be some changes in the future to try to retain the capital earned. Lastly, there is money left over in our tuition assistance grants and donation to hand out for camp tuition assistance next year. Parents and guardians applying for tuition assistance will know what money is available for them ahead of time. Overall, he expects the budget to tight this year because we only have one boat and many costs (insurance, leases, fuel, etc.) have increased this year. We will revisit the budget in more detail next month.

Andrew highlighted the following information from his written report for the Board: *Grant activities:* Our work concluded on the NOAA B-WET 2021 Grant and NOAA B-WET 2024 funding is delayed due to a change in NOAA's distribution of funds which is now managed by the National Institute of Health eRA Commons financial management tool. LTRAP work continues and Project Oceanology received additional funding to continue this work for multiple years. The Congressionally Directed Spending Request and a Community Program Funding Request are still in process.

School Year Programs: Our school vessel program consists of Enviro-Lab II augmented by Aubrey Joy. The boats are well booked so rescheduling boat trips might be difficult. We will be delivering after-school programs to ISSAC, Groton, and Stonington and possibly Winthrop Elementary if an NLPS grant is funded. The Quahog bowl will return to Avery point this year on Feb 1, 2025.

Public events: The Maritime Heritage Festival was a great event and there Project O met with many families displaying live animals and talking about the organizations mission and opportunities.

Summer Camps: For summer camps, Project O had great staff and interns, 468 campers overall; Marine Science Research Experience and Ocean Explorer Academy campers got to visit with scientists and officers from NOAA in week 6 of camp – this was a popular program that we intend to continue next year. Thank you to Callie Scheetz for impactful training on behavior management for the camp staff.

Staff: Welcome to Kelsey Gillen a new full-time educator and thank you to Seth Megargle for returning as a part time captain.

Administration/logistics: The floating pier has been rebuilt; we hope the repairs will hold up for years to come. Andrew has been working with CT DEEP to address the use of dock at Shennecossett Yacht Club that makes it difficult for Enviro-Lab to

safely moor in her berth. New London Public school systems donated furniture to Project O. The new website and trademark of name and logo are still in process. *Outreach:* The CBEC held a launch event at Mystic Seaport on July 10, 2024. LISS took part in an impactful educational event in Washington, DC on July 10, 2024.

7. Committee Membership and Reports:
 - a. Executive Committee – n/a
 - b. Personnel Committee – n/a
 - c. Program Committee – There is space on the program committee for an additional Board Member. Andrew will solicit a new member by email.
 - d. Budget Committee – n/a
 - e. Vessel Search Committee – n/a

8. The board established the following meeting dates for the remainder of 2024/2025:
 - a. October 10, 2024
 - b. November 14, 2024
 - c. January 30, 2025
 - d. February 20, 2025
 - e. March 13, 2025
 - f. April 24, 2025
 - g. May 29, 2024

9. **Motion to Adjourn was made at 4:53 p.m. by Lisa England/2nd Elenor Mariani. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Biddle, Board Secretary