

**Project Oceanology®
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2025 - 4:00pm**

Attendance BOARD MEMBER	ORGANIZATION	OFFICERS	ATTENDANCE *
Joshua Fish	Bozrah		Present
Jennifer Andrews	Columbia		<i>Absent</i>
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		<i>Excused</i>
Cassidy Corey	Sprague		<i>Absent</i>
Nat Trumbull	UConn		<i>Absent</i>
Mike O'Connor	Waterford		<i>Excused</i>
J. Andrew Ely	Project Oceanology	Ex-officio	Present
PUBLIC			
Callie Scheetz	Project Oceanology		Present
Lesley DeLabry	Project Oceanology		Present

*** 14 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 February 20, 2025 meeting. **Motion to accept minutes as presented at 4:05 pm. Lisa England/Joshua Fish 2nd. Robin Harris and Annaliese Spaziano abstained.**
3. Public comments: None
4. Chairman's remarks to the Board: It is already March, so we need to start thinking about several things.
 - a. Kathy expressed gratitude for all those on the board. All members of the Board have 1-year terms that can be renewed indefinitely. Board members representing members are appointed by school systems, community members are elected by the members representing school systems. Prior to last board meeting on May 29th, we will need names of community members that wish to stay on the board and officers (chairman, treasurer, and secretary) for a vote.

b. There are 2 upcoming opportunities for staff, board members, and/or high school students. Thank you to Franklin Templeton and Mystic Financial for funding these opportunities.

i. National Marine Educators Association takes place June 29th-July 3rd in Lafayette, LA. For staff, Callie Scheetz will attend and there is also funding to send one board member. Contact Andrew if interested as those attending should register soon.

ii. Capitol Hill Ocean Week is May 31st-June 5th in Washington, DC. There is funding to send 2 high school students, and we will need to decide how to pick these students. In addition, there are funds to support a board member to represent Project Oceanology. Reach out to Andrew if interested.

5. Highlights from the Executive Director's report:

a. Budget/Finance – FY2025 total income and expenses were provided. The investment account is doing well despite the sharp market downturn.

b. Grant Activities/Updates – Thanks to Revolution Wind, Project Oceanology will provide 2 all day in school programs for New Haven Public Schools this spring; recently completed a grant feasibility study with Richard J. Miller and Associates and will find out soon if they can support Project Oceanology in seeking new grants; and will attend the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS) Spring Conference on March 20th and the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools Conference on April 28th-April 29th. Project Oceanology completed the full application for the Long Island Sound Community Investment Fund and should be notified about this grant proposal at the end of April or beginning of May; the Interdistrict Grant Program funds Connecticut River Connections and earlier this week members of the Connecticut River Museum education staff (who co-teach part of this program) joined Project Oceanology for a seal watch trip.

c. School Year Programs – Project Oceanology has a new program funded by a grant from the Connecticut Judicial Branch comprised of an April Break week Marine Science Camp that is already full; Marine Science Day, co-hosted by UConn, will be May 14th.

d. Public Programs – Project Oceanology will have Family Day on April 26th. This is especially popular for camp tours which require advance registration.

e. Summer Camp - Thanks to all the member schools for getting their summer camp registrations in. Summer hires are ongoing, and several positions have been filled.

f. Administrative and Logistics – The seawater system has been inspected and the source of the leak identified. The contractor that provided a quote to fix this has been asked to prepare an itemized quote. In the meantime, Project Oceanology is consulting with engineers at UConn. The UConn Police and Contractor are developing project cost estimates to use when seeking a grant to improve facility security. The trademark for "Project Oceanology" was approved on March 11, 2025. The trademark for the logo is still pending.

h. Outreach –There are 3 upcoming scheduled fundraising events that will be held at Project Oceanology as well as a “Celebrity” Bartenders Event at Mix Restaurant and Rooftop Bar. Please consider attending these events and/or share them on social media; Enstructure is still interested in providing funding support so Project Oceanology can provide programming to New Haven school systems and planning for that work is ongoing. The Executive Steering Committee at URI is still interested in possible Project Oceanology programming at URI and a member of the URI faculty will attend our next board meeting to discuss this initiative. Andrew met with SCIENT Federal Credit Union who will continue to fund Robin’s Ice Cream truck for summer camp and area also considering other ways to support Project Oceanology.

6. Committee Membership and Reports:

a. Executive Committee- n/a

b. Personnel Committee – The committee met on March 12th to discuss two things.

i. Review the Employee Handbook changes required by CT to Paid Time Off (PTO) policy to include Paid Sick Leave (PSL), their relationship to one another, the hours of PSL that can be earned per year and that it cannot be carried over to another year. After discussion a **motion was made at 4:37 p.m. by Jay England/2nd Lisa England to accept the revised PTO and PSL policies. Unanimous.**

ii. Review Project Oceanology Job Descriptions so that for future hires there is a list of responsibilities to show new employees. Andrew thanked Eleanor Mariani for her work to update the previous job descriptions to the new standardized format.

c. Programs Committee – n/a

d. Budget Committee – The committee met on March 4th to discuss draft 2025-2026 budget.

i. Projected Income- Confirmed income includes membership fees, member supplemental sales, a NOAA B-WET grant, and the remaining Revolution Wind funds. Sales of school programs to non-member schools, summer camp and public cruises while not confirmed have been set at income levels that Project Oceanology will meet and may exceed. Sales of single school programs and summer camp are outperforming projections and overnight hostel sales are underperforming projections. There are still many unknowns including several grant sources as well as approval of Congressionally Directed Spending and Community Program Fund requests. Possible ways to increase income included working with the Richard J Miler and Associates to help seek new grants.

ii. Projected Expenses- There will be a 1.75% increase in staff salaries to help keep up with inflation. Vessel maintenance should be lower as EnviroLab II recently had a lot of work done and no new equipment purchases are planned. The budget remains tight and is still a deficit so will need to look for ways to decrease expenditures or increase income.

e. Vessel Search Committee – The committee met on March 5th to discuss a vessel for sale.

i. The M/V Atlantis is a 1986 fiberglass vessel powered by 3 Detroit 6-71s and has a Coast Guard Inspection Certificate of Inspection for 87 passengers and is in Miami, FL. This boat is longer than EnviroLab II but has the same engines and fiberglass construction and a good record with the Coast Guard. UConn is agreeable to this vessel being moored at the floating dock with a plan for a fixed pier to use when

needed. This vessel has potential and there is a plan to travel to investigate it further if possible after learning the state of the federal budget fundings.

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

a. Board meeting dates:

i. April 24, 2025

1. Special agenda items: Presentation by Chris Kincaid, Professor of Oceanography at URI on a Coastal Public Access Venue at the Narragansett Bay Campus; 2025-2026 Project Oceanology Budget Proposal and vote; nominations for 2025-2026 Board of Directors Officers and Community Members.

ii. May 29, 2025

1. Special agenda items: Election of 2025-2026 Board of Directors Officers and Community Members

b. Committee meeting dates:

i. Programs Committee – April 7, 2025

ii. Budget Committee –TBD in April (if needed)

8. Motion to Adjourn was made at 4:54 pm. Joshua Fish/Monica Swyden 2nd. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Biddle, Community Board Member and Secretary