



DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 7:00pm

Board Members

Sarah Armour
Adenike Bamgboye
Peter Capek
~~Joshua Clyburn~~
Mitzi Elkes, Executive Committee At Large
Joan Gaylord
Neil Gordon, Treasurer
Samantha Hicks, President
~~Gareth Hougham~~
Arthur Jones, Vice-President
~~Aaron Mair~~

~~Jennifer McMillan~~
Tom Murphy, Executive Comm. At Large
Jeremy Rainer
Dan Riesel
Larry Rothbart
Gabrielle Spielberg
Steve Stanne, Executive Comm. At Large
Donna Stein
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary
~~Sarah Underhill~~
Julia Wilson
(~~strike through~~ indicates absence)

Staff Members

Meg Mayo

David Toman, Executive Director

Members

Jeremy Baron

Alan Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
Mission Song sung by Neil, "This Land is Your Land"

Approval of Minutes

The 07/11/24 Board meeting minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Executive Director's Report

Operations

David gave a program update including Tideline, on board education, youth empowerment programs, fall charters, and upcoming special events. Tideline spring programming was fully booked for the second year in a row. All three youth empowerment programs returned this year, were well attended and received great feedback. These programs were funded in part by the Dorr Foundation. A unique new program, Animation Screening on the Clearwater mainsail from Red Hook, Brooklyn, coordinated with PortSide and NY Film and Video Council is set for Oct 3rd. To date, “Pay What You Can” sails have had a 95% occupancy and continue to build community and dock relationships. Sponsors for these sails would enable them to continue long term. Upcoming special events include the Beacon Sloop Club Pumpkin Festival, Walktober Poughkeepsie, Pumpkin sail event in Kingston, and an invitation to the ribbon cutting on the new Fleischmann Pier in Peekskill (a new dock in Westchester County!). A Fall Speaker Sail Series is underway with upcoming sails covering Hudson River fish and how they shape our culture, PCBs, and Hudson River flood resistance.

An August 15th Friends of the Clean Hudson briefing was attended by over 100 individuals and the recording is available online. An 8/21 PCB advocacy sail out of Beacon sold out, with the talk followed by a comment writing session. An action alert on this topic is forthcoming.

Vacant staffing positions are being filled. A Donor Relations Coordinator, Emily Marcet, started Sept. 9th and an Events and Program Sponsorship Coordinator will start Sept. 30th. Advertising for an Education Director is underway, with this position replacing the Program Director’s position, vacant as of 9/4.

While the opportunity for significant bank loan forgiveness remains, and contributions have been received, a pathway is not yet clear. Creative thoughts can be shared with David or Meg.

David shared progress of the Business Management Plan (BMP) group. The top goal is to deliver three years of budget targets building towards a 12% surplus in the 3rd year. The team updated the organization chart with an Education Director’s role having the capacity to focus on growth of programs, both sloop and land based, and with an outline for potential future investments. The group will be working on the Board role, targets and expectations to be presented at the Annual Meeting. Up next will be defining workstreams to achieve specific targets; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed to measure growth to success.

The Annual Meeting theme is BMP and our plan to help Clearwater achieve success in 2025, as an organization and, importantly, as individual board members – how do we see ourselves as part of this change. David asked everyone to challenge themselves on how best to participate, and think about it in advance of the meeting.

Development

Meg went into more detail on the responsibilities of the new Donor Relations Coordinator and the new Events and Sponsorship Coordinator. David thanked Meg for her stellar job keeping us going since spring, while very short handed, and noted that we are backlogged, but can now catch up.

Meg said development revenue is 33% better than last year (includes the emergency appeal), and we will continue to build on the connections and relationships with those who stepped up during this serious fiscal crisis. Julia requested the difference in development revenue between this year and last, subtracting out the emergency appeal results. This will receive a follow up.

Fall appeal is scheduled to mail later this month.

Meg gave a detailed overview of the grants pipeline and took questions. Sam said it is heartening to see the grants kicking back in and you really see the impact of the grant gateway issue last year.

Business Model Task Force Update

Steve spoke of the dedicated and impressive group that is actively working on this project, doing their homework, bringing ideas and strategies, and helping us think in new ways.

Julia wrote in chat that her biggest hope is we normalize using KPI's for all departments as a regular thing, and in our board reporting.

Sam said there are folders and working documents with frameworks and rubrics, including a document on deliverables, and the group is working towards a specific, actionable document at the end, with 'the how', the very tangible deliverables, all written down. Julia commented in chat that each action must have its KPIs tied in from the beginning as it focuses the conversation.

David noted that the group is self-facilitating, as funds are limited.

Peter said there is good progress but the pace needs to pick up a bit as we are halfway to next year's budget deadline. David concurred.

David added it's important to realize that from where we were in the spring to where we want to go will not just happen without deliberate participation from everyone. We have to think about what each of us can do to make it happen. It's about a plan, a timetable, and a way to remind yourself. We are not trying to overstretch everyone. The external participants said we have a community that cares and can raise the amount of money we saw in the spring. He said we need to think and plan ahead, so by the time FY2025 hits, we each have a plan and we each can make a difference.

Annual Meeting Agenda review / expectations

Sam highlighted that the Annual Meeting will run from 10am to 2pm, at the Beacon Settlement Camp Theater. A board retreat will follow, taking advantage of directors having gathered.

Steve will send a note on how folks can help at the Annual Meeting. Sam shared the link to register to attend, which allows for better event planning.

Sad News

Sam called attention to the passing of Scott Greathead, who will be greatly missed. Scott was in his second term as a Director. A moment of silence was held.

Thank you to departing directors

Sam proffered a motion to extend sincerest gratitude to Donna Stein and Mitzi Elkes for their nine years of service to Clearwater. Arthur moved and Larry seconded. The text of the motion is attached in Appendix A. The motion was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

David wants to be sure departing directors stay a part of Clearwater and stay engaged. The invitation is there.

New business

Larry noted the date, Sept. 11th, and shared the view from his window of the Tribute in Light shining upward from Ground Zero into the sky.

Gabbie highlighted a Summer of Heat event on Monday, Sept. 23rd, 10am, at Citibank in NYC.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary

Appendix A:

Motion to extend thanks to departing board members

I'd like to proffer a motion to extend the sincerest thanks from the organization to Mitzi Elkes and Donna Stein for their NINE years of service to Clearwater's Board.

We thank Donna for her outreach on the airwaves and the River waves, helping to foster deep connections with the river, as a board member, paddler, and sloop club champion.

And we thank Mitzi for her passionate outreach and advocacy for the organization, her profound contributions in creating some of Clearwater's most dynamic and successful events and funding drives, and her always sound business guidance.

The organization has come a long way in these nine years and to stick with it that long, with the crises and challenges, takes an incredible level of commitment. Mitzi, Donna, we quite literally would not be here without your support.