



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Wednesday, May 8, 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
~~Scott Greathead~~
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

Jen Benson
Anne Crowley
Erin Macchiaroli
Meg Mayo

Gigi Rapetti
Eli Schloss
David Toman, Executive Director

Members

Jeremy Baron
Amy Bergenfeld
Hal Cohen
Roy Felshin

Joyce Hanson
Eric Kantrowitz
Alan Thomas
Jonathan Rubin

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
Mission Song sung by Sam, “Well May the World Go”.

Approval of Minutes

The 03/06/24 Board meeting minutes were unanimously approved by hand and voice vote.

Financial Crisis Review and Update

David said the ongoing cash struggle, since March 2023, is now a full blown crisis with risk of insolvency. Using recent years data, David illustrated how revenue deficits were offset by non-recurring receipts. He detailed immediate actions being taken to raise \$250k urgently, to gain time to transition to a new business model, including a President's appeal letter sent to select donors and key community members, a public awareness campaign (Times Union article, radio support, press release) and the spring appeal. The goal is for the broader community to hear and help. David said there is some very positive early feedback on the appeal.

While navigating forward, prudence dictates that a pathway to dissolution also be mapped. David spoke to prioritizing near term obligations, utilizing unpaid furloughs as short term cost control, and reducing triggers that could force insolvency.

David added that financial reporting delays, since resolved, hurt tremendously in terms of grant funding. While this will grow back, realistically the recovery will take time.

Top near term priorities are sloop occupancy for the summer (new 'pay what you can' sails, new/increased sails with lectures/music, more community groups on board through program or charter), promotion / sponsorships for the Paddle fundraiser, continued push for memberships and donations, and use of volunteers to support the reduced staff. Wood purchase for the upcoming major project is also vital to ensure our ability to sail in 2026. This wood is needed now, to allow for seasoning. David pointed to Jen's work on the Hike and Learns as an example of fostering adult interest in making them stewards of the environment. He said we need more community groups out on the Hudson and volunteers to make it happen.

David laid out plans to convene a business model plan task group, starting in June, to develop a high-confidence, sustainable plan that can be shared with supporters. .

He continued with the actionable ways the Board can help, including sharing the appeal letter, help responding to donors, sharing the Times Union article, volunteer opportunities, promoting / supporting Paddle for Our Hudson, and selling charter sails for the summer time. The Paddle and the summer charters offer ways for local businesses to sponsor our organization and be recognized.

Mitzi asked about bringing in more grants and Jen replied we are having those conversations but that funding does take time.

A fundraising tool kit will go out to the full board tomorrow. David will share his slide deck with the Board and more detail can be found there. If there are questions, see David or Sam.

Board task workshopping

Sam began with volunteer opportunities: in the office, tabling at Kingston Earth Fair table, and making calls for sloop marketing. She asked folks to raise their hands in chat to show availability.. For office work, David is looking for a weekly commitment at this time. Erin noted, in chat, that a few remote hours per week/bi-weekly could be used to help compile contact lists for outreach.

Sam covered Paddle for our Hudson, sharing the link to register and donate, sponsorship information, and outreach needs and then walked people through the website, showing how to register, reach the fundraising guide, and general navigation around the informative website. Sam asked everyone to post the flyers in as many public places as possible. There is no restriction on geography. Gareth said he created a team and team name, Ossining Paddles for Clearwater, and is hoping to get it on the town's email blast. He asked about creating a fundraiser in that team's name.

For the Appeal letter, Sam suggested individuals customize the language for their networks, make a list of contacts, and SEND.

Sam asked everyone to make their lists of potential charterers, noting that if everyone thought of 3 potential names / groups, that would be 66 potential charters. Tom shared what he is doing on this as an example. Sam is willing to partner with another board member for a charter out of Hudson and asked board members in the NYC area to connect with each other on charters and pick a date. Arthur said he's created Ambassador pages for individual sails in the past, which have worked well. Sam said to remember there is flexibility in the sloop schedule as shown online.

David shared the Times Union article and Sam suggested sending a couple of sentences to your network with a link to the Times Union story or a link to the radio Kingston interview.

Sam asked anyone interested in a mini session on peer to peer fundraising to put their name in chat for follow up.

David returned to the appeal to raise \$250k, reminding everyone that the newspaper article, and the imminent press release, are part of the broad public outreach to help reach this achievable goal, encouraging everyone to share the immediate urgent need while still being positive and upbeat.

Sam concluded by saying we are looking at impactful changes and the leadership team in place is committed to making changes for a better, sustainable organization.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary