



Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.  
**Annual Meeting**  
**October 5, 2024, at 10:00am**

Board Members:

~~Sarah Armour~~  
~~Adenike Bamgboye~~  
Peter Capek  
~~Josh Clyburn~~  
Mitzi Elkes  
Joan Gaylord  
Neil Gordon  
Samantha Hicks

Gareth Hougham  
Arthur Jones  
Aaron Mair  
Jennifer McMillan  
Tom Murphy  
Jeremy Rainer  
~~Dan Riesel~~  
Larry Rothbart

Gabrielle Speilberg  
Steve Stanne  
Donna Stein  
Rosemary Thomas  
~~Sarah Underhill~~  
Julia Wilson  
(~~strike through~~ indicates absence)

Board Candidates:

Dr. Stuart Findlay  
Peter Gregory

Jillian Maresco

Liam Purvis

Staff and Members:

Chris Bendetti  
Jen Benson  
Susan Berliner  
Bill Braine  
Debbie Cohen  
Hal Cohen  
Anne Crowley  
Lydia Adams Davis  
Jan Dolan  
Patricia Evans  
Laura Finkelstein  
Manna Jo Green  
John Greener  
Mai Jacobs  
Joette Kane

Dean Lentz  
Hanna Leshaw  
Sayief Leshaw  
Jeffrey Levinton  
Emily Marcet  
Meryl Marcus  
Rob May  
Meg Mayo  
John McLaughlin  
Henry Neale  
Joan Noack  
Annie Osborn  
Hans Palvaast  
Gigi Rapetti

Robert Reardon  
Mariabella Rivera-Todaro  
Anne Scheinberg  
Eli Schloss  
Steve Schwartz  
Tinya Seeger  
Ajax Stavis  
Robyn Tauss  
Kevin Thompson  
Robert Thompson  
Alan Thomas  
David Toman  
Denis Woodin  
Rachel Zollner

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Call to Order:**

Samantha Hicks (Sam) called the meeting to order at 10:15am. The mission song was sung by David and Jacob Bernz - "It's a Long Haul".

### **Election Results**

Sam announced election results. Board members elected:

Sarah Armour  
Dr. Stuart Findlay  
Peter Gregory  
Samantha Heyman Hicks  
Arthur Jones  
Jillian Maresco  
Jennifer McMillan  
Liam Purvis  
Dan Riesel  
Larry Rothbart

The by-law update passed.

### **Executive Director Report**

David Toman, Executive Director, introduced the staff including Erin Macchiaroli, Director of Operations, Meg Mayo, Director of Development & Marketing, Jen Benson, Environmental Action Director and Interim Director of Communications, Rory Kane, Senior Captain, Eli Schloss, Tideline Manager and Interim Education Director. A new Director of Education will be hired. David acknowledged the important contributions from program leaders and coordinators, the administrative staff, and crew.

David announced this year's theme of "All Hands on Deck!!! Together we can make it happen!", and went around the room asking folks to share with inspires them about Clearwater. Responses included: all we have done and the potential for what we can do in the future, the sloop represents the soul of the river, Pete's words 'participation is what will save us', pulling up the mainsail for the first time and learning we only move forward when everyone pulls together, and learning that what a former 5<sup>th</sup> grade education sail student remembered most clearly 20 years later is "it's important to keep the river clean".

David highlighted some notables this year – community sails, a public sail lecture series, Hike and Learns – all extremely well received and reaching a broader audience, as well as the best Gala to date. He spoke briefly to the need for EPA action on PCBs. Program directors will cover these topic.

David spoke candidly about the springtime financial crisis with the risk of insolvency, the large impact (staff resignations, delayed payments, loss of a large wood purchase), and the path to a public appeal, with support from multiple news outlets and legislators, which led to an unprecedented outpouring of support from the community and to the formation of a business model plan (BMP) task force.

The BMP task group, consisting of four external business experts, four board members, and staff leadership, is charged with developing a pathway to fiscal stability, a business pathway to build reserves over time. David said the business plan will complement the Strategic Plan, which is still valid.

David shared several funding needs beyond operations: 1) a new main sail (\$10k remains to be raised); 2) the wood for the 26-27 preservation work (\$34k remains to be raised); 3) the Ulster Savings loan repayment offer (still need \$70k to reap this, but the bank contribution would be \$40k); and 4) materials to rebuild the sloop refrigerator (\$3k). David asked everyone to share this within their circles and with organizations that might want to participate, to work towards these discrete objectives.

Returning to the "All Hands on Deck" theme, David requested that everyone ask themselves how they can help, not just with their personal contribution but also connections and how to help make concrete things happen this year.

## **Business Model Plan (BMP)**

Dean Lentz and Bill Braine introduced themselves. Dean started an IT service business in Manhattan in 1998, grew it from 2 to 50 people with customers worldwide, and sold the business in 2020. He sat on Clearwater's board in 2013-2014 and provides volunteer IT support to Clearwater today. Bill is a marketer by profession, with 20 years of experience and sits on Cornwall-on-Hudson Village Board. Bill did a volunteer week on board the sloop in 2017. Upon hearing the spring appeal, both Dean and Bill reached out to help.

The project is focused on two Strategic Plan priorities – bolstering the sloop and education program and securing the resources needed for Clearwater to become and remain fiscally stable. The BMP aims to define how to achieve these goals in a sustainable way, with year-over-year growth.

The BMP objectives are to provide guidance on financial and organization structure, propose a sustainable revenue and expense model, recommend optimized, diversified and balanced revenue streams (programs, grants, contributions) and identify areas within the organization that will have high returns on investments.

The team is a mix of external talent (Bill Braine, marketing; Dean Lentz, business leader; Helen Pashley, educator; Captain Peg Brandon, marine educator and non profit leader), staff leadership (David Toman, Erin Macchiaroli, Meg Mayo, Jen Benson), and board members (Samantha Hicks, Steve Stanne, Peter Capek, and Julia Wilson).

Planned deliverables include a three-year detailed budget (including costs, revenues, and new investments), an organization chart review and recommendations (board roles, staff workstreams and roles, volunteer roles), definitions of balanced revenue streams (programs, contributions, grants, special events), and defined metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs). A workstream was defined as a set of activities that people work on together to move something toward a specific goal. KPIs were described as things you want to measure so you can understand the status/success of a given effort.

Dean stressed that we're looking for opportunities. A high-level pie chart of 2018-2023 revenue streams (contributions, programs, grants, special events, and other) was presented, and Dean emphasized that the group is looking at the detail, the minutiae, to identify where to apply resources to get the most impact.

The May to December timeline was shown, with draft recommendations expected by end of October, breakouts with staff and stakeholders by end of November, and refined recommendations by mid-December. The group has begun to draft recommendations.

Dean, Bill, and David answered many questions from the board and other attendees, before available time ran out. David is glad to speak with anyone who wants to continue the conversation. Aaron Maier thanked Bill and Dean on behalf of the entire board.

David again stressed that the success story for 2025 is going to happen with everyone finding a role and playing their part.

## **Program and Sloop**

Eli Schloss, Tideline Manager and Interim Education Director, introduced department staff including Joao De la Cruz, Chloe Grey Smith, and Jacob Dyck and shared the accomplishments and challenges of one season, two jobs, and a big boat.

Accomplishments include a new dock in Brooklyn (Portside, in Atlantic Basin), a NYC Parks Department agreement, the return of Young Men at the Helm (funded by Dorr Foundation), and Pay What You Can sails at 98% capacity. (The community sailing program is also known as PWYC, Pay What You Can, though there is a suggested donation.) The PWYC sails are bringing in 90% first-timers, a new audience, important for outreach and community relations.

Challenges included the financial crisis, inability to use the Piermont dock (at least temporarily), no timeline on the NYC 79<sup>th</sup> St. Boat Basin dock returning, docking fees for charters in some locations, and the new Peekskill city dock that, though welcome, needs dredging before use. Eli continued that the PWYC sails need sponsors for the program to be viable in the long term and that some schools need the afternoon sails to end earlier. David said the school afternoon sail issue may be an example of where the business model planning group can help.

Eli shared additional accomplishments including speaker sails (shout out to Jen, Chloe and the team!), charters, and special events, and highlighted examples in each of these categories. The Tideline program season was fully booked for the second year in a row, with 1,600 participants from Pre-K to high school!

Between on board (2,680 students) and Tideline (1,600 students) programs, Clearwater hosted 4,280 students YTD. Public and charter sail passengers total 2,805 YTD. The combined YTD total is 7,085 individuals having either an onboard or land based Clearwater experience, with four weeks remaining on the season. These numbers represent an increase over 2023 and do not include Hike and Learn participants.

### **Environmental Advocacy Actions and Communications**

Jen Benson, Environmental Action Director and Interim Director of Communications, highlighted EA work the year, beginning with the new adult speaker sail program. The first of eight was held in April. Topics included drinkability, river science, advocacy, story telling about maritime life and more. Another new offering was the Hike and Learn program, launched with a grant from Hudson River Greenway, where Clearwater partnered with organizations up and down the river to offer three programs this year. EA focus areas are the Hudson River and environmental justice, with the PCB cleanup, PFAS contamination in Newburgh, and Indian Point decommissioning mentioned. Jen noted that EA work went on pause from April till August, due to the need to support fundraising activities driven by the financial crisis.

Jen shone a spotlight on the PCB contamination impacting 200 miles of the Hudson River, giving the background and status, which is that monitored natural recovery is not performing as anticipated, and so human health and ecological risks remain well above plan. Jen asked folks to submit comments on this important topic, with cards available in the back of the room.

Jen shared our approach to communications - storytelling, highlighting programs, and quality over quantity. She spoke to Clearwater's communication tools, press coverage, and social media growth, and noted we got a NYTimes cooking blog shout out on Sunday, 9/22, in the context of Rossi's deli, with a direct link to our website.

Jen asked everyone to stay engaged and stay informed, follow us on social media and amplify our impact by liking / sharing / commenting, join the EA email list for action alerts and updates and to submit a comment to EPA on the Hudson River PCB Draft Five Year Review.

Q & A: Henry Neale what does Clearwater think should happen with PCBs? Jen would like the door opened for EPA to force GE to research what additional actions could be taken to get the cleanup back on track. She added it will take comprehensive scientific studies and noted technology has changed since the initial plan was formulated in 2002.

### **Development**

Meg Mayo, Director of Development & Marketing, spoke to how the department is recovering from the financial crisis and, with BMP support, recently filled two positions needed for financial stability – Emily Marcet is the new Donor Relations Coordinator and also in charge of membership, and Mariabella Rivera-Todaro is the new Events and Sponsorship Coordinator. (Welcome Emily and Mariabella!). Meg recognized the Development Committee which meets monthly and is of great support.

Moving to the spring emergency appeal, Meg used bar and pie charts to show its immense impact. Not only did the second quarter revenue double in 2024, the number of donors more than doubled, the average gift increased, and

there was a substantial number of new donors. Meg said the incredible outpouring of support from the community energized everyone.

Looking forward, priorities include stewarding donors, strengthening connections, building sponsor relationships, rebuilding the grants pipeline, and creating state and federal legislative opportunities. Meg gave an update on two state and some foundation grants which are pending. Meg said some legislative discretionary funds have been received, thanks to Jen's work, and Jen remains key in that area.

Meg spotlighted ways to support fundraising and outreach efforts: event support (volunteer, invite, share), run a mini 'friend raiser' (for example, raise \$3k for the fridge), rally friends to purchase a wish list item, write thank you letters, write holiday cards to someone new to Clearwater and follow up, and community sail sponsorships (connect with community businesses, chambers, rotaries, and so on).

Lastly, Meg called attention to the many ways to leave a legacy to sustain the next generation, the most common being a charitable gift in a will or a beneficiary designation on a bank, brokerage, or retirement account, or on other assets. Meg shared a quote from Donkey Dover Jr (Development Committee member): "I take pride in knowing my support will help Clearwater endure as long as the Hudson needs it." Meg is seeking a board member to be the face of the Seeger Society this year, helping coordinate two events and writing two letters, taking over from Sarah Underhill who handled it last year. For more information, or to volunteer to help, reach out to Meg.

### **Thanks to outgoing board members**

Sam thanked outgoing board members Donna Stein and Mitzi Elkes for their 9 years of board service and for all they have done for Clearwater over many years. Both will be greatly missed and we all hope they will remain active in the Clearwater community. David presented tokens of appreciation.

Sam took a moment to honor and mark the recent passing of board member Scott Greathead.

### **Adjourn**

Mitzi moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Julia. The meeting ended at 12:15pm.

### **Break**

## **OCTOBER MEETING (New Board) CONVENED**

### **Call to order.**

Sam called the meeting to order at 1:10. The new board was present. Steve and Rick Nestler opened the meeting with "Well May the World Go".

### **Schedule for future board meetings**

Sam presented the proposed calendar. A vote was held and the calendar was unanimously approved.

The approved schedule is:

Thursday, November 7, 2024

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Saturday, June 7, 2025 – in person meeting in Beacon; time TBD

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Sunday, October 5, 2025; 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM – in person Annual Meeting & Board Retreat

### **Vote to approve officers**

Sam read the proposed slate for the Officers for the 2024-2025 year:

Samantha Hicks – President  
Arthur Jones – Vice-President  
Rosemary Thomas – Secretary  
Tom Murphy – Treasurer

Aaron moved to accept slate as shown. Larry seconded. The slate was Unanimously PASSED by a show of hands.

**Vote to elect Nominating Committee**

Sam read the proposed names for the nominating committee for the new year:

Arthur Jones  
Sarah Underhill

Julia Wilson made a MOTION, seconded by Larry Rothbart, to put the slate in. It PASSED by a unanimous vote.

**Vote to approve Member-at-Large for Executive Committee**

Sam read the proposed names for the coming year:

Joan Gaylord  
Tom Murphy  
Steve Stanne

Rosemary made a MOTION to approve the slate and Larry seconded. It PASSED by unanimous vote.

Sam invited board members to participate in EC meetings and will send around a signup sheet to facilitate this. Sam wants participation in the EC to give members a better sense of its function and have a succession plan.

**Sloop Club Charters**

David presented charters for Beacon Sloop Club, NYC Friends of Clearwater, Walkabout Clearwater, Brooklyn Friends of Clearwater, and North River Friends of Clearwater. .

**Adjourn**

Aaron moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Larry.

The meeting ended at 1:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary