



Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
February 9, 2021 at 6:30 PM  
Virtual via Zoom Meeting

**Attendance:**

**Board Members:**

Bob Alpern  
Peter Capek  
~~Nancy Cincotta~~  
Seth Davis  
Jeff Domanski  
Mitzi Elkes  
Joan Gaylord  
Neil Gordon  
Scott Greathead

~~Allen Gutkin~~  
Samantha Hicks  
Gareth Hougham  
Arthur Jones  
~~Ashley Knox~~  
Janine Napierkowski  
Henry Neale  
Aaron Mair  
Jeremy Rainer

~~Gregory Simpson~~  
Steve Stanne  
Sarah Underhill  
Donna Stein  
Rosemary Thomas  
Greg Williams  
Thomasina Winslow

**Staff:**

Debbie Cohen  
Hal Cohen  
Amali Knobloch  
Erin Macchiaroli  
Meg Mayo  
Gigi Rapetti  
Nick Rogers  
Matt Salton  
Anita Vargas

**Guests:**

Jeremy Baron  
Susan Berliner  
Victoria Christof  
Lisa Gaffney  
Betty Harkins  
Maryellen Healy  
Ben Kaminsky  
James Malchow  
Alan Thomas  
Roy Volpe

Steve opened the meeting by performing “Who Made This Mess”.

The minutes of January 11, 2021 were raised for approval. There were no modifications to the draft version. Approval moved by Peter, seconded by Neil. Approval unanimous.

Steve gave the Executive Director’s review. The series of 4 webinars offered in conjunction with the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of The Hudson has been completed and was well received, with 75 to 100 people attending each of the 4 webinars. Recordings are available to those who were registered for the webinars.

We are applying for a grant from the Malcolm Gordon Charitable Foundation to expand our Native American program. Our current plan is to begin offering sails on May 16 at 50% capacity, though we don’t expect a large uptake due to ongoing Covid concerns; Steve encouraged all to continue to promote these programs. We have begun recruitment of a Program Director and expect to hire one by the end of March. This role will manage a combination of the sloop and education departments, with increased involvement of the crew in education.

A proposal for support of environmental action was submitted to the Birches Foundation, and we believe it has a good chance of being funded. The focus of the work will be disadvantaged communities in light of the Indian Point decommissioning. Work is proceeding on a congressional briefing in March featuring Amory Lovins as a speaker on the topic of why nuclear power is not a climate change solution. Representative Mondaire Jones will also speak. We are starting to publicize our proposed work on low-impact hydro dams and there is starting to be some push-back, apparently due to the assumption that we are blindly advocating in favor of them. In fact, it is Clearwater’s intention to study the issues in a balanced and open way and Make recommendations based on that. Gareth has put together a comprehensive presentation on the issues and a video of that is available on YouTube.

Crew is being hired for the sloop and expected to be on board during March. We hope to be able to offer Clearwater Connects and perhaps Our River Connects Us, depending on funding. Work is continuing to assemble documentation for the NYS reimbursement grant for past work on the sloop. In response to a question from Thomasina, Nick outlined the structure of hiring crew. He said he expect there will be fewer returning crew than usual, due to the smaller-than-usual crew we had last year.

Neil continued with a financial report. Our “weeks ahead” expectation of ability to meet payroll continue slowly and steadily to improve, and is currently at mid-April, not counting income expected from the Gala. Neil had a very productive meeting with the Development Committee which included discussion of various tools to help Board members achieve their annual give/get commitment. Our current bank balance is about \$141,000 in unrestricted funds.

Meg continued with a report on Development. Our revenue to date for this FY is at 22% above the proposed budget. The webinar raised nearly \$3000, not including book sales, and created

substantial goodwill among our membership. The year-end/holiday appeal raised \$93K, but January overall income was only slightly above half the amount budgeted. The Gala is an important upcoming event, and a membership drive will take place in March. Additional events are planned for succeeding months. Clearwater is participating in Black History month with information on the web site about Black sailors and merchandise (a portion of proceeds will be donated to WEACT, an environmental justice organization).

Mitzi asked about Board give/get attainment and about 2<sup>nd</sup> round PPP loans, but no specific answers were forthcoming. Completion of the FY 2019 form 990 is a prerequisite for a PPP application.

Rosemary gave a development update with a focus on the upcoming Gala. Because it will be virtual, the opportunity arises for people from any distance to participate, and already we have people in 12 states and Australia who've bought tickets. The event is planned to include 2 breakout sessions at the end, in addition to the usual silent auction. Ron Olesko will be the host. Rosemary gave a summary of the event program, including the honorees, and entertainment (Gordon Bok). Sections of the program will be pre-recorded, and that will help to keep things on schedule.

Strategic Planning was next on the agenda and was discussed by Samantha, Steve, and Seth. The process began by gathering data (through questionnaires and interviews) from nearly 700 people including staff, Board, membership and the public, peer organizations, and other interested parties. Among the results: that CW's membership is dominated by long-term members (10 year or more), by whites or Caucasians, and by people over age 50. People's first encounter with Clearwater was primarily through Revival, Pete Seeger, or a friend who was involved. Additional results included people's perception of various aspects of the organization's activity and operation, and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Seth commented that, in conducting some of the interviews, he was heartened and encouraged to learn that CW has some very strong supporters who would be prepared to do a lot for us. Responding to a comment made during the presentation about publicizing our EA accomplishments, Aaron discussed the definition of lobbying (which is prohibited to us as a non-profit) and messaging and publicizing our activities (which is not prohibited), and suggested that we need to understand this better. The committee will next work on drafting a report with proposed actions, which the Board will have the opportunity to act on. This will take one to two months. The charts presented are attached to these minutes.

Arthur reported on the Nominating Committee's activity. They will be sending out the self-assessment form to the Board shortly, and Board members will have about two weeks to respond. He thought it could be filled out in no more than 15 minutes. Also, in April they will announce to the membership that nominations are open for future Board candidates. Greg asked if any supporting information would be provided with the self-assessment form, such as give/get status, and Arthur answered that there was no present plan to do that. Rosemary mentioned that her committee, P&G, had discussed this and related matters, but not yet reached a decision.

Rosemary reported on Planning and Government. They are looking at 3 of the policies. The first relates to job responsibilities of Board members, Policy III. Aaron provided a document which might serve as a model for some changes, but this is still under discussion. He also suggested some changes to the election policy/process, which is also still being discussed. There was also discussion about Policy VIII, concerning moral ownership; Alan had observed that the moral owners of the river included people with whom we would not normally get involved. There is also discussion about committee definitions and scope ongoing. The committee plans in the next few months to reconcile the committee definitions in the Bylaws, Policies, and in reality. Aaron requested that his "Affirmative Standards of Conduct" document be distributed to the Board and to anyone else interested.

Henry continued with a discussion of the Properties Committee, and said we're in pretty good shape. He gave an estimate of about \$23,000 for the repairs that were detailed by the engineer. We still don't have a lease, but the City of Beacon does not appear to be concerned. Roof repair will be done when weather allows in the spring.

Peter gave a brief summary of the Program Committee's work. We've become aware of a cache of recordings of performances at Revival from about 1982 to around 2001 to which we believe we have rights and are looking into using some of them to spark interest in the virtual Revival and to fund-raise. In addition, Jeff Domanski has some ideas about outreach to colleges that we are exploring.

Donna discussed sloop clubs. North River is waiting for an expected education grant. They are encouraging the use of Ambassador web pages by sloop club members.

The Board then went into Private Session for a discussion about hiring and which involves salaries. Steve said the Private Session should last about 15 minutes

Following the exit from Private Session, Neil moved to adjourn, seconded by Greg, and agreed to unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Capek

# Strategic Planning Update

February 9, 2021



# Agenda

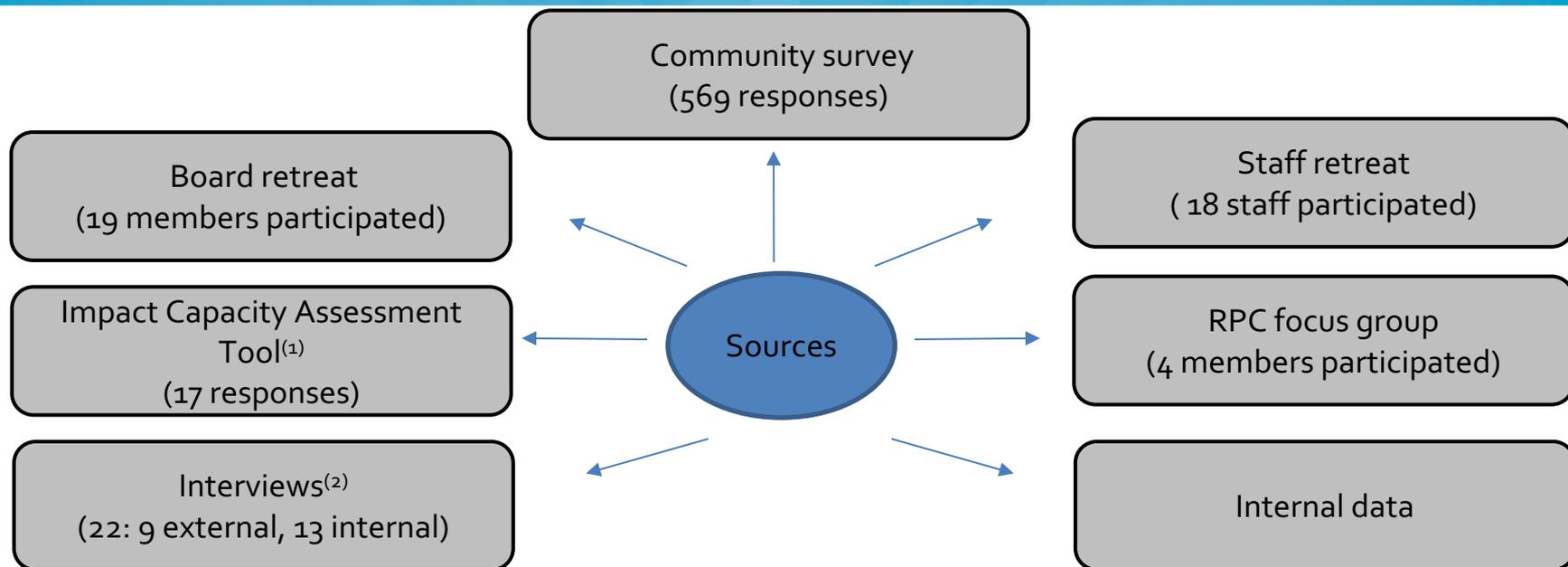
1. Sources of data
2. A few findings from the community survey
3. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) findings from interviews, surveys and retreats
4. Summary of theme; areas to reconcile

**Important: The findings presented are not our opinions. They are responses to questions asked in our data collecting efforts.**

**Don't shoot the messenger!**



# Clearwater collected data from multiple sources to inform the strategic planning process and gather knowledge and opinions from those in the Clearwater and Hudson River communities



The Coordinating Committee<sup>(3)</sup> is leading the planning process & has been assisted by:

- Outward (10 members) and inward looking (8 members) working groups of former board, staff, & representatives of relevant organizations outside CW
- The Support Center

(1) Survey tool that measures organizational effectiveness across six core capacities; administered by the Support Center

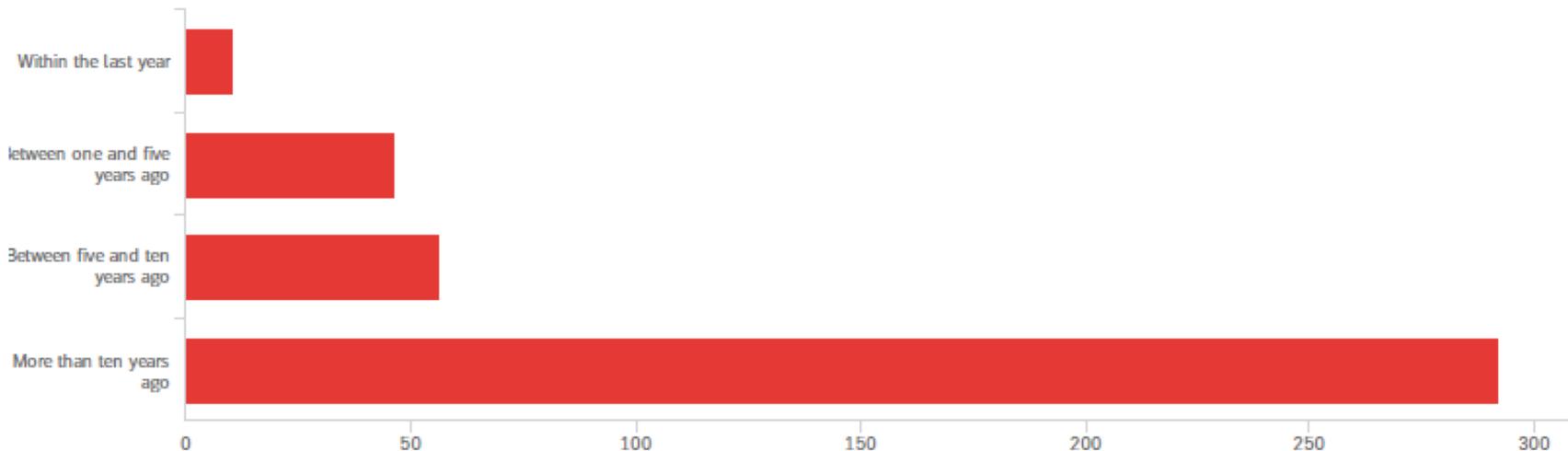
(2) Interviews conducted with organizations who could provide perspective on the landscape in which CW operates, and external and internal stakeholders

(3) Steve Stanne, Janine Napierkowski, Samantha Hicks, Seth Davis

# Community survey: Membership

Results indicate that CW has an aging membership base with limited diversity

Q1.3 - When did you first join Clearwater as a member? (n= 404<sup>(1)</sup>)



76.8% of participants are age 50+, 61.9% are age 60+ (n=396<sup>(1)</sup>)

84.2% identified as White or Caucasian (n=407<sup>(1)</sup>)



(1) number of responses to survey question

# Community survey: entree to CW

Revival and being a Pete Seeger fan were the top 2 contexts in which participants first encountered CW

Question: "In what context did you first encounter CW? (Please check one)" (n=469<sup>(1)</sup>)

Top 3:

- |                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. I attended the Revival/Festival | 21.1%        |
| 2. I am a fan of Pete Seeger       | 18.8%        |
| 3. A friend told me about CW       | <u>11.9%</u> |
|                                    | 51.8%        |

All sloop and education related categories combined totaled 16.2%;  
interest in environmental action was 8.7%)

(1) number of responses to survey question



# Community survey: EA mission and focus

## Participants prioritized environmental topics for CW's future work

Q2.5 - What environmental and social justice topics would you most like to see

Clearwater work on in the future? (Please select and prioritize your top five responses)



Top 5 environmental & social justice topics:

1. climate change,
2. fish and wildlife conservation,
3. drinking water protection,
4. sewage & bacterial pollution,
5. PCBs & legacy pollutants

# Clearwater's strengths

## From interviews

<b>Sloop</b>	13
<b>Education</b>	11
<b>Music</b> (not necessarily Revival)	8
<b>Heritage</b> (Seeger; 50 years)	4
<b>Accessible/inclusive</b> (welcoming; not elite)	4
<b>Revival</b>	3
<b>Sense of community</b>	2
<b>Membership</b>	2
<b>Primary community served is kids</b>	2
<b>Strategic planning underway</b>	2

## From survey & retreats

**Community:** a value & a strength; sense of community to all that CW does; "community is what CW does best"; differentiates CW from other environmental groups

A strong community of committed & passionate individuals, including volunteers & HR residents

**Recognition, visibility and reputation:** aided by CW's history & legacy

**Sloop:** symbol of CW; platform to connect people to the river & nature; vehicle for education & advocacy

**Symbol of hope/resilience/justice**

**Ability to change people's future & engagement with/support of environmental causes through interactions with staff & experience with the HR.** Bringing people to the river differentiates CW from other organizations- people interact and experience the river

Empowers & activates people

**Education programming; environmental advocacy & justice**



# Clearwater's weaknesses

From interviews

From survey & retreats

- Finances** (fiscally irresponsible; self-imposed limits on fund-raising; lack honesty about difficulties) 14
- Prioritization** (3-leg stool not working-do one thing; river & boat not part of it? it's someone else's job) 11
- EA mission undefined** (no longer voice for river; not influential in Albany) 8
- Revival rationale** (needs rethinking; lose it) 8
- Board** (lacks expertise; not fund-raising; too big; does not understand role/expectations) 5
- Mission overall is ill-defined** 5
- Exec director turnover**; don't conduct evaluations 5
- Member governance**; satisfy members & funders? 4
- No business plan** 3
- Ed programs need reinvigoration** 3
- Staff compensation (\$)** inadequate 3
- Aging membership** 2
- Lack of EA staff** 2
- Problematic work environment** (no golden rule; job insecurity; drama; micro-aggression; toxic baggage; issues used as wedges; lack of professionalism) 2
- Seem to relish confrontation** 2
- Silos between programs** 2
- Solipsistic; provincial** - insiders vs outsiders 2

- Finances**; lack development infrastructure & resources; operate from crisis to crisis; distraction for staff & board; perception of poor fiscal management
- Governance & leadership**; exec director turnover; internal conflicts; fiscal issues; festival problems - all contribute to perception of lack of leadership and an ineffective board
- Fragmented organization**; CW has not emerged strong & unified post Seegers; different interests in CW & approaches to mission; strong & divergent opinions on:
  - value of each leg of stool (focus & resource allocation)
  - how the Seeger's legacy, values, & vision should be embodied in CW going forward
- Delineation of board vs staff roles & accountability**; lack leads to unclear boundaries & conflicts
- Focus and identity**; need to resolve identity & regain focus & relevancy in post-Pete era. Diffuse messaging
- Membership**; declining, aging, & lacking in diversity
- Turnover, turmoil & distraction arise from weaknesses**
- Sloop cost**

# Opportunities for Clearwater

## From interviews

- Followup with kids** who come on the boat; send kids home with CW info 5
- Long-term youth development** (use crew slots; place in community projects; recruit HS students/scouts who need volunteer hrs/projects; students gather data) 5
- Virtual programs** (more use of YouTube, including ads; video of restoration) 5
- Engage members** (in major roles other than board; with skills & willingness to work for free; from broader demographics-Republicans, younger cohort) 4
- Get people on the water** (donors, kids) 4
- Redesign Revival** (festival should be program, not fund-raiser; more board engagement) 4
- Grow membership** 3
- Better fundraising** (corporate sponsors OK; grow fund-raising network; VIP music sails; focus on boat) 3
- EA important** if education can show why necessary or kids can be harnessed, **make kids stewards** 3
- Partnership, merger** 3
- Doing strategic planning** 2
- Must do Environmental Justice** 2
- Grassroots community education about issues** 2

## From survey & retreats

- Broaden leadership in environmental action/** widen breadth of outreach
- Inspire environmental stewardship/** be a leader in and example of environmental activism
- Expand access to environmental education/** access for all
- Respond to major environmental issues** including climate change, regulatory rollbacks, and health of the Hudson River
- Undertake more social justice advocacy-** reflects values of the organization
- Attract and engage a younger, more diverse membership**



# Threats to Clearwater

## From interviews

- COVID uncertainty** 2
- finances 1
- mandated testing 1
- perception that CW is in death spiral 1
- claiming too much; YEP changing lives? 1
- expense of boat 1
- board inaction 1

## From survey & retreats

- Other organizations in the environmental advocacy and action space** - competition for engagement of community members and funding
- Environmental regulatory rollbacks** - both threat and opportunity]
- Covid-19** - constraints on ability to conduct operations



# Summary themes/ Areas to reconcile

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sloop</li> <li>• Education program</li> <li>• CW community's passion and commitment</li> <li>• Heritage</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Bring people to the river</li> <li>• Environmental advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus/ identity</li> <li>• Financial position</li> <li>• Governance/leadership /divisions</li> <li>• Aging membership/ diversity lacking</li> <li>• Environmental advocacy</li> <li>• Festival (financial risk)</li> <li>• Sloop cost</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sloop: education, environmental stewardship, engagement</li> <li>• Education program: expand, greater focus, virtual</li> <li>• Foster environmental stewardship</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Environmental advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of CW's organizational/financial challenges</li> <li>• Loss of presence and influence</li> <li>• EA groups w/greater impact, clout and resources</li> <li>• COVID uncertainty</li> </ul>

## AREAS TO RECONCILE:

- **Focus/ identity:** mission priorities and vision are not defined; CW has not emerged strong and unified in a post – Seeger world
- **Heritage:** Disagreement on how much to adhere to the Seegers' original work and how to embody values
- **Music/ Festival:** Integral to CW but how to incorporate. Festival cannot compromise financial viability
- **Environmental advocacy:** how much to focus on EA, how to conduct EA, which issues to pursue