



Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Annual Meeting
October 1, 2023, at 10:00am

Present:

Board Members:

~~Sarah Armour~~
Peter Capek
Mitzi Elkes
Joan Gaylord
~~Neil Gordon~~
Scott Greathead
Samantha Hicks
Gareth Hougham

Arthur Jones
~~Steve Kieler~~
Aaron Mair
~~Jennifer McMillan~~
Tom Murphy
Henry Neale
Jeremy Rainer
Dan Riesel

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

Board Candidates:

Adenike Bamgboye

Josh Clyburn

Gabrielle Speilberg

Staff and Members:

Jen Benson
Susan Berliner
Scott Berwick
Sandy Brennan
Steve Brennan
Blu
Debbie Cohen
Hal Cohen
Anne Crowley
Dusty
Ruthie Gold
Manna Jo Green

John Greener
Mai Jacobs
Manna Jo Greene
John Greener
Deborah Kair
Erin Macchiaroli
Dustin Macchiaroli
James Malchow
Rob May
Meg Mayo
James Malchow
John McLaughlin

Ann Mellor
Rob May
Helen Pashley
Gigi Rapetti
Eli Schloss
Steve Schwartz
Tinya Seeger
Carole Siegel
Jeffrey Siegel
Ajax Stavis
Amber Stewart
Alan Thomas

ANNUAL MEETING

Call to Order:

Steve Stanne called the meeting to order at 10:20 and welcomed everyone to Clearwater's 2023 Annual Meeting, the first in person Annual Meeting since 2019! Steve and Sarah Underhill opened with 'Sailing Up My Dirty Stream'.

Steve announced that David Toman, Executive Director, is unable to attend but wanted to be sure to thank all Staff, Crew, and the Board for their work over the past year and that he looks forward to working with them in the coming year. Steve and Arthur Jones then introduced Board members, Board candidates, and Staff, and recognized many of the attendees.

Staff Reports

After thanking the office staff for organizing today's meeting, Ruthie Gold, Program Director, introduced the sloop team including Captain Rory Kane, Outreach and Engagement Manager Amali Knobloch, Tideline Program Director Eli Schloss, Administrative Sloop Liaison Caitlin Zinsley, On Board Educators Ella Agoos and Chloe Grey Smith and the crew. Ruthie gave a program summary recapping sailing and Tideline programs, special programs, community outreach, and volunteering, and then a sloop summary of crew, past winter work, and upcoming winter work.

In Clearwater's first full programmatic season since before the pandemic, there were 95 education sails, 35 public sails, 26 charters, 48 tideline programs, and one spectator event, serving 6,411 program participants over 10 counties and 16 docks. Of the participants, 53% were in elementary school, 16% in middle school and 24% in high school, with the balance in post-secondary education.

Special programs, including Open Boats, the Winter Junior Bosun Program, Youth Empowerment Programs, and a Pumpkin Sail were well attended. Ruthie described the programs, what participants learn in each, and the focus on building communities.

Ruthie highlighted Clearwater's presence at 17 events throughout NYC and the Hudson Valley, including the NYC Boat Show, Teatown's Eagle Fest, Kids Week at the Intrepid Museum, Hudson's Waterfront Wednesday, Randall's Island Waterfront Festival, Catskill Farmer's Market, the Beacon Sloop Club's three festivals, and Poughkeepsie's Walktoberfest.

Ruthie reviewed numbers related to the thriving onboard volunteering programs, a wonderful way for new people to get involved in the Clearwater community.

Turning to sloop preservation, Ruthie recapped winter 2022-2023 work and said winter 2023-2024 will include a short Coast Guard mandated haul-out, replacing a couple of planks, and caulking and painting. Winter 2024-2025 is planned as a fairly regular winter work year, in Kingston, with no haul-out. Then, in winter of 2025-2026, a major preservation project is planned, including replacing the transom and topsides, and requiring the purchase of \$40k of wood this year, to allow for proper seasoning, and an additional \$20k of wood later. Total project cost is projected at \$650k.

Ruthie thanked everyone for their continued support and asked folks to please share our programs with a colleague, friend or loved one.

Steve reminded everyone that ballots close at 11:00.

Jen Benson, EA Director, who joined Clearwater in July, introduced herself, sharing her background and how she got involved in EA growing up and started organizing against fracking while in college. Jen has spent her first few months looking back at work done by Clearwater and building a framework for determining EA work areas moving forward. Jen reviewed the many aspects to consider for project prioritization and showed a campaign / project prioritization matrix.

Jen said that climate change is not listed as its own priority, but rather is wrapped into every item and messaging on climate change will be included in all our work areas.

Priorities for 2024 were identified as working on PCBs, Indian Point decommissioning, a swimmable Hudson River, PFAS contaminated drinking source water in Newburgh, and the Army Corps of Engineers proposed Coastal

Resilience Measures for NYNJ. Jen encouraged everyone to learn more about these priorities by visiting the Clearwater website.

Scott Greathead said there is a place for environmental litigation in the issues we deal with and suggested we develop a relationship with the NYC Attorney General's office. John McLaughlin, a community member of the EA Committee, expressed appreciation for the matrix of issues, probable positions, and supporting documentation and said it provides a robust foundation for positions that Clearwater might take. John hopes the organization will start to focus on people like the Attorney General to inform them.

Jen said Manna Jo Greene left a great repository to work with and the goal is to put that resource into the community's hands, with up to date information and actionable items.

Manna, answering John's comments, said we focus on education, keeping key decision makers informed through briefings and forums, and that through education we build a foundation for decisions. She said that is definitely going on. Jen said there could be more conversations on this within the EA Committee.

Joan Gaylord said the power of grass roots activism, each of us getting our voices out there and weighing in, is amazing and we have that opportunity as individuals.

Meg Mayo, Development Director and Director of Marketing, said development is the fund raising arm of Clearwater's staff and introduced Ann Mellor, Manager of Membership, and Amber Stewart, Communications Coordinator. Meg said the department is responsible for raising 55% of Clearwater's annual revenue. Meg also introduced the Development Committee consisting of 15 board, staff, and community members.

Meg showed 2023 year-to-date metrics, with development revenue up 9% over 2022, the average gift up 15%, membership revenue down 36%, and sustaining donor dollars up 68%. The goal has been a 10% increase in development revenue over last year. Meg said the membership revenue decrease is reflective of a societal change where there is just not as much interest in membership as before, and there is a membership committee looking at what membership means to Clearwater going forward. Clearwater will continue to focus on growing sustaining donors in 2024, to help build a stable cushion of revenue.

Meg said we are current, right now, on all of our financial reporting, which has been a huge accomplishment over the past year. Meg spoke about rebuilding strategically to achieve financial stability by building donor confidence, creating connections and providing opportunities to give. Meg said everyone's effort is needed to create the connections needed to build financial stability. Meg gave examples of creating connections by outreach, and asked for everyone's support in making our second Brooklyn cultivation event a success.

Meg spoke of the Clearwater legacy society, the Pete and Toshi Seeger Society, and how legacy gifts can sustain the next generation, with the most common planned gifts being a charitable gift in a will or a beneficiary designation on a bank account, brokerage account, retirement account or other assets. Meg said this type of giving is vital to the long term success of an organization. Meg thanked Sarah Underhill for leading the effort to revitalize this society. Meg highlighted a quote from Donkey Dover Jr, a Seeger Society member – "I take pride in knowing my support will help Clearwater endure as long as the Hudson needs it."

Looking ahead to 2024 growth and expansion, highlighted areas include a business sponsorship program, grants, and donor cultivation and stewardship. Meg said she works closely with Ruthie on the grants, to ensure grant objectives are deliverable. Meg said we are also working hard on donor cultivation now and how we tell our story.

Gareth congratulated Meg and everyone on getting the financial reporting up to date and asked if Clearwater is pre-qualified with NYS for grants. Meg said yes, Clearwater is.

Meg then introduced Amber Stewart, Communications Coordinator.

Amber introduced the communications team, explained their responsibilities, spoke about communication channels, and shared improvements in email open rates and click rates achieved through an ongoing strategy to increase email

engagement. Looking ahead, there will be an emphasis on public relations strategy. Amber answered questions and explained that click rate is the amount of people who click the links inside the email, and that both open rate and click rate are important when dealing with sponsors.

Henry announced that he would be submitting a resignation in writing. Henry has served six years on the Board and is currently Chair of the Properties and EA Committees, as well as serving on the EC in recent years. Arthur thanked Henry for his six years on the Board and 60 years in defense of the Hudson River.

Election Results

Board members elected:

Adenike Bamgboye
Peter Capek
Joshua Clyburn
Joan Gaylord
Scott Greathead
Gareth Hougham
Aaron Mair
Henry Neale
Jeremy Rainer
Gabrielle Speilberg
Steve Stanne
Rosemary Thomas

Meg said paper ballots were sent to those without email addresses on file and requested anyone receiving a paper ballot to supply an email address, as email ballots are more environmentally friendly and cost effective.

Sloop Club Charters

Steve presented charters for Walkabout Clearwater Chorus, Riverlovers, North River Friends of Clearwater, NYC Friends of Clearwater, New Jersey Friends of Clearwater, Brooklyn Friends of Clearwater and the Beacon Sloop Club.

Wrapping up, Steve and Sarah marked the close of this part of the meeting with a song originally written by Harry Belafonte and simplified by Kim and Reggie Harris 'We Come From the Mountains'.

Finally, the trailer for 'Down by the Riverside', a documentary film about Pete Seeger building a boat and launching a movement was shown.

Break

OCTOBER MEETING (New Board) CONVENED

Call to order

Steve called the meeting to order at 1:00. The new board was present.

Vote to approve the officers

Steve read the proposed slate for the Officers for the 2023-2024 year:

Samantha Hicks – President
Arthur Jones – Vice-President
Rosemary Thomas – Secretary
Neil Gordon – Treasurer

Steve asked for nominations from the floor and there were none. Scott moved to accept slate as shown. Julia seconded. The slate was Unanimously PASSED by voice vote.

Steve said it was his privilege to work with the board and there are great new members coming. He asked for everyone to be supportive of Sam and continue the progress made over past couple of years. Joan cheered Steve and he received a standing ovation for his work over the past three years.

Sam took over as chair and thanked Steve.

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:

Mitzi Elkes
Tom Murphy
Steve Stanne

Aaron Mair made a MOTION to approve the slate and Gareth Hougham seconded. It PASSED by unanimous vote.

Schedule for future board meetings

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

The approved schedule is:

Wednesday, November 1, 2023
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
Thursday, January 11, 2024
Wednesday, March 6, 2024
Tuesday, May 7, 2024
Saturday, June 8, 2024 – in person meeting in Beacon; time TBD
Thursday, July 11, 2024
Wednesday, September 11, 2024
Saturday, October 5, 2024; 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM – in person Annual Meeting

Adjourn

Dan Riesel moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Tom Murphy.
The meeting ended at 1:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary