Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 7:00pm

Board Members
Sarah Armour
~~Adenike Bamgboye~~
Peter Capek
~~Joshua Clyburn~~
Stuart Findlay
Joan Gaylord, Executive Comm. At Large
~~Peter Gregory~~
Neil Gordon, Executive Comm. At Large
Samantha Hicks, President
Gareth Hougham
Arthur Jones, Vice-President
~~Aaron Mair~~
Jillian Maresco
Jennifer McMillan
~~Tom Murphy~~, Treasurer
Liam Purvis
Jeremy Rainer
Dan Riesel
Larry Rothbart
Gabrielle Spielberg
Steve Stanne, Executive Comm. At Large
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary
Sarah Underhill
Julia Wilson
(~~strike through~~ indicates absence)

Staff Members
Erin Macchiaroli
Meg Mayo
Mariabella Rivera-Todaro
David Toman, Executive Director

Members
Jeremy Baron
Ben Kaminsky
Alan Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
Mission Song sung by Gabbie, "Angel from Montgomery."

Approval of Minutes

The 12/18/24 Board meeting minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Budget Discussion and Vote

Sam led the discussion on the FY2025 budget. Neil made a MOTION to approve the budget as presented and Arthur seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Stuart asked what levers can be pulled if fundraising does not meet its mark and David shared deliberate decisions to delay certain expenses until later in the year, such as staff pay raises and the hiring of a new communications and environmental advocacy position, until after the winter season. David emphasized the importance of collective effort and commitment to achieve the organization's goals. Larry pointed out the difference between the current budget and the previous year's budget was largely due to grants. Sam called the vote and the budget PASSED unanimously.

Resolution on Use of a Bequest

Regarding a recently received $50k bequest, Larry made a MOTION to follow the Finance Committee's recommendation that it be released at the Executive Director's discretion. Steve seconded the motion. David explained that the funds will be used to pay down debt and to hire a grants contractor. Steve clarified that the policy guiding use of windfalls is to ensure long-term financial improvement. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Operations

David focused on financials, including a Statement of Activity for FY2024 (12/1/2023 through 11/30/2024). He covered progress made in the financial management of the organization, highlighting the challenges faced in the past and improvements made. He mentioned the use of multiple systems for tracking revenue and expenses, and the efforts made to enhance the accuracy and reliability of financial reports. David also presented a comparison of the organization's financial performance over the past few years, noting the growth potential and the need to achieve a surplus to cover expenses and debt repayment. He emphasized the importance of building on relationships with donors to ensure long-term financial stability.

David discussed the trajectory of the Business Model Planning group's work, which is on track to achieve success in 2025. He mentioned the group meets every two weeks, had a full day retreat on 1/9, and plans to compile all outlines by mid-February. David highlighted the importance of clear implementation plans to meet the aggressive targets. A project report will be generated to support fund raising efforts.

David also highlighted the importance of reaching out to potential funders and donors, and the need to start building connections now for future sponsorship and charter sails. He emphasized the importance of securing table purchases for the upcoming Gala.

Meg presented some preliminary data on the organization's fiscal year 2025 performance, highlighting increases in development revenue, new donors, and donors who increased their level of support. She also noted a 15% increase in revenue year-to-date compared to the same period last year. Meg said Gala outreach is underway and sponsors are sought.a

Board Outreach & Opportunties

Rosemary reiterated the importance of engaging more people with the organization, not just for fundraising but also to increase its impact. Joan shared a personal experience with outreach that illustrated the effectiveness of this approach. Several board members shared their relevant

experience, in particular with the use of guest spots on education sails. The team agreed on the importance of promoting Clearwater's education sails and engaging with potential supporters.

Steve emphasized use of guest spots on education sails, saying if you haven't been on an education sail, the first step is to get yourself on one. He said the schedule will be available shortly and stressed the importance of seeing the program in action with kids. Three guest spots are held on every sail, ideally for folks in a position to donate or book the boat. A staff or board member familiar with the program should be along to explain things so the onboard educators are not interrupted.

David said everyone can help create connections to opportunities for sponsorships, charter sails, and general support. If someone brings the connection, staff can help with the follow through. David noted the effort needs to start now in order to populate the sailing season.

Sam led a discussion about potential partnerships and outreach strategies, encouraging the team to think of individuals or organizations they could connect with for potential collaborations, such as sailing with college students or advertising opportunities for the upcoming gala.

Committees

Sam said Phase 1 committees, the highest priority, are now up and running, including Finance, Development, Sloop, Nominating, and Education and that Phase II is underway, focused on revitalizing the Planning & Governance (P&G), Environmental action (EA), and Outreach committees.

Nominating Committee

Sam and Arthur discussed the committee's responsibilities and timeline. Arthur explained the duties are outlined in the bylaws, and they are responsible for filling open seats, evaluating potential nominees, and conducting board assessments. He also mentioned that the committee will seek nominations from the membership and the public. Arthur said two board members have reached the end of their third three year terms, Sarah U. and Neil, two are up for re-election, Julia and Tom M., and there is one open seat. Arthur and Sarah U. intend to distribute the Board assessment questionnaire by the end of February, with responses due by the end of March.

The conversation ended with a discussion about the possibility of changing the timing of the board self-assessment. This was referred to the P&G Committee. Larry, P&G Chair, invited interested individuals to join his committee.

Education Committee

Steve gave a brief description of Education Committee focus. The intent is to bring in community members with expertise beyond the board itself. He said the role is advisory, to serve as a sounding board for the Education Director in discussing policies, challenges, and programs, so as to help them do their job of improving Clearwater's education program. This mirrors his experience back when he was the Education Director. Steve gave several examples of what the committee is currently focused on and said it is great to be working so closely with a talented staff.

Sloop Committee

Sarah A. said the Sloop Committee, looking at long term preservation of a wooden structure sailing on fresh water with a full schedule, is considering adding industry experts to act as a sounding board, similar to how the Education Committee functions. Connecting the tremendous experience of Clearwater's captains and crew with a set of industry experts would offer valuable insight. The question is who are the right experts for this.

The committee is also focused on significant, near term topsides and transom work in 2026 and ensuring we are on our timeline for grants and project management.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary