Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, March 06, 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
Jacob Benoist
Jen Benson
Erin Macchiaroli
Emily Marcet
Meg Mayo
Mariabella Rivera-Todaro
David Toman, Executive Director

Members
Jeremy Baron
Alan Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
Mission Song sung by Steve, "Sailing Down my Golden River."

Approval of Minutes

The 01/14/25 Board meeting minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Executive Director's Report

Operations

David highlighted Business Model Planning group updates. Significant sessions included a full day on tactical objectives to increase sloop occupancy and programming, a brainstorming meeting with the Harvard Business School New York City Alumni Club Community Partners focused on corporate and sponsorship engagement, and a retreat on development planning and events. Volunteers Dean Lentz and Bill Braine are drafting a comprehensive plan for discussion and approval at the May 8th board meeting.

A financial update was not sufficiently vetted for this meeting, but the first quarter report will be distributed ahead of the May meeting.

Jen Benson, Director of Advocacy & Communications, is a 40 Under 40 Mover and Shaker awardee of the Duchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, with a celebration on May 1st in Poughkeepsie. Reach out to David if interested in attending. (Congratulations Jen!!).

Administrative highlights were next. Grant funding for a retirement plan has been received. Three proposals are in review and the Finance Committee will guide a decision. Voluntary board, crew, and staff demographic surveys will be emailed by end of April. FY2024 audit field work begins the week of April 28th, with reports and 990 delivered by August 31st. Two 2025 On-Board Program Coordinators, Jacob Dyck and Ren Zollinger were welcomed.

David gave a detailed update on spring education sails, youth empowerment programs, Tideline scheduling, the Junior Bosun program, public sails, and community partners. Both spring education sails and Tideline programming are very close to booking targets.

Jen spoke of her efforts to reintroduce Clearwater to our representatives in the NYS Legislature, in particular the Hudson River Delegation which includes Senators and Assemblymembers who represent communities along the river. In addition to meetings with individual Senators/Assembly Members and staff, Jen has participated in the Environmental Protection Fund Advocacy Day with the New Yorkers for Clean Water and Green Jobs Coalition (Clearwater is a member) and co-hosted the Hudson River Advocacy Day with Riverkeeper and Scenic Hudson. These meetings have identified some support opportunities. Jen covered additional efforts to secure funding for Clearwater, including a presentation to the Duchess County Chamber of Commerce and work on establishing a portfolio of donors for deeper connections.

Next, Jen covered Hudson River PCBs, where a sign on letter from electeds to the EPA is underway, plus progress on hiring an Advocacy and Communications Associate, planning for 2025 speaker sails, communications work promoting the upcoming sailing season, and supporting the development team on promoting events and member renewal.

Development

Meg introduced Jacob Benoist, our new donor relations coordinator.

Progress is now being reported against the budget. Meg covered end-of-year giving, highlighting a shortfall of the goal in January and plans to address this through one-on-one outreach. Gala revenues are lagging monthly budget projections and everyone is encouraged to both participate and to help promote the event via their networks. Revenue opportunities include sponsorships, ticket and/or table purchases, silent auction participation (no ticket required!), the live auction, and the paddle raise. The silent auction is an opportunity to engage new people.

Meg spoke to creating change, covering grants, stewarding boat passengers, business outreach, and database cleanup. The new grants contactor has identified 7 prospects. There is attention and

energy on stewarding boat passengers, including donation envelopes being available, information sheets for our education sail families, and exploring automation between Fare Harbor and Donor Perfect. Outreach to businesses is ongoing and continued support in making connections is requested and will be greatly appreciated. Meg is working with Jacob B. and Dean Lentz on donor database projects to improve reliability of the data and to simplify and automate tasks. They are also identifying KPIs for decision-making and measuring progress.

Julia asked how to learn about sponsorship opportunities, using the website. Meg said direct outreach is being used and she can send something to Julia. Julia noted that if people don't know they can sponsor, that might be one reason it's a little low. Erin noted that sponsorships for Gala are on the GiveSmart page and provided a link in chat. Sam put the ticket connection into chat.

Interactive: Board Outreach & Opportunities

The board discussed ways to support and promote Clearwater's upcoming events and fundraising efforts. Sam encouraged members to participate in events, promote them to their networks, and consider sponsorships. She highlighted upcoming dates like the Gala, the paddle event, and the sailing season. Steve shared information about educational sails and urged board members to join one to better understand Clearwater's work. Rosemary emphasized the importance of connecting more people to Clearwater to expand the base of support.

Sam asked everyone to think in terms of **participate, promote, sponsor** and where each activity falls for you as an individual. Sam reviewed upcoming events (3/21 -Gala silent auction goes live; 4/6 – the 11th Annual Spirit of the Hudson Gala; 4/1 – Registration opens for Paddle for Our Hudson; 5/10 – Kingston Earth Fair on the Rondout Creek, partnered with Radio Kingston; 5/15 – benefit concert at the Town Crier in Beacon; 9/6 – Folk Picnic at the Beacon Settlement Camp). Sam reviewed the sloop schedule for spring and Steve sent an email to board members with the spring education sail schedule so they can sign up and see an education sail in action. Doing so makes it much easier to speak to what happens on board and why it's so significant.

Sam divided the group into three breakout rooms, asking folks to visualize, then verbalize, then make it happen. Session leaders will roll up their input and provide it to Sam.

Steve noted that this year is the 60th anniversary of the precedent-setting decision in the Scenic Hudson vs Federal Power Commission and suggested hikes and a sail past the mountain as a way to celebrate.

Committee Work & Reporting

Nominating Committee: Arthur said the annual board survey has been sent out, and members are reminded to complete it.

Sloop Committee: David recapped Sloop winter preservation goals and Sam showed an update from Sarah A. highlighting March progress including quarter deck planking and reefer refit work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rosemary Thomas, Secretary