

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of the West Harbor Pond Watershed
Association, Monday, January 20, 2025 7 PM

Board Members Present: Merritt Blakeslee, Will Anderson, Valerie Breen, Mike Breen, Sue Harris, Dave McFarlane, Nate Cagle and Maggie Fairbrother

Identify a practical solution to relieve Merritt of certain responsibilities.

The overriding goal is to identify and get a commitment from other board members to take over these responsibilities ensuring they continue to get done successfully/well. If a plan is finalized, Merritt will continue handling remaining presidential responsibilities.

Alternatively, find someone to take over the position of president. Currently, none of the board members present at meeting are prepared to do that.

Reviewed and commenced discussing list provided by Merritt (attached)

Confirmed meeting set in one month during which specifics will be discussed including which board member will accept responsibility for handling which item(s).

Merritt recognized all on the call already doing stuff for the pond and spoke of the current responsibilities of each member participating in the call.

Note, in preparation for today's meeting, Sue reviewed our By Laws and clarified the need to be mindful of President's responsibilities set forth in the By Laws.

Regarding calling meetings of the Board, Sue suggested all board meetings be scheduled at one time, be it at the end of prior year or at the first meeting of any year, including the dates and times for each meeting. Once meeting date/time are set, Will to handle setting up the Zoom call and, by email, providing board members with relevant information to connect to the meeting.

Alternatively, if cannot agree to dates for all meetings then use an app like Doodle, to schedule BOD meeting as need arises thereby removing Merritt from the process of scheduling board meetings. Once date/time identified Will arranges the Zoom call and sends the sign in protocol to the members.

Note: Board did not discuss who would take responsibility for scheduling meetings if dates not prearranged.

Potential need to modify By Laws to reflect new division of existing responsibilities.

In addressing Merritt's request for someone else to be responsible for matters involving membership, reviewed the need to develop a list of former members who, for unknown reasons, are no longer members. We have names and corresponding information going back 5 or 6 years. Suggestion made to send communication to those who "dropped off".

Need to develop strategy for staying close to members including, but not limited to, apprising members of activities relevant to the lake, discuss proposed new projects and/or update status of new projects, informing members of the Board's activities, and even reminder when to pay dues.

Merritt stated more communication to all members could help increase the number of members.

Merritt mentioned Historical Society, which does a somewhat better job at fundraising and increasing number of members, raised its profile by placing articles in the Register detailing happening, social events, etc. in order to keep the Society in the minds of the community.

Reiterated historically the board would send a membership update via USPS each year around April. This annual mailing involved numerous persons, stuffing envelopes, applying postage, etc. Resurrecting this annual mailing could possibly increase membership.

Furthermore, in an effort to increase membership, consider sending off an email saying, in essence, "Hey did you forget about us?" Thereby letting them know what we've been doing, why we need you and why they should care.

Regarding communication to the full membership, Merritt will send out communication written by others to the full membership. However, Merritt emphasized he would not be responsible for composing any messages

Queried board members to see if they know anyone who could educate us on how to increase membership, ideally provide specific suggestions and step to take.

Maggie suggested reaching out to Susan Morris, because of her experience with non-profits and marketing, while being sensitive to her past experiences with the Association.

Merritt briefly talked about friction related to float plane many years ago, very strident effort on the part of the Association to ban float planes from the lake (it served as one of the seeds for the creation of the Association). This effort continues to have an impact, having left scars that are still palpable today. Some neighbors will not serve on the

board or become a member based on how the float plane issues was handled. Merritt noted Chip Newell, without becoming a member, made a significant contribution to the siphon fund.

Mike Breen has discussed getting involved with the Association with Chip Newell. Mike agreed Chip Newell should be approached on becoming a member or at minimum provide assistance.

Board agreed efforts should be made to try and get all of them back working with us or, at a minimum, function as a resource.

319 Grant discussion – 2018 survey of pond, identified remediation needed, turn that into a plan of action per guidelines, go to the government and get funds to remediate the erosion problems set forth in the survey.

Questionable if results of the 2018 survey could be the basis for requesting funds through the 319-grant program. The 2018 survey was extensive, provided detailed information regarding issues and possible solutions to each problem. However, the information can be considered stale.

As part of the survey, each property owner was notified of the concerns identified in the survey. With the passage of time, some of the problems may have been fixed, others could have gotten worse, many properties around the lake have been sold and new owner may not be aware of the concerns uncovered as part of the survey.

Concluded the 319 grant is not currently an active item and therefore is not a responsibility to “offload”. However, this is something the board should resurrect.

Mountain View Road (“MVR”) and its runoff into the lake was discussed at length.

In the recent past, MVR issues have been discussed along with possible solutions. In April 2024, the Association hired Rebecca Jacobs to assess the overall situation related to MVR’s negative impact on the lake. Rebecca felt strongly that one or two grant applications could be successful, and she could write the grant applications the cost of which would be around \$ 2,000+. The Board did not take any action regarding hiring Rebecca to write the grant applications.

No current work being done to actively advance any form of remediation to MVR. However, Merritt believes we have a significant opportunity to get something done. Therefore, it would make sense to identify a board member willing to pursue this opportunity to eliminate MVR runoff from entering the pond.

The board member who agrees to take over responsibility for this task should be sensitive to potential issues with owners of property – MVR is a private road and residents have a HOA. Furthermore, Merritt spoke with its president, Erik Kesting.

One possible solution discussed would be diversion of the run-off that reaches Lakeside Drive into an existing low area that would serve as a settlement pond. This project could be done easily by the town's Public Works Department at little or no cost. Alternative solution to the MVR's runoff problem considered it being mostly a matter of grading the right-of-way, so the erosion goes into a ditch and then into a settling pond.

Owners of Mountain View Road do have a HOA. Merritt spoke with the President of MVR's HOA, Erik Kersting and briefly reviewed possible solutions. Merritt is of the opinion, with the HOA's cooperation, we could successfully resolve MVR's runoff into the lake. Possibility exists that the grant would cover Rebecca's costs to write grant and oversee the project, if matching funds is a requirement, hope it could be satisfied with in-kind contributions.

Merritt believes if MVR's HOA was approached with a grant to fix the road, where the HOA didn't have to do a lot of heavy lifting and minimal cost, this would be a successful project.

Further thoughts on this matter were to postpone any action until we confirm HOA's willingness to move forward should the remediation of MVR qualify for and be awarded grant funds. If HOA agrees to go along, then attempt to get grant money to pay for the work.

This is a significant opportunity to get something done for the protection of the lake. It would be good to identify a board member willing to liaise with the HOA and pursue this opportunity to eliminate MVR runoff from entering the pond.

Merritt would like the board members to acquire an understanding of the fundamentals of lake ecology, keep up with new programs and information LSM is providing, thus developing a more fundamental knowledge base, learn issues facing other lakes in Maine while recognizing our lake is unique. Merritt looking for all board members to raise their game by being better informed about the water quality of Maine lakes and specifically as applies to our pond.

Sue briefly explained the fundamentals of collecting data and monitoring, need to differentiate between the two, look at data as happening and seeing if something is different.

Access to and sharing testing data was also discussed. Need access so as to work with it on a real-time basis and quickly respond by taking any necessary action. Receiving data long after it was obtained does no good. Merritt has shared all the data he has.

Nate, Mike, Dave and Sue should plan to get together to look at the data, understand its meaning and will thereafter be better able to understand what to look for when testing. Going through Sue's graphs, having them explained, would be helpful as they are collecting data.

Currently our water testing is a piecemeal regime. We can do better if all have better understanding of the lake's water quality issues, the big picture.

Merritt wanting to spend his time on water testing and making sure the siphon is doing what it is supposed to do.

Summary:

1. Confirm Merritt believes this is the operative list for him to remain President.
2. Board members to review Merritt's list; at February 20 meeting to talk about specific resolutions to each item on the list including individual members of the board committing to taking over responsibility of item(s) on list.

Will to send out email with Zoom link a day or two prior to the February meeting.

Meeting concluded 8:25 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Fairbrother

If I am to continue as president of the WHPWA, I no longer wish to have responsibility for – or involvement in – the following:

Ministerial tasks

Scheduling Board of Directors meetings;

Planning for and scheduling the Annual Meeting;

Organizing social events;

Matters involving membership, dues, etc.;

Certain Large Projects

319 grant application

Grant application to remediate erosion on Mountain View Road

Being the person chiefly responsible for understanding water quality issues

In addition, I would like the other Board members to educate themselves on basic water quality issues and to learn what other lakes in Maine are doing to maintain water quality. This can be done by getting on the email list of the Lake Stewards of Maine and by absorbing the information provided in those emails and in the resources available on the LSM website (<https://www.lakestewardsofmaine.org/>).