

HLA monthly BOG meeting held on Monday, April 29, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM by President Jay Cassella.

Attendance by ZOOM: Cindy Porriello; Bob Kiehm; Nick Porriello; Eleanore Porriello; David Chalifoux; Heather Edelson; Laurel Hoynoski.

Attendance in person: Alan Stokke; Karin Bullock; Sharon Howell; Alan Howell; Brian Polak; Keha Esposito; Betty Barsevich; Jean Cassella

Board members attending in person: Jay Cassella; Sheri Berger; Frank Nunes; Brian Polak.  
Absent Board members: Lloyd Pearson, past president.

Approval of the Minutes for the March 2024 board of Governors meeting. Sheri Berger, Tax Collector indicated that the minutes as submitted have a typo which says "By-Lay" instead of "Bylaw" as well as another typo in the general discussion section where the "T" is missing in the word "sought". A motion was made to wave the reading of the Minutes by Sheri Berger and was seconded by Frank Nunes, there were no objections, there was then a motion to approve the minutes as corrected made by Frank Nunes, which was seconded by Brian Polak, this was also approved unanimously.

The floor was open to general discussion with Alan Stokke commenting regarding ZOOM meetings and seeking clarification on whether or not BOG members are allowed to vote while participating through ZOOM attendance. Laurel Hoynoski through ZOOM indicated that it is her understanding that it is currently up to each organization, this will be double checked, and proper procedures will be followed. Also, Alan Stokke had comments regarding the bylaws guidance regarding absentee ballots and Proxy votes, it is his opinion that the bylaws are not clear on the details and/or rules for the processing of such.

Alan Howell provided feedback regarding the Japanese Knotweed at the spillway and noted that it appears to be making a comeback. Jay Cassella and other members had attempted to apply for a grant to remove it, but it was declined by the state. It was noted that Japanese Knotweed may become covered under a similar grant in the future, this will be an ongoing process.

Karin Bullock addressed concerns regarding the voting process and concerns that it is unclear as to exactly when during the annual meeting voting will be taking place, whether at the start of the meeting or the end and that this uncertainty may lead members to leave the meeting before candidates actually come up to a vote. This should be clarified so that members are able to plan accordingly. She also addressed the possible need for a reminder to go out to members about the existing prohibition on burning leaves, this has been creating horrible smell, and lots of smoke in the air, she noted that it is an existing town ordinance, not simply an association rule and it should be enforced.

Treasurer reports for March 2024 and April 2024 were read by treasurer Bob Kiehm, he reviewed the figures for March which show an income for the month of \$312.70, which include interest income of \$239.69 for the existing certificate of deposit as well as \$72.74 for the money market account and \$.27 in interest for the savings account. Expenditures for the month of March

were \$178.30 broken down to \$86.80 for administrative and supplies and expenses, \$21.26 for the Adobe program and an additional \$65.54 for [wix.com](https://www.wix.com) for a one year membership. \$91.50 was spent on electrical service for the street lights. The current bank balances are as follows: checking account \$5,602.89, savings account \$31,401.85, money market account \$29,584.59, Webster bank one year certificate of deposit \$77,215.21 for a grand total of \$143,804.54. A motion was made by Frank Nunes to approve the March Treasurer report and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cindy Porriello, motion passed unanimously.

Income for April was \$2,569.38 with expenditures for the month of April were \$1,052.10 of that \$21.26 was for administration supplies and expenses, \$140.30 under beautification and \$90.54 for electrical services. There was an expenditure of \$800 for property maintenance. Account balances are \$5,491.09 in Checking, \$33,714.20 in Savings and \$29,584.59 in Money Market account as well as the Webster bank one year certificate of deposit of \$77,472.24 for a grand total of \$146,262.12. A motion was made by Frank Nunes, to approve the Treasurer report for April 2024. The motion was seconded by Brian Polak and passed unanimously.

-Tax collector report was read by our Text collector, Sheri Berger. She reports the current tax total for 2023 of \$61,127.81 with a total current tax collected of \$58,135.09. Back taxes/interest/fees collected \$2,938.66 for a total collected of \$61,073.75 thus far. She indicated that there are eight properties that are delinquent on their tax payments and she will be looking to file liens on these properties after this upcoming weekend. It was discussed that electronic banking is acceptable for association banking purposes with the account at Citizens Bank.

-Septic report, president Cassella indicated that after discussions with Cahill, it has been agreed that they will honor last year's prices for septic pumping for this year's service.

-Road report, it was reported to the membership that Mr. John Hoynoski has resigned his position as Road Committee chairperson, and the association is currently looking for volunteers to fill that position.

-Lake and Dam report by David Chalifoux. He indicated that they last met on April 22 and all members were present except for Marybeth Russo. The boat registration program is on hold pending budget clarification. He reviewed funding figures and indicated that they have been shopping for the necessary instruments in order to make the lake quality readings as recommended by AER. He was asked for clarification as to what exactly we are doing with the collected data and responded that the data will be sent to AER for ongoing monitoring and to inform the development of the water quality plan. Sheri Berger added that it allows us to benchmark and collect consistent data in order to support the lake water quality treatment plan. AER will use the data to make adjustments as necessary. This also contributes to our ability to compare with and supply data to the state database of Connecticut Lakes. This is in line with many other lakes in the state. There is also a plan to purchase the recommended Secchi Disk, which is required to check the water clarity levels, this measures the water turbidity and is a one time purchase. It was noted that the weed treatment permit has been paid and that there are some other plans for work in progress. President Cassella reemphasized that the association's priority is the lake health and as such the board is not looking to cut corners and save pennies.

-The Aquatic Wildlife report was presented by Keha Esposito, she indicated that they met on April 24 and are currently working on the gardens, they are looking to tag existing plants so that visitors to the gardens can know what is present as well as adding additional plants. They have a fall garden planned for Shore Dr. They are also working on two workshops that are planned with the suppliers for bluebird houses and bat houses, no dates have been picked as of yet. They are planning to present at the annual meeting and set up a table with handouts on various topics to inform the membership. The turtle crossing signs are back up and they have also signed up for frogwatchusa.com which has an audio course available for volunteers to recognize and document the various species of frogs. The butterfly waystation continues to be supported by a variety of plantings in the various gardens. Their first newsletter is now out and the second newsletter is in the works to include frogs and light pollution. Bob Kiehm thinks that there is a grant for some of these initiatives that his wife, Sandy, previously saw and which may be available to the association to apply to.

-Bylaw committee reports that new proposed amendments will be discussed under the New Business section today. They met twice in April, on April 2 and April 16, and are currently working on an Architectural guidelines bylaw.

-Audit committee was reported by Alan Howell, who indicated that they are working on finishing their report ahead of the annual meeting for next month.

-The Web and Facebook committee is reportedly up-to-date. Facebook is currently pretty much on auto pilot and the website is mostly up-to-date as indicated by Heather Edelson. Heather asked that the recording secretary send her the corrected Minutes for March as she has not received those.

-Under New Business, it was disclosed that the state of Connecticut responded to the grant submission for weed removal and that they advised us that currently the Japanese Knotweed is not covered under the funding. Apparently, there had been two lists released with the application, one of which included Japanese Knotweed, but it was the one that does not include it that was correct. There is currently no funding for Japanese Knotweed removal. Keha Esposito indicated that the Connecticut Agricultural Department may be having new grants coming up for Japanese Knotweed specifically. They will keep an eye out for this. Bob Kiehm congratulated and recognized the many members who contributed to completing the grant application and submitting it in a very short period of time.

-Keha Esposito presented her resignation from the Ad-hoc Bylaw Review committee due to a lack of interest by Association members.

-The proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year was presented by Bob Kiehm, he noted that there is no increase in taxes and that the proposed budget is for the same amount as last year, \$62,000. He noted that there is an increase proposed for the insurance and bonding category as well as a couple of other items. The road drainage budget was cut due to there being money left over in the current budget and significant work can be done before the end of this fiscal year. Next year's budget will dip into savings for a total of \$2,000 in order to balance the new budget. The upcoming budget only includes currently contracted services and does not include any

Phragmites remediation as it has not appeared to be effective thus far. The beach maintenance budget will be reduced by \$500 and the beautification budget will remain the same at \$1,000. The electricity budget will remain the same despite expected increases in the electricity rates. Lake testing will be increased to meet the new testing schedule, some questions still remain as to how many testing sessions and sites are to be had. Funding for testing equipment probably should come from the reserve budget as per Bob Kiehm. He also noted that this proposed budget accounts for a little bit lower testing frequency and fewer locations than initially proposed, so as to prevent the need for a potential tax increase. It is felt that if issues are found, a vote can be taken to top off reserves and conduct additional testing. Legal expenses line item is expected to be lower due to less need for consultation with our attorney. The septic pumping budget remains the same as does the snow plowing and sanding budget. The \$75,000 certificate of deposit is coming up for renewal in June and we are looking to renew that certificate of deposit. The general fund reserves were tapped this year, but there are still some \$3,200 available. A motion to accept the proposed budget was made by Laurel Hoynoski and 2nd by Brian Polak, it was approved unanimously.

The floor was open to comment by members on any of the pending amendments, there are a total of six amendments, including two from today.

-Alan Stokke had comments on bylaw number 15 and 16. For number 15 he proposed the need to clarify that votes needed to move a resolution forward be noted as five and not a majority. For number 16 he posited that there is no such thing as “president elect” as he/she takes office immediately upon election. In regards to resignations he sought clarification on the language regarding committee members being appointed for one year. Should it rather be that appointments expire at the end of the term? Also, he does not agree with the proposed changes in language as it pertains to the authority of the president. For number 18, regarding ballot votes, he indicated that at the previous annual meeting, members left the meeting having cast votes prior to the actual voting time when the vote was taken, and prior to the official nominations being made. He believes that only once nominations actually occur at the meeting, can those names of those nominated be put on the ballot, also he raised the question of whether or not incumbents need to be nominated at each election as this is currently unclear. Under number 22 Alan Stokke takes objection to the rationale used to support this proposal by comparing it to the United States president.

-Karin Bullock feels that the proposed bylaw amendment makes the process of members nominating candidates for committees a moot point. Brian Polak responded that the original bylaws indicated that all appointments were “served at the pleasure of the president” and that his goal with his proposal is to go back to that philosophy, that is not our current bylaw however.

-Alan Stokke mentioned the proposed changes in the camping bylaws and raised concern that a 21 day limit is not very limited and that also it has never been shown that the Knickerbocker family were ever given permission to camp and thus such a presupposed argument should not be used as a precedent. Also, he feels that the camping permit as currently written is actually a contract and as such, it must be approved by the board of governors before the president can sign it. It is also unclear as to what exactly the definition of “Day” is, he has questions about the use

of generators and the disposal of Grey water. He feels that too many things are still left open to interpretation.

-Keha Esposito spoke regarding the camping amendment and feels that it changes the residential nature of the association, but also that it is a way of being inclusive of land owners who do not have houses on their lots. In regards to the voting process, she feels that there is still a need for consistency and clarity as there are several remaining weaknesses, such as filling out ballots before the time of the vote and what exactly counts as a quorum?. She would like the board of governors to look at that and clarify the process. She asked rhetorically, “when does a vote become an absentee ballot?” In regards to committees and the president’s power to appoint, Keha feels as it stands, the power is/was shared and the new proposal limits the power of the association members. Brian Polak spoke to support the idea of empowering the president to “get his agenda met“. Keha feels this is an attempt to shift power from the membership to the president. Brian Polak states that the proposed change is only to clarify the existing bylaw and that currently does not empower the membership to select the committee members, just to nominate them. Keha also raised some concerns that the last several meeting minutes of the Bylaw Committee do not appear to be currently on the website.

-Karin Bullock suggested that committee chairs should have a strong voice as to who is nominated and selected for their particular committees, Brian Polak disagrees. It was noted that at the last annual meeting, there were no nominations made for the committees, it was noted that this was probably due to it being such an extremely long day and it was overlooked. We all agreed we must do better this year.

-Cindy Porriello indicated that at last year’s annual meeting those members who left early were told that they could only vote for those candidates who were incumbents and that votes for non incumbents were not counted. But then the point was made that if they wrote in their votes for incumbents before the time of the vote, should these votes be instead considered an absentee ballot and also not counted/allowed? Karin Bullock asked if this year there would be a BOG and separate Annual meeting on separate days in order to keep each of them shorter. President Jay Cassella does not think so.

-Heather Edelson clarified that the Bylaw meeting minutes postings are actually currently on the website in response to Keha Esposito’s previous statement of them being missing.

The board of Governors prepared to vote for amendments number 15 and number 51A. Comments were requested from board members, none were made. A motion to present these two amendments to the membership at the upcoming May meeting was made by Bob Kiehm and 2nd by Heather Edelson. There were no objections, the motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn at 8:42 PM by Bob Kiehm and 2nd by Heather Edelson.