

Lake Zoar Authority

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Member Towns

Monroe-Newtown-Oxford-Southbury

The regular meeting of the Lake Zoar Authority was held on Tuesday December 3, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Oxford Town Hall.

Commissioners Present:

Gary Fillion, Chairman
Frank Cavallo
John Downs
Bill May, Treasurer
Barbara McWilliams
Lesley Pires
Mark Saksa
Dick Speer

Absent:

Chairman Gary Fillion called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Secretary's Report:

A motion to accept the minutes with from the November 8, 2022 minutes, was made by Mark Saksa, seconded by Bill May; the motion was passed unanimously. There is an error in the 2023 meeting schedule. The actual May meeting is May 2, 2023 and will be reposted online.

Public Comments:

In attendance was Brian Wood and Andy Brydges of FirstLight, and Jeff Stahl and Zac Davis of Pond and Lake Connection.

Correspondence and News Clippings:

An article was presented from the NewsTimes about Candlewood Lake. Three local news articles regarding the town of Newtown and the LZA budget were presented from the NewsTimes and Voices.

Treasurer's Report:

Bill May, Treasurer, presented account balances, with cash on hand equaling \$104,308.70. Bill reported that the town of Newtown did not pay their full portion of their dues this year as a member town, as Monroe, Oxford, and Southbury have paid in full. Bill attended a meeting of the Newtown legislative council on November 16, 2022, to answer questions regarding the remaining balance and upcoming the 2023-2024 budget. A commissioner from the Lake Lillinonah Authority was also present. There is another town meeting on December 7, 2022, to reconsider the remaining budget payment balance of \$3,075. The LZA budget for 2023-2024 is \$123,309, and is split equally by all four member towns. A motion to pass the budget for the 2023-2024 season was made by Barbara McWilliams, seconded by Dick Speer; the motion was passed unanimously.

Marine Patrol Report:

Marine Patrol Coordinator Dan Semosky reported a call was received from the first selectman of Newtown offering to store the boats at the Fairfield Hills P&R department. There is no cost savings to separating the trailers from the boats during winter storage. The boats will be kept at Lakeside Marina for storage.

Publicity/ Public Awareness:

None.

Water Quality / Grants Report:

Jeff Stahl gave a presentation for weed treatment services offered by Pond and Lake Connections. He reported he fulfilled 480 permits for lake treatments last year. Jeff explained that permit approval time is variable depending on endangered species and watershed considerations. He announced that starting in 2023, the CT DEEP will be accepting online permit applications only. Jeff explained a three year permit is available to limit the renewal process time, and the application can include a variety of approved chemical agents. Pond and Lake Connection can operate under a three year permit and then report what was specifically used each year. This helps account for seasonal variables such as supply issues. Jeff also offered cost savings with a three year service contract. Jeff reported that Pond and Lake Connection will commit to better execution of residential notifications to weed treatments. Jeff offered early treatments for curly leaf in March, before there is considerable growth and biomass in the water column. He said a second treatment could be considered for milfoil. The LZA will consider an official service proposal from Pond and Lake Connection, to begin services in 2023.

Gary Fillion, Chairman, asked Brian Woods of FirstLight to coordinate better management of removal of dangerous lake debris. Brian Woods reported that the FirstLight boat and equipment used to remove debris has been upgraded. The new strategy is to mark debris and target areas in the spring time, and then remove bulk via a vendor. He also suggested use of a second ramp in a priority area to stack large debris, in addition to the existing ramp in Monroe. Brian explained that debris attached to the shore cannot be removed as it is protected woody fish habitat per the CT DEEP. Brian gave the LZA a large map, and asked the patrol drivers to mark the physical map and send him a photo of where debris lies. He said he will forward it to the vendor, and the vendor will collect the debris and drop the bulk off at a ramp. He prefers a physical map over GPS coordinates of the tagged debris. He reports the FirstLight crew only removes debris from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Brian reported the priority for removal is large woody debris in the navigational channel. He reported that debris is only removed by official request of the LZA. Brian suggested if the LZA drivers see hazardous debris, they tow it. Commissioners Gary and Dick explained that the LZA boats are physically unable to keep up with the debris removal, and debris will only be towed to the nearest shore and tagged. Commissioners further expressed disappointment in this past year's collection efforts, reporting debris was cut down under the water surface and not removed, trimmed, or tags were removed and debris was not. Brian explained he no longer uses a survey crew to look for debris, as they were cut due to cost saving measures, and he relies solely on the lake authorities to alert him to dangerous debris that needs to be removed. **It is FirstLight's primary responsibility to remove hazardous debris from Lake Zoar.** In an effort to thoroughly document and report debris hazards, the LZA will tag visible debris for removal during patrols, mark it on the map, and send it to Brian Woods in a good faith effort to comply with his request for official notifications only. In an effort to maintain transparency and accountability, the LZA will record the reported hazards and their removal statuses in an online public database. In order to promote safety on the Lake, the LZA will solicit photos and GPS coordinates of debris hazards from residents. Residents should contact the LZA patrol boat during seasonal months to report hazards, or contact the LZA by email, at lakezoar@gmail.com at any time to report debris which needs to be removed by FirstLight.

Boats and Motors Report:

Dick Speer reported that the boats are stored for winter.

Grants:

Barbara McWilliams reported that the new marine patrol boat committee is working on identifying a boat for purchase to replace one of the patrol boats, using a combination of new grant and budget reserve funds. The boat purchasing committee includes Barbara as head of the committee, with support from commissioners Dick Speer, Bill May, Jerry Kozera, and Frank Cavallo, Marine Patrol Coordinator Dan Semosky, and Patrol Driver Mike Gibbons.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Dick Speer and seconded by Barbara McWilliams. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Pires
Secretary

The minutes are not considered official until approved at the next regular meeting of the Lake Zoar Authority to be held on January 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Southbury Town Hall.