

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, September 10, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Southbury Town Hall.

Commissioners Present:

Barbara McWilliams, Chairwoman
John Downs
James Galarneau
Tim Glover
Jerry Kozera
Dennis Lawler
John Morin
Lesley Pires

Absent:

Tony Fischetti
Mark Saksa
Dick Speer

Call to Order

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Secretary's Report:

A motion to accept the minutes from the August 5, 2024 meetings was made by Dennis Lawler seconded by Tim Glover; the motion was passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

Residents from Monroe (1), Newtown (1) Southbury (3), and the owner of the Lake Zoar Family Marina were in attendance with concerns over flood debris clean up. Residents are still removing floating debris from their property or securing it with tie downs and looking for removal assistance from FirstLight or Marine Patrol.

Amy, a representative from the Housatonic Valley Health Authority was in attendance to share information about water quality testing. Amy explained the Housatonic Valley Health district is responsible for testing *E coli* and microcystin water quality from Memorial Day to Labor Day, including the beaches at Jackson's Cove and Eichler's Cove and the Pomperaug River. Recent sampling indicates it is likely wells in Southbury and Oxford have coliform or *e coli* bacteria in the water if there was overflow during recent flooding and she recommends private water testing. Test kits are available at the Oxford Town Hall and the HHA office in Southbury, while test results cost between approximately \$40 - \$50.

Andy Brydges from FirstLight reported that FirstLight operations have been very busy since the storm in August and he has great appreciation for the help received from the LZA to retrieve man-made material such as docks, boats, and jet skis. FirstLight has started removal of stock pile of manmade debris and will quantify the amount in an upcoming report. For now he estimates the flood produced an estimated ten times the annual amount of debris. The flood ranked as a 1,000 year rainfall statistic. The FirstLight debris management plan specifies that FirstLight must provide a certain number of days on the lake to enhance recreational use but does not address specific storm debris or operations of the dam. There was thus a complaint by the LHA to FERC that will be appropriately addressed as they have every right to follow that process. A resident inquired about how FirstLight can assist with supporting

removal of debris that lands on resident property and requires removal by dumpster during storms or annually. Andy will look into it as he is only very familiar with debris in the water column.

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams shared appreciation for the three marine patrol drivers in attendance; JD McCauly, Mike Gibbons, Ed Schierloh, and Bill Cannon, and Coordinator Dan Semosky, for their commitment to duty while pulling hazardous debris out the lake, which was covered in fuel and bacteria, sacrificing most summer weekends in service to lake zoar.

Treasurer's Report:

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams reported current treasury balances with cash on hand equaling \$133,011.62 with \$12,674.42 in paid invoices pending, including payroll. A motion to pass the treasurer's report was made by Tim Glover, seconded by John Morin, the motion was passed unanimously.

Marine Patrol Report:

Marine Patrol Coordinator Dan Semosky reported that for the month of August there were 16 regular patrols with 108 enforcements. There were 106 written warnings, 2 infractions with tickets including fines for no PFDs on PWCs, no boating licenses while operating a jet ski, unregistered jet skis. There were 53 boat inspections and 7 tows for broken down boats. There were 2 Oxford concert patrols and was one special weed patrol tour. People continue to walk up the Southbury side of the Shepaug Dam and fish off the spill case, then run into the woods in Newtown when sirens are activated. FirstLight is installing a buoy to keep the boaters away from the spill case, and Newtown PD will be notified of the walkers who are under video surveillance of FirstLight. There is imminent danger due to the powerful current under the spill case.

On August 18th there was a storm with severe flooding. There were four special flood clean up patrols and one patrol with the Monroe first selectman and police chief. The first priority of debris removal was gas cans and propane tanks that needed to be removed before they went over the dam. The stockpile of debris is at the Monroe boat launch and a construction crew is actively filling dumpsters. Logs and trees are piled separately from metal and man-made materials. Marine Patrol is no longer needed for daily floating debris removal but is still collecting debris on site or providing assistance by request.

Publicity/ Public Awareness:

Dennis Lawler reported the website is up to date with water quality monitoring updates and new newsletter subscribers.

Water Quality

Weed Treatment Committee:

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams reported there is still no actual hydrilla in Lake Zoar although some residents have mistaken some milfoil species for hydrilla.

Water Quality Monitoring Committee:

John Morin reported that although the lake was recently flushed by the flood, the August results for microcystin were all under 1.0 ppb.

All water samples collected for the WCSU water quality monitoring program this year remained under the microcystin threshold of 8.0 parts per billion (ppb; µg/L) for recreational waters (sites include Eichler's Cove, Jackson's Cove, Kettletown State Park, the Shepaug Dam, the Pootatuck River inlet to Lake Zoar, the Pomperaug River near the Audubon Society, the Sandbar, Lakeside Marina, and Frenches Cove).

Dr. Wong is retiring from his laboratory this season and the LZA will explore the opportunity to continue microcystin testing through WCSU or other vendors.

Boats and Motors Report:

The third boat is in the water since Labor Day weekend. It does not have police or marine radios, or flashing lights or sirens. It was pulled out of the water and brought to Hamden for equipment installation this week. Once it is put back in the water, boat 1 will be pulled for repair of the tow bar by the original vendor. The three missing buoys have been replaced and will be reinstalled next season. Jerry Kozera has offered to make a maintenance spreadsheet of costs for boat repairs by each boat going forward.

Grants:

None.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams reported that if residents need help after the flood they can contact the LZA or Marine Patrol for assistance.

The annual drawdown for Lake Zoar will start October 19, 2024.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Tim Glover seconded by John Morin, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned 8:15pm.

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 Tuesday October 8, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Monroe Town Hall.