**CONNECTICUT RIVER CONSERVANCY**

Board of Trustees Meeting

September 6th, 2019

11am – 2:30pm

15 Bank Row

Greenfield, MA

**ATTENDEES**

Trustees: Melissa Ocana, Tim Keeney, Annette Spaulding, Melody Foti, Amy Tran, Bob Sproull, Neftali Duran, Liz Austin, Bob Moore, Ron Poltak, Lora Wondolowski, Kate Putnam (phone), Tony Judge.

Absent: Dave Hewitt, David Mears,

Staff: Andy Fisk, Phil Girton, Corey Kurtz, Aliki Fornier, Brett Morrison, Angela Chaffee, Brett Morrison.

Meeting begun at 11:05am

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Minute of silence of Astrid Hanzalek, honorary trustee of the CRC and active member of the community.

1. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The meeting minutes from the May Board meeting were not included in the packet. The board will have to accept said minutes at the next board meeting in December.

MOTION: To accept the items as submitted. Wondolowski/Austin on the motion; unanimous.

1. **Finance and Development Report**

Andy Fisk gave the board the finance report, starting with the last FY 19 report. To summarize, we hit our grant target. Earlier this fiscal year, we did fall $40,000 short for grand revenue for salary, but caught up as more grant money came in. Over the course of the fiscal year, we saw 50 grants coming in. We are still pulling in indirect revenue from our capital projects, and we are using all the available cash to meet our cash needs. Overall, the net income and expenses from last fiscal year are where we expected them to be.

Corey Kurtz gave the development results for FY 18-19. The annual giving goal was $250,000 and we raised $285,000. When we financially struggled in early 2019, we raised our giving goal and ended up matching that goal. Trustees exceeded their goal by $17,000. New member retention wise, there is an increase retention rate of 58% (58% of new donors stay and become annual or monthly donors). The repeat donor retention rate was 70% (donors who have been members for a while and are loyal). How can we increase the retention rate? The organization, and especially the development team, are constantly adjusting their methods and adapt to the membership’s conditions. That includes changing communication strategies, flagging contact preferences, and growing relationships with donors. Corey concluded with a brief report on where most of our new members come from.

Andy presented the current FY 20 report. He confirmed that we’re on pace with revenue, and as a matter of fact, it looks better than last year at this time. We’re where expected on expenses, and predict an increase in incoming costs with the three upcoming dam removals. There is another increase in expenses in terms of payroll; the CRC staff share a number of different skills that the organization is incorporating into the work by bringing said staff into full time.

MOTION: to accept finance and development report. Keeney/Austin on the motion; unanimous.

A topic the board also discussed is increasing the line of credit from the organization’s bank account at the Greenfield Savings Bank. The increase will help manage all our cash flow needs, including during times when the revenue is lower than the expenses. The executive committee approved the change. Input from the board is needed to fill the paper work at the bank.

MOTION: to open discussion on the need to increase the line of credit: Putnam/Moore on the motion; unanimous.

Some board members are concerned that this will open the liberty to spend money to the limit, with less restrictions and control over paying back the money. Andy assured them that the performance metrics and finance report will be presented at every board meeting as they always have. And as the organization always has, it’ll always be working towards going debt free.

MOTION to approve the increase in line of credit: unanimous

Corey presented the giving report on this fiscal year to date. She began by explaining why it’s important of having a 100% donating board. She then gave the fall fundraising timeline: dam removal appeal, thank-a-thon, year-end appeal, giving Tuesday, year-end final push. Tony pushed the board to be involved in this fall’s appeal. He motivated the board to take on connecting and solicitation/thanking at least 5 members. They can choose to solicit or thank. Corey introduced the “Boom! Bam! Demolish the dams!” appeal.

The board was updated on the Campaign for our Rivers, including our progress on outreach and development effort to reach 5 million dollar goal. Brett and Corey have been doing a great job growing relationships with major donors and get an understanding of what members expect out of the organization.

Legacy giving of the long River Society update; the goal is to reach 1million dollars in legacy gifts. The development team is communicating more to the membership about long term commitments to the river.

Andy briefly updated the board on the annuities program. At a prior meeting, the board had approved changes to the annuities program, and that has been now implemented.

At this time, the audit is underway and on pace.

1. **Administration & Policy**

Andy let the board know how fast the organization is growing; with 9 full-time and 9 part-time staff, we need to keep thinking about how we develop our human resources tools. With internal changes, and new MA laws regarding family medical leave and CRC staff’s current benefits, we are reminded the implementation of a personnel manual is overdue.

The board also discussed the potential of cybersecurity risks within the organization. The CRC staff is not trained in cyber security, and it is apparent that there is a lot of personal data within our network that may be vulnerable to hacks. Payton Shubrick, Amy Tran and Bob Sproull have offered their services is advising and/or training the organization and the staff in cybersecurity. Further discussion on this topic, including arranging an initial conversation with staff and board is in order for after the meeting.

1. **Lunch**

Kelsey Wentling, the new River Steward based in CT, presented herself to the board. She gave a presentation on our “Swap your Dock” campaign, put into place to work with dock owners to switch their dock material from polystyrene (a pollutant), to enclosed foam or air-filled plastic containers.

1. **Strategic Plan**

At our May meeting we had an initial conversation about affiliations and partnerships. At this meeting Andy will be recapping the broad strokes of the current strategic plan and its visions, then we’ll dive into more detail and discussion about possible future partnerships. Corey and Andy will present a range of possible partnerships of different size and scope and we can talk through how our first formal affiliation with the Deerfield River Watershed Association is working both in numbers and purpose. Staff will be requesting a small ad hoc committee to work on the question of adding additional partnerships between now

and the December board meeting. In December we will need to be making some decisions as we have at least two small watershed groups seeking affiliations.

Andy started the ongoing conversation about our affiliations and partnerships. This topic was initially brought up to the board at the May Board Meeting. Today’s tactic is to establish goals and guidelines in anticipation of developing partnership/affiliation relationships with local conservation groups. Andy reported on the status of our current affiliation with the Deerfield River Watershed Association, and a brief history on CRC’s affiliation and partnership with other groups. He mentions that we are constantly adjusting and developing our relationship with others, and the main purpose of this tactic is to combine conservation and advocacy effort, and spread by regions and thrive with increased support. Today, the board considered if CRC wants to take over recreational assets, and have CRC supervise a facility by the river. The board discussed the pros and cons of a partnership/affiliation. Andy also mentioned other on-going relationships we have with groups, and how those might develop as well. Finally, Andy brought up Holyoke Rows, and how it could be a recreational management opportunity for the organization. Holyoke Rows is a 501(c) 3 community based recreation facility in Holyoke, MA.

1. **Source to Sea Cleanup 2019**

Angela updated the board on our progress with organizing the clean up this year. At the time these minutes were written, 102 groups had registered, which is a more that last year at this time. Angela encouraged the board to participate in the event. She also gave the board an update on our trash advocacy Campaign and how we are connecting it to the cleanup this year. She included our work on Swap your Dock advocacy and the Tire EPR. Finally, she told the board how we were doing on our Stop Trash Before it Starts petition, and how much longer we will run it to reach the 1000 signatures goal.

1. **Executive session**

The board discussed the committee rosters. The following committees were added:

* Partnerships and affiliations
  + Neftali Duran,
  + Tony Judge
  + Melody Foti
  + Amy Tran
  + Lora Wondolowski
* Cybersecurity
  + Payton Shubrick
  + Amy Tran
  + Bob Sproull
  + Tim Keeney
  + Annette Spaulding
* Personnel material
  + Liz Austin
  + Phil Girton.

At a different time, additional committee chairs will have to be picked

MOTION: Wondolowski/Putnam.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20pm

Prepared by: Aliki Fornier

Reviewed by: