

HLA monthly meeting of Monday, July 28, 2025

BOG members in attendance: Cynthia Porriello, Bob Kiehm, Frank Nunes, Brian Polak, Marybeth Russo, Sheri Berger, Jay Cassella.

BOG members absent Carolyn Chalifoux and Heather Edelson.

Association members on Zoom: Sandy Kiehm.

Association members in attendance: Mary Shea, Ed Shamway, BJ Choitner, Alan Howell, Jean Cassella, Linda Lamitola, Betty Barsevich, Keha Esposito, Charlene Baulski, Renee Norkin.

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM by Marybeth Russo Association president. She noted that we have not been in compliance with FOI rules Regarding timelines for posting the meeting minutes as applies only to the June 2025 Meeting Minutes. All other minutes are up-to-date. Recording secretary was away for the June 2025 meeting causing the delay. The BOG is working on developing a refined and streamlined agenda process.

Reading of the minutes: Bob Kiehm made a motion to wave the reading of the minutes, Frank Nunes seconded the motion which passed unanimously. President Marybeth Russo indicated that as we go forward she will be abstaining from most votes unless it is of serious importance or a tie breaking vote is needed. The recording of the votes will be noting specifically the times when president Russo casts a vote. It was noted that the June 2025 Minutes needs some spelling corrections, particularly the spelling for Sandy Kiehm in the committee reports section of the Minutes. A motion was made by Cynthia Porriello and seconded by Jay Cassella to accept the corrections to the minutes as noted.

The floor was open to comments: Keha Esposito would like clarification on the process for reimbursement for expenses by Committee members for association business. Keha also indicated that she would bring to the board of governors all future projects prior to their implementation. A motion to add said discussion and planning to today's agenda was made by Frank Nunes and seconded by Brian Polak, the motion passed unanimously

The Treasurer's report was presented by Bob Kiehm, two reports were reviewed, one for Jult 2025 and the other the 24-25 Fiscal year end report. Copies were emailed for inclusion in the record. Frank Nunes and Cynthia Porriello submitted expense receipts to Bob Kiehm for reimbursement. During discussion, Jay Cassella asked if the audit has been completed, he was advised it has not been finished, but was advised that would not be something that would prevent the treasurer from presenting his end of year report and for it being approved.

July 2025 report summary: Taxes collected \$47,265.37 plus \$43.60 in bank interest equals \$47,309.37. Expenditures for July total \$80.80. Total bank accounts balance of \$192,852.83

FY 24-25 closing report: taxes collected \$61,765.58 plus \$2,898.90 in bank interest equals \$64,664.48. The fiscal year ended with a combined bank balance of \$149,718.26.

Tax Collector's report was presented by Sheri Berger, the mill rate has increased, payments are coming in slowly, but there is still time left until the end of July for timely payments to be made. Bob Kiehm indicated that due to all the accounting being in flux at the end of this month and end of year his and Sheri's numbers aren't yet matching, they still need to be reconciled. 2025 Current tax is \$79,684.42 of which \$45,943.83 has been collected thus far. There has been no back taxes or fees collected thus far.

Lake and Dam commission report by chairperson Jay Cassella. It was noted that a few new members have joined the committee, Jay will be updating the website with the current membership composition. They are looking to obtain throwable life rings for each of the beaches and as such are requesting \$150 to be allocated for the purchase of such at the next meeting. As it pertains to beach erosion, they are obtaining quotes for remediation as well as exploring funding sources. They have been working on devising a comprehensive plan to mitigate the erosion, they are exploring all grants available for this project as well. Water testing was completed, and the results are great for the condition of our lake, four areas were tested, a couple were a little elevated, they are seeking a \$35 line item for funding to test one additional area towards the end of August. They have been studying invasive species and educating themselves on septic systems through the Connecticut Association of Lakes and their website, they are developing a better vessel cleaning protocol and communication method to our members, they also discussed the Japanese Knotweed mitigation process, which is already underway.

Road and drainage committee presented by Rene Sorkin. She is the only member serving on this committee, but is working on recruiting additional members. They will be examining the condition of the roads ahead of the upcoming chip sealing application. They are seeking proposals and exploring grants on various websites. Also, it was noted that at 34 W. Shore there is a water drainage issue that continues to be problematic, they are examining issues that arise when heavy rain storms come by and will be going out as these occur to observe the situation live.

Aquatic Wildlife Committee presented by Keha Esposito, they met this past Thursday and have a new member named Caleb. They are going to be redoing the container gardens as well as adding a new additional container garden with plantings geared to that specific area. The East Shore garden was started most recently, and they added some plantings by the E. Shore causeway sign. They have several projects in process, including aquatic, plantings and creating a buffer zone, educating lakeside property owners and creating signage for identification. They are working on preparing a newsletter with a focus on butterflies, as well as devising a reimbursement protocol for supplies for all of the projects that are community based.

Septic report presented by Charlene Baulski, she took over from Anthony Grandazzo. She has been working on organizing the maps and obtaining missing invoices from the prior contractor, Cahill. They are waiting for the new contracts with a new provider to be finalized. There are 34 houses on the list for pumping this year.

Bylaws committee presented by Brian Polak. There was no meeting this month. They have two new members, Laurel and Jill, August 13 will be their next meeting

Web and Social media committee presented by Marybeth Russo. They met briefly as part of the getting to know you process, They also have a couple of new members the names of which will be updated on the website. They posted some photos and a video of Bryozoans, which he have many of and is a sign of good health for our lake. Marybeth Russo indicated that the unapproved minutes are posted only until the new revised ones become finalized and posted.

we will be holding off on the Entertainment and the Audit Committees reports. We are hoping to secure a greater member participation in volunteering for these various committees so as to be able to rotate the heavy work loads. We will discuss the audit report later in this meeting.

Unfinished Business: Audit committee, historically there has not been a record of there being approvals for the audits by the board of governors, Marybeth Russo would like the members to discuss this history and process going forward. It was noted that as of now all documents have been returned to the Treasurer and to the Tax collector from those holding them for audit purposes. Jay Cassella indicated that he is in aw as to how this suddenly came about after two years of so many struggles with securing these missing documents. He asked for clarity and details on how we came to possess these documents that were supposedly missing for so long. Marybeth Russo said that she cannot attest as to where the documents were but indicated that at no point where the documents missing, they were always available to the Treasure and the Tax collector. Jay Cassella made note that the same three people are still on the Audit committee. Marybeth Russo indicated that she wishes to look forward rather than backwards. Jay wants it to be on the record that he has serious concerns about this. Brian Polak indicated that he thought that the originals were missing, but Sheri Berger clarified that she had always had the records and that they had been scanned. Cynthia Porriello said that we should make certain to notify membership of this at the next annual meeting in May. Marybeth Russo said that an option is to extend the due date in the future so that delays become less likely. We may need to refine the relevant bylaw language. Sheri Berger and Bob Kiehm agree that audits should only be occurring on financials once that fiscal year has closed out. Bob Kiehm likes that there are actionable recommendations coming from these audits. We accepted the 2024 Audit and will look to have the 2025 Audit completed in time to present at the May 2026 Annual meeting.

Chip seal discussion, the roads have been examined and about 10 smallish holes have been found, there is also some cracking, repairs are also not going to happen until May or June 2026 most likely. Bob Kiehm said that by his driveway there is a large 50 foot area of washout and settling that is needing examining. Jay Cassella said that there is a very large puddle accumulating at the start of Shore Dr. Marybeth Russo appreciates all the work that homeowners have done around the culverts and thank them. Brian Polak asked about Hidden Lake Rd. across from Cynthia Porriello, she said that she called the town and was told that the

repairs were not expected for probably about five years. Marybeth Russo took note to check it out as well. As for the catch basin cleaning, Marybeth Russo asked for the location of all the basins and also for help with seeking proposals for cleaning them out. Cynthia Porriello said that she has already called one provider but no response has come. Most people she speaks with have told her the job is too small to bid out. Finkleday is one of the choices and we are hoping to also tap some of the providers that the town and or the school system use for their cleanouts. Brian Polak has some options that he will explore also.

Unfinished business, Paper Roads: Marybeth Russo has not finished her investigation, but asked for a motion to table the matter until the next meeting so that she can get the answers that she needs. Bob Kiehm made a motion and Sheri Berger seconded it Jay Cassella interjected that he would like an update if the matter is not included at the next meeting. He expressed concerns that there is an increased risk of liability due to kids playing on this paper road. A point was made that this area of association property is likely much less dangerous now than it used to be due to the abutting neighbor having cleared out all the debris that used to be there. Marybeth Russo expressed that she wants equity in our deliberation process so that some members aren't targeted while others in similar situations are not. Brian Polak wondered if something can be tabled without a specific future date. A motion to table the matter to the next meeting was passed unanimously.

New Business: On July 4, 2025 a very large tree branch fell across the road and caused a very dangerous situation which required immediate response. The power company was called and Witkowski came out within three hours to clear the road, he returned the following week and cleared the remaining portion of the tree, which was still on the property. Total cost was \$6,800. This cost will need to be paid out of the emergency fund, the stump was not ground as that would be an additional expense. It was cut as low as possible. Bob Kiehm made a motion to pay the invoice of \$6,800 which is to be taken from Property Maintenance. The motion was seconded by Brian Polak, the motion passed unanimously. Marybeth Russo indicated that she will work on her negotiating skills for future instances, there was no time to get multiple quotes for this particular situation, especially during a holiday weekend. Jay Cassella asked Bob Kiehm why not take the funds from the reserves? Treasurer Kiehm said that there isn't enough in reserves.

Discussion item: The association will need a new bid for general liability insurance, Jay Cassella was asked to provide the phone number for the current provider. The current policy is in force until November 2025. We should expect to vote at the August meeting on any proposals that we get for replacement coverage. Jay Cassella said that the carriers usually don't know whether or not they will renew until the very last minute. It is still a good idea to put it out to bid in advance so that we have options available when the time comes. Bob Kiehm will work with Marybeth Russo on these bids.

Aquatic, invasive species, the Connecticut Federation of Lakes newsletter mentioned there has been a change in the vessel registration process in Connecticut, which now requires two registration stamps rather than the one combined stamp, the second stamp feeds The funding for invasive species remediation, the question arose as to who is checking for this second

stamp on our vessel registrations. The penalty for not having the stamp as per the State of Connecticut is \$85. The question was raised whether we even need it for usage on a private lake only. Marybeth Russo wants the Lake committee to study how we will move forward with enforcing these two registrations since those fees will fund any grants that we may get in the future.

Marybeth Russo received an email from the Lake and Pond Connection indicating they were looking to complete another treatment of the lake on August 7. Discussion was had amongst various past & present members about the historical process for this. It was felt that the best path forward would be to ask for them to conduct an inspection and based on their findings, then decide on treatment or not. If treatment is required, this would be the second treatment for the season. There is some trepidation on whether or not we should just skip it, the lake appears to be in good shape now, but some lily pads are starting to pop up. Marybeth Russo would like to take a look around ahead of time in order to make an informed decision. Jay suggested that we just have the staff from Lake and Pond Connection complete the inspection and not do the treatment. It was noted that the Snail Weed is only an issue if and when it reaches the surface of the water. The lake is very low now so maybe we should also take the opportunity to examine the condition of the dam and it's spillway height and make sure that everything is set correctly. The spillway is currently dry according to Alan Howell.

General discussion open to the public: Alan Howell indicated that on the association property behind his house there have been some teenagers swimming around without supervision. That is not a designated beach area and if we allow them to swim there, what are the liability implications? Maybe we need to post a no swimming sign for children under 12 years old who are not accompanied on HLA property. Sheri Berger suggested that a letter informing those particular members that swimming on association property is only allowed at the designated beaches would be best. Marybeth Russel will send a letter to the particular family in question.

Linda L. spoke again to the Chip seal issue and repairs. She is wondering if the association should not make the repairs sooner rather than later, as the longer we wait, the worst they will get and the more expensive it will become to make the repairs, especially now that there is discussion of the repairs being pushed out to the spring of 2026. Mary indicated that there are also some drainage issues at 65 Birch Trail, which should be looked at ahead of any repairs being made.

Point of order was called for an agenda item regarding reimbursement for expenditures by the committees as needed. Discussion was held on the benefits and drawbacks of installing life rings at the various beaches, Bob Kiehm thinks that it could be a liability to install these as some level of training would probably be required on how to throw these life rings without causing any injuries or leading to any unsafe situations, also the question arose as to how likely is it that this is just one more thing for kids to start playing around with? Marybeth Russo wants to set up some training for the use of these Life Rings, Keha Esposito indicated there may be instructions on the unit itself, there might also be some that can just be posted nearby. Bob Kiehm mentioned that there is also going to be additional costs and labor involved with mounting these such as posts in the ground or some other method.

Discussion was held on the protocol for reimbursement for committee expenses, it was decided that a writeup should be made which estimates the cost and list the items, it will then need to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, and at the meeting, a vote would be held to allocate or not allocate said funds. All of this must be done before the expense is incurred.

Keha Esposito feels that it is very important to seriously consider The Life rings, she is actually surprised that the insurance company doesn't require it of us.

Mary would like a letter sent to members regarding someone having taken her kayak out and causing some damage. She suggested that maybe we consider requiring owners to take their paddles from the beach while not in use or some kind of way to lock up the kayaks so that any random person cannot take them out.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Kiehm and seconded by Brian Polak at 8:26 PM, the meeting is adjourned