



FOR THE SUDBURY ASSABET & CONCORD RIVERS

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OARS 37th Annual Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2023

Meeting Attendees: (total 47)

Board members: Roger Beatty, Bob Brown, Don Burn, Holly Clack, Jeff Collins, Kirk Doggett, Allan Fierce, Paul Fitzgerald, Paul Goldman, Ingeborg Hegemann, Pam Rockwell,

Staff members: Alison Field-Juma, Heather Conkerton, Sarah Kwan, Adam Nolde, Ben Wetherill

Presenter: Chad Sumner

Others: 30 other Members and observers attended remotely

At 7:02 it was noted that a quorum of 25 members had signed into the meeting.

Welcome: Ingeborg Hegemann, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and reviewed the procedures since the meeting was held using Zoom, would be recorded, and that voting would be by voice vote. The agenda was reviewed, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: Draft Annual Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2022, were approved by a unanimous vote of members present.

Treasurer's Report: Paul Fitzgerald, Treasurer, was pleased to report that OARS's financial health is good. The year 2022 was one of transitions, with staff retiring, new staff being recruited, and new programs being initiated. Starting in 2023 OARS programs came back in full force with three new staff and additional programming. This investment in human resources is reflected in the relatively higher 2022 General and Administrative Costs for this one year. In 2022, the groundwork for major growth in our ecological restoration and climate resilience programs was laid. Several large grants for dam removal projects were initiated, but the income is not expected until 2023 and beyond.

OARS members have always been the motivation and the means for our work. We are so grateful that you have stepped up to carry us through this time of transition. OARS has traditionally had the enviable position of almost 50% of our support coming from your contributions. We seek to maintain this level to match the new higher levels of grant funding that we have been able to secure. We thank you very much, in advance, for your continued generous support!

Board of Directors Election: Pam Rockwell, member of the Governance & Nominating Committee, introduced the Board's recommended slate of new and returning board member candidates for 3-year terms: New Director candidate: Bob Brown from Maynard.

Existing Board members for re-election:

Ingeborg Hegemann from Stow

Jeff Collins from Concord

Kirk Doggett from Acton

She asked if there were any other nominations from members; there were none. The slate was approved by a unanimous voice vote of members present.



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She noted that our clerk Susan MacArthur is retiring from the Board. OARS' Board thanks her for her service to our mission!

2023–24: Eyes on the Future: Alison Field-Juma, OARS Executive Director, introduced our new staff and thanked our supporters for helping us make it through a challenging transition year. She gave an overview of our organization and thanked corporate, municipal, and private donors. Alison pointed out that OARS mission shares the goals of the Clean Water Act, to achieve clean water that is fishable and swimmable and that OARS extends those goals to include making sure our rivers are accessible to all.

Under the leadership of OARS Water Quality Scientist Ben Wetherill, our science mission has expanded. Our traditional water quality monitoring in the rivers and streams has continued, and our bacteria monitoring programs have expanded to include tracking down specific bacterial contamination with DNA analysis, detergent testing, and *E. coli* sampling. OARS has added programs to monitor and understand rising salinity in our watershed, which is associated with road salt and runoff. OARS has also been monitoring water temperatures above and below the dams in North Brook, Nashoba Brook, and the Concord River which are caused by stagnant waters due to restricted flow and are exacerbated by climate change and drought. Ben analyzes our water quality data to design efforts to track down phosphorus sources in our streams. This includes investigating non-point sources in Hop Brook and flagging wastewater treatment plant permit violations at the Hudson and Marlborough Easterly WWTPs.

During 2022, our Ecological Restoration and Climate Resiliency programs have moved into high gear. OARS is a principal partner in funded projects to remove two dams in our watershed: the Talbot Mills dam on the Concord River in Billerica, and the Wheeler Pond dam on North Brook in Berlin. Dam removal is expected in 2024 or 2025. OARS is leading a Technical Advisory Committee in developing a river continuity restoration plan that will help prioritize dam removal and projects in the future. We are organizing municipal stormwater financing workshops through the SuAsCo Climate Resiliency Coalition in 2023. And our future work includes developing a pollinator rain garden at the Marlborough Senior Center to demonstrate effective stormwater recharge that has multiple benefits.

Our advocacy work builds on our work in 2022. OARS is working with legislators on PFAS and drought legislation, and lobbying for more funds for municipalities through the state's MVP program. OARS also successfully advocated for proper development of a new general wastewater treatment plant permit in our watershed and will continue to advocate that all permits be applied appropriately.

In 2022 we transitioned our invasive water chestnut management to be volunteer-based in the watershed through the Weed Warriors Program. Our Outreach, Education and Recreation work included updating our river maps, holding the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Maynard, Otter News, Water Wise Workshops for children through the Boys and Girls Clubs. We are designing a new website to come online by this time next year, and we are investing in better data management, member communications database, and social media presence, so that our members and the public can stay up to date on our work. Our work depends on your help, so we encourage you to join, donate, and volunteer with us to help us on our mission.

Presentation: Chad Sumner, Managing Principal of SumCo Eco-Contracting, presented, **"Reconnecting Watersheds: Innovative Approaches for River Connectivity and Restoration."**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm