

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
August 21, 2014 6:30pm**

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Attending: Alan Desbonnet, Grace Lentini , , Hellen Drew, W. Galloway, Pete. August, Chris Fox, Kim Coulter, Jennifer MacKenzie, Tom Boving  
Not in Attendance:, G. Cunningham, A. Morrison, M. Grant

**1. Call to Order     6:35 PM   H. Drew**

Walt G. suggested the minutes from the June 29<sup>th</sup> meeting be amended to correct acronym USCG to ASGS, remove Surprisingly form Approval of Sandy Funding and to state that the Board agreed to discuss the transition from a project based to an ED based organization. Peter motioned minutes approved as amended, Alan 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passes.

**2. Reports**

**A. President Report**

Helen is impressed with the programs WPWA offers. She asked the Board to think about how we should move forward with robust functionality, cleaning up the watershed and educating the community. Going forward, should we focus on diversity and external participants to help us? How do we measure what we are doing and do we have enough science?

**B. Financial Report**

Pete August presented the 2012 Financial Review and all looks well. There was an issue with the system of checks and balances regarding writing checks and that has been resolved. Kristi presented reports for the second quarter of 2014 and we are on track. Peter stated that the easiest report to review is the P&L Report (Performance without special projects). Tom expressed concern about negative income and Pete explained that it is a result of cash flow and that it should balance out by year end. Peter said there are no surprises or red flags in the Q2 numbers and that we are in solid shape at the halfway mark of 2014. Chris said that while the review of 2012 financials was late, they are starting the review of 2013 immediately following the 2012 review and that review will be on schedule and possibly early.

**C. Program Report**

**1. Easement – C. Fox**

Madeline Jeffries is a long time WPWA Member and Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer. She is in the process of subdividing her 192 acre forested parcel in Stonington. The existing home will be subdivided into a 20 acre lot and the remaining 172 acres will be placed in a conservation trust. Madeline has asked WPWA to be the conservation organization. This will not cost anything to WPWA and monitoring fees

will be paid by the trust. There are no legal ramifications and the responsibility of WPWA will be to walk the land to ensure it is not being developed. Alan put a motion that we approve, Jennifer 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous approval.

## **2. Pew Charitable Trust's Herring Alliance – Chris Fox**

The PEW Charitable Trust is a well know advocate and grantor within the migratory fish restoration community and sponsor of the Herring Alliance. The Alliance is a growing coalition of environmental and public interest organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring marine wildlife populations and ecosystems by reforming the Atlantic Herring fishery.

WPWA will join the Alliance in support of their efforts to restore and bolster the migratory fish species that will benefit from our recently completed fish passage projects on the Pawcatuck River. WPWA's participation is expected to be limited to providing written support towards their advocacy for stronger fishing regulations and increased by-catch observation on fishing vessels. This partnership will lay the foundation for a working relationship with the Pew Charitable Trust which could lead to future grant opportunities for the WPWA. The Board agreed to join the alliance.

## **3. Welcome Center C-O – Chris Fox**

The Hopkinton Building Inspector has granted temporary use of the Welcome Center allowing the building to be open to the public on a limited basis. A full certificate of occupancy is on hold due to a miscommunication between the inspector, the contractor and WPWA over the covering of exposed fiberglass insulation in the storage closet. In July the inspector verbally informed the contractor that a vapor barrier over the insulation was required to satisfy code. Upon inspection of the plastic vapor barrier (and other punchlist items), it was learned that a fire barrier was in fact required. Our contractor has agreed to install the fire barrier, if necessary, at no cost to WPWA hopefully in September. Once the work is completed and the inspection is performed, the Town will grant WPWA its certificate of Occupancy for the building.

## **4. Sandy Grant - "Pawcatuck River Watershed Flood & Storm Damage Resiliency Management Plan" – Chris Fox**

WPWA has completed its budget negotiations with the National Fish & Wildlife Federation to reduce our grant expenses from the proposed \$780K to their requested reduction down to \$720K. This reduction was primarily achieved by slightly reducing the scope of the data gathering portion of the management plan's development and by eliminating one of the two proposed A-133 Audit expenses. WPWA will work with our selected engineering firm to ensure we only exceed the expenditure threshold which triggers the need for an audit during one of the two project years.

## **5. Board Members are encouraged to promote the project utilizing the following information – Chris Fox**

By working collaboratively with the watershed's municipal, state, federal and conservation agencies WPWA will assess the vulnerability of the watershed to flooding and erosion, and develop a comprehensive, watershed-based management plan that will be endorsed and adopted by RIDEM to serve as the guiding document toward protecting and enhancing the resiliency of the watershed.

The project will:

- Help the watershed communities (local, state, and tribal governments and private land owners) prepare for and mitigate the impacts of future severe storms.
- Protect critical community infrastructure and the ability of communities to deliver vital municipal services.
- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife species and habitats.
- Maintain and improve the viability of agricultural and forested land.
- Help communities understand watershed and riverine processes so that better land use and infrastructure investments can be made.
- Help improve the quality of life and economic viability of the watershed communities.

#### **6. Database Software - Bloomerang – Chris Fox**

In order to facilitate better communication and tracking with our donors, WPWA has purchased at a significant discount a 1 year subscription for a new web-based member/donor database tool called Bloomerang. The software was purchased at a cost of \$71 for the first year versus the advertised price of \$2160 thanks to Tech Soup, a charitable giving company that unites non-profits with discounted software. To reduce the additional cost of data migration, we will utilize staff and volunteers to organize and extract data from our existing Access Database into Bloomerang. This will be done in a phased approach and will be labor intensive. Our appx 400 active member's contact and historical giving information will be migrated into Bloomerang during the month of September. By the close of 2014 all our additional contacts will be migrated over allowing us to abandon Access and begin fully utilizing Bloomerang in 2015. This will be an important tool for the fund development committee, as well as the staff and board to track our donor's engagement. Among many other benefits, Bloomerang will allow us to transition to an electronic newsletter and provides a mass email tool that will allow us to eliminate the need for and monthly expense of Constant Contact. Please see me or Alan if you would like more comprehensive information on this software and transitional process.

### **D. Committee Reports**

#### **7. Fund Development Committee Report – A. Desbonnet**

It was discussed that Helen create a committee and that the scope of work should be stated on the website. Walt asked if staff should be on the committee. It was decided that the ED

will participate. Alan put forth a motion that the board should outline the scope of work for the committee and that it should be reviewed every two years. Pete 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion Approved.

Chris and Alan met to develop charge of the Committee and membership was discussed. Alan asked board members to think about their thoughts and interests. It was suggested that they reach out to Dick Holiday. Bloomerang will play a large part in development of the fundraising initiative. The goal is to have the “Watershed Watch” funded through individual and corporate donors by next year. Chris stated that we need more funding (\$14,000.00) for the Watershed Watch up front to analyze samples gathered by Denise. It was discussed that while grants have covered this initiative in the past, they are likely to dry up. Once that happens, there will not be enough funds to continue the monitoring initiative. Prior to WPWA receiving these large grants, there was not a solid donor base. We need to get the word out that to all Watershed inhabitants (private and business sectors) that we need and deserve their support. Pete suggested that review the original scope of WPWA when it was formed. It was designated as a “Wild and Scenic Region”, was supposed to be donor centric and its function was to protect the watershed.

The next steps for the Committee are to move the 400 active member list over the Bloomerang by the end of September. It will take time to migrate information and Alan and Chris are working on it. Both Alan and Chris feel this software will be key to fundraising as it is portable (Internet based) and user friendly

## **E. Business**

### **1. Old Business**

#### **A. Bios**

We still need Bios for the Board Members. They should be no more than 3-4 sentences and should say where they live, why they care about WPWA and what they bring to the board. Those should be submitted to Heather to be put on the website.

#### **B. Fund Development Committee**

We need Board Members to participate in the fund development committee. Pete said we need to toot our own horn more such as the successes of the Gaging Stations. We need to take advantage of the media better to let the community know about our successes and accomplishments. Chris stated that Bloomerang will make it easier to send out media blasts.

### **2. New Business**

#### **A. 2014 Work Plan Discussion**

We must look at this in the context of what's going on outside WPWA. Alan said the Feds are focusing on Resiliency as a theme which encompasses climate change and flooding. Chris said that there should be no hard structures built on the River and that we much watch for trends for the building of these structures as people move inward from the coast. Part of the Sandy Grant deals focuses on this and we need to work with town planning boards to prevent this. Chris is also concerned with tree removal as hardwood prices increase and clearing is used as an income source. Pete mentioned that it is possible to remove trees in a sustainable fashion that will not increase run-off. Chris asked if our work through the Sandy Grant would be used by the RI Regulatory Agency. Alan said it would likely be used as guidance and/or a basis for a watershed management plan. Helen mentioned that we might be able to use the Sandy Grant to position ourselves in the community. Alan mentioned that Climate Change Services are not going away and we should continue to address it. This should be done at the staff level, not the board level. Chris needs to know the impact this will have on staff time when planning. It was agreed that communication to the community could be better and should be included in next year's work plan. We need a better media strategy that involves the use of digital media as well as paper. Education should be part of the work plan.

#### **B. 2014 Meeting/Workshop Dates**

Monday, 9-22-14 – We will hold a Board Workshop to discuss the 2015 Work Plan. Alan mentioned that we need a strategic plan, including a mission statement, that will help us raise funds. It should outline where we need to go and what we need to do to get there. Walt said we had one from 2003 – 2009 that was 2-4 pages and we could use that to build on. We need to be clear on what we are – the purpose of the organization. Chris mentioned that it should not be long and should be easy to read and put into simple language. Helen says we need a guide to keep us on track. We will revisit the mission statement at this workshop. Chris will make sure we have markers and flip chart paper and stands. Jennifer will facilitate the workshop.

5. Adjourn 8:35pm

Minutes submitted by Jennifer MacKenzie and Chris Fox