

Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: 07/18/24

Location: Westmore Fellowship Hall

Topic	Discussion Points
Opening	<p>Deb Smith opened. Introduced the board and elected new board members, while acknowledging Irene Salerno for her contributions as outgoing Treasurer.</p>
Treasurers Report	<p>Ellie shared bullet points provided by Irene for the 2023 Treasurer’s Report. Summary documents were also available to members during the meeting.</p> <p><u>Key Highlights ending 2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total membership of 170 households • The total income for the year was \$27,303, \$2000 over our projected income. The total expenses were \$29,995, \$3,000 less than our expected expenses. And we had a net loss of \$2,692 for the year. Our projected losses were expected to be \$7,800. • The interest rates have gone up for the CD and MM accounts and netted \$821 in interest. • The balance for the bank accounts on Dec 31, 2023, was \$49,483. And on the 5-year budget estimate our projected 2023 end balance was to be \$41,000. Most of this discrepancy could be due to less scholarship money being given out. <p>Announcement made encouraging members to consider the Treasurer Position, which is vacant. Assistance is available to support the transition.</p>
Committees	<p>Jen presented the committee section. The Associations committee structure recently underwent some changes. Last Fall the Board reviewed all committees, both standing and ad hoc, and met with the committee chairs and proposed an update to the committees as well as some restructuring and consolidating. The Board approved the new committee roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Jen also highlighted that there are (or will be) some vacancies across the committees and members are invited to join or chair a committee. Members do not need to be board members to participate in the committees.</p>
Communications	<p>Jen provided an update for the newly consolidated Communications and Media Relations Committee. The focus of the committee has been to increase communication with members, including increasing the frequency of the email-Mailchimp newsletter, Facebook and website updates. The Association also internally creates Posters, conducts advertising through The Chronicle and posts on front porch forum and other networks.</p> <p>Jen walked members through the process of signing up for Mailchimp and encouraged members to “like” the Association’s Facebook page. The Board acknowledged Tamara who has supported the Association’s Facebook posts and content. This is a great example of a non-board member supporting some of the WA activities.</p>

Membership	Ellie provided a membership update and highlighted the need to increase membership in order to continue to work on the Association’s priority projects.
Events	<p>Jen reported out on behalf of Peggy who was not able to be in attendance. Jen acknowledged Peggy’s efforts with the committee and shared a new process that was recently implemented to better streamline the event process internally with the board as well as through reservation of the hall and necessary publication and advertising. Members outside the board can be in touch with Peggy if they have an interest in submitting an event idea for future years (event type, cost, etc.). There is a deadline date of April 1st in order to get event listings out to members for the summer. Jen acknowledged the support from the Church and Carol Davis (as rep) for helping coordinate the events as well.</p> <p><u>Other highlights included:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events held to date were very successful: Paint n Sip (17 people) and the July 4th Boat Parade. The Parade theme was “Under the Sea” and 9 boats participated. This is a partnership with the Westmore Fire Department. The Felting workshop was postponed due to flooding. • Upcoming events include the rescheduled felting workshop, Plein Air, Modern Times and Castleton Quartet. • The Association continues to work with Liz Teuber, yoga instructor, to offer Thursday morning yoga at the Hall for \$10 a class, drop-ins welcome and no experience is necessary. <p>Jen introduced Meggie as a new Board member and convener of the Farmers Market. Meggie provided update with the farmer’s market: The market occurs on Mondays from 3-6p. The Westmore Association sponsored marketing and musicians. The Westmore church is sponsoring it as well (Wi-Fi and space). There are 14-17 vendors with a mix of fresh produce (farms), meat, eggs, prepared foods, and local crafts. The vendors are all local—Newport-Burke. Meggie invited everyone to attend and support local and engage with the community.</p> <p>Carol Davis also shared an update on an upcoming church sponsored event—Soupy Talks, similar to “Ted Talks”. Carol also provided an updated calendar of events with the recent additions/changes.</p>
Scholarship	<p>Deb Richards provided an update on the expanded Association Scholarship opportunity. Due to the low number of high school students in Westmore, the Association has opened up the scholarship to anyone pursuing educational opportunities. The purpose is to make educational programs accessible and affordable to individuals and families across the lifespan in Westmore. The Westmore Association scholarship can be used for programs including preschool, private school, college, graduate/master’s level, trade schools, continuing education, certification, etc. Applicants must be residents of Westmore. The award amount can range from \$250-\$1,500 depending on the number of applicants and demonstrated need.</p>

	<p>Copies were available at the meeting. Jen will work with Irene to upload to the website for download as well. An announcement with the new scholarship opportunity will go out to members in the Mailchimp newsletter.</p>
<p>Trails & Recreation</p>	<p>Jen provided an update. The Association continues to pledge \$2,500 to the Northwoods Stewardship Center in Charleston whose mission is to support conservation and trail access and maintenance, as well as educational and student engagement opportunities. Northwoods provided a great overview of some of their work this summer and the engagement of youth in the projects (document available at the meeting). As of the end of June, Northwoods utilized the pledge to conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and reroutes on Pisgah South, North and East trails • Maintenance on Mt Hor Herbert Hawkes trail • Maintenance on Long Pond and Telegraph Trails of Bald Mtn <p>For July, they are planning to work on the Wheeler Mountain rock staircase reroute. The State recently bought wheeler mountain access from a private landowner. This extends the Willoughby State Forest and our access to the mountain. Jen acknowledged that while this increases access and conservation of the area, we have a growing problem with increased foot and car traffic that needs to be addressed. This was a topic at the Westmore Path Forward meeting and Jen hoped as a community we could bolster efforts to preserve the natural resources we have in the state and town forests.</p> <p>Jen also highlighted the Green Mountain Club-NEK chapter, who continually provides maintenance to the Westmore trails, including the Town Forest. They recently shared some upgrades and maintenance needs to the Town Forest, specifically the bog area. Jen has been in touch with Northwoods and will determine how to proceed more towards the end of the summer.</p>
<p>Water Quality</p>	<p>Bruce Tanner, chair of the water quality committee, provided an update on some of the activities underway including:</p> <p>The state has been monitoring the lake since 1979--- at least what we have data from. We monitor pollutants—phosphorus (a compound from lawn fertilizer, sewage, etc.) is just about everywhere and washed down from our streams and into the lake. The phosphorus levels are taken each year. The trend is that the level of phosphorus is going up (in 44 years it has almost doubled), which is a concern. They can produce algae blooms with the increase heat too-- Cyobacteria give off toxins that can harm people and pets. The rain in summertime has been variable, which impacts the input of phosphorus. The phosphorus level taken after the flooding more than doubled, but within 2 weeks it settled and was back to average levels. The pulse of phosphorus did push the</p> <p>Bruce is monitoring several tributaries (6 of the 17)- there are high levels of chloride. The state improvements at the south end have improved some of the drainage issues. When we see a big storm, the levels within the brooks change too and we want to mitigate that.</p>

The Association entered into a partnership with the Memphremagog Watershed Association and Orleans County Natural Resource Conservation District (OCNRCD) to develop a [lake watershed action plan](#)—expert hydrologist surveyed the streams, road, culverts, development, etc. As of last spring we have a master plan with 70 identified possible projects that the community could pursue.

Bruce brought the tools and water monitoring equipment to demonstrate the work that happens in the lake—measuring clarity, temps and general samples. In addition to phosphorus, they are also measuring for Caffeine, which is a proxy for septic systems that might be seeping into the lake. They also look at the algae. Analysis is done by the state (lab).

The Association covered funds for Bruce to develop and distribute zebra traps. Anyone can obtain a trap from Bruce, and it needs to be placed at the end of a dock, not touching the lake floor. They can be checked 1x/month. Bruce is not an expert on identifying organisms, but we have individuals in town that could support this.

- Eastern Elliptio mussel is native to Willoughby—they are good for the lake and important parts of the ecosystem.
- Zebra mussels can completely take over the lake, strip the lower level of the food chain and will have repercussions all the way up the food chain. Once established they are hard to get rid of. They are very distinct, they are sharp. Recently found in the Canadian side of Memphremagog (2 years ago), boat greeters are every diligent. They are also in Champlain.

Lake wise program—shoreline property on the lake—developed and promoted by DEC- it's an educational program, strictly volunteer- someone trained in assessment will come and review your property. They look at various components (general landscaping, driveway, septic system, shoreline, etc.) If you meet the criteria, you are awarded a lake wise award—plaque.

Discussion Points:

- Water temperature: Bruce mentioned that the temp (2 weeks ago) was 65 degrees—it is much warmer now. When does the temp peak? Now through mid-august.
- Milfoil status—Milfoil has been around since 1980's. In the last 6 years the harvest has varied some. We're hoping that the current contractor (local resident) believes he has been gaining on it. The cost to the town is about \$30,000/year to manage the milfoil. We're hoping the harvests continue to go down as they have been. Our lake is so big and used so much and is very windy, so eliminating milfoil is almost impossible. Another invasive species: Starry stonewort is concerning, it is a mega algae that is worse than milfoil and is present in Memphremagog, another reason the bat greeter program is so critical to ensuring vessels are checked before and after accessing the lake.
- Greeter Program: Last year the greeter program position was increased to \$20/hour. It's still lower than other communities, but it has increased staffing. They were only monitoring from Thursday-Monday, and we discussed how we (Association) can go 50/50 with the town to add the extra days for 7 days to make

sure we're meeting the need of the increased boater presence. This was approved by the selectboard and is now operational. The data for the boat greeter program can be found here: <https://www.westmoreonline.org/milfoil>

- Fireworks impact on the lake: Bruce volunteered to monitor lake Willoughby as part of the national effort.

Discussion shifted to Deb Smith who reiterated the Association's commitment to doing everything to preserve the Westmore community. Deb invited members and the community to engage with the Association, attend meeting, etc.

Diane Ledher shared updates to the state and local wakeboat discussions and actions:

- Wakeboats in wake sport mode are potentially detrimental to the lake water quality. There are a lot of discussions about wakeboats in Vermont and across the country. As of April 15, 2024, [a new state rule](#) impacting wakeboats and wakesports is in effect with new regulations. The regulations include specific lakes where wakesports can occur—from the 800 bodies of water, only 30 lakes will allow wakeboats and Willoughby is one of them. The regulations also include specific designated wake zones within those lakes. In Willoughby, there is a 4.5-mile zone down the lake.
- The State allows communities to petition to strengthen the rules. Of the 30 lakes, almost half of those lakes are petitioning to the state to either prohibit wakeboats or wakesports. Right now, a committee along with the Association is in the process of acquiring local signatures **to support a petition to prohibit wakesports not wakeboats**. Some lakes are trying to ban wakeboats entirely. The hope is the hoping the selectboard and planning commission will back this petition as so many community members already have.
- The **special selectboard wakeboat meeting is on August 8**. This is an opportunity to hear both sides. It's important for all sides to participate so the town can make an informed stand. Ultimately, the state will still have to support and approve the petition before anything is formally accepted and implemented. In the meantime, the Association is requesting members to sign the petition and submit letters of support.

Discussion Points:

- Question about the characteristics of wakeboats and difference with a traditional boat. Diane shared that wakeboats have ballast tanks ballast tanks or bladders to hold pumped-in water (typically 1,000 to 4,000 pounds) which weighs the boat down and makes for bigger wakes. They are capable of 3–4-foot wake. There are boats that can create a 7-foot wake. Because the tanks cannot fully empty, this is a big concern with spreading invasive species, which are in surrounding lake. One member raised opposition to the tanks and was invited to speak about that issue at the August 8th meeting.

Potluck
Pastor Bob provided a Blessing

