

# OLSBA BOG Regular Meeting April 15, 2026 via zoom: Draft Meeting Minutes

## Key takeaways

- Three property tax liens will be filed by April 30 for unpaid taxes
- March financials show cash position of \$240,000 with \$130,000 in CD investment
- Fuss and O'Neill design phase bills need final payment of approximately \$16,000, reimbursable through Clean Water Funds
- Sheffield Brook maintenance will be handled through ongoing clean-out services rather than expensive engineering solutions
- Board approved combining Force Main, Bioxide Station, and Shorefront Sewer contracts with Baltazar
- IMA buy-ins will be treated as operational expenses instead of capital expenses to provide more bond capacity
- Shared project total cost is \$26.5 million with \$21.5 million in grants/loan forgiveness, leaving \$5 million balance
- Association's share is \$1 million if town participates, \$1.5 million if town opts out

## Officers Present

- President: John Cunningham
- Vice President: Paul Yellen
- Treasurer: Rob Cappellucci
- Secretary: Tracey Cappellucci

**Board Members Present:** Bob Palazzo, Jerry Vande Werken, Jack Thomas, Mary Kate Reynolds, Tim Larson

## Quorum verified and meeting began at 7:02

## Approval of March Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed and approved the minutes from the March meeting.

- **Details**

- **Jerry Vande Werken: Moved to approve the minutes**
- **Jack Thomas: Seconded the motion**
- **Conclusion**
  - **Minutes approved unanimously**

## **Treasurer's Report and Financial Update**

Rob presented the March 2026 financials and discussed outstanding bills, tax collections, and budget planning.

- **Details**
  - Rob: Cash position at \$240,000 as of March 31, with \$130,000 in certificate of deposit earning interest
  - Rob: Three lien notices sent for unpaid taxes; liens will be filed April 30 if no payment received
  - Rob: Accounts payable include utilities, Nickerson invoice, and Shipman invoices on payment plan
  - Rob: \$49,000 wire from DEEP paid to Fuss and O'Neill (\$19,000 in prior month, \$31,000 in March)
  - Jerry V: Asked about attempts to contact property owners with liens
  - Rob: Confirmed email and phone contact attempts made with mixed responses
  - Jack: Suggested focusing on oldest delinquency and involving attorney for foreclosure process
  - Rob: Expressed concern about foreclosure for small amounts and volunteer capacity
  - Norbert: Clarified that after filing lien, association has 15 years to foreclose and collects statutory interest rate
  - Jack: Recommended filing liens on all delinquent accounts for consistency
  - Rob: Agreed to file lien on \$44 balance for consistency
  - Bob: Questioned how property owners will handle upcoming sewer assessments if unable to pay current minimal taxes
  - Norbert: Noted lien recording fee is \$90 per lien, recoverable when paid
  - **Tim Larson: Made motion to accept Treasurer's report, seconded by Jerry. Suggested accepting treasurer's report without additional action, noting Rob is doing what he can as volunteer**
  - **Unanimous approval**
- **Conclusion**
  - Board unanimously approved and accepted treasurer's report

- Liens will be filed by May 1 for three properties
- Topic will be revisited at June meeting
- All delinquent accounts will receive liens for consistency

## **Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27**

Rob presented draft budget with several open items requiring further development.

- **Details**
  - Rob: Core budget presented but project-related debt repayment not yet included
  - Rob: Major open items include beach cleaning contract with Anthony, insurance quote expected next week, WPCA budget request from Jay
  - Paul: Confirmed Anthony's beach contract is two-year agreement from last year
  - Paul: Suggested getting pricing for identification signs on five streets north of Route 156
  - Bob: Supported adding street signs to budget
  - Rob: Discussed potential capital projects including seawall steps and security camera system
  - Bob: Warned that upgrading stairs may trigger handicap accessibility requirements including ramps
  - Rob: Annual capital reserve of \$10,000 will continue to build association surplus
  - Jerry: Asked questions about budget assumptions and reimbursable expenses
- **Conclusion**
  - Budget remains in draft form with assumptions to be finalized
  - Paul will obtain pricing for street signs
  - Final budget approval scheduled for June meeting

## **Operations and Maintenance Report**

Paul provided updates on winter damage repairs, beach work, and upcoming seasonal preparations.

- **Details**
  - Paul: Stop sign at Saltaire repaired, mailbox and fence damage from plowing fixed
  - Paul: Received complaints about lawn damage from snowplowing; discussed with contractor about using mailboxes as guides

- Paul: Corner properties at Bel Air and Sea Lane had snow pushed onto property with limited alternatives
- Paul: Anthony's Landscaping working on beach, stockpiling sand, digging out drain pipes
- Paul: Measured exact distance from seawall to Billow and Brightwater discharge pipes for future reference
- Paul: Garvin expected to remove stockpiled sand next week
- Paul: Significant sand depth at end of stairways; will attempt to lower sand levels
- Paul: Speed signs, garbage cans, and bicycle racks to be installed in next 1-2 weeks
- **Conclusion**
  - Winter damage repairs completed
  - Beach maintenance progressing on schedule
  - Seasonal equipment installation planned for coming weeks

### **Sheffield Brook Maintenance and Engineering**

Discussion of ongoing drainage issues, clean-out costs, and engineering consultation expenses.

- **Details**
  - John: Sheffield Brook has been clogging and unclogging; one clean-out required, but system also self-flushed on another occasion
  - John: Received bills for \$800 clean-out and \$4,137 Ramboll consulting fees (association pays half)
  - John: Old Colony engaging Ramboll to explore funding options but no clear path to success
  - Bob: Agreed that spending large sums fighting nature is not cost-effective
  - Jack: Asked about temporary fixes being considered
  - John: No clear temporary solution; weather patterns are unpredictable
  - Tim: Suggested incorporating Sheffield Brook fix into sewer project or adding to maintenance contractor's scope
  - Paul: Original maintenance agreement included contractor installing weir boards before storms, but that contractor passed away two years ago
  - Paul: Tony Montano currently handles excavation clean-outs through Old Colony
  - Jack: Emphasized need to formalize system with specific individual having discretion to install/remove boards
  - Tim: Proposed tracking occurrences in spreadsheet to make better decisions

## **Conclusion**

### **Vote to approve payment of Cleanout Expense bill for Sheffield Brook**

- **Motion to approve payment of \$800.00 bill made by Tim Larson, seconded by Jack Thomas**
- **Unanimous approval**

### **Vote to approve of Ramboll Consulting Fees**

- **Motion to approve payment of half of \$4137.00 (shared expense with OCBA) made by Tim Larson, seconded by Jack Thomas**
- **Unanimous approval**

### **Vote: Stop notification to OCBA on Ramboll Fees**

- **Motion to suspend Ramboll consulting work until written proposal with clear objectives received made by Tim, seconded by Jack**
- **Unanimous Approval**
- Jack will work with John to establish formal maintenance system with Old Colony
- Association will track Sheffield Brook issues in spreadsheet for data-driven decisions

## **Recruiting Committee Update**

Judeen reported on efforts to recruit volunteers for expiring board positions and update committee lists.

- **Details**
  - Judeen: Communication sent to all residents about expiring positions and volunteer opportunities
  - Judeen: Information will be included in upcoming OLS newsletter
  - Judeen: Committee list needs updating due to low survey response rate
  - Judeen: Proposes distributing committee list at spring meeting for two-minute review and updates
  - Judeen: Recruiting committee now understands responsibility to maintain updated committee list
  - Judeen: Proposed that each committee have go-to person on Board of Governors or officers for better connection
  - John: Emphasized need to attract and retain volunteers given tremendous workload
- **Conclusion**

- Recruitment communications distributed and will be included in newsletter
- Committee list to be updated through newsletter and potentially at spring meeting
- New liaison structure proposed between committees and Board of Governors

## **Infrastructure and Sewer Project Updates**

John provided comprehensive updates from Three Beaches Construction Committee meeting and requested votes on critical project documents.

- **Details**

- John: Attended efficient 75-minute construction committee meeting run by Doug Whalen
- John: Market adjustments came in under 8% (estimated at 10%), representing 1.2% of total project
- John: ARPA funds of \$60,000-\$70,000 may still be available from Town of Old Lyme
- John: Town approving permits quickly and participating constructively despite attorney's statement
- John: East Lyme expressed interest in providing operations and maintenance services with good rates
- John: Design IFO for shared project only 83% utilized, \$167,000 under budget
- John: Old Colony notified state agencies about position on CSA and town; awaiting response
- John: Retired CT DOT engineer Joe Cancelleri reviewed F&O agreements, confirmed standard industry practice at 6% of total cost
- John: Latest shared project numbers: \$26.5M total, \$6.5M grant, \$15M loan forgiveness, \$5M balance
- John: Association share is \$1M with town in, \$1.5M with town out
- John: Fuss and O'Neill expressed high confidence in Amtrak coordination; inspectors available and scheduling feasible
- John: Baltazar has ongoing Amtrak relationship which benefits project
- John: State paving of Route 156 may be pushed to 2027, saving approximately \$1M in temporary paving costs
- John: Requested vote to pay outstanding Fuss and O'Neill design phase bills (approximately \$16,000 remaining)
- **Vote to pay Fuss & O'Neill Outstanding Bills**

- **Motion to pay outstanding bills made by Tim Larson, seconded by Jack Thomas**
- **Unanimous approval**
- Rob: Confirmed \$50,000 already paid, approximately \$16,000 balance owed
- Jerry: Asked about fund flow between association and WPCA
- John: Explained liability tracking for funds fronted to WPCA and rebalancing plan
- **John: Requested vote on change order combining Force Main, Bioxide Station, and Shorefront Sewer with Baltazar**
- Bob: Asked if change affects Clean Water Fund qualifications
- John: Confirmed not signing would prevent funding
- **Tim: Moved to approve change order, seconded by Jerry**
- **Unanimous approval**
- **John: Requested votes on shared and internal F&O Engineering Agreement amendments**
- John: Explained cost increases due to inflation from 2020 pricing and scope increases
- John: F&O reduced burden rate from 1.7 to 1.45-1.49 to lower costs
- John: Total approximately \$900,000, about \$400,000 higher than before
- John: Agreements essential for unlocking Clean Water Funds and securing professional oversight
- **Tim: Moved to approve items 3, 4, and 5 together (shared agreement, internal agreement, and IMA buy-ins treatment), seconded by Jerry**
- **Unanimous approval**
- John: Explained treating IMA buy-ins as operational expense better matches expenses over time and frees bond capacity
- John: New London agreement is 2.5% over 20 years, suitable for operational expense treatment
- Rob: Asked about accounting treatment and audit implications
- John: Confirmed Treasury indicated option available and dropped hints favoring operational treatment
- Rob: Confirmed understanding that this is customary for intermunicipal agreements
- **Conclusion**
  - Board approved payment of outstanding Fuss and O'Neill design phase bills
  - Funds will be moved from association to WPCA for payment and reimbursement tracking

- Board approved change order combining three contract segments with Baltazar
- Board approved shared F&O Engineering Agreement Amendment Number 6
- Board approved internal F&O Engineering Agreement Amendment Number 8
- Board approved treating IMA buy-ins as operational expenses instead of capital expenses
- All votes passed unanimously

## Public Comments

Public comment raised concerns about WPCA hiring additional staff for functions that should be performed by committee members.

- **Details**
  - PC: Expressed concern about WPCA with seven members constantly looking to hire others for core functions
  - PC: Questioned hiring project manager to oversee Fuss and O'Neill's project manager
  - PC: Noted WPCA secretary elected by ordinance not performing duties; questioned hiring secretary for secretary
  - PC: Questioned \$50,000 proposal to hire someone to interface between residents and Fuss and O'Neill
  - Bob: Explained owner's representative is common practice in municipal projects
  - Bob: Owner's rep reviews prevailing wage rates, classifications, and can identify cost savings and rebates
  - Bob: Cited examples from Boston municipal projects using firms like Accenture
  - PC: Argued state of Connecticut controls prevailing wage, not association
  - John: Noted RFP had extensive state compliance requirements
  - John: Expressed concern about layering watchdogs breaking down trust with engineering firm
  - John: Noted Mike Nelson from Fuss and O'Neill (20-year veteran) assigned to internal project at 5 hours per week
  - Bob: Defended having conversation about owner's rep as normal board discussion
  - Tim: Owner's rep concept as "our guy on the street" for day-to-day issues and change orders
  - Tim: Noted value for public relations and ensuring quality control

- John: Raised systemic concern about hiring accountants, attorneys, and others for tasks volunteers should handle
- John: Referenced two-hour conversation with Marty about financing where Marty was unaware of QuickBooks system
- Tim: Clarified Board of Governors role is to fund, WPCA must justify expenses
- Tim: Noted WPCA has statutory authority as taxing body
- Bob: Emphasized nobody hates wasting money more than him
- Bob: Noted Dennis Baltazar won't be on site daily; quality depends on crew assigned
- Tim: Warned about discussing individual property owners in public meetings and liability concerns
- **Conclusion**
  - Discussion highlighted tension between volunteer capacity and professional services needs
  - No formal action taken; topic remains open for future WPCA budget discussions
  - Board acknowledged responsibility to evaluate and approve WPCA funding requests

## **Route 156 Traffic Safety**

Tim raised concerns about traffic safety and pedestrian access across Route 156.

- **Details**
  - Tim: Investigation of traffic light with pedestrian crosswalk for north side residents
  - Tim: Noted difficulty and danger of turning from Billow onto Route 156 at blind corner
  - Bob: Agreed and noted previous outreach for crosswalk or caution light
  - Bob: Described cars coming around Amtrak bridge corner at 50 mph making crossing dangerous
  - Tim: Suggested one of four north-side streets should have pedestrian crosswalk included in project
  - Bob: Proposed crosswalks at each end of association area
- **Conclusion**
  - Traffic safety concern raised for future consideration
  - No formal action taken but issue documented for project planning

## **DEEP Accounting Seminar and Independence Day Safety Meeting**

John announced upcoming meetings relevant to project accounting and community safety.

- **Details**
  - Jerry: Emphasized importance of DEEP accounting seminar on Tuesday, April 21, 12:30-3:30 PM
  - John: Confirmed he will attend
  - Bob: Will try to attend depending on schedule
  - Rob: Will try to attend
  - John: Noted Independence Day safety meeting at 4:30 PM same day via Microsoft Teams hosted by Martha
- **Conclusion**
  - Multiple board members plan to attend DEEP accounting seminar
  - Meeting information shared with board

## **Directory Update**

Mary Kate provided update on association directory before leaving meeting.

- **Details**
  - John: Reported Mary Kate will send email next week requesting directory updates
  - John: Goal is to complete directory before annual meeting
- **Conclusion**
  - Directory update email to be sent to membership next week

## **Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn at 8:42 by Tim, seconded by MK

## **Challenges**

- Recruiting and retaining volunteers for board positions and committees despite significant workload
- Balancing volunteer capacity with need for professional services on complex sewer project
- Managing Sheffield Brook drainage issues without clear engineering solution or excessive costs
- Collecting delinquent property taxes from non-responsive owners
- Coordinating with Town of Old Lyme on CSA participation and permit approvals

- Maintaining trust and alignment with engineering firm while ensuring proper oversight
- Staying within bond capacity limits while managing project contingencies
- Establishing formal maintenance procedures for Sheffield Brook with Old Colony
- Improving communication and coordination between WPCA and Board of Governors

## Action items

- **Rob**
  - File property tax liens by May 1, 2026 for 3 properties
  - File lien on \$44 balance for consistency
  - Obtain insurance quote for fiscal year 2027 budget (expected next week)
  - Finalize WPCA budget request from Jay for inclusion in draft budget
  - Work with John to document Fuss and O'Neill payment details for QuickBooks entry
  - Move funds from association to WPCA for Fuss and O'Neill payment and reimbursement tracking
- **Paul**
  - Obtain pricing from SignPro for identification signs on five streets north of Route 156
  - Install speed signs within next week
  - Install garbage cans and bicycle racks within next 1-2 weeks
  - Confirm beach cleaning contract details with Anthony
- **Jack**
  - Work with John to contact Doug Whalen about formalizing Sheffield Brook maintenance system
  - Explore contract options with Old Colony for ongoing Sheffield Brook clean-out services
- **John**
  - Contact Doug Whalen to stop open-ended Ramboll consulting and request written proposal with clear objectives
  - Work with Jack on Sheffield Brook maintenance agreement with Old Colony
  - Sign change order combining Force Main, Bioxide Station, and Shorefront Sewer contracts
  - Sign shared F&O Engineering Agreement Amendment Number 6
  - Sign internal F&O Engineering Agreement Amendment Number 8
  - Work with Rob to establish proper accounting entries between association and WPCA books

- Attend DEEP accounting seminar on Tuesday, April 21, 12:30-3:30 PM
- Create spreadsheet to track Sheffield Brook clogging incidents and resolutions
- **Judeen**
  - Include volunteer recruitment information in upcoming OLS newsletter
  - Include committee list in newsletter requesting member updates
  - Prepare committee list for distribution at spring meeting if needed
- **Mary Kate**
  - Send email next week requesting directory updates from membership
  - Complete directory before annual meeting
- **Board of Governors**
  - Review and approve final budget at June meeting
  - Revisit property tax lien status at June meeting
  - Evaluate WPCA staffing and budget requests as they arise