

**October 9, 2024**  
**South End Rowing Club**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Roll Call**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>		<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>
J. Sale	X		C. Lovazzano	
C. Bump	X		A. Diaz	X
E. Gliebe	X		L. Hovden	X
V. Blyth Marlin	X		M. Miller	
V. Cornwell	X		E. Gable	X
J. Li	X		K. Hutchins	X
G. Lazaneo	X		S. Phillipow	X
F. Hegeler			D. Flatow	X
J. Sellers				
T. Yarish	X		S. Wintersteen	

**Approval of Minutes**

The September 2024 Board minutes were approved (12 - 0 - 2).

**President's Remarks.**

President opened the meeting at 6:30pm and had introductions from non-board members who joined the meeting.

Josh worked with Jim Alexander and Jamie Pickard to bring 60 children on a tour around the club. They had a great time at the club and maybe the parents enjoyed it more.

Our Super Volunteer appreciation night was a great success. There was lots of laughter and enjoyment. Jeanne did an outstanding job. It was a fun event!

Final reminder to get your award nominations to Erika by the end of the month. Nominations are due October 31<sup>st</sup>.

It is election time again so talk to your friends who may be interested in serving on the Board and have them submit.

Josh was informed that on October 21<sup>st</sup> they are going to start removing docks over by gas house. There will be a barge so they can dig up the docks and remove them. He requested commissioners communicate this to the membership.

### **6:40 pm- Members Moment**

Brandon Andersen joined for a member's moment. He came to provide feedback on how our annual by-law amendment changes are handled, which is that currently it is via an in-person vote at our annual member meeting. He is proposing that this goes to an electronic voting system. While it has been in place for 150 years, at this day in age it makes sense to migrate this strategy. This will allow all our members to participate. It will allow people to submit their complaints, and you can batch responses to address groups of concerns. So that all complaints are heard.

On the implementation side, we already have electronic board elections, so this is something we already do. He would argue that by-law amendments are as important as elections. We will need to address some members who are not digitally savvy and can have paper options available.

With electronic voting we can do it at any time and can solicit feedback throughout the year. You can engage and modify an amendment and seek an electronic vote at any time.

### **6:45 pm- Agenda Items**

#### **A. Fund Investment Proposal (Laura/ Sydelle, 15 minutes, not deferrable)**

Last year we talked about having an investment committee. Laura and Sydelle talked through options and wanted to engage with the board on our feelings and our risk tolerance and determine the direction to go from here.

Sydelle noted we have a lot of money in our accounts, and we could move money to an operating account and move some money to invest. She recommended we hire someone to handle the investments for us. These are members' dues, and we don't want to have a lot of risk so having an investment advisor may make some sense.

Options- Ladder bonds, low risk index funds, mix of ladder and low risk investment funds

We need to determine % of funds, strategy and risk tolerance

Historically per previous treasurer, we did not invest as we had no savings after the renovation. It would have been prudent. She felt it is prudent to invest and consider CDs and Bonds and recommends we hire someone to help guide us in the investments. Others felt that we should hire an independent expert to provide us with various recommendations that the board could then review and vote on.

**Motion** to instruct Laura, David and Sydelle to select 1 -3 investment advisors to manage our funds and bring back those recommendations to the board for review.

Approved (13 - 0 – 1).

**B. 1873 Fund Plans through 2024 (Marc, Susan Blew, 15 minutes, not deferrable)**

Marc noted that we incorporated in 2023 and spent 2024 doing some basic things including setting up accounts, setting up donations, reaching out to high-net-worth donors, set up a list of what they are raising money for. They have discussed raising money for SERC in general as well as for specific projects.

With the upcoming membership renewals, they would like to be included in the renewal notification with a link to make donations to the 1873 Fund. They would like to have a link on the website and would like to have a link

in all modes of communications to the club with a link. They feel like they have a good opportunity to have our members donate a tax-deductible donation when they renew and via club communications. They would also like to make this same presentation at the member meeting.

There are 4 things they want to go forward with.

- 1- Educate membership on donation to South End, 1873 or the scholarship fund at the members meeting
- 2- Link on the dues renewal communication
- 3- Link on all official club communications
- 4- Link on our website to the 1873 fund

Several shared concerns about including a link in all official club communications but many shared their support of 3 of the other 4 requests.

Capital improvements and repairs is the intention of the 1873 Fund. There is a question around the scholarship fund and if the 1873 funds can support scholarship. There is an outstanding question about if the fund can take over the scholarships. Marc noted they are awaiting legal opinion.

**Vote** to include a link on the dues renewal- approved unanimously with hopes they will take over the scholarship fund.

**Vote** to include a link on the website – also approved unanimously.

Josh noted that the 1873 Fund is already included in the Members Meeting Agenda.

### **C. Capacity Focus Groups (Vanessa/ Jessica, 20 minutes, not deferrable)**

Vanessa recapped the capacity project in 5 sections

- Data and usage
- Sports and entertainment

- Volunteerism
- Building
- Culture

They felt like focus groups would be a great way to tap into our community to hear how they feel about capacity. 105 people attended with members of only 6 months and some who were members over 40 years.

Jessica Gammell joined us and shared an overview of the progress thus far. Jessica works on facilitating conversations and that is what she tried to do. Conversations generated goodwill and built the buzz. The focus groups were typically 20-30 people, broken into 4 or 5. The groups were then provided prompts to talk through. Jessica then guided all in the room through a similar process.

The Committee will continue to keep the Board apprised of its progress.

**D. Alcatraz Invitation Name Change (Andrew, 5 minutes, not deferrable)**

Andrew joined the board and thanks us for our continued support of the annual Alcatraz Invitational event - this year we once again brought in ~\$100k for the club!

As we look to improve next year's event, one item we're strongly considering is changing the event name. Over the past two years, we received a significant amount of feedback from would be swimmers that the term "invitational" implies the need to be invited, which has kept people from registering. It also carries the connotation of competition, which is something we want to move away from - the award ceremony and race results tend to have a few errors annually, and for people who have a framing of competition, this is a really big deal that reflects poorly on the club when we don't get it right.

After consulting with our in-house brand expert Fran, we propose changing the name of the event (either sourcing from the club or just running with the "SERC Alcatraz Open") over the next 2 years, with this year being a "transition" where we include invitational in marketing materials, so we don't lose returning swimmers.

We hope to open registration the first week of November so folks can gift swims to loved ones during the holiday season.

**Motion** to approve the name change to SERC Alcatraz Open in 2025.

Approved (14 – 0 - 0)

**E. CRM discussion (Vanessa/ Brian, 20 minutes, not deferrable)**

Vanessa and Brian joined to vote on whether we would like to implement CRM in the next year. The contract was sent to board members for review in advance of the meeting. The contract also went back and forth between our lawyer, Don and their team.

The team looked at various CRM systems like Salesforce, Club Spot, WildApricot. Club Spot was recommended by a member and it seemed to fit the bill for what we are looking for. Our current membership is our email, and everything is very labor intensive. The new CRM system will cover making a membership only database. We have an open calendar. You would now need to sign in to see the calendar. We will have an accurate member list and the new system will support a variety of elements to run the club more efficiently as discussed in the September Board Meeting.

Many feel that the software is needed but are concerned there is not a service level agreement (“SLA”) around support. There was one recommendation made to ensure the SLA is included in the contract, but other board members pointed out that the year-to-year contract is the real pressure on them to perform.

**Motion** to approve the Club Spot contract as presented for CRM system for the duration of one year.

Approved (13 – 0 - 0)

**F. Holiday party capacity update (Jeanne, 10 minutes, not deferrable)**

Holiday Party, 2024 provided by Jeanne via email as she was unable to attend in person.

This year for the holiday party, we will be adding a 20' x 20' tent outside the roll up doors with a stage, lights and heater. Ideally, this stage will be where the band/DJ and speeches are made. With the slope of the LBH, the viewing of the speeches should be good. We'll have lots of high top tables and heavy appetizers instead of a sit down meal. I'm still working on the theme, it will include some reference to snowflakes, which there will be in abundance.

As for how many attendees we can have, after removing all the boats and storing them outside we are somewhere in the range of 500 or so, which is great, it adds about 150 extra people. Once she has a quote for the rentals and the food she may adjust the cost of the tickets nominally.

Jeanne should have the quotes in by next month's meeting and will advise of the new (if needed) ticket price.

**G. 2025 Cost of living adjustment (Laura, 15 minutes, not deferrable)**

Laura reviewed our option to take a CPI adjustment for membership dues which was approved at last year's members meeting. We can vote to do it or we can vote not to do it. CPI index for SF area is 2.7% from one year ago. Current dues are \$450/year. With the CPI adjustment they would go to \$462 or +\$12 (rounded to the nearest dollar).

Laura shared reasons to increase dues:

- Our dues are low compared to similar venues.
- Costs of service continue to increase
- Slowly build out cushion
- Membership cap has decreased funds

She also shared reasons not to increase:

- We have money in our accounts to meet ongoing needs
- No urgent needs identified
- Push back from membership
- Membership is at an all-time high

Many people in the room reminded us of the contentious conversations last year when we sought a vote to raise our dues for the first time in 10 years. We also sought approval to make annual adjustments based on the CPI as recommended by our landlords which is also in line with what the Dolphin Club. Both were approved in 2023. Several Board members noted that it should be procedural and just clicks up each year so that we are building our savings over time so we have the funds should something happen.

Some board members felt that while we should take the CPI increase, we need to have a strong “why” behind it to support it and more transparency in our costs as well as outline critical capital projects that we see in the future.

**Motion** to increase due by 2.7% rounding to the nearest dollar on all membership dues.

Approved (12 – 1 - 0)

#### **H. Member meeting agenda (Josh, 10 minutes, not deferrable)**

Josh sent around a draft outline of the members’ meeting for November. Even with no meat in the skeleton, there is a lot to cover and as such we will need everyone to be very tight on what they share out. All board members who have a topic should have a first draft by 10.23.



Erika and Jeanne on point for pizza and drinks.

**I. Copenwater visit Oct 10 - 17th 2025 (David, 5 minutes, not deferrable)**

David shared some background from our previous discussions.

In August David presented the idea of a reciprocal relationship with the Copenwater swimming organization. The shape and size of the relationship was iterated through numerous conversations with board and club members to take into account various factors including but not limited to: capacity, differences in terms of facilities at each club, volunteer effort, and ongoing effort to maintain a relationship. The current proposal, that seems to have broad support with the board, is to have an inaugural trip where the Copenwater swimmers would visit the South End in 2025, and the South End would visit Copenwater sometime in 2025 as well (or in 2026). The nature of the ongoing relationship would get rolled into an initiative exploring whether the South End should be part of or help facilitate a “network/federation of clubs”. This initiative is at an early stage, but conversations with Josh, Van, and others have already proved fruitful. A sample itinerary could incorporate a “super sunriser” on Thursday morning, otherwise leaning on incorporating our guests into our pod swims. David would be the point person to lead from our side. The point person at Copenwater is their founder Hans Heming. Hans is an ocean steward, long-distance swimmer, and economist, with a deep passion for environmental conservation and community engagement.

**Motion**

To grant temporary club membership to up to 15 members of Copenwater for one week in 2025 and to work with Don Margolis to create a liability release for them. This includes the ability to participate in sunrisers.

Approved (13 – 0 - 0)

**J. Update Building Commissioner description (Steve, 5 minutes, not deferrable)**

SERC Procedure Update - Building Commissioner Job Description updates to v2.1

Under Powers & Duties of Individual Officers (pg 8)

**Building Commissioner** - to supervise the upkeep of the clubhouse and its services; to keep the Board informed of the status of general maintenance, repairs and projects; to propose long-range plans and priorities for building projects;

Adding a new section after Membership Commissioner (pg 31)

### **Building Commissioner**

Each year the Board appoints a Building Commissioner as soon as practical after an election. The Building Commissioner shall be either a Life member, or an Active member of at least two consecutive years with experience leading or organizing a minimum of one major facility project.

The Building Commissioner shall:

- identify maintenance and repairs required and organize the necessary resources to complete the work
- assume a leadership or trusted advisor role as directed by the Board for major capital projects
- collaborate with the members of the Board as needed for any work impacting sports activities, locker room services, public access or security
- keep the membership apprised of work that impacts the primary sporting mission of the club
- provide regular updates to the Board regarding building maintenance and repair
- propose long-range plans and priorities for facility projects
- prepare a spending plan and manage allocated budget
- rely as needed on the facility and trades expertise of advisors such as an Assistant Building Commissioner, volunteer leaders, club members with craft expertise or vendors. Reaches out to past building commissioners and the body of building knowledge they possess.
- Identifies and directs volunteer leaders in executing projects or Day of Service

**Motion** to approve the update to the procedures for the Building Commissioner.

Approved by Elected Officials (6 – 0 - 0)

**K. December board dinner date (Erika, 5 minutes, not deferrable)**

As discussed at the September Board meeting, we have chosen to host our December board meeting at Capurros as we have done previously. We have two date options to consider as Capurros is closed on Wednesday. Monday December 9<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> are our two options.

December 9<sup>th</sup> was voted as best option by the Board and will be rescheduled from Wednesday December 11<sup>th</sup>.

**L. New name for the Dock Committee (Tim, 10 minutes, not deferrable)**

Tim presented that they are working on a new name for the Dock Committee: The Water Safety and Access Committee. The composition of the Stakeholders Group will include the commissioners of Rowing, Swimming and Entertainment, plus a member of the Pilot Committee.

The Water Safety and Access Committee will be charged with developing a program to address water safety and access based on the input of the Stakeholder group.

A zoom meeting of the Stakeholders will be scheduled soon, to begin collecting data and feedback from the members.

There was some confusion around the reference to “water safety” in the name and mission. It felt too broad. Tim, George and Steve will revisit the name and mission to clarify the focus is on the dock.

**Agenda Items to inform only- Recapped via email in advance of board meeting**

- **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (Jeanne, email)**

Volunteer Appreciation Night 10/2/2024

The volunteer appreciation night was a great success. We had about 30 volunteers of the 50 or so that were invited to our blackjack themed evening. The cookshack was turned into a casino with black tablecloths and a prize table. The night was warm, Erika and Catherine manned the bar out on the deck. We had appetizers from Espostos (the same caterer as the holiday party) which were delicious. David, Tim, Steve and Van were our outstanding and very personable blackjack dealers. Each of our guests received \$260 in poker chips and a raffle ticket when they arrived. Susan Blew, Maureen Keefe and Laura Hovden all helped with donating prizes for the raffles and the overall winner. Each of the board members that were there said some kind words of thanks to the guests. Each guest was appreciated by at least one board member, some by several board members. The evening ended around 8:00 and the cookshack was put back together quickly with the help of some of our guests whom we were there to appreciate. Thanks to everyone who came and helped, it was a really fun time and I believe that sentiment was echoed throughout.

- **Update on The Southender newsletter revival & Update on Security & Capacity (George, email)**

A comprehensive report on Capacity was provided at the September 2024 Board Meeting with the following high-level takeaways.

- Low (but predictable) levels of activity from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM weekdays.
- Consistent daily peak surge times from 5:00 AM - 8:00 AM.
- Club throughput averaging 1,900 weekly, 270 daily. (92% Members, 8% Day Use/Guests).
- Club use during peak hours represents 25% of our total weekly capacity.

FOLLOW UP REPORT September data validates the prior data set, noting a slight reduction in overall use as noted in red.

- Low (but predictable) levels of activity from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM weekdays.

#### UNCHANGED

- Consistent daily peak surge times from 5:00 AM - 8:00 AM.  
UNCHANGED
- Club throughput averaging 1,800 weekly, 260 daily. (94% Members, 6% Day Use/Guests).
- Club use during peak hours represents 25% of our total weekly capacity.

#### UNCHANGED

Data and observations suggest that August and September may be our peak season. This will be confirmed by an overall decline in attendance if noted in October - November. Tailgating and lax adherence to the existing guest policy continues. There are some members (old and new) that choose to ignore our stated door & admission policy. The lobby attendant service was approved by the Board through October 2024 for a 5 day weekly schedule. The service will not be extended and will end on Thursday, October 31, 2024..

#### FINDINGS

Data validates prior assumptions of SERC capacity during our normal hours of operation, demonstrating that the club is overutilized for 3 hours daily and underutilized otherwise. SERC has additional capacity for general use, but limited capacity during our surge hours. We should continue to message to members that facilitating tailgating is a security and policy breach, and that this learned behavior needs to stop. Anybody who enters the club that is not a member needs to sign the guest list waiver and be accounted for, without exception.

#### SOUTHENDER REVIVAL

The printed version of the club newsletter (approved on October 11, 2023) is finally proofed and at the printer, with a planned release within the next 7 days. In true South End style, this project is hitting the beach DFL (6-months overdue). The driver for the constant delays was the new editor dealing with personal family issues, with no backfill. 2 weeks ago, a publish or cancel directive was issued, which finally got the issue to the finish line. The proof as presented looks great and we can discuss the value of this (and future) issues at the November board meeting. My inclination is to plan on a digital-only version to close out the year and have the seated 2025 Board make a determination on the best path forward. Thanks to everybody who made their deadlines only to watch the clock tick. I hope you are all pleasantly surprised.

**Adjournment at 8:27pm** Dinner provided by Directors at Large. Ellen Boyle was our lead chef supported by Rick Perez and River Pember who prepared and cleaned up after a delicious meal for the board in the cookshack.

**Next Board Meeting November 13, 2024 at 6:30pm**