

GARDNER LAKE AUTHORITY

270 Hartford Road
Salem, CT 06240

Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2023
Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Co., Salem

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Attendees

Bozrah: Henry Granger, Scott Soderberg
Montville: Bill Wrobel, Kate Johnson, Mike Magliano
Salem: Chris Rios, Jim Miller

Excused: Tony Lasaracina
Guests: 48 guests were in attendance.

A quorum was noted.

Public Comment - Moved to the beginning of the meeting for discussion of lake concerns.

- Jim Miller began the discussion by referencing a plan that he and Salem First Selectman Ed Chmielewski were drafting to bring together nine stakeholders involved with the operations surrounding Gardner Lake.
- Selectman Chmielewski shared efforts by the Town of Salem to decrease some of the ongoing problems including the installation of parking signs, hiring a wrecker to tow violators, reducing flow into the parking lot, the alcohol ban, educational units and putting the two resident state troopers in on the weekends. Some of these practices have been in place for several years and continue. He noted that the three chief town officials are working together to plan for the 2024 season.
- DEEP Encon officers Colonel Chris Lewis and Captain Vincent Mazzotta spoke about the annual 90-day alcohol ban at the state park. To address speed limits on the lake, the first step would be for Bozrah, Montville and Salem to agree on a plan to bring forward. Encon has been patrolling both on land and in the water. Newly hired officers will be building their experience.
- Management of the boat launch and the state park belongs to two separate agencies within DEEP.
- Col. Lewis and Capt. Mazzotta responded to numerous concerns raised about jet skis and their erratic and unsafe operations. Noise levels and trash were also brought to the attention of Encon. It was noted that this problem has existed for years but no changes have been seen by neighbors of the boat launch area. One recommended solution was to hire someone at the gate. Another suggestion was to install cameras.
- The State has the capacity to prohibit parking along Route 354, but they have no jurisdiction to stop people walking in.
- It was noted that there are three separate entities: the state park, the state boat launch, and the waterbody itself. The Gardner Lake Authority, comprised of three appointees from each of the three towns, serves to protect the waterbody. This includes hiring boating patrols, water quality monitoring of the lake's chemistry and the management of invasive aquatic plants. The State of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has the responsibility of the park and boat launch.
- State Senator Martha Marx and State Representative Holly Cheeseman encouraged attendees to reach out to them with their concerns.

Public Comment concluded at 8:30 p.m.

The regular business portion of the meeting resumed at 9:05 p.m.

July Agenda Correction

It was noted that the agenda for the July meeting cancellation was to be held at the Montville Public Safety Building, and the next meeting (August) was to be held in Salem.

Minutes

The minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting were presented for approval. Chris Rios made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Bill Wrobel. The motion passed unanimously.

Attachments

- Treasurer's Report from 5/18/2023 – 6/16/2023
- Treasurer's Report from 6/17/2023 – 7/17/2023
- Client Monitoring Field Data Sheet dated 6/21/2023
- Client Monitoring Field Data Sheet dated 7/25/2023

Administration, Correspondence & Communication

- **Salem Payment:** Received in the amount of \$11,000, approximately 30% short of requested 2023 amount.
- **Invoice from Kate Johnson:** Dated 8/10/23, in the amount of \$157.38 for secretarial supplies (printer toner).
- **Invoice from UConn CESE:** Dated 6/21/23, in the amount of \$124 for water sampling lab analysis.
- **Invoice from GZA:** Dated 7/17/23, in the amount of \$3,150 for water quality monitoring to date.
- **2023 DEEP Patrol Contract:** Executed, in the amount of \$10,500.
- **Client Monitoring Field Data Sheets:** Dated 6/21/2023 and 7/25/2023.
- **Lake Water Levels:** Through 8/8/2023.
- **The Day Letter to the Editor:** Dated 7/31/2023, titled "Gardner Lake is a 'Zoo.'"
- **The Day Article – Sunday Region Section:** Dated 8/6/2023, "Keeping Order at Gardner Lake."
- **Email from Jane Coffey:** Dated 8/5/2023, raising concerns about jet skis and the lack of State oversight at the park and boat launch; including a draft petition for consideration.
- **Email from Tony Lasaracina:** Listing observations at the south end of the lake.
- **Invoice to Towns:** Sent to Bozrah and Salem on 8/10/23. Salem's payment for \$11,000 has been received. (See above.)
- **Census Report Form:** Past due notice for *Survey of 2022 Census of Governments, Survey of Local Government Finances*.
- **State Statutes regarding Gardner Lake Authority:** CT § Chapter 63, submitted by John Hummel, as adopted by the Town of Montville.
- **CT Office of Legal Research (OLR) Report on the Regulation of Lake Activity:** Submitted by John Hummel and distributed to members for review via email.

Treasurer's Report

Scott Soderberg presented the July (May 18, 2023 to June 16, 2023) and August (June 17, 2023 to July 17, 2023) Treasurer's Reports for approval. Kate Johnson made a motion to approve the reports as presented; seconded by Chris Rios. The motion passed unanimously.

The following invoices were presented for payment approval:

- ❖ **Payment to Kate Johnson:** Chris Rios made a motion to approve payment to Kate Johnson in the amount of \$157.38 for printer toner; seconded by Mike Magliano. Six voted in favor, Kate Johnson abstained. The motion passed.
- ❖ **Payment to UConn CESE:** Mike Magliano made a motion to approve payment to CESE in the amount of \$124 for lab analysis; seconded by Jim Miller. The motion passed unanimously.
- ❖ **Payment to GZA:** Bill Wrobel made a motion to approve payment in the amount of \$3,150 (30% of contracted amount); seconded by Chris Rios. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Business

- **Law Enforcement Patrol:** (See Public Comment above.) There was discussion about receiving DEEP patrol reports on a monthly basis, as was done in years past by Montville Patrol.
- **Water Quality Sampling:** During recent secchi disk readings, Scott observed a reduction in clarity. Additionally, he noted that green algae is present in the south end of the lake, which usually dissipates earlier in the season, and there is a greater presence of milfoil this year. He will request GZA's presentation for the October meeting.

- **Dam/Drawdown Updates:** Henry shared this year's draft revised drawdown letter. Kate Johnson made a motion to approve as revised; seconded by Scott Soderberg. The motion passed unanimously.

A new 2023 *Policy to Draw Down State-Owned Impoundments* [with an Online Request] was electronically received from Linda Brunza, DEEP Senior Environmental Analyst, dated July 11, 2023. There is a link included to request a drawdown, which is expected to replace the request form used in years past. Henry will review.

Kate reported that the lake reached full capacity on April 10, 2023. Since April 21, 2023 the water level has remained above full capacity.

Old Business

- **Swim Marker Permit Application, Gardner Lake Heights, 14 Fett Road, Salem:** Tony, Henry and Kate inspected the location, finding no obstructions. The application was signed and forwarded to DEEP.

New Business

- **Proposed Stakeholders' Meeting:** Consensus is that the proposed upcoming stakeholders' meeting addressing issues at the state park and boat launch should take place at Salem Town Hall.
- **Park Signs:** The State needs to work on improved signage to better inform park and boat launch users of the rules.

Other Business – None.

Public Comment

Val Hormat, Laurel Lock Campground, submitted three letters from campers there addressing dangerous behaviors of jet skiers and boaters. Violations reported included reckless and dangerous activity by jet skiers disregarding the safety of other boats, swimmers and personal property, and lacking courtesy. Increases in boat and jet ski traffic, along with speeding, continue to escalate.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2023 at the Bozrah Senior Center beginning at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment

Chris Rios made a motion to adjourn at 10:09 p.m.; seconded by Jim Miller. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Kate Johnson,
Secretary