



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman

PO BOX 37 • SHERMAN, CT 06784 • P (860) 354-6928 • F (860) 350-5611

Minutes of CLA Regular Meeting Wednesday, December 11, 2024 - 7:00PM via ZOOM

ATTENDING:

D. Cushnie	Sherman
M. O'Connor	Sherman
B. Licht	New Fairfield
J. Main	New Fairfield
W. Meikle	Brookfield
B. Lohan	Brookfield
E. Siergiej	Danbury
S. Kluge	New Milford
M. Toussaint	New Milford

ABSENT:

P. Schaer	Sherman
J. Archer	New Fairfield
M. Gaffey	Brookfield
J. Wodarski	New Milford

M. Howarth, Executive Director
N. Stalter, Director of Ecology
M. Gasperino, Operations Manager
D. Wright, Administrative Coordinator

Recorder: D. Wright

Guests: 4

*Chairman, **Martin O'Connor**, called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

***Martin O'Connor** made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by **Will Meikle**, all voting in favor.*

Will M. introduced George Sinnamon, from Sinnamon & Associates CPA's, who is CLA's external auditor for an update on the recent audit. George S. provided a review of the draft audit for the 23/24 fiscal year. He stated it was a clean audit, monthly reports were consistently detailed, and did not have any formal recommendations - only had a few minor ones which have already been implemented.

TREASURER (Will Meikle)

*Will Meikle made a motion to approve the audit report, seconded by **Steve Kluge**, all voting in favor.*

Will mentioned that he and Mark will sign audit report. Will mentioned that a contract with George will be extended for another three years for a fixed price.

Will mentioned that three weeks ago, he presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 25/26 for your review.

*Will Meikle made a motion for the Board to approve the fiscal year 25/26 budget of \$790,000, seconded by **Mark Toussaint**, all voting in favor.*

Will provided an update on the November results.

Will stated that last year a capital purchase was approved for three tablets for the Marine Patrol to have on their vessels along with the software needed to reduce the officers' administrative effort and improve the tracking and incident tracking on the water. To provide connectivity for those tablets to work on the water he will make a capital request to purchase three modems and 3 antennae to be used on the three silver ships vessels for the start of next season.

*Will Meikle made a motion for the Board to approve the acquisition of three modems and antennas, as noted above, for a not to exceed cost of \$6,000, seconded by **Bill Licht**, all voting in favor.*

PUBLIC SAFETY (Bill Licht)

The 2024 data acquisition is complete for activity on the lake this past season and Chief Mellas will be forwarding the statistics to Will soon. Interviews for the LPO position are progressing and five candidates were interviewed on December 9th. On December 17th more interviews will take place with six or seven more applicants.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES (Michael Gasperino)

Michael G. provided an update that all vessels have been winterized and he is finishing up work on the shed repairs and catching up on paperwork. Everything is all set for the end of the season.

PUBLIC AWARENESS (Mark Howarth)

Mark H. discussed the appeal which is included in the Executive Director report. The final draft has been completed and he thanked everyone involved in the process. The appeal is at the printer and will be distributed soon.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT (Steve Kluge, Neil Stalter)

Steve K. discussed that he and Neil finished the last round of water quality monitoring for the season. He thanked Mike who helped by creating very useful devices for dropping the probe into the water for sampling. Neil S. mentioned the Lake Steward report will be completed shortly and it was another successful year. He submitted the final application to the State for the Lake Stewards for year 2026; 2025 has already been approved. First Light received their invasive species monitoring report from the supplier they used, and they spent extra time on Lake Zoar and Lillinonah to search for hydrilla and spent less time on Candlewood Lake. However, they did find more plant material in Candlewood since the plants were lost. To clarify, the plants were not hydrilla.

***Bill Lohan** made a motion to approve the current state of officers for re-election, seconded by **Bill Licht**, all voting in favor.*

ADJOURN

Martin O'Connor made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Will Meikle, all voting in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Archer^{DW}

Joan Archer, Secretary
Dee Wright, Administrative Coordinator

These minutes are not considered official until they have been approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Candlewood Lake Authority.



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**Martin O'Connor, Chair
Candlewood Lake Authority**

December 11, 2024

Municipalities

Continue to connect with all parties regarding providing law enforcement support with the planned closing of all islands next season. The concerns of overcrowding, sanitation, ferrying and noise remain a major concern for all. In summary, there is still much work to be done by all before next season.

Committees and Delegates:

The Danbury Mayor's office confirmed on the 3rd of December, they appointed three Delegates to represent Danbury for a term of three years expiring on December 3rd, 2027. They are E.Siergiej, S.McColgan, and J.Laughinghouse. I plan to connect with the two new Delegates to welcome them to the CLA, understand their respective backgrounds, and discuss committee assignments.

Financials

I reviewed the complete audit report and was pleased with the findings. The independent auditor will present his findings to the board on the 11th of December. I want to thank Will for his support with the audit and respective budget presentations. The initial draft remains on target, and we will be presenting it to the municipalities in January and February of 2025.

Year End

I want to personally thank everyone for all their support this past year. This entire team continues to exceed expectations from both an operating and financial position. I wish all a joyous holiday as we take time to be with our friends and family. Happy Holidays!!

Martin O'Connor

December 11, 2024

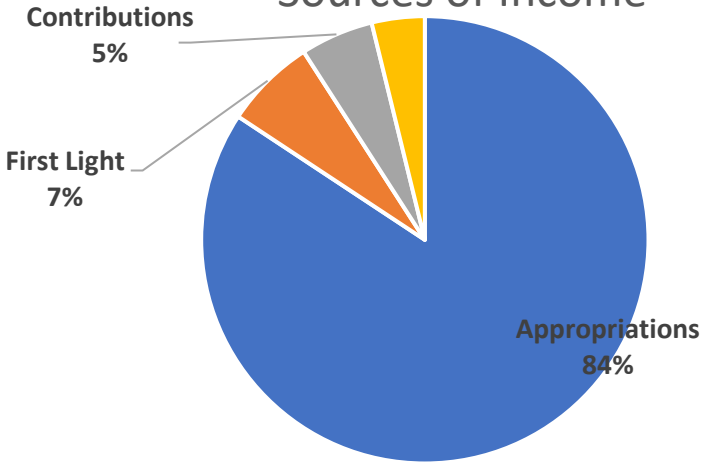
Finance Committee Financial Results November 2024



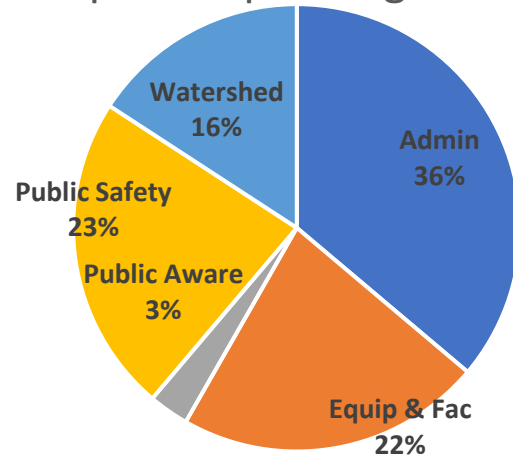
Income & Expense Overview

Financial Results thru November 2024

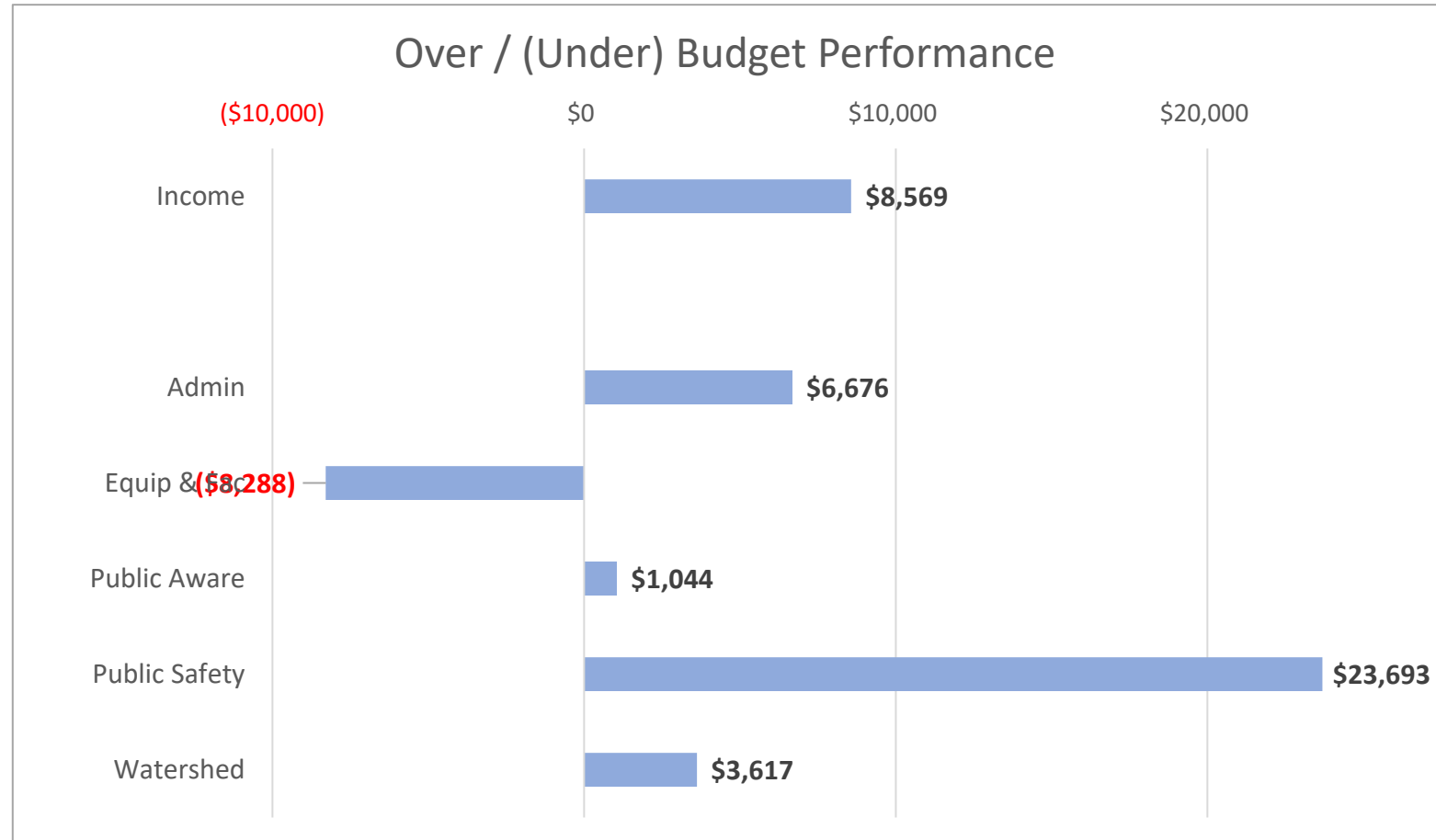
Sources of Income



Expense Spending Profile



Over / (Under) Budget Performance



Operational Income & Expense Summary

Financial Results thru November 2024

November 2024 Results	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	O / (U) YTD Budget	% of YTD Budget	FY Budget	FY Forecast	O / (U) FY Budget	% of FY Budget
Income	\$708,500	\$717,069	\$8,569	101%	\$757,500	\$766,069	\$8,569	101%
Expenses								
Administration	\$112,343	\$119,020	\$6,676	106%	\$273,855	\$280,531	\$6,676	102%
Equipment & Facilities	\$127,496	\$119,208	(\$8,288)	93%	\$167,590	\$159,302	(\$8,288)	95%
Public Awareness	\$5,000	\$6,044	\$1,044	121%	\$22,000	\$23,044	\$1,044	105%
Public Safety	\$98,148	\$121,841	\$23,693	124%	\$174,280	\$197,973	\$23,693	114%
Watershed Management	\$52,133	\$55,750	\$3,617	107%	\$119,775	\$123,392	\$3,617	103%
Total Expense	\$395,120	\$421,863	\$26,743	107%	\$757,500	\$784,243	\$26,743	104%
Other Income/(Expense)	(\$13,500)	(\$23,554)	(\$10,054)		\$0	(\$10,054)	(\$10,054)	
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$299,880	\$271,652	(\$28,228)	91%	\$0	(\$28,228)	(\$28,228)	-
* Accrual Basis Accounting								

Key Drivers of the deltas to Budget



Income: Exceeded budget driven by Interest Income



Administration: Over budget driven by higher Professional Services and payroll taxes, offset by rent cost.



Equipment & Facilities: Under Budget driven by Buoy expenses (correction needed), Utilities and Temporary Personnel wages .



Public Awareness: Over budget driven by Education Bulletins(to be moved to Reserved Fund), and CLA 2024 Cleanup expenses.



Public Safety: Over budget due to Boat Maintenance and Fuel costs offset by Lake Patrol Wages.



Watershed: Over budget due to Water Testing Fees.

Committee Details



Income Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Income						
901 · Appropriations	0.00	0.00	638,500.00	638,500.00	0.00	638,500.00
902 · Contribution from FirstLight	0.00	0.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	0.00	50,000.00
903 · Interest	4,357.32	2,500.00	21,033.32	14,000.00	7,033.32	25,000.00
911 · Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	568.63	0.00	568.63	0.00
912 · Contributions and Donations	201.50	1,000.00	3,467.17	5,000.00	-1,532.83	30,000.00
915 · Sponsorship -programs/activitie	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	1,000.00	1,500.00	10,000.00
916 · Lake Patrol Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
917 · Buoy Contract	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	2,000.00
Total Income	4,558.82	3,500.00	717,069.12	708,500.00	8,569.12	757,500.00



Administration Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Administration						
100 - Executive Director - Wages	8,033.34	8,033.33	40,166.70	40,166.66	0.04	96,400.00
101 - SS/Medi/CTUC	1,926.53	2,566.25	14,493.72	12,831.25	1,662.47	30,795.00
101A - Workers Comp Insurance	0.00	0.00	2,109.00	2,317.50	-208.50	4,635.00
102 - Exec Dir - Fringe Benefits	1,300.66	1,258.33	6,480.41	6,291.66	188.75	15,100.00
110 - Admin. Coordinator - Wages	3,139.44	2,987.08	15,437.64	14,935.41	502.23	35,845.00
112 - Admin Cor - Fringe Benefits	951.14	1,109.17	5,403.13	5,545.84	-142.71	13,310.00
113 - Insurance	0.00	0.00	6,172.74	5,855.00	317.74	11,710.00
114 - Telephone	275.00	300.00	1,350.00	1,500.00	-150.00	3,600.00
115 - Office Supplies	497.82	491.67	3,194.71	2,458.34	736.37	5,900.00
116 - Postage	0.00	62.50	375.40	312.50	62.90	750.00
117 - Audit	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,500.00
118 - Professional Services	2,034.07	1,320.83	13,086.84	6,604.16	6,482.68	15,850.00
119 - Bank and Service Fees	188.13	100.00	1,555.60	500.00	1,055.60	1,200.00
121 - Expenses	0.00	83.33	90.62	416.66	-326.04	1,000.00
122 - Internet Access	231.83	100.00	431.77	500.00	-68.23	1,200.00
124 - Technology Hardware & Service	0.00	666.67	3,171.43	3,333.34	-161.91	8,000.00
161 - Office Rent	1,100.00	1,755.00	5,500.00	8,775.00	-3,275.00	21,060.00
Total Administration	19,677.96	20,834.16	119,019.71	112,343.32	6,676.39	273,855.00



Equipment & Facilities Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Equipment and Facilities						
200 · Personnel - Wages	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	2,000.00
210 · Operations Manager - Wages	3,549.44	3,700.00	18,551.37	18,500.00	51.37	44,400.00
212 · Ops Mgr - Fringe Benefits	100.00	100.00	570.50	500.00	70.50	1,200.00
221 · Sherman Base - Repairs/Maint	28.35	250.00	428.46	1,250.00	-821.54	3,000.00
222 · Utilities - electric	150.71	520.00	452.79	2,600.00	-2,147.21	6,240.00
223 · Internet and Security Systems	123.80	20.83	658.35	104.16	554.19	250.00
226 · Work Boats	483.16	500.00	1,525.73	2,500.00	-974.27	6,000.00
227 · Vehicle	707.14	166.67	1,750.46	833.34	917.12	2,000.00
228 · Dock and Trash Pick Up	0.00	41.67	0.00	208.34	-208.34	500.00
231 · Buoy Maintenance	-2,025.00	0.00	-4,730.00	0.00	-4,730.00	2,000.00
261 · Capital Replacement Fund	0.00	0.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	0.00	100,000.00
Total Equipment and Facilities	3,117.60	6,299.17	119,207.66	127,495.84	-8,288.18	167,590.00



Public Awareness Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Public Awareness						
412 · Educational Bulletins	-527.24		2,051.14		2,051.14	
413 · School Programs	0.00	250.00	0.00	1,250.00	-1,250.00	3,000.00
414 · Subscription services	1,873.78	416.67	2,204.12	2,083.34	120.78	5,000.00
415 · Events and Displays	0.00	333.33	692.68	1,666.66	-973.98	4,000.00
417 · Fundraising	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,000.00
421 · Shoreline Cleanup	0.00	0.00	1,095.93	0.00	1,095.93	4,000.00
Total Public Awareness	1,346.54	1,000.00	6,043.87	5,000.00	1,043.87	22,000.00



Public Safety Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Public Safety						
300 · Lake Patrol Wages	1,567.80	294.00	47,528.52	51,188.30	-3,659.78	66,803.00
301 · CLAMP Chief Salary	3,433.34	3,433.33	17,166.70	17,166.66	0.04	41,200.00
311 · Boat Maintenance and Reimburs	1,748.06	1,500.00	22,767.86	3,450.00	19,317.86	13,250.00
312 · Gas and Oil	3,031.98	0.00	27,363.76	19,790.70	7,573.06	26,117.00
313 · Insurance	0.00	0.00	5,258.26	5,312.50	-54.24	10,625.00
314 · Training	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,475.00
318 · Miscellaneous	-178.78	100.00	262.85	500.00	-237.15	1,000.00
321 · Radio & Equipment	0.00	0.00	-96.46	100.00	-196.46	1,810.00
322 · Uniforms	0.00	0.00	1,590.00	640.00	950.00	5,000.00
324 · CLAMP Services - Fireworks	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
Total Public Safety	9,602.40	5,327.33	121,841.49	98,148.16	23,693.33	174,280.00



Watershed Management Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Watershed Management						
Total 500 · WM - Personnel Wages	5,786.26	5,934.58	29,672.90	29,672.91	-0.01	71,215.00
502 · Dir. Ecology - Fringe	1,237.70	1,196.67	6,228.31	5,983.34	244.97	14,360.00
511 · Lake and Stream Monitoring	4,551.58	0.00	14,191.09	7,600.00	6,591.09	15,200.00
512 · E-Coli Bacteria Testing	0.00	0.00	918.00	1,500.00	-582.00	3,000.00
513 · Cynobacteria testing (BG Algae)	0.00	0.00	153.23	1,000.00	-846.77	2,000.00
514 · Travel	584.50	250.00	610.63	1,250.00	-639.37	3,000.00
515 · Equipment and Supplies	200.62	200.00	1,303.04	1,000.00	303.04	2,500.00
531 · Professional Development	572.94	0.00	2,673.12	3,500.00	-826.88	7,000.00
532 · Engineering and Consulting	0.00	83.33	0.00	416.66	-416.66	1,000.00
599 · Miscellaneous	0.00	30.00	0.00	210.00	-210.00	500.00
Total Watershed Management	12,933.60	7,694.58	55,750.32	52,132.91	3,617.41	119,775.00

Other (Restricted Grants) Income/Expense Details

	<u>Nov 24</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jul - Nov 24</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Other Income/Expense						
Other Income						
Income Restricted/Grants						
900-21B · DEEP AIS (Lake Steward)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,000.00
Total Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,000.00
Other Expense						
Expense Restricted/Grants						
800-21B · DEEP AIS (Lake Steward)	0.00	0.00	14,776.60	13,500.00	1,276.60	18,000.00
80000 · Ask My Accountant	8,618.42		8,778.74		8,778.74	
Total Other Expense	8,618.42	0.00	23,555.34	13,500.00	10,055.34	18,000.00
Net Other Income / Other Expense	-8,618.42	0.00	-23,555.34	-13,500.00	-10,055.34	0.00

Capital Summary Status

Capital Summary for Fiscal Year 2024/2025		Available
Opening Balance as of July 1, 2024	\$491,824	\$263,730
Appropriations		
Annual Capital Appropriation	\$100,000	\$100,000
Capital Planned Expenditures		
Ark Engine (\$15,600 - Jun 2024)	(\$15,600)	
Silver Ship Propeller (\$1,750 - Aug 2024)	(\$1,762)	(\$1,762)
Buoy Entries (need to be corrected)	(\$4,050)	
Total Expenditures		
Closing Balance as of November 30, 2024	\$570,412	\$361,968
Items in () show amount & when CLA Board approved the expenditure		

Balance Sheet Summary & Details

	Nov 30, 24
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1120 · USB Checking -0212	1,061,854.02
Total Checking/Savings	1,061,854.02
Accounts Receivable	
11000 · Accounts Receivable	64,850.00
Total Accounts Receivable	64,850.00
Total Current Assets	1,126,704.02
TOTAL ASSETS	1,126,704.02

	Nov 30, 24
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
2000 · Accounts Payable	5,876.51
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	2,843.53
2500 · Accrued Expenses	3,295.90
2700 · Deferred Grant Income	
2700A · DEEP CO2 Grant	13,418.06
2700B · Grass Carp	4,981.00
Total 2700 · Deferred Grant Income	18,399.06
700 · Due to/from CapitalProject Fund	570,411.83
Total Liabilities	600,826.83

	Nov 30, 24
Equity	
3200 · Retained Earnings	6,310.68
3200B · Restricted	
3200B 1 · Education Programs	20,571.83
3200B 2 · Zebra Mussell	6,276.00
Total 3200B · Restricted	26,847.83
3200D · Assigned	
3200D 1 · HMS Initiatives	5,245.06
3200D 2 · Lake Management Plan	23,317.23
3200D 3 · Buffer Garden	1,983.77
Total 3200D · Assigned	30,546.06
3200E · Unassigned	190,520.90
Net Income	271,651.72
Total Equity	525,877.19
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,126,704.02

Accounts Receivable			
Danbury Appropriation	Inv# 2223	July	\$63,850.00
DEEP Buoy - 2024 Fall Retrieval	Inv# 2221	Feb	\$1,000.00
Total Accounts Receivable			\$64,850.00

Accounts Payable			
AccuCom Consulting - Tablet SW	J/E 24-17BC	June	\$6,000.00
Organizationink		Oct	-\$50.00
Eversource		Oct	-\$72.10
Elan Financial		Aug	-\$0.99
Marie Nugent		Aug	-\$0.40
Total Accounts Payable			\$5,876.51

Payroll Liabilities	
Simple IRA - 7/15/24	\$1,418.09
Simple IRA - 7/31/24	\$1,425.44
Total Payroll Liabilities	\$2,843.53

Accrued Expenses	
Website Refresh	\$2,320.00
IT Security Audit	\$975.90
Total Accrued Expenses	\$3,295.90



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December 11, 2024
Executive Director
Mark Howarth

Monthly Report

- A lot of time was spent the past month working on and completing the 2024 CLA Appeal which is being sent out to shoreline and lake community residents. This is part of our annual effort to bring funds that will help us successfully implement our programs and initiatives to improve public safety on the lake as well as preserve the ecology and water quality that makes Candlewood such a desirable place to live along and recreate on. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this, especially Joan, Marianne and Neil.
- I was part of the interview panel for our first day of interviews for new Marine Patrol officers for the 2025 season. Thank you to Dee and all involved in setting that up. We have one more day of interviews set up at this time.
- We have resumed conversations with Silver Ships on our final patrol boat. They are reviewing some basic design features with us and it will be going into “metal” soon, where they will construct the hull, tower and do the majority of the aluminum work. We will be in regular communication with them throughout the process on this final build in anticipation for delivery for the 2025 season.
- Will and I met with Vladimir Kan, the Finance Director for the Town of New Fairfield. As he is relatively new in this position, we used this time with him to introduce ourselves and speak with him about the CLA and our budget process. We did not review our draft budget with him, however we informed him we would be voting on our proposed budget at our December meeting and would then be submitting that to all of our municipalities.
- Will, Ed and I attended the Budget Kickoff Meeting in Danbury. It was an opportunity for us to hear from Mayor Alves and Director of Finance Daniel Garrick and understand any changes to the upcoming budget process.

- Will and I met with our auditor last month. He came to the New Fairfield office and it allowed us to go over the audit with him in person and discuss other financial topics. We appreciated him visiting us and look forward to his summary presentation at our board meeting.

Dear Friends of the Lake,

The Candlewood Lake Authority is dedicated to ensuring Candlewood Lake remains a thriving, safe and sustainable resource for future generations by fostering environmental stewardship, enhancing public safety and promoting a courteous boating environment.

Please consider making a donation to the CLA to support our ongoing work in safeguarding our lake. Together we can make a substantial difference!

Mark Howarth, Executive Director | Martin O'Connor, Chairman

PS: Thank you to everyone who has supported us, believes in our mission and shares our vision for a better Candlewood Lake.

CLA's New Waterfront Headquarters

CLA's New Office Headquarters Advances Strategic Plan to Expand Presence on the Lake

After 15 years in "limbo" (aka "down" - see Millard office space), the CLA's main office has returned to the shores of the lake with a new headquarters at 110 New Fairfield Road in New Fairfield. Our new location allows us to utilize Marine Patrol boats in New Fairfield, Sherman and Danbury. In addition, our operations department is now located in New Fairfield, and our administrative department is now located in Danbury. This allows for better coverage of the lake and our administrative coverage across the entire lake.

Our new location also allows our ecologists to spend more time on the lake collecting and analyzing data on the timing and money.

www.candlewoodlakeauthority.org **DONATE**

Responding to Our Changing Environment

Understanding the Zebra Mussels in Candlewood

Zebra mussels have established a lakewide population in the lake since the first one was discovered in May of 2020. We have been monitoring their successful reproduction and rise in their population over the past five summers. That said, we anticipate their population cycle will be similar to what is seen in other lakes, with their population peaking and then fluctuating in the coming years before reaching an equilibrium within the ecosystem. Containing them to an area or eliminating them from the lake is not an option. Thankfully, the winter drawdowns will kill the zebra mussels exposed to the air, but that won't eliminate them all since they also live below the water level reached by the drawdown. One thing we are confident of is that despite the fact that our lake now has zebra mussels, it will remain the lake we love. To find out more, watch our webinar...

The CLA's three main areas of concentration to preserve the lake's health: Nutrient Pollution, Aquatic Invasive Species and Loss of Vegetation.

- ### 1 Identifying Nutrient Pollution Sources: CLA Takes Important Step in Lake Management Plan

Nutrients in the lake, namely nitrogen and phosphorus, come from a variety of sources.

The Candlewood Lake Authority has embarked on a comprehensive study to identify the primary sources of nutrient pollution. Excess nutrients fuel algae growth that can cause a decline in water clarity and toxic algae blooms. This study is the framework for the CLA's Lake Management Plan.

This study, called a "Nutrient Budget", will investigate the share of the nutrient pollution coming from the below sources:

 - Lake Bed Sediment
 - Ground Water
 - Precipitation
 - Septic Systems
 - Housatonic River
 - Pump Up
 - Watershed Runoff
 - Stream Inputs

This summer, the CLA significantly increased the number of water samples taken from the lake to better understand the share of nutrients coming from internal loading (lake bed sediment). In 2025, we will examine nutrient runoff coming from streams, septic systems and storm drains.
- ### 2 Preventing New Invasive Species: Troubling Threats Lurking

Since 2021, CLA Lake Stewards have inspected 2,328 boats entering the lake on public ramps, preventing the introduction of 6 new invasive species from other bodies of water.

This winter CLA is developing a rapid response plan for any new invasive plants found in the lake, with a goal of containing or quickly eliminating the threat.

Currently, the CLA is most concerned about the introduction of hydrilla and quagga mussels.

Hydrilla: Photo courtesy CT River Conservancy

Hydrilla aka "the world's worst invasive aquatic plant". Hydrilla grows faster and thicker than Eurasian watermilfoil and is more difficult to manage. It is established in Lake Lilianah and the Connecticut River.

Quagga Mussels have a larger impact than zebra mussels and can rapidly populate more of the lake bed than zebra mussels. They are established nearby in the Hudson River.
- ### 3 Restoring Balance: Encouraging a Managed Return of Lake Vegetation

In 2022, the lake lost nearly all of its plants due to several factors including the sterile grass carp. While overly dense vegetation can be a nuisance, aquatic weeds are a critical component in lake ecosystems and lake health. Our goal is for the lake to have some vegetation to support a healthy ecosystem, but not a return to a level of vegetation that negatively impacts boating and recreation on the lake.

In response, DEEP Fisheries, with assistance from the CLA, began removing some of the sterile grass carp that were initially stocked in 2015 and 2017 to control excessive, invasive milfoil. A total of 450 of the original 8,903 grass carp have been removed to date.

This season we observed some regrowth of milfoil as well as an increase in native eelgrass, but plants are still under found.

CLA Director of Ecology, Neil Steiner, presents at the North American Lake Management Society's Symposium in November at South Lake Tahoe.

CT Vessel Registration Change - Boaters must have a valid "Individual Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp" or "Vessel Aquatic Invasive Species Decal." In 2025, the fee will no longer be included in your boat registration; it must be purchased separately. Visit the DEEP website for more details. This change ensures all lake users, including out-of-state boaters, contribute to invasive species management.

The Candlewood Lake Authority's Lake Steward Program is funded by the state's Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp funds.

Responding to Changing Recreational Lake Activity

The summer of 2024 set multiple records: the hottest on record and the highest number of vessels docked along the shoreline. In response, CLA Marine Patrol logged unprecedented hours on the water. To address rising nighttime activity in recent years the Marine Patrol has expanded its night coverage.

Additionally, the Marine Patrol has focused on educating boaters on safety and being courteous lake users. These enhanced patrol efforts have also led to the need for new equipment and technology.

Officers Can See In the Dark

The FLIR Forward-Looking Infrared system on our patrol boat, made possible by a donation, is a critical search and rescue tool which also doubles as night vision for the Patrol. With increased nighttime patrols, visibility has become crucial for the CLA Marine Patrol.

CLA Marine Patrol to Expand Use of PWCs

The CLA Marine Patrol fleet includes two personal watercraft (PWCs), also donated, were recently upgraded with lights and sirens. These PWCs enhance officers' ability to navigate near shorelines and in crowded areas, allowing for improved interaction with boaters and lake users.

What Do CLA Marine Patrol Officers Do Beyond Enforcing Boating Laws?

- Rescue Stranded Vessels and People
- Conduct Voluntary Safety Inspections at Launches
- Teach CT Safe Boating Certification Classes
- Respond to Accidents and Medical Emergencies
- Remove Floating Hazards from Boat Paths
- Pile Prevention, Mitigation and Education

New Video Series: Safety and Courtesy

The first video can be found on our website and social media...

...with more videos to come next season.

PROTECTING CANDLEWOOD LAKE
GOLD WATER SAFETY

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J. Neil Stalter

Director of Ecology and Environmental Education

Candlewood Lake Authority

Re: December Monthly Report

Date: 12/11/2024

- We have officially finished all of our on-lake sampling work for the year! The exclosures are all out, and the boats have all been taken out of the water. Thanks especially to Steve and Mike, without whose help we wouldn't have been able to take advantage of the most robust water sampling and monitoring year to date on the lake!

- Thanks also to any other delegates who came out and joined us for the sampling effort!
- There were a number of healthy plants found during the removal process of the exclosures – primarily filamentous algae and some eelgrass, but we did find a few strands of milfoil as well. The most productive exclosure was that just north of the Candlewood Isle Causeway, with the exclosure near Hollywyle coming in second place. The other three did not show any signs of growth this year, likely due to a wiped-out seed bank in those areas.



- The lake steward report from 2024 is nearly finished and will be ready for publication soon. It was another successful year for the stewards but presented some new challenges that we will be learning from moving forward.

- I have officially submitted the grant request to the CT DEEP to fund the Lake Stewards in 2026. We have already executed the contract for the 2025 season, and that funding is locked and ready to go.
- I have also prepared the reimbursement request for the 2024 program – that needs to be submitted along with the final report, so those will be submitted simultaneously, hopefully making bookkeeping a little easier for this year.
- There is a planned deep drawdown of the lake this winter. I spoke with FirstLight and the state a bit about a shallow vs. deep drawdown with an eye to helping the plant community recover, but FirstLight is sticking with the planned deep drawdown. Hopefully this will potentially help trim some of the zebra mussel population in the shallower parts of Candlewood.
- I helped with the annual appeal that should be going out to the community soon, and it looks fantastic! Huge props to Mark, Joan, and Marianne for making it so great.
- I've been assisting CT CAES with a manuscript regarding the plant community changes over time in Candlewood Lake. We're hoping to potentially have some exciting research to share on that front soon!
- We just received the nuisance plant monitoring report for 2024 from FirstLight. I have not gotten the chance to review it yet but will be sharing it with the Watershed Committee during the comment period. We will discuss any potential comments to submit at the watershed meeting this month.
- I have begun working on the final water quality report and will be able to present those findings to the board hopefully in January, barring any delays in the final lab analysis.
- We are developing a rapid response plan for the potentiality of a hydrilla invasion and hope to have buy-in from both FirstLight and the state to rapidly deploy management measures should an invasion be detected.
- We will be submitting an RFP for the next phase of the nutrient budget project to contractors by the holidays!
- Happy holidays and Merry Christmas!

