



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, February 12, 2025 - 7:00PM via ZOOM

ATTENDING:

P. Schaer Sherman
M. O'Connor Sherman
J. Main New Fairfield
M. Gaffey Brookfield
W. Meikle Brookfield
B. Lohan Brookfield
E. Siergiej Danbury
S. Kluge New Milford
J. Wodarski New Milford

ABSENT:

D. Cushnie Sherman
B. Licht New Fairfield
J. Archer New Fairfield
S. McColgan Danbury
J. Laughinghouse Danbury
M. Toussaint New Milford

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

Recorder: D. Wright

Guests: 2

Chairman, Martin O'Connor, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

TREASURER (Will Meikle)

Will stated that although due to some unforeseen expenses we are running slightly over on expenses the budget is on track as a result of a strong month of revenue thanks to donations from the community.

Will Meikle made a motion to approve reimbursement to Steve Kluge for \$450 for airfare to the NALMS conference, seconded by Bill Lohan, all voting in favor.

PUBLIC SAFETY (Will Meikle)

Will M. stated that we are finalizing the 2024 statistics for the season and preparing the end-of-season report. Training is being scheduled, and the process of onboarding new LPO applicants has begun. The Policy and Procedures manual is being updated and revised. Will noted that Silver Ships III has gone to metal and is moving along on track for delivery in late April or early May. Nick M. mentioned DEEP provided in-person training dates in March.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES (Ed Siergiej)

Ed discussed the search for a replacement truck, which Mike G. has been researching. There is a potential used truck that has been identified as a possible solution. Mike G. stated he has been working on building storage racks for Silver Ships III and doing miscellaneous building maintenance.

PUBLIC AWARENESS (Mark Howarth)

Mark H. discussed he and Neil have been working on the new layout for the website's homepage and creating content, with a targeted release date of mid-April. Final filming dates have been set for the "About CLA" video for the beginning of March. Neil will be posting information on the Shoreline Management Plan and the proposed changes.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT (Steve Kluge, Neil Stalter)

Steve K. and Neil S. briefly mentioned the significant zebra mussel population that has been seen in areas around the lake. Neil discussed that the nutrient budget request for proposals have officially been sent out. CLA was awarded the AIS grant for 2026 which means the Lake Stewards are funded through next summer. Neil sent a document with comments on the Shoreline Management Plan to the board, advocating for better clarity on the permit process, fee structure, and improved language regarding derelict docks. as well as keeping the review process at six years and keeping the public hearing.

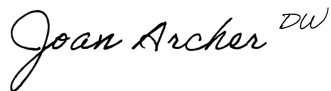
Bill Lohan made a motion to approve the submission of the comments as written on the Shoreline Management Plan, seconded by Steve Kluge, all voting in favor.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Joan Archer in cursive script, with the initials "DW" written to the right of the name.

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 W. O'Connor, Chair
Candlewood Lake Authority**

February 12, 2025

Municipalities

Budget review process continues with the respective Municipalities. New Fairfield is complete, with dates set for New Milford and Sherman. Brookfield confirmed they will not require a presentation meeting. Will and Mark will continue to lead the presentations with support from myself and the respective Delegates.

Committees:

All committee chairs have been advised to remain conservative with spend through year-end. This will ensure we remain on track to achieve budget targets. The committees continue to meet regularly with no major concerns noted.

Financials

Overall financial position remains strong. Connected with Will and Mark with regard to the balance sheet and possible adjustments. Further analysis will need to be completed before any actions are considered.

Other:

Year-end performance appraisals are in process with a target completion of end of month. I plan to connect with Mark this month to review our HR policies and determine if a refresh / update might be required.

We are planning a video shoot for late this month or early March with both the Vice Chair and me. The videos will be posted on our site and this will complete the initial videos planned.

**Martin W. O'Connor –
February 12, 2025**

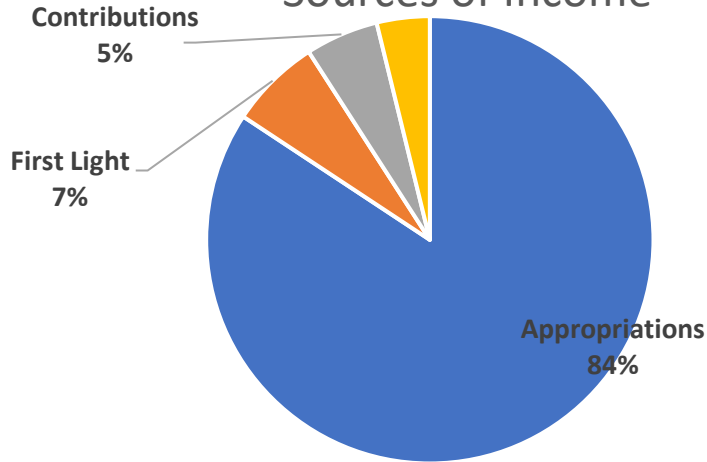
Finance Committee Financial Results January 2025



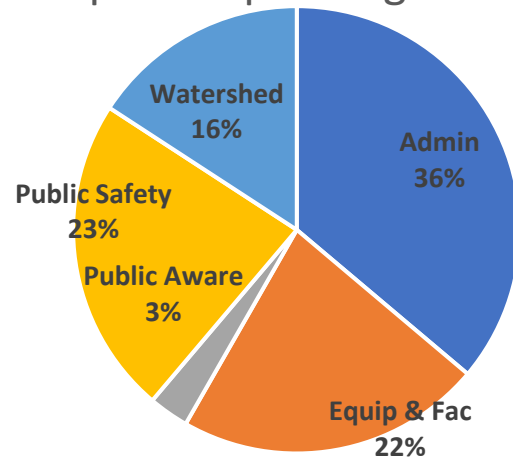
Income & Expense Overview

Financial Results thru January 2025

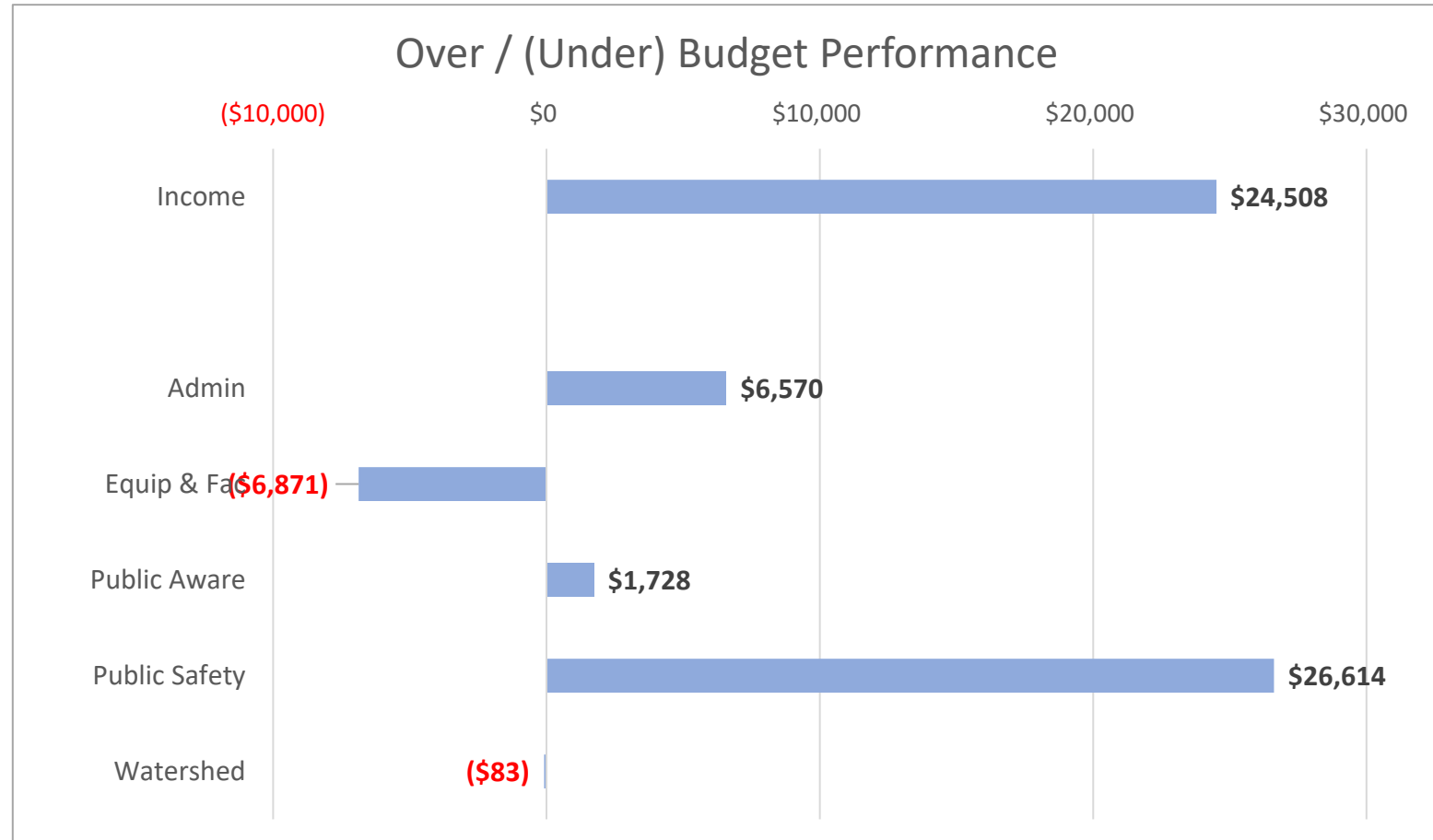
Sources of Income



Expense Spending Profile



Over / (Under) Budget Performance



Operational Income & Expense Summary

Financial Results thru January 2025

January 2025 Results	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	O / (U) YTD Budget	% of YTD Budget	FY Budget	FY Forecast	O / (U) FY Budget	% of FY Budget
Income	\$729,500	\$754,008	\$24,508	103%	\$757,500	\$782,008	\$24,508	103%
Expenses								
Administration	\$166,757	\$173,327	\$6,570	104%	\$273,855	\$280,425	\$6,570	102%
Equipment & Facilities	\$140,094	\$133,223	(\$6,871)	95%	\$167,590	\$160,719	(\$6,871)	96%
Public Awareness	\$10,000	\$11,728	\$1,728	117%	\$22,000	\$23,728	\$1,728	108%
Public Safety	\$116,559	\$143,173	\$26,614	123%	\$174,280	\$200,894	\$26,614	115%
Watershed Management	\$71,022	\$70,939	(\$83)	100%	\$119,775	\$119,692	(\$83)	100%
Total Expense	\$504,432	\$532,390	\$27,958	106%	\$757,500	\$785,458	\$27,958	104%
Other Income/(Expense)	\$4,500	\$2,946	(\$1,554)		\$0	(\$1,554)	(\$1,554)	
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$229,568	\$224,564	(\$5,004)	98%	\$0	(\$5,004)	(\$5,004)	-
* Accrual Basis Accounting								

Key Drivers of the deltas to Budget



Income: Exceeded budget driven by Interest Income and Donations from the community.



Administration: Over budget driven by higher Professional Services, Technology Services and Payroll taxes, offset by Rent.



Equipment & Facilities: Under Budget driven by Utilities, Wages and Temporary Personnel wages .



Public Awareness: Over budget driven by Fundraising expenses and CLA 2024 Cleanup carry over expenses.



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



Watershed: On budget overall.

Committee Details



Income Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Income						
901 · Appropriations	0.00		638,500.00	638,500.00	0.00	638,500.00
902 · Contribution from FirstLight	0.00		50,000.00	50,000.00	0.00	50,000.00
903 · Interest	3,745.74	2,000.00	28,868.93	18,000.00	10,868.93	25,000.00
911 · Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	568.63	0.00	568.63	0.00
912 · Contributions and Donations	17,307.10	7,500.00	32,570.74	20,000.00	12,570.74	30,000.00
915 · Sponsorship -programs/activitie	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,000.00	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	1,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Total Income	21,052.84	9,500.00	754,008.30	729,500.00	24,508.30	757,500.00



Administration Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Administration						
100 · Executive Director - Wages	8,033.34	8,033.33	56,233.38	56,233.33	0.05	96,400.00
101 · SS/Medi/CTUC	1,624.58	2,566.25	18,803.70	17,963.75	839.95	30,795.00
101A · Workers Comp Insurance	0.00	2,317.50	4,217.00	4,635.00	-418.00	4,635.00
102 · Exec Dir - Fringe Benefits	1,180.21	1,258.33	9,202.28	8,808.33	393.95	15,100.00
110 · Admin. Coordinator - Wages	3,188.88	2,987.08	21,864.84	20,909.58	955.26	35,845.00
112 · Admin Cor - Fringe Benefits	1,101.11	1,109.17	7,825.85	7,764.17	61.68	13,310.00
113 · Insurance	0.00	0.00	9,312.30	8,782.50	529.80	11,710.00
114 · Telephone	250.00	300.00	1,875.00	2,100.00	-225.00	3,600.00
115 · Office Supplies	246.10	491.67	3,984.99	3,441.67	543.32	5,900.00
116 · Postage	0.00	62.50	375.40	437.50	-62.10	750.00
117 · Audit	0.00		7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00	7,500.00
118 · Professional Services	595.30	1,320.83	16,433.83	9,245.83	7,188.00	15,850.00
119 · Bank and Service Fees	0.00	100.00	1,938.38	700.00	1,238.38	1,200.00
121 · Expenses	0.00	83.33	90.62	583.33	-492.71	1,000.00
122 · Internet Access	0.00	100.00	631.71	700.00	-68.29	1,200.00
124 · Technology Hardware & Services	-332.25	666.67	5,337.38	4,666.67	670.71	8,000.00
161 · Office Rent	1,100.00	1,755.00	7,700.00	12,285.00	-4,585.00	21,060.00
Total Administration	16,987.27	23,151.66	173,326.66	166,756.66	6,570.00	273,855.00



Equipment & Facilities Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Equipment and Facilities						
200 · Personnel - Wages	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	2,000.00
210 · Operations Manager - Wages	2,551.16	3,700.00	24,541.05	25,900.00	-1,358.95	44,400.00
212 · Ops Mgr - Fringe Benefits	0.00	100.00	500.00	700.00	-200.00	1,200.00
221 · Sherman Base - Repairs/Maint	0.00	250.00	917.89	1,750.00	-832.11	3,000.00
222 · Utilities - electric	867.63	520.00	1,320.42	3,640.00	-2,319.58	6,240.00
223 · Internet and Security Systems	0.00	20.83	905.95	145.83	760.12	250.00
226 · Work Boats	764.00	0.00	3,793.82	4,500.00	-706.18	6,000.00
227 · Vehicle	0.00	166.67	1,924.18	1,166.67	757.51	2,000.00
228 · Dock and Trash Pick Up	0.00	41.67	0.00	291.67	-291.67	500.00
231 · Buoy Maintenance	0.00	0.00	-680.00	1,000.00	-1,680.00	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	4,182.79	4,799.17	133,223.31	140,094.17	-6,870.86	167,590.00



Public Awareness Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Public Awareness						
413 · School Programs	0.00	250.00	0.00	1,750.00	-1,750.00	3,000.00
414 · Subscription services	0.00	416.67	3,077.46	2,916.67	160.79	5,000.00
415 · Events and Displays	0.00	333.33	692.68	2,333.33	-1,640.65	4,000.00
417 · Fundraising	5,103.40	0.00	6,861.80	3,000.00	3,861.80	6,000.00
421 · Shoreline Cleanup	0.00	0.00	1,095.93	0.00	1,095.93	4,000.00
Total Public Awareness	5,103.40	1,000.00	11,727.87	10,000.00	1,727.87	22,000.00



Public Safety Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Public Safety					0.00	
300 · Lake Patrol Wages	110.88	294.00	57,044.63	51,776.30	5,268.33	66,803.00
301 · CLAMP Chief Salary	3,433.34	3,433.33	24,033.38	24,033.33	0.05	41,200.00
311 · Boat Maintenance and Reimburse	0.00	0.00	24,870.13	11,750.00	13,120.13	13,250.00
312 · Gas and Oil	0.00	0.00	27,363.76	19,790.70	7,573.06	26,117.00
313 · Insurance	0.00	0.00	7,886.70	7,968.75	-82.05	10,625.00
314 · Training	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,475.00
318 · Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	456.98	500.00	-43.02	1,000.00
321 · Radio & Equipment	24.00	0.00	-72.46	100.00	-172.46	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	3,568.22	3,727.33	143,173.12	116,559.08	26,614.04	174,280.00



Watershed Management Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Watershed Managment						
500A · Director of Ecology Wage	5,934.58	5,934.58	41,542.06	41,542.08	-0.02	71,215.00
502 · Dir. Ecology - Fringe	1,148.63	1,196.67	8,792.68	8,376.67	416.01	14,360.00
511 · Lake and Stream Monitoring	0.00	0.00	11,392.69	7,600.00	3,792.69	15,200.00
512 · E-Coli Bacteria Testing	0.00	0.00	3,716.40	1,500.00	2,216.40	3,000.00
513 · Cynobacteria testing (BG Algae)	0.00	0.00	153.23	1,000.00	-846.77	2,000.00
514 · Travel	0.00	250.00	1,080.12	1,750.00	-669.88	3,000.00
515 · Equipment and Supplies	0.00	200.00	1,589.08	1,400.00	189.08	2,500.00
531 · Professional Development	0.00	3,500.00	2,673.12	7,000.00	-4,326.88	7,000.00
532 · Engineering and Consulting	0.00	83.33	0.00	583.33	-583.33	1,000.00
599 · Miscellaneous	0.00	30.00	0.00	270.00	-270.00	500.00
Total Watershed Managment	7,083.21	11,194.58	70,939.38	71,022.08	-82.70	119,775.00

Other Income/Expense Details

	<u>Jan 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Other Income/Expense						
Other Income						
900-21B · DEEP AIS (Lake Steward)	<u>17,594.00</u>	<u>18,000.00</u>	<u>17,594.00</u>	<u>18,000.00</u>	-406.00	<u>18,000.00</u>
Other Expense						
800-21B · DEEP AIS (Lake Steward)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>14,776.60</u>	<u>13,500.00</u>	1,276.60	<u>18,000.00</u>
80000 · Ask My Accountant	<u>0.00</u>		<u>130.63</u>		130.63	
Net Other Income / Other Expense	<u>17,594.00</u>	<u>18,000.00</u>	<u>2,686.77</u>	<u>4,500.00</u>	-1,813.23	<u>0.00</u>

Capital Summary Status

Capital Summary for Fiscal Year 2024/2025		Available
Opening Balance as of July 1, 2024	\$491,824	\$265,030
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)
Modem/Antennaes (\$6,000 - Dec 2024)		(\$6,000)
SS1 Light Bar	(\$1,200)	
Total Expenditures		
Closing Balance as of January 31, 2025	\$573,262	\$357,268

Items in () show amount & when CLA Board approved the expenditure

Balance Sheet Summary & Details

	Jan 31
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
1120 · USB Checking -0212	1,031,543.39
11000 · Accounts Receivable	49,519.00
Total Current Assets	1,081,062.39
TOTAL ASSETS	1,081,062.39

	Jan 31
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 · Accounts Payable	-0.40
Elan Financial Services	
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	2,843.53
2500 · Accrued Expenses	9,820.00
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	573,261.60
Total Liabilities	604,323.79

	Jan 31
Equity	
3200B · Restricted	
3200B 1 · Education Programs	18,520.69
3200B 2 · Zebra Mussels	6,276.00
Total 3200B · Restricted	24,796.69
3200D · Assigned	
3200D 1 · HMS Initiatives	5,245.06
3200D 2 · Lake Incentives	23,317.23
3200D 3 · Buffer Garden	1,983.77
Total 3200D · Assigned	30,546.06
3200E · Unassigned	196,831.58
Net Income	224,564.27
Total Equity	476,738.60
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,081,062.39

Accounts Receivable			
Danbury Appropriation	Inv# 2223	July	\$31,925.00
DEEP Lake Stewards	Inv# 2227	Jan	\$17,594.00
Total Accounts Receivable			\$49,519.00

Accounts Payable		
Marie Nugent	Aug	-\$0.40
Total Accounts Payable		-\$0.40
Payroll Liabilities		
Simple IRA	??	\$1,425.44
Simple IRA	Jan	\$1,418.09
Total Payroll Liabilities		\$2,843.53

Accrued Expenses	
Sinnamon & Associates	\$7,500.00
Website Refresh	\$2,320.00
Total Accrued Expenses	\$9,820.00



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February 12, 2025
Executive Director
Mark Howarth

Monthly Report

- On January 23rd, Neil and I were at the FirstLight offices in New Milford to attend the Lake Advisory Committee to review the updates to the draft SMP, as part of the document's current 6-year cycle. I would like to thank Neil for doing such a thorough review of the document and composing his recommendations for improvements, which he expressed at the meeting.
- 2025/2026 Budget
 - We look forward to presenting our draft budget to New Milford on February 20th and then to Sherman on the 22nd.
 - We are waiting for confirmation from Danbury on our budget meeting date.
- Martin and Marianne will be filming their portion of the "About the CLA" video that we are producing for distribution on social media and our website. Thank you to Steve for letting us use his home as the filming location for this section.
- Members of the Brookfield Plan of Conservation and Development committee requested a meeting with Neil and me to ask us questions related to the lake as they look to complete their report which is on a 10-year review cycle. Our meeting with them on the 29th of January went well and we look forward to seeing their finished report.

- Silver Ships has been working on our final patrol boat. It has gone through the initial metal fabrication process, and we are working with them as they move the boat into the next steps in its production. The anticipated delivery timing remains as May.



- We continue to make updates to the Marine Patrol's 2025 Policies and Procedures manual, as we fine-tune the document prior to distribution for the 2025 season. It has gone through a number of edits and will soon present this draft document to the Public Safety Committee.
- Neil and I are working on updates to the website's home page, which will focus on the important "Projects and Initiatives" that the CLA has undertaken to draw attention to the many things the CLA does throughout the year. We plan to include the "About the CLA" video in this new home page redesign to further highlight what we do as an organization.
- We continue to work with DEEP this off-season on a number of public safety topics including training for an incoming class of officers and are looking to plan meetings with them regarding several environmental topics focusing on aquatic invasive species.



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J. Neil Stalter

Director of Ecology and Environmental Education

Candlewood Lake Authority

Re: February Monthly Report

Date: 2/12/2025

- I have finished my comments on the proposed SMP updates from FirstLight. I have attached those comments with my report for your review, as we will plan to vote on approving these for submission at the February Board Meeting. The priority in the comments has been to hopefully help clarify the permitting process for homeowners around the lake in multiple ways.
 - We will be posting this week to notify the public of the upcoming public hearing for the SMP updates in Southbury on February 26th.
 - We attended the SMP stakeholder meeting and listened to a few other stakeholders' thoughts for the SMP, some of which has been incorporated into our comments as well.
- We received the good news from DEEP that our grant application for the lake stewards for 2026 has been fully funded up to \$27,553.75! That will be the 6th consecutive year of the Lake Steward program!
- Mark and I have begun the process of planning for a variety of meetings with the state DEEP to discuss topics including, but not limited to, a codified rapid response to hydrilla invasion, recreational management at the boat launches, and the planned update to Squantz Cove boat launch.
- I had the pleasure of visiting Danbury High School a few times this month to present about the CLA and what we do, as well as serve as a "Shark" in a Shark Tank style presentation contest for student stormwater projects. It was so much fun to hear about their exciting projects!

- I am continuing work on the water quality monitoring results from last year and will present them to the board. On the whole it was a generally uneventful year in regard to water chemistry (which is good news!). The primary developments in 2024 were more ecosystem based, and regarding invasive species changes.
- I wrote and submitted an RFP to contractors to hopefully conduct the phase 2 portion of the nutrient budget project this summer. I incorporated much of what we learned at NALMS this year into the bid, so we should receive more informative proposals from the contractors. The due date for responses is late next week, so I expect some information soon!
- Lots of folks are enjoying the frozen lake this year, so Mark and I worked on an updated version of our ice safety graphic that we posted on Facebook.
- Mark and I met virtually with the Brookfield POCD committee on their planned update of the plan of conservation and development for the town. We advised them on the things to potentially include in regard to Candlewood Lake, and what they might need to be aware of compared to the previous plan.
- Mark and I did a site visit to Steve's cabin to film the next portions of the About Us CLA video! We're looking forward to a year of lots of informative educational videos for the public!



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Candlewood Lake Authority Comments on Proposed Shoreline Management Plan 6-year Update for FERC P-2576

The Candlewood Lake Authority would first like to thank FirstLight for submitting the proposed changes to the shoreline management plan (SMP) for review and comment by the critical stakeholders. The SMP is a critical document that has the most tangible impact on those homeowners and local property owners around both Candlewood Lake and the rest of the Housatonic River Project. On balance, we feel that the proposed changes to the SMP represent a general improvement in clarity and specificity and appreciate the effort FirstLight has made in making the document more approachable. We also want to acknowledge the continued effort by FirstLight to improve their permitting and communication process and appreciate the improvements that they've made over the past 6 years.

The 6-year update of the SMP gives us the opportunity to adjust the document to reflect what has been learned over the past 6-year period. Specifically, we want to take this opportunity to point out the specific “pain points” that are confusing, unclear, or overly ambiguous as places to improve the document for stakeholders, neighbors, and FirstLight. Please see the comments below for our recommendations to continue to improve the document moving forward:

1. While FirstLight has indeed made significant progress over the past 6 years to clarify their permitting process and creating a more user-friendly online portal – confusion and headaches still persist for many when applying for permits to conduct work around the lake.
 - a. As an example, the FAQs and Checklists document¹ meant to condense the process for homeowners is a 27-page document – only 1 page shorter than the SMP itself (not including Appendices). Realistically, homeowners need either a simpler process or a simpler explanation of the process to encourage compliance.
 - i. We recommend that a simple flowchart be contained within the SMP itself illustrating, with photos of the website, where homeowners need to go to:
 - 1) Submit Permit Applications, 2) Check the status of permit applications,

¹ “Shoreline and Land Use Permit Application Frequently Asked Questions & Checklists” 1/28/2022, FirstLight (https://firstlightportal.myadept.com/pdf/Shoreline_and_Land_Use_Applications_FAQs_and_Checklists_rev.01.28.22.pdf)

and 3) Ask questions about permit applications. This can be contained in the appendixes so that the photos can be updated should the website change.

- b. The best way to contact the Land Management Department is through the “Contact Us” page on their website – which is nested far enough into the website to require 4 clicks to reach. It is also confused by the media inquiry “Contact Us” page being on the homepage and much easier to reach.
 - i. We would like to recommend that the “Contact Us” page for the land management department be added to the homepage of the website and be clarified to ensure people know that it is the “Contact Us” page for “questions on permit applications and status.”
 - c. There remains significant confusion for homeowners about specifically *what* activities do and do not need a permit, as well as the status of permit applications after submittal to FirstLight.
 - i. We recommend that contained within the SMP is a communication requirement that FirstLight must acknowledge permit applications within 30 days of their submittal as well as a similar communication requirement for answering questions within 30 days.
 - 1. Often the most vocal concerns from the public come from folks who, after submitting an application, feel as if they haven’t heard from FirstLight regarding a final decision for their permit application. A 90-day requirement for FirstLight to either approve, deny, or schedule further fact-finding with homeowners seems both reasonable for the licensee and sufficient for homeowners, and should be included in the SMP.
 - ii. We understand that homeowners can and do check on the status of their applications on the web portal that FirstLight has built, but many homeowners lack the understanding on how to reach this status page. Contained within the SMP or a simplified FAQ document should be a flowchart with screenshots of the website that tells homeowners how to reach this page.
 - iii. We commit to partnering with FirstLight on new and novel ways to educate homeowners on how to access and use the web portal.
2. We appreciate the need for FirstLight, as a private entity, to recoup costs associated with administering the permitting process. We have had 6 years of time with the new fee system, and while it is improved in some ways, there are very few updates to the fee

process (apart from some amount changes and clarification of specific activities associated with specific fees) contained within these proposed changes to the SMP.

- a. Under the current system, there is a system of 3 separate nested fees for any given activity. This represents a point of significant confusion for homeowners, as they can receive news of surprising second, or even third level fees (i.e. Application submittal fee, Activity Review Fee, Use Review Fee).
 - b. We recommend that, in general, applicants should have a good idea of the fees associated with an application at the time of application. For that reason, we recommend that Use Review Fees be eliminated and Activity Review Fees instead be tiered to account for differences in administrative time for FirstLight.
 - i. For example, both Limited and Significant Activity Review Fees have 3 tiers: No Fee, Minimal Fee, and Standard Fee. This would mean that homeowners would only have to understand two fees: one for the submittal of their application, and one for the review of their application, while still giving FirstLight flexibility in fee attribution for more complicated applications.
 - ii. Similar to Appendix C in the SMP now, the most common activities homeowners apply for should be contained within a table illustrating where those uses exist on the tiered Activity Review Fees.
3. The Derelict Docks section on p. 16 of the SMP remains unchanged from the version written 6-years ago. In that time, it has become apparent to us, as well as homeowners around Candlewood Lake, that the responsibility for removing derelict docks is unclear and ultimately results in derelict docks remaining in the lake unmanaged for significant periods of time – proving to be a potentially dangerous navigational hazard.
- a. We recommend that the SMP clarify the responsibility of the licensee to remove debris, including derelict docks, that are reported to them within a timely manner.
 - b. Currently the language as written is *“FirstLight or its agents, the respective police, boating authority or any others may endeavor to secure, remove and/or dispose of any derelict docks that break loose and could cause a hazard to boating navigation.”*
 - i. We recommend that this be updated to “It is FirstLight’s commitment to remove and/or dispose of derelict docks within 7 days of their reporting to the land use department. FirstLight may partner with police, boating authority, or any others to transport derelict docks to a safe location where they can be removed and disposed of.”
 - ii. We as the CLA commit to partnering with FirstLight to assist with the removal of derelict docks in a timely manner – but lack the resources necessary to conduct the program ourselves. The current ambiguous language points to us as a “boating authority” involved with the process,

but in practice often leaves us in the difficult position of being obligated to manage this process on behalf of FirstLight with no commitment from the licensee to cover the cost of disposal, and no specific workflow on how to effectively dispose of derelict docks.

4. Currently the proposed SMP changes the review process to every ten years with the next review occurring in 2035.
 - a. We request that the SMP retain it's 6-year review process to allow FirstLight and stakeholders to recommend continued improvements to the document. These periods provide stakeholders with the best opportunity to recommend updates on behalf of the community, and 10 years is a very long time between review periods.
 - b. In addition, we also request that the public hearing requirement remain in the SMP, as this is the primary opportunity for the public to express their concerns with the SMP – which is the document that tangibly affects homeowners the most.

Thank you to FirstLight and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the review of these comments. Should there be further questions or clarifications necessary, the Candlewood Lake Authority can be easily reached at (860) 354-6928 or science@candlewoodlakeauthority.org