



Stonington Harbor Management Commission

March 13, 2023

Minutes by Katrina Bercaw, Recording Secretary



1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Spalding called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attending: Chairman Jay Spalding, Treasurer Sherm Crites, Vice Chairman Jesse Diggs (via teleconference), Commissioners Melanie Degler, Tori Gimple, Bruce MacKinnon, Stathis Manousos, Caleb Rose, Joseph Williams, Harbormaster Eric Donch, and Recording Secretary Katrina Bercaw

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Edward Smith

Guests: members of the public spoke as noted below

2. **Minutes:**

The Minutes of the February 13, 2023, meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Degler made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner McKinnon seconded the motion. After review of the action items, no further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

Action Items remaining open:

ACTION ITEM #1: Harbormaster Donch is awaiting a return call from DEEP to discuss potential future commercial moorings... and what action the Commission should be proactively taking....

ACTION ITEM #4: Chairman Spalding will contact John Pinto regarding proposed bill #5615, and then the Selectmen's office and Boro Warden Jeff Callahan to see how they wish to proceed.

3. **Wequetequock Cove Commercial Moorings** - a pre-application to gauge community response (see appended document)

Chairman Spalding explained the approval process: SHMC members review proposals to determine if they are in compliance with the Stonington Harbor Management Plan and also confer with the Stonington Shellfish Commission. SHMC then makes a recommendation to DEEP and the Army Corps of Engineers which is taken into account in their review.

The floor was opened to public comment:

Paul Goetz, Stonington Marina: Will this be a General Permit or Structures and Dredging Permit? Harbormaster Donch responded that no dredging activities have been mentioned at this date.

Steve Gumbel, of Palmer Neck Rd: Doesn't believe that a commercial entity should take over a public waterway. Views and habitat will be disturbed, navigational hazard especially in fog, potential increased pollution, this bay is commonly used for various water-related activities.

Robert Valenti, Palmer Neck Rd: It's a quiet cove, a wildlife sanctuary. Can't see this fitting in, besides its effect on shellfish, boat speed –currently owners often put boats on a plane to get through.

Harold Hefel, Greenhaven Rd, one-half mile away from the marina, agrees with what has been said.

Tom Quirk, who fishes there, aware of the tides, limited bridge clearance and depth. Not deep enough for the pumpout boat. Harbor is already relatively dirty and this wouldn't help.

Steve McCabe, across the inlet. Has observed Lockwood Marina's docks washed onto adjacent properties, their workboat with its gas can floated free and onto his property.

Jim Cunningham, Palmer Neck Rd. This would be a major navigation hazard, especially in fog there is a hazard. Shellfish area.

Ben Terrible, agrees with what has been said. Appreciates access to open water to get to speed. Depth issues—could only accommodate small boats. Lockwood's performance has been poor.

Paul Goetz, Stonington Marina owner: Wequetequock Cove earned a D- for its water quality from CUSH. Remediation would be to expand outflow, these moorings would be in the way. Duty of care: Lockwood created dirty water. Recommends Commission inquire of the Town regarding the applicant.

John Pierra (JP) from PMW Marine, 23 years in business, two businesses in the area. Agrees with what has been said.

Ian Heatherington: There is likely to be ongoing pressure, need to plan how to address the needs.

Letter from Jennifer Martin of the Elihu Island Trust was shared by Chairman Spalding. She expressed concerns about the proposal with questions on shellfish beds, permitting, cladophora algae, and the permitting process with DEEP, among others.

John Wesson, Elihu Island family member: This issue should be determined according to the Stonington Harbor Management Plan.

Matt Gimple Pawcatuck: USCG Waterways Management might make a recommendation to US Army Corps regarding navigation.

HM Donch attended the Shellfish Commission meeting at which Docko also presented materials regarding this pre-proposal.

Letters regarding the proposed moorings can go to:

- Michael Grzywinski at DEEP: micheal.grzywinski@ct.gov
- David Carey at the Bureau of Aquaculture in Milford: David.Carey@ct.gov
- Stonington Harbor Management Commission: Stnharbor2023@gmail.com
- There will be a public notice in [The Day](#) when the application is made.

In sum, the Commission heard an overwhelming lack of support for this project.

ACTION ITEM #1: Chairman Spalding will contact the Stonington PZC as well as the Town attorney regarding Lockwood Marina's history with the Town.

8pm Chairman Spalding closed public comment

4. Special Purpose Moorings (15 total)

A. SHYC Monica Hallisey Requesting six moorings once again. Harbormaster Donch noted that one mooring might need to be relocated due to a nearby dock extension. Commissioner McKinnon made a motion to approve, Treasurer Crites seconded it. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

B. NESS Mark Zagel, managing director: Requesting six moorings again, no changes. Commissioner McKinnon made a motion to approve, Treasurer Crites seconded it. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

C. Wadawanuck Club Robert Scala Request 3 moorings again, no changes. Commissioner McKinnon made a motion to approve, Treasurer Crites seconded it. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

5. Public Comment:

Paul Goetz, Stonington Marina: Since ordinance includes conservation, requests the Commission to send letters with its recommendations to Shellfish Commission, Wastewater Commission (no sewers available in this watershed Greenhaven to Main Street) and others. CUSH samples frequently. ECCD did a follow-up study that points to pollution sources. Fertilizers and pesticides on lawns also cause problems.

6. Correspondence: Chairman Spalding

- **In Jurisdiction: 11 Hancox St,** Bulkhead rebuild and stairs to the existing structure. Commissioner Manousos made a motion to approve as it conforms to the Stonington Harbor Management Plan. Commissioner Degler seconded the motion. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

- **Out of Jurisdiction:** none

7. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Crites

The March 2023 Financial Report was reviewed and is attached to these minutes. Fees paid through OLM have not yet come in for deposit. Commissioner Degler made a motion to approve the report as presented. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion was approved.

8. Harbormaster's Report:

The Harbormaster's March 2023 Report was reviewed and attached to these minutes. Mooring fee structure has been tabled awaiting the Town Attorney's advice. Sandy Point shoaling has gotten worse over the winter. Natasha Hope of USCG recommended letter writing effort to Army Corps of Engineers requesting emergency funds for dredging. Commissioner McKinnon made a motion to approve the Harbormaster's Report as presented. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. No further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.

9. Online Mooring Update by Commissioner Degler: Renewals: 191 of 294 sent out have been approved. 96 fees outstanding, but they are coming in. No further complaints have been received, but rather thanks given to Commissioners for their efforts. Three "renewals under review" due to registration questions. Incomplete renewals are provided a grace period; reminders will be sent April 1. Seven moorings have been relinquished to date. Three new waitlist applications. New moorings will be assigned based on vessel size and location. Commissioner Degler trained Dodson's and Don's Dock to use OLM. She expressed appreciation for the detailed moorings information they shared. Commissioners will have this information for their summer surveys. Bills for commercial moorings will be sent.

10. Old Business:

A. Deputy Harbormaster Search Update - Harbormaster Donch said the Assistant HM position has been posted in the Town and Borough, but there are no responses to date.

ACTION ITEM #2: Commissioner Degler will post the position on the Stonington Harbor FB page, to publicize the opening.

B. Stonington Harbor Management Plan update – Commissioner McKinnon noted that the area east of Stonington village is in the SHMC jurisdiction. Although the "harbor proper" has historically been the focus for mooring regulations, it will be important to plan for the entire area. Don Murphy said the Shellfish Commission would be part of updating the plan. Commissioners will review the current draft plan in the context of the Commission's entire jurisdiction, as well as the wharfing out policy. Chairman Spalding will send the final draft version for review.

ACTION ITEM #3: Chairman Spalding will contact DEEP to advise them that there may be updates to the Stonington Harbor Management Plan.

ACTION ITEM #4: A working group consisting of Commissioners McKinnon, Williams, and Rose, plus the Harbormaster, will be established to review the existing draft and propose clarifications and updates for the Commission's further review.

C. East Side Inner Breakwater Project Update - Commissioner Gimple spoke with past commissioner Paul O'Neill who provided background information. She has requested a copy of the previous permit from the Town Engineer. Meanwhile, further deterioration has occurred. USCG is a key player for outer portions of the breakwater.

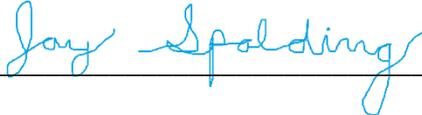
ACTION ITEM #5: Consider requesting emergency funds of the Army Corps of Engineers

11. New Business:

A. Newsletter - Commissioner Degler suggested emailing rather than printing the newsletter to the mooring holders and waitlist (about 500), printing fewer, with a QR code. All supported this idea. She has received several of the requested newsletter submissions from Commission members.

B. Secretary Role Duties to Transfer: Chairman Spalding will prepare and share the Agenda each month, review the draft minutes submitted by Ms. Bercaw and submit them to the Town Clerk, and submit an invoice for the Secretary. Commissioner Degler will produce the Newsletter and continue to update the website. Chairman Spalding thanked Commissioner Degler for all her work.

9. Adjournment: Chairman Spalding adjourned the meeting at 9:43 p.m.

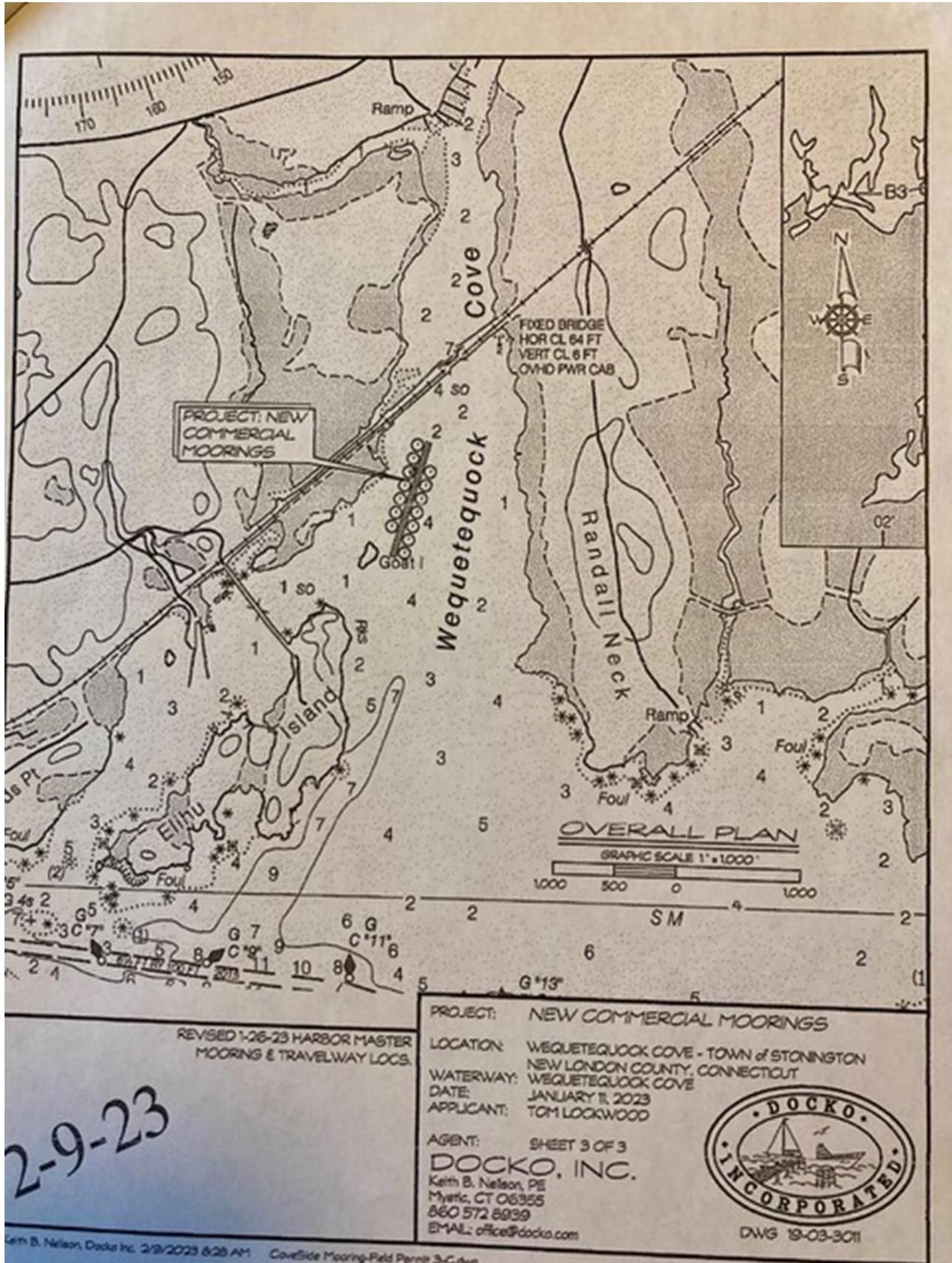
Approved: 

Date: 10 April 2023

Attachments:

- Lockwood New Commercial Moorings Pre-Proposal
- Letter from Elihu Island Trust
- Treasurer's Report
- Harbormaster's Report

Lockwood Proposal



Letter from Elihu I Trust



Elihu Island Trust
P.O. Box 166
Stonington CT 06378
March 13, 2023

Jay Spalding, Chairman
Stonington Harbor Management Commission
Stonington CT 06378
Email: STNHArbor2023@gmail.com

Re: Proposed commercial moorings in Wequetequock Cove

Chairman Spalding:

As one of over a hundred family members and as a trustee at Elihu Island, I am writing to share our concerns about the proposal for 14 new commercial moorings south of the railroad bridge in Wequetequock Cove. Before the Commission makes a decision about the suitability, number, and locations of new commercial moorings in this area, we'd like to be sure that you and the other commissioners have considered the impact that the new moorings would have on the area.

- Would the new moorings increase boat traffic enough that navigation controls should be added? Channel markers?
- Would increased boat traffic cause harm to aquatic grasses and other elements of the shoreline?
- Should a Slow No Wake (SNW) zone be considered?
- What about sanitation? The water quality in this area has been significantly worse than other parts of Little Narragansett Bay. Additional moorings are very likely to cause increased water pollution.

In addition to these concerns, we would also like to know:

- whether the Commission has coordinated with the Stonington Shellfish Commission about the proposed new moorings. We have in the past and continue to support shellfishing zones in the waters adjacent to Elihu Island.
- whether the Army Corps of Engineers and Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection have issued permits for the proposed commercial moorings (as required by the Stonington Harbor Management Plan).

If the Wequetequock Cove area is going to have commercial moorings, we would urge the Town of Stonington to consider, in a multi-department coordinated manner, the

broader impacts of this development. Are the Route 1 marinas equipped to handle an increase in parking and restroom use? Will they be authorized and properly licensed to provide launch and water taxi service to the new commercial moorings? If they encourage more visitors to Sandy Point, is the Sandy Point permit system and the property itself capable of handling an increased number of visits?

Although Wequetequock Cove falls under the jurisdiction of the Stonington Harbor Management Commission, the demand for moorings has not so far required the intensive planning and management that has been necessary in Stonington Harbor. If the current proposal for commercial moorings in Wequetequock Cove is a sign of things to come, we urge the Commission (and other appropriate agencies) to undertake a thorough review of the conditions in Wequetequock Cove including water quality, water depth (taking into account the proliferation of *Cladophora* that when it decays and sinks essentially makes the water shallower), and navigation from the railroad bridge to the main channel so that an ecological and fair plan can be devised that is consistent with how the main harbor is managed. As we move forward, it will be important that individuals have the same opportunity as commercial operations to obtain moorings in this part of Stonington's waters.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard at the meeting tonight and thank you to all the commission members for their work to ensure that we can continue to have safe use and responsible enjoyment of the water.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Martin, Trustee
Elihu Island Trust

Cc:

Donald L. Murphy, Chair, Stonington Shellfish Commission,

stoningtonshellfish@gmail.com, donald.l.murphy@snet.net

Danielle Chesebrough, First Selectman, Stonington Board of Selectmen,

Selectmen@stonington-ct.gov

Chris Freeman, Clean Up Sound & Harbors (CUSH),

info@cushinc.org, christopherfreeman535@gmail.com

Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division,

cenae-r-ct@usace.army.mil, Leslie.Martin@usace.army.mil

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection,

katie.dykes@ct.gov

Paul Aresta, Executive Director, Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality,

paul.aresta@ct.gov

David H. Carey, Director, Bureau of Aquaculture & Laboratory Services,

David.Carey@ct.gov

Harbormaster Report

March 13, 2023

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| New Mooring permits issued: 0 | Moorings given up (2023): 1 |
| New Mooring assignments in the works: 23 | |
| Deposits to SHMC account since last report: \$0 | 2023 YTD=\$300 |

Deputy Harbormaster job posting submitted to Borough Hall for posting. I have not had any replies to the postings.

Breakwater Restaurant dock being extended 100'. May affect NESS, SHYC Special Purpose moorings. Final determination when dock is finished.

Commercial mooring field in Wequetequock Cove covered under separate agenda item.

Mooring fee structure covered under separate agenda item.

Sandy Point shoaling covered under separate agenda item. Email for letters to ACOE forwarded to Chairman.

Robert G

Robert G was hauled 01/01/2023. Boat is stored at my house with its upper house shrink wrapped to protect electronics on overhead.

New boat update:
New boat delivered 3/1/2023.

- 1) Boats need to be swapped on trailers to return Rowmarine trailer with old hull.
- 2) Engine swap at PMW Marine awaiting ordered control cables, instruments, control binnacle.
- 3) Lettering at Amie's Signs in Ashaway. 1-2 week lead time after engine install
- 4) Electronics swap by Harbormaster and Scott Degler, working on layout and parts list

New Gear predicted:

- 1) Dock "Whips" to hold boat off dock
- 2) Deck flood lights
- 3) Remote controlled, LED spotlight
- 4) Anchor and deck anchor holder/mount

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Donch
Stonington Harbormaster

Treasurer's Report

| Report Date 3/13/2023 | Plan | Jan | Feb | Mar | YTD | Probable |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| Funds Generated: | | | | | | |
| Balance Brought Forward: | 32,022 | 32,022.38 | 31,865.60 | | 32,022.38 | 32,022.38 |
| Paid Moorings: Com/Pvt/Pub: | 128/280/15 | | 0/3/0 | | 0/3/0 | 128/280/15 |
| Mooring Fees: | 41,100 | | 250.00 | | 250.00 | 41,100.00 |
| Wait List Fees | 2,675 | | 50.00 | | 50.00 | 2,675.00 |
| Miscellaneous Income: | 0 | | 0.00 | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Generated Funds: | 75,797 | 32,022.38 | 32,165.60 | 0.00 | 32,322.38 | 75,797.38 |
| Operating Expense: | | | | | | |
| Mooring Admin: | | | | | | |
| Mailings: | 200 | | | | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| Telephone: | 0 | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Online Mooring | 5,250 | 31.78 | | | 31.78 | 5,250.00 |
| Miscellaneous: | 200 | | | | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| Sub-Total: | 5,650 | 31.78 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 31.78 | 5,650.00 |
| Boat: | | | | | | |
| Fuel & Oil: | 800 | | | | 0.00 | 800.00 |
| Commissioning: | 3,000 | | 625.00 | | 625.00 | 3,000.00 |
| Storage: | 0 | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Maintenance/Repairs: | 500 | | | | 0.00 | 500.00 |
| Equipment: | 500 | | 1,092.54 | | 1,092.54 | 500.00 |
| Sub-Total: | 4,800 | 0.00 | 1,717.54 | 0.00 | 1,717.54 | 4,800.00 |
| Harbor Maintenance: | | | | | | |
| Buoy: Commission/Haul/Store: | 7,500 | | | | 0.00 | 7,500.00 |
| Misc Service/Locker/PO Box: | 1,000 | | | | 0.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Adjust Grid Allignment | 1,000 | | | | 0.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Signage: | 100 | | | | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Sub-Total: | 9,600 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 9,600.00 |
| Dock/Pumpout: | | | | | | |
| Dock Eqpt./Maintenance: | 500 | | | | 0.00 | 500.00 |
| Pumpout Eqpt./Maintenance: | 0 | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Sub-Total: | 500 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 500.00 |
| Administrative: | | | | | | |
| Supplies: | 250 | | 53.16 | | 53.16 | 250.00 |
| Newsletter: | 5,200 | | | | 0.00 | 5,200.00 |
| Professional Services: | 1,500 | 125.00 | | | 125.00 | 1,500.00 |
| Sub-Total: | 6,950 | 125.00 | 53.16 | 0.00 | 178.16 | 6,950.00 |
| Total Operating Expense: | #VALUE! | 156.78 | 1,770.70 | 0.00 | 1,927.48 | 27,500.00 |
| Approved Projects/Capital | | | | | | |
| Replacement HM Boat | 17,000 | | 11,945.95 | | 11,945.95 | 17,000.00 |
| Public Access/Insurance Reserve | 20,000 | | | | 0.00 | 20,000.00 |
| Approved Projects/Capital | 37,000 | 0.00 | 11,945.95 | 0.00 | 11,945.95 | 37,000.00 |