



Minutes of the 1/20/2026 Meeting

The January 2026 meeting of the Lake Housatonic Authority was held at Derby City Hall.

Members Present

Ames, Scott (Oxford)
Behuniak, Paul (Seymour)
Blanchard, Sandy (Shelton)
Evans, Chris (Shelton)
Fiedler, Andy (Derby)
Gildea, Jim (Derby)
Stahl, Mike (Derby)

Members Absent

Fitzgerald, Alegra (Shelton)
Olson, Jim (Oxford)

Also present was LHAMP Chief Brian Brainard.

The Chairman, Mike Stahl, called the meeting to order at 6:33PM

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public present

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

The November 2025 meeting was canceled due to lack of a quorum and there was no meeting in December as typical. So, there were no meeting minutes to be approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer, Sandy Blanchard, reported that all finances were in order. There were no expenses incurred for the month of December and income was minimal from interest income.

Motion to accept the January 2026 treasurer's report as presented:

Motion: Behuniak

Second: Fiedler

Vote: Unanimous

GUEST PRESENTATION:

None scheduled.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Patrol:

The Chief, Brian Brainard, reported that the hiring process was well under way and looked promising based on the high number of resumes he has already received. He is losing one officer this year due to him moving out of state. He hopes to hire approximately 10 officers as typically that number drops to 5 or 6 officers that actually stay. The state will be offering training again this year in March. He will need a place to hold the interviews and may call on NHRC to possibly use their facility. He will be ordering new uniforms and duty gear once he has a commitment from the new officers.

Water Quality:

Scott Ames reported that a request for quote was made to the water testing laboratory. The request was for the same tests and the same frequency. There is no major increase anticipated. Testing will start in May.

Weed abatement:

No report at this time

Vessels and Equipment:

Brian Brainard noted that the two new handheld radios have been programmed and are ready to be picked up. This brings the total number of portables to 5.

Mike Stahl shared a copy of the brochure for a potential replacement boat for the marine patrol. It was the Boards' intention to replace the motors every 2 to 3 years based on hours and replace the boats every several years based on the condition. Currently the boats are 8 years old and the motors have about 500 hours on them. However, the replacement cost has more than doubled from last year. A \$23,000 boat is now \$48,000. There was some discussion on if one or two boats should be replaced and if they could wait until next year. There was also discussion on the sales value of the existing boats as well as the possibility of selling them to the local fire departments. Mike will look into getting a new estimate and the discussion will be continued at the next meeting as a new item under new business.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Budget Committee

The Treasurer, Sandy Blanchard, presented the 2026 budget to the board. Sandy had previously distributed the proposed budget to the board members to review prior to the meeting.

Patrol had a significant wage and hour increase in 2025, so he suggests keeping the same number. Weed control was based on last years spend and the results of the end of year survey.

Jim Gildea questioned what the approximately \$20,000 reduction to the budget was for. Sandy explained that the LHA was involved in a SCSU environmental program a few years ago that contemplated running a significant ecological study of area waterways. The LHA budgeted for the towns to fund this program, which they did, with that money going into reserves. The program was

postponed a couple of years, then abandoned. As such the LHA has been "giving back" the funds by running an intentionally deficit budget. He has been very transparent with the towns, and this has been communicated. Rather than return the remaining funds, the surplus funds were subtracted from the ask to the cities/towns for the yearly budget request. This proposed budget is the final year of the "give back" with the final \$20,250 shown as the deficit, eliminating the surplus funds.

Motion to accept the 2026 Budget as presented and authorize the Treasurer to submit the request letters to the towns/cities:

Motion: Evans Second: Behuniak Vote: Unanimous

OLD BUSINESS:

Water Safety Grant

Alegra Fitzgerald was not able to attend the meeting but said she had information to share with the board at the February meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Rehire LHAMP Chief and Assistant Chief:

Since all LHA employees are temporary seasonal employees, they must be rehired each year. It is necessary to rehire the Chief and Assistant Chief immediately so they can begin their duties preparing for the upcoming season including the hiring process.

Motion to hire Brian Brainard as Chief at a rate of \$37/hour and to hire Alex Commander as Assistant Chief at a rate of \$30/hour for the 2026 season.

Motion: Evans Second: Behuniak Vote: Unanimous

Yale Regatta Marne Event Permit Applications

Yale Athletics submitted four permit applications for four, weekends in April. Yale will be hosting their Home Spring Regattas out of Gilder Boathouse. The secretary forwarded the applications to the board for review prior to the meeting.

Yale Regatta Dates – All morning start times.

April 4

April 11

April 18

April 25

The applications were typical to year's past and for the most part complete. There were some omissions that the Secretary will add when approving the applications. Such as "event not to be held during flood conditions". The board was satisfied with the applications with the added notes.

Motion to approve all four applications and submit to DEEP:

Motion: Evans Second: Blanchard Vote: Unanimous

Elect Slate of Officers for 2026:

The Chairman recognized the 2025 officers and thanked them for their help. He then asked if anyone else would like the opportunity to fill the positions. The board all felt that the officers should stay the same again this year. As such, the Chairman proposed the following slate of officers for 2026:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Stahl, Mike (Derby) | Chairman |
| Behuniak, Paul (Seymour) | Vice-Chairman |
| Blanchard, Sandy (Shelton) | Treasurer |
| Ames, Scott (Oxford) | Secretary |

Motion to accept the 2026 slate of officers as presented.

Motion: Behuniak

Second: Gildea

Vote: Unanimous

CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence of any significance was received since the last meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

None at this time.

AJOURNMENT:

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn the January meeting at 7:08 PM.

Motion: Gildea

Second: Behuniak

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Ames
Secretary – LHA

These minutes are subject to approval.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LAKE HOUSATONIC AUTHORITY IS SCHEDULED FOR
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026.