****

**Findley Lake Watershed Foundation**

 **Minutes of Board Meeting**

**January 25, 2025**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by President Ed Mulkearn at 8:42 am.

**Quorum:**

A quorum was declared present to conduct business.

**Present:**

Lex Brumagin (virtual), Chrissy Craffey, Ben Fergus (virtual), Paul Fellinger, Lant Lictus, George Mihalik, Erin Miller (virtual), Ed Mulkearn and Debbie Thresher (virtual).

**Absent:** Bill Simpkins, Jeff Ireland

**Minutes:**

The minutes from the September 14, 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. Chrissy Craffey motioned to approve the minutes and Ben Fergus second.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Ed Mulkearn reported for Jeff Ireland who was unable to attend. Jeff put together a handout of the 2024 Financial Report and Membership. As for the 2025 budget, he left the budget the same for harvesting. In hopes, the herbicide treatment does what we expect. We ended the 2024 with a surplus of $37,503.01 of which $2,078.99 was surplus from 2023.

One expense for the coming year are repairs to the front deck flooring and steps on the WWOL building. He kept the 2025 budget at $7,000 for that reason. Jeff believes we are in very good financial shape going into 2025.

Ben Fergus suggested only approving the 2024 Financial Report. He suggested not approving the 2025 Budget report until it is finalized. Ben suggested renaming a line item in the treasurer’s report to better reflect the costs of treating milfoil. Chrissy Craffey will speak with Jeff about this change.

A motion was made by George Mihalik to approve the treasure’s report and Paul Fellinger second the motion, the motion was approved.

**President’s Report:**

Ed Mulkearn reported the sewer development is moving forward. It’s a 2-3year project. The construction will possibly begin next year.

**Committee Reports:**

**Membership:**

Lex Brumagin asked for a paragraph from each committee group. An explanation of what they did last year. He is getting the membership letter out for 2025 in the mail. Erin Miller suggested using the who, what, why sheet with the membership letter. Also, the boating guidelines and mentioning that all drivers will need a Boater Safety License this year.

Chrissy Craffey asked about sheriff time on the lake this summer? If we could have a sheriff on July 4th? Chrissy mentioned that Dave Clemens ,the new owner of Paradise Bay Campgrounds , would like to be involved in membership.

**Lake Management:**

Lant Lictus had nothing new to report at this time. Chrissy and Ben discussed the challenges of managing the lake’s water levels and the need for a flexible policy. Ed Mulkearn is putting together a lake management policy. Erin suggested using examples of such situations in the policy to inform people. Ben suggested being simple and concise in the policy. They decided to update the guidelines on their website to match those on the town’s site, Erin will work on this.

1. Consultant help – Glenn Sullivan – Ready Scout, LLC – presenting areas where he can help us achieve our goals in the Watershed and Lake Strategic Management Plan
2. CSLAP 2025 – Chrissy to report
	1. 4 or 8 samples this year – cost, benefits and motion from Chrissy
3. HAB control
	1. Projects yet to be done for Town by Princeton Hydro as precursor to moving forward with design and cost estimate for aeration or oxygenation of anoxic zones to control internal P releases.
		1. Bathymetric survey
		2. Sediment Oxygen Demand Study
	2. Potential for Glenn to get permit for temporary control with algicide
	3. New Technology: An electrochemical ozonation process is being developed and demonstrated by Prof. Yang Yang and his grad students at Clarkson University (Ben’s Alma Mater). Ben has read two published articles and has been emailing with Dr. Yang. A pilot scale boat-mounted system was successfully demonstrated in Lake Neatahwanta and Oneida Lake in New York State. They are doing a technology demonstration in Hyde Lake (NY) this summer then Dr. Yang has expressed his willingness to consider a demonstration project for FLWF in Findley Lake in 2026. Dr. Yang is submitting an abstract for NYSFOLA Conference this May. Ben will be attending NYSFOLA and will continue to develop our relationship with Dr. Yang. The commercialization of this process is probably several years away.
4. Funding for Treatment:

Here is a debrief from Dave McCoy on how we scored on our April 1, 2024 application for Chautauqua County 2025 Occupancy Tax Program for Grants for Lakes and Waterways

The Findley Lake application was very well prepared and ranked 7th of 12 applications.

The highest ranked application scored 41.25, while your application scored 35.8. The lowest ranked application scored 28.8. Because we have limited funding, we were able to fund just four projects, the lowest of which scored 36.75 – so your application was less than less than 1 point from making the cut.

Generally, the reviewer’s scores ranged:

7 – 9 for Narrative Content

7 – 9 for Narrative Quality

6 – 8 for Anticipated Increase in Tourism

6 – 8 for Anticipated increase in Recreation

5 – 8 for Collaborative Efforts

Your application was well written and the supporting data from Ready Scout was good. For 2026, you might consider improving the Collaborative Efforts discussion, as that ranked a little lower than the others. You might also consider including some metrics from the herbicide application to the north portion of the lake, like did you see any increases in Tourism or Recreation opportunities.

***[Ben’s follow-up question] I'm not sure how to measure any increase in tourism or recreation opportunities resulting from the treatment of milfoil with herbicide in the north portion of the lake. We received a lot of thank-yous from homeowners around the lake- one even saying we "saved the lake". But we don't have a way to measure tourism. Any suggestions?*[Dave McCoy’s Response]**You might see if there was an increase in launch fees, boat sales, or revenues at the shops and restaurants. Just ask them if they had better sales and more people through the door, especially people from outside the area. Also, revenue generators – more short-term rentals and increased occupancy.

Lastly, you might consider providing a local match or contribution for 2026. The four projects that were funded for 2025 all brought something to the table.

***[Ben’s follow-up question] Also, I think it saw the notice for the grants and there was a grant for "operations". Can we apply for a grant to help cover our operating costs?*[Dave McCoy’s response]** Yes you can.

***[Ben’s follow-up question] Chrissy heard that there will be a different group and/or process for evaluating the applications. Can you provide any insights into that?* [Dave McCoy’s response]** Yes, that is correct. The 2026 Round of applications will be evaluated by Planning & Economic Development Department staff, then by the Chairman of the Legislature and the County Executive. Most state and federal grant programs use junior staff to score and rank projects, then review by senior staff and management. So, we are mirroring what is being done elsewhere.

* 1. We can apply for 2026 2% Bed-tax County grant, but what options are available for funding treatment in the south end in 2025?
1. NYSFOLA – Ben is planning to go. Will the Board approve reimbursement of expenses?

**Communications:**

Erin Miller reported the new website is up and running. Check it out. Erin brought up about the new sign for information at the ramp. She asked about what the budget might be? Chrissy suggested it should be used for directional purposes rather than advertising. Erin will contact sign companies for quotes and to potentially meet with them.

**Fundraising:**

George Mihalik is working with the athletic department at Mercyhurst College to help with funds for water quality. We will look at ways for them to integrate into the community. Ben Fergus suggested letting the college know what our needs are to keep water quality. Chrissy suggested the potential for financial support over a three-year program or one time contribution. Chrissy suggested involving Mercyhurst in community projects or research. Ben agreed to help with historical needs and cost for a better understanding. George asked if we want to try with the raffle for sport events again this year? After discussion, George will pursue the idea. Discussion more at next meeting**.**

**Old Business**:

Discussion of the possibility of selling the marina property by waterfront. Chrissy suggested contacting a commercial real estate broker. Further discussion later.

**New Business:**

We discussed the need for more collaboration efforts and funding from other sources for future grant applications. A motion was passed to approve spending up to $1,100 for Ben Fergus to attend the Nice Fola Conference.

Ed Mulkearn spoke of the Annual Meeting. We will no longer be able to use Camp Findley this year. We are checking on moving to the Community Center for the Annual Meeting on July 19, 2025. More details to follow.

**Adjournment:**

Ed Mulkearn motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 am, Paul Fellinger seconded.

Next meeting is April 26, 2025, 8:30 am

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Thresher

Secretary

**Action Items:**

Chrissy Craffey will follow up with Jeff Ireland with a question on the 2024 Financial Report.

Chrissy Craffey will revise the who, what and why information sheet.

George Mihalik will work on new raffle ideas for fund raiser.

Lex Brumagin and Ed Mulkearn are going through the membership list, removing outdated entries.

Erin Miller will work on a new sign on the boat ramp, for the purpose of directions with the lake.