

Minutes of Meeting
BLBRA Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, November 16, 2023, 1:30 – 4:00 PM
Highland Village, Iona



Our mission is to improve balance in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere by encouraging community capacity building, conservation efforts, and sustainable development.

DIRECTORS (Member at Large)		DIRECTORS (Ex Officio)	
Allison Mclsaac (Chair)	Y	Amanda Mombourquette (Richmond)	R
Liz Campbell	Y	Barbara Longva (Victoria)	N
Tony Sylliboy	N	Steve Parsons (CBRM)	N
Parker Donham (Appointed Treasurer)	Y	Kirsty Lock (NSCC)	Y
Veronika Brzeski	Y	Stan Johnson (CEPI)	Y
Megan MacInnis (Secretary)	Y	Kathleen Aitkens (ACAP)	Y
Bethsheila Kent	R	Tyler Mattheis (CB Partnership)	R
Terri Shobbrook(Vice-chair)	Y	Bonnie MacIsaac (Inverness)	R
Breah Sampson-MacDonald	N		
Wendy MacKinnon	N		
Kirsten Campbell	N		

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of 50% of the Executive Comm. plus 6 non-executive Board members. (Y= Present; R= Regrets sent; N= none)

Observers/Guests: Doug Foster (**Manager**), Zoe Nicholas (**BLBRA Admin Assist**), Ron Newcombe (**Chair Trails**), and Rodney Chaisson

Call to Order:

Quorum was met, and meeting started at 1:54 pm Chair Allison Mclsaac began the meeting by acknowledging that the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. Some of the BoD went on a hike in Sky River in the morning with the regional Biosphere gathering.

1. Additions to the agenda:

No additions to the agenda

2. Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve agenda made by Allison Mclsaac seconded by Parker Donham - Motion passed.

3. Approval of minutes – September 21, 2023

Motion to approve the minutes made by Kathleen Aikens and seconded by Megan MacInnis – Motion passed.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

Allison Mclsaac stated that finding a Treasurer for the BLBRA is priority and first on the agenda.

The letter of concern from Islandview residents organized by Clem MacPhee. Allison Mclsaac stated that a letter was drafted from the BLBRA in response to the letter of concern. Doug spoke with Mr. MacPhee, and it was reported that there is good response from the government and government agencies about the issue and they

are looking into it. Veronika Brzeski inquired what the outcome of the feedback will be, and Allison answered saying the governing agencies ask questions if any permits were filed, checking proper sewage disposal, wharf structure and if any fish or fish habitats were damaged. Clem MacPhee was grateful that the BLBRA had reached out to him and asked questions.

5. New Business & Correspondence Requiring Action

I. Treasurer

[Allison Mclsaac](#)

II. Financial committee

Allison Mclsaac

III. Donation to BLBRA

Doug Foster

IV. Tourism Corridor

Terri Shobbrook

I. Treasurer

Allison thanked Rodney for helping the Board after his official leave during the September 2023 BoD meeting and had discussions on ways a new treasurer can be supported. They suggested that moving forward with employees, the administrative assistant Zoe Nicholas can complete the bookkeeping aspects of BLBRA through QuickBooks. Rodney has agreed to meet with Zoe and give support in terms of a refresher on how to input on QuickBooks, writing invoices, entering journal entries and then the appointed Treasurer will work with Zoe to complete reports for the meetings. A Financial or funding committee that can support the Treasurer and Zoe along with being a conduit for identifying funding opportunities so that not all opportunities need to go to the Board at the early stages if it fits the mandate of the organization. Allison and Rodney also talked about getting an audit or accountant if it helps alleviate the scope of the Treasurer position for anyone who wants to become Treasurer but concerned about the scope of the position. Allison reiterated that the BLBRA needs a Treasurer and asked if anyone on the Board was interested. Parker Donham explained his experience as Treasurer in another organization and expressed his interest in taking on the role of Treasurer at the BLBRA. Kathleen Aikens nominated Parker for the Treasurer position and seconded by Veronika Brzeski – Parker Donham accepted. Allison asked “Is there any other nominations” 3 times – Parker Donham is appointed Treasurer of the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Region Association by acclamation.

Action item: Create a Financial or Funding committee to support the treasurer and administrative assistant along with helping find funding opportunities.

II. Financial committee

A Financial committee within the BLBRA would help the staff and Treasurer. Allison asked Parker if he would Chair the Financial committee and Parker agreed. Parker explained the committee would mostly be used for preparing draft budgets and reports. Allison informed the BoD that the financial committee will also help to apply for fundings at the early stages.

Doug F. asks the BoD if a resolution needs to be drawn up to add Parker Donham as a signing authority at TD Bank and CRA. Rodney Chaisson recommends that there be 4 signing authorities named: Allison Mclsaac (Chair), Terri Shobbrook (Vice-Chair), Doug Foster (Project Manager), and Parker Donham (Newly appointed Treasurer). Parker Donham motions that “Allison Mclsaac, Terri Shobbrook, Doug Foster and Parker Donham will serve as signing officers for BLBRA and any two of the four listed can sign effective today” – seconded by Veronika Brzeski – motion passed.

Action item:

Zoe: Write up the resolution to add the new Treasurer, Parker D., as signing authority for BLBRA's TD Bank and CRA accounts and remove Rodney Chaisson.

III. Donation to BLBRA

Doug informed the group that a donation was made to the BLBRA by Bras d'Or Preservation Trust (BPNT) in the amount of \$8000.00 for the work of BLBRA, which has been deposited. Doug has been in conversation with individuals and organizations that want to donate to the BLBRA. In preparation Doug has contacted Cape Breton Print to order 4 updated tax receipt books using the credit on file at CBP. When the tax receipt book is received a receipt will be issued to Bras d'Or Preservation Trust for their donation.

Parker Donham motioned that the charitable tax receipt signing authority will be the signing officers: Allison McIsaac, Terri Shobbrook, Parker Donham, and Doug Foster plus Kathleen Aikens in her capacity as Chair of the Membership committee – Veronika Brzeski seconds the motion – motion passed.

Action item:

Zoe: Get a thank you card for Bras d'Or Preservation Trust on behalf of the BLBRA.

Doug: Order proper tax receipt books.

Doug: Issue receipt to Bras d'Or Preservation Trust for \$8000 donation.

IV. Tourism corridor

Terri Shobbrook explains that the Tourism corridor is looking to see if they need to partner with other organizations in its complexity. The Tourism corridor is going to be like a giant "Amazing Places" where people are encouraged to travel throughout the Biospheres. It is being funded through Destination Canada to promote travel of the Biospheres in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, part of Quebec and New Fallon. The meetings Terri has attended talked about transportation, cell phone coverage, accommodations, restaurants, seasonality, Wi-Fi coverage, signage, and more other relevant issues. The report will be released at the beginning of December and includes Biospheres, heritage sites and geoparks.

6. Updates

I. Treasurer - Rodney Chaisson

Rodney updated the Board about the \$8000.00 donation from Bras d'Or Preservation Trust and \$25,000 received from Dalhousie. Rodney informed the Board that all the BLBRA's accounts are updated in QuickBooks and the HST rebates are completed until the end of September.

II. Manager - Doug Foster

Doug Foster contacted Cape Breton Print and ordered 4 receipt books, totalling \$120, using the credit on file at CBP – roughly \$500 is left.

An application to ECCC was submitted for the extension of years 4 and 5 and Doug does not anticipate any difficulties with the application. Years 4 and 5's work plan will be a continuation of work in progress.

The Climate Change application to NRCAN has been talking with 17 agencies that are involved – possibly including 5 Indigenous Bands and 5 municipalities. Doug states that the Government supports the initiative, and the lead in Climate Change, Gordon Smith, who's with Provincial Environment (ECCC). The program

provides 75% Federal funding and other people who have been helping with the process believe that the modelling tools that are being developed in Margaree will be suitable for use throughout Cape Breton Island as a 10%-15% in-kind from the province. The funding will be for adaptation, not mitigation. The funding will enable hiring for a climate change coordinator to work on the two aspects of climate change: flood line mapping and coastal zoning. The deadline for the submission is December 13, 2023. The flood line mapping will document all the areas that will be affected by the water level rise in Cape Breton within the next 80 years. The project will also look at the impact on the wetlands which include barrachois ponds.

Allison states that a program Doug identified 6 months ago through discussions was decided that the First Nations would take the lead. This program will be a parallel process to with the First Nations, support, while still engaging with the First Nations and on a community level. The project aligns with the BLBRA's strategic plan: engaging with organizations around the lake, finding funding for operations, engaging with First Nation communities. If any of the BoD have any thoughts about the application they can email Doug. When there is a date for a meeting it will be sent to the Board and Directors can self identify if they are available or want to participate.

Action Item:

Doug Foster: Complete and submit application for Climate Change.

III. Trail Committee – Ron Newcombe

The Trail committee completed a debrief on the Explore the Bras d'Or trails event, in his opinion it was not as successful as they hoped. The committee decided that the EtBD event will take on different forms and expand to include multiple events throughout the year. The committee undertook a discussion about revisiting the objectives and aligning them with the strategic plan. The trails committee continues plans to create a walking path around the Bras d'Or Lake.

The BLBRA had an information booth set up at the Two Eyed Seeing conference and Zoe Nicholas sold 50 maps during the 3-day conference. The breakdown of the map sale was 24 cash sales, 11 e-transfers, and 15 invoiced.

IV. Communications Committee - Pierre LaRochelle

Pierre LaRochelle was not in attendance, but Allison discussed during her attendance at the CBRA annual gathering attendees were impressed with Pierres work on the Day of the Biospheres Ad he created.

Zoe let the Board know that the next newsletter will be Dec 3rd and if anyone has any submissions to please forward them to Pierre.

V. Community Engagement & Learning Committee - Kirsty Locke

Kirsty announced a couple of successes within the CEAL committee (1) Working with MK Stem Mentor Jen Sawler, who has applied for a \$15,000 grant and was successful to create education kits for each MK school. (2) Kathleen along with Sarah were successful in an application through the TD Bank and received just under \$4,000 to create 5 education sets of the 3 different kits. The CEAL committee can help facilitate the teacher PD of the kits or do workshops to teach the teachers how to use them. Kathleen has also put in for another funding proposal that would look for more kits and citizens in science station kits. The funding application had a due date of October 31 and was submitted. The funding would buy 5 more educational kits to replace and supplement Bras d'Or Watch equipment and related items.

The CEAL committee is continuing its work on the QR codes for the Nicholson trail and Adventure Labs. In the new year they will start discussing the Bras d'Or Watch and what it will look like next year. Kirsty mentioned that NSCC does have many programs that align with the project, and they have an applied research department based in Halifax. Kirsty believes there would be interest in becoming involved with the Climate Change application.

Action item:

CEAL Committee - Start discussions on BDW and how it will look in 2024

CEAL Committee- Create teaching kits with approved funding.

VI. Membership Committee - Kathleen Aikens

Update on total membership when this report was made is 150 Total Active Members: 46 Annual Members, and 104 Lifetime Members.

The Membership committee is going to set up a longer, hybrid meeting in December to discuss next steps for membership, including youth recruitment and future membership. Kathleen will contact Parker about the process around membership for example e-transfers. The committee will also discuss what it means to become a member, do they get a welcoming email for a better experience.

Action item:

7. Ex-Officio / Partner Updates

I. CEPI - Stan Johnson

CEPI held the Two Eyed Seeing conference and it was a great success. CEPI also plans on revisiting the State of the Bras d'Or report; it has not been revisited since 2007. Ron mentions that CEPI and the BLBRA co-event the EtBD and it will need a coordinator and funding.

II. Richmond County - Amanda Mombourquette

Sends regrets.

III. Victoria County - Barbara Longva

Sends regrets.

IV. Inverness County – Bonnie MacIsaac

Send regrets.

V. CBRM – Steve Parsons

Sends regrets.

VI. Cape Breton Partnership - Tyler Mattheis

Sends regrets.

VII. NSCC - Kirsty Locke

A faculty member at NSCC (Waddie Long) received a Golden Award at the Two Eyed Seeing conference. Kirsty describes Waddie as a champion of Two Eyed Seeing and has been implementing it in his teachings for a long time.

VIII. Port Hawkesbury Paper - Megan MacInnis

Kirsty suggests that Jeff Clarke who is the manager of Sustainability and Economic Development for PHP be asked to do a presentation for the Board. Megan will contact Jeff about attending a future Board meeting. Discussions about inviting presenters to BoD meetings and whether they should start up again. It was asked why the ex-Officio seats of the CBRM and Inverness have been empty. Doug has been in contact with the CBRM representative, and they have been having issues with timing. Zoe has been in contact with Bonnie MacIsaac, Inverness ex officio, and she has conflict with timing as the Inverness County has their meeting the same day as BLBRA. Allison stated that these are the issues to remember when making up next year's BoD meetings. Discussion of having a "BLBRA Road Show" to reconnect and ask when a good time for them is to attend meetings.

Action item:

[Megan MacInnis](#)- Contact Jeff Clarke about presenting at the January 18 BoD meeting.

8. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Megan MacInnis – Motion passed at 3:59 pm

Next meeting: January 18, 2023, 1:30 – 4:00 pm; East Bay Fire Hall, East Bay

Minutes by Zoe Nicholas verified by Megan MacInnis. Please email any corrections, clarifications, or omissions to Megan MacInnis by email secretary@blbra.ca .