



**Minutes**  
**Governing Board Meeting, Cruising Club of America**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2023 via Zoom**

1. Commodore Otorowski called the meeting to order at 1600 hours (Eastern) and welcomed attendees.

There were 25 people in attendance to start, constituting a quorum, ultimately reaching 27 participants including Commodore Chris Otorowski, Vice Commodore Jay Gowell, Secretary Molly Barnes, Treasurer Kathleen O'Donnell, Historian Doug Adkins, Membership Chair Ernie Godshalk, Fleet Captain Paul Hamilton; the following Rear Commodores: Peter Balasubramanian, Peter Becker, Steve Calhoun, Bev Crump, Bill Greenwood, Nick Orem, Richard Schaper, David Utley, and Tom Wadlow; the following Elected Governors: Amanda Balasubramanian, Gretchen Biemesderfer, Rowena Carlson, Dennis Durgan, Jeffrey Gonsalves, Hans Himmelman, Mary Alice O'Neill, Buddy Rego, and Jonathan Wright. Invited guests in attendance were: Financial Affairs Committee Chair Chace Anderson and Webmaster Michael Moradzadeh

2. The Commodore gave his report, beginning with a recap of what has happened since the Governing Board's last meeting in September, which was held on the eve of the wonderful Mallorca Cruise, which was a terrific success and led into the Fall Meeting of Members in Lunenburg Nova Scotia. He noted that it was a great event, well attended and well put on by the Bras d'Or Lakes Station. With his wife Shawn, the Commodore has been trying to attend as many station annual meetings as possible. It has been very gratifying to meet members in person after hearing their names for years and also to see the stations and posts functioning very well. The Commodore noted that the budget process has been underway for a while now under the able direction of Kathleen and Chace, who will be presenting the budget later today. He reported that we have an ongoing partnership with the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club and the New York Yacht Club, thanks to Peter Becker, to put on the Bermuda Race and the single-handed return race respectively. There are currently approximately 120 entries into the Bermuda Race and Andrew Kallfelz has been doing an excellent job as the Bermuda Race Chair since Mark Lenci stepped down a number of weeks ago. The Commodore said in conclusion that things seem to be functioning well across the club.

3. There was a motion made and seconded to approve the minutes from the September 5, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Governors as presented. **The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.**

4. The Commodore called on Ernie Godshalk, the Chair of the Membership Committee. Ernie announced that he has only one topic, specifically a request for approval by the Governing Board to modify the resolution about the Seafarer program, which was approved about 18 months ago. Ernie reminded us that Seafarer is a status granted to members who have serious medical or personal issues

that prevent the member from participating in the club and/or for whom the dues are a financial burden. Ernie believes the program is working reasonably well as there are 15 members on seafarer status, which is roughly 1% of the membership, which keeps us below the limit of 2% set in the resolution. One aspect of the resolution is: "The dues waiver may be renewed annually, upon request of the Station MC chair, but, except in unusual circumstances, not beyond a third year." Ernie noted that he originally drafted the resolution and included the 3-year limit because he thought some kind of a soft sunset clause would be appropriate. Ernie noted that the evidence now makes it very clear that these are permanent. Our members that become seafarers either have a serious or permanent medical disability, and Ernie is aware of only one case that is a financial burden.

Ernie then made a motion that the Governing Board eliminate the words "but, except in unusual circumstances, not beyond a third year." Such that the resolution now reads simply: "The dues waiver may be renewed annually, upon request of the Station MC chair." There was a second. During the discussion, Ernie clarified the process noting that at the beginning of November, Ernie in his role as Membership Committee Chair asked all of the station membership committee chairs to suggest candidates for Seafarer status in the following year. All 15 of the existing seafarers were requested for renewal. He also clarified that the Seafarer Program is not intended to be an honorary membership but is designed to be a one-year dues waiver intended for members with serious medical or personal issues that prevent the member from participating in the club and or for whom that goes, or a financial burden. The Commodore called for a vote and **the motion passed unanimously**.

Ernie then noted that the club currently has 1,365 members, which is down a little from a high of just over 1,400. Membership proposals fell off during covid and are coming back a bit now. The Commodore encouraged all of us to be on the lookout for prospective members.

5. The Commodore noted that the Flag Officers have had some financial meetings with Chace Anderson, Chair of the Financial Affairs Committee and the Treasurer, Kathleen O'Donnell, who have worked hard on the whole budgeting process. In reviewing the budget that Molly sent out a couple of days ago, we are recommending that we have a dues increase from \$240 for the full membership to \$250, which is slightly over 4%. Before entertaining a motion, the Commodore called on Kathleen to give the Treasurer's report and present the proposed budget.

While getting set to share her screen, Kathleen thanked the Financial Affairs Committee and Chace Anderson in particular for their assistance, noting that creating a budget for the CCA is still a relatively new process.

Kathleen began by reviewing the annual income. First, we have a draw from the investment portfolio that we have at fidelity. Chace has a policy that outlines how much we can draw. For the last few years, the average has been about \$15,000/year, which is less than 3% of the balance at Fidelity. Kathleen reminded us that the Board of Governors voted to draw \$100,000 from Fidelity to support the 100th year celebrations, which was different from typical years.

Second is the interest we make on this investment and on our Key Bank account.

The third source of income is the annual dinner. Over the past few years, the number of attendees has been declining, and the cost has been increasing. For example, last year we collected \$24,000 and spent \$66,000. Kathleen noted that last year we tried having the primary meetings and awards dinner on

Saturday night in the hopes that more people who could not take time off mid-week would choose to attend; unfortunately, attendance did not go up to offset the increase in weekend labor cost. Kathleen noted that the budget this year is conservative and we are hoping that attendance will be up a bit and the costs will be down slightly because it is back to being on Friday.

Fourth source of income is the membership dues. Kathleen noted that the proposed budget does not reflect the increase in dues that the Commodore mentioned at the start of the meeting. Kathleen then explained that Membership Dues includes the annual dues, the initiation fees for new members, and the prepaid dues figure, which reflects the members who have paid their dues several years in advance and also includes the 8 lifetime members of the CCA.

The Fifth source, the “Other Income” line, is for the cruise income. Kathleen went on to note that the intention is for all of our cruises to be net even. Certainly, the cost of the cruises is covered so we don’t lose money on them, but in the case of the Mallorca Cruise, there was a slight surplus that can be used to offset any potential losses we might have on future cruises. Kathleen noted that there are payments for cruises that go out before we collect revenue such as to secure venues, so budgeting for the cruises is important.

Sixth is the publication revenues. First book is The Adventurous Use of the Sea. We have sold about 25 copies/year and we have 1,413 copies sitting in inventory, for which we pay the company \$155 a month to store. We also pay a monthly storage fee for the Sailing Safety Guides, but there is a more consistent revenue stream for those because of the seminars we run. Kathleen noted that the expected revenue for the Cruising Guide Royalties is conservative, especially since there are new guides coming out. The Committee is doing a great job with their guide publishing efforts but we don’t make a lot of money from the cruising guides.

Next is the Safety at Sea programs. Kathleen noted that the budgeted revenue for 2024 is lower. She explained that the previous two years were higher than normal because of COVID and the cancelled Bermuda races. We did extra programming to catch up.

For the weather/medical seminar line, Kathleen noted that there is currently no plan to have a weather seminar in 2024. The medical seminar, held in November, splits its revenue with the New York Yacht Club. Kathleen expects that revenue to be higher but the figures are not final yet.

Next Kathleen reviewed the expenses, highlighting a few items. She noted that credit card processing fees are increasing, and unlike other clubs, the CCA does not ask its members to pay an additional 3% when using a credit card. Kathleen is working with Michael Moradzadeh to set up the system for ACH payments, but it is not in place yet and the dues notices are going out. Kathleen is hoping that the change will save the club approximately \$10,000.

We pay approximately \$78,000 in insurance but through our agreement with the Bermuda Race Foundation, that number is split 70-30 so we actually only pay \$45,000.

The Awards Committee expenses were more last year in part because of the cost of the 100. Also, the Commodore very generously donated trophies that we cleaned up, engraved, and had mounted. In addition, there were higher travel costs than normal last year because we had guests from Japan and South Africa. This year’s budget assumes that we are going back to normal historical ranges.

Kathleen noted that there is \$25,000 in the budget for Flag Officers. This covers travel for the Commodore and Vice Commodore as well as some funds for the Historian to print up his sea shanties and other historian materials.

Kathleen noted that the fall meeting in Lunenburg was both successful and under budget so she expects that cost for next year's hosted by the Chesapeake Station to be higher. The fall and annual meeting costs include food and drink, and also photography, AV equipment, meeting rooms, and labor.

Next Kathleen explained the \$143,000 line item, approximately one-third of our membership dues, that goes toward publications. She noted that our publications take the place of a traditional clubhouse so they are important to our members and they are also getting to be much more expensive.

Kathleen then explained the current problem with the Safety at Sea program expenses. Right now, the line item is just the hard expenses but does not include a percentage of our insurance expense. And when it is a cross-burpee event and the revenue is split with the NYYC, we need to have a more accurate actual cost of the event.

The Commodore thanked Kathleen for her report and invited questions. There were several questions about how the budget for the dues was calculated. There were concerns raised that the dues revenue line did not make sense given the number of members and the annual dues (the budget is too high). Kathleen noted that the accountants reported that we brought in \$343,376.81 in dues in 2023. In contrast, Michael Moradzadeh noted that his search revealed that we brought in \$314,395 in dues in 2023. At a minimum, the round number makes more sense so there is likely an accounting error by the bookkeepers.

Ultimately, it was suggested that in the future the Treasurer should add two numbers together: dues from the younger members (# of members under the age of 35 multiplied by the reduced dues rate) and then the dues from regular members. The regular members total should be a result of the number of members over age 35 less the lifetime members & Seafarers and less the number that have prepaid the annual dues multiplied by the annual dues less the number of possible shared mailing address discounts. This should result in a conservative estimate for dues revenue given that our membership remains relatively flat year over year.

There was then a motion made and seconded to approve the budget as proposed with direction to the Treasurer and Financial Affairs Committee to continue to review the details of last year's accounting with the bookkeepers. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The Commodore then thanked Kathleen, noting that she has a very difficult job and along with the Financial Affairs Committee, has brought order to a budgeting process that did not even exist a few years ago

6. The Commodore then turned our attention to the Membership Dues. There was a motion made and seconded to raise the dues for full membership to \$250 per year, \$165 per year for members under 35 years old, and for members who share the same address and share mailings it would be \$200 each. Initiation fees mirror the membership fees.

There was some discussion during which it was noted that we are in an inflationary time, so thing cost more each year, and that it might be better to raise the dues in small increments each year rather than a much bigger increase out of desperation. Ernie noted that when the club was formed, the original dues

were \$10, and that calculates to a 3% increase per year over the last century. The Commodore called for a vote and the **motion to raise the dues passed unanimously**.

7. The Commodore introduced the “Life Jackets & Tethers Statement” from the Safety and Seamanship Committee. He noted that right now, there is a statement on the CCA website that recommends, subject to the skipper’s discretion, that the crew should wear a life jacket. It says nothing about tethers. In contrast, the new statement, which includes the tagline " Stay Onboard; if not, Stay Afloat!" explicitly encourages the use of tethers. Bill Strassberg, Chair of the S&S Committee, was unable to attend the meeting and had asked the Board of Governors for approval of the statement, which is not posited as a mandate but a recommendation. If approved, it will be placed on the website and then the Safety and Sea Committee is discussing ways to use it that may include publishing in Scuttlebutt, creating some videos of CCA Members explaining why they wear tethers and life jackets, and generally a broader communications plan so that the tag line, " Stay Onboard; if not, Stay Afloat!" is something that would be associated with the CCA.

There was a motion made and seconded to support the Safety and Seamanship Committee’s Life Jackets and Tethers Statement and to publish it in the yearbook. The Commodore noted that in Lunenburg, there was an interesting discussion by the committee including Chuck Hawley’s comment that if you wind up going overboard, you’ve got a 50% chance of survival; whereas if you’re tethered to the boat, you have a 90% chance. **The motion passed unanimously.** (See attachment #1 below)

8. The Commodore invited any new business. A lengthy discussion of flag etiquette ensued. Topics included acceptable location to fly the burgee, how many club burgees can be flown at once, location on charter boats, location of member aboard flags, location of member aboard flags relative to other burgees and courtesy flags, and flags during club rendezvous or cruises. The Commodore appointed an ad hoc Committee to research and propose revisions to CCA Flag Etiquette, to be presented to the Board at the February 20 meeting. The Chair of this committee will be the Fleet Captain, Paul Hamilton. Members will include Steve Calhoun, Rowena Carlson, Jay Gowell, Hans Himmelman, and in part because he declared a love of vexillology, Club Historian Doug Adkins.

9. After some discussion, we made a plan for filling the Florida Staton Elected Governor vacancy left by Chris Terajewicz’s resignation. Club Secretary, Molly Barnes, will reach out to Florida RC Atle Moe (who was unable to attend this meeting) for a nomination. Once Molly has approval from the flags, she will initiate a vote to approve that appointment via email that will require 100% participation from the board.

10. The Commodore reminded us of the upcoming meetings of the Governing Board.  
Upcoming meetings for 2024: (All Zoom: 1700 Atl/1600 East/1500 Cen/1400/Mtn/1300 Pac)  
Tuesday, February 20 via Zoom  
Thur-Fri, February 29-March 1: Annual Meeting of Members, NYYC  
Tuesday, June 4 via Zoom  
Thursday, October 10 via Zoom  
Wed-Thur, October 16 -17: Fall Meeting of Members, Annapolis  
Tuesday, December 3 via Zoom

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1730 hours Eastern

Respectfully Submitted,

Molly P. Barnes  
Secretary, The Cruising Club of America

(please see attachments below)



## **The Cruising Club of America's Recommendation on Life Jackets and Tethers**

### ***Stay Onboard; if not, Stay Afloat!***

Wearing a life jacket and tether when on deck and underway is part of a vessel's Culture of Safety. When operating in warm waters, in daylight, and in calm conditions, virtually any approved life jacket will work. It's when conditions are more challenging that an inflatable offshore life jacket and a tether become the "right tools for the job." It's vital that you not only have sufficient buoyancy for rough conditions but that you remain attached to the vessel by means of a tether. This greatly reduces the chance of going overboard when rescue may be challenging for your crew.

The use of tethers is recommended under the following conditions:

- Sea conditions: large waves, heavy winds, cold water, confused seas
- Low visibility conditions: nighttime, fog, heavy rain, large seas
- Crew limitations: shorthanded, less experienced, lack of training, age and fitness
- Vessel design: boats with fewer protected spaces, sailing at greater angles of heel, smaller or lighter displacement sailboats with quicker motions