

**LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278**

LCIA Board Meeting – June 10, 2026 – DRAFT

Date of Meeting: This meeting was held at Pirzl Hall.

Board Members:

Mike Panek (P)	Tom Martin (VP)	Erin Szela (S)	Chris Fyler (T)
Gerald Dufresne (R)	Mary Griffin (R)	Carol Natitus (R)	Seth Kaufman (R)
Phil Silverstein (R)	Lynn Fontaine (R)		
Joseph Hall (Alt)	Liz Provencher (Alt)	Kay Warren (Alt)	

Public in Attendance: Cesar Barrios, Ralph Sherman, Lynn Paine, Carmen Hall, Lisa Whiteway, Yuna Davtyan, and Theresa Harty.

- 1. Call to Order/Seating of Alternates:** Mike called the meeting to order 6:35pm, provided reminder to sign in on the sign in sheet. Tom made a motion to seat Kay as an alternate. Carol seconded the motion. All in favor, Kay was seated as an alternate.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** May 13, 2026 Minutes. Tom made a motion to accept the meeting minutes, seconded by Chris. All in favor, minutes approved.
- 3. Public Comments: Phil Silverstein** stated that recently he has been reading several posts on social media and Facebook and wanted to note that Lake Chaffee has an official website that the LCIA pays for to have the domain. He noted that the website contains the Charter, By-Laws, and Ordinances. Phil read off several different posts that have been posted in recent (wheelies, loud engines, scumbag...comment, average working American cannot attend, roads, geese removal, etc.). Phil noted that the website contains factual information and does not feel that the Facebook page should be policed by the board when things are inaccurate. He included that if you are a board member and you are on Facebook, we should continue to direct people to the official website. All of the board members are volunteers. Phil feels that there has been a lot posted that hurts and divides the community of Lake Chaffee. Anyone can attend a meeting, have a vote, run for the board, or volunteer. For example, the roads issue would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Everyone can have a vote and a say, but misinformation and complaints hurts the community. Phil noted that Mike received a phone call about kids vandalizing down at the Hall. Phil drove over in 45 minutes after the phone call, spoke to the kids and found no vandalism, alcohol, or drugs and that they were simply hanging out talking.
Theresa moved in last fall, came from another lake community, to her dream of living on the lake. Seeking more information on what the LCIA does to test the water in the cove and her husband was cleaning out the weeds, brought up UConn would test her previous lake community's water. Tom noted that the LCIA tests the water three times a year, and Ralph will do it again this year. Theresa noted a group of volunteers patrols her previous lake that had done a lot of work to clean up their lake, that has comparable association fees. Mike noted that there were no invasive weeds in the lake, when tested by UConn, and the water is very clear in the middle of the lake. Previously, companies quoted a \$15k-\$20k for one application to remove the weeds, which the yearly budget cannot support currently. See proposed budget that will be

LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278

40 posted at the Hall and online on the website for additional information on specific line items
41 that make up the full budget yearly. Reminder that the LCIA needs volunteers who can help the
42 community as a whole.

43 **Yuna Davtyan** asked about a possible correlation between the waterfront lawns that are treated
44 with chemicals and the weed problem in the lake. Mike cannot confirm that there is a
45 correlation but notes that the LCIA does not encourage treatments on lawns, see ordinance.
46 Ralph noted that phosphorus is not allowed to be used on the lake, which is in the ordinance,
47 and is actually banned from fertilizers in the State of Connecticut. **Lynn Paine** noted that
48 fertilizer is fertilizer, and Elodia is going to exist in the lake; it is plant material. Currently, the
49 Elodia is in its infant stage and needs to be pulled; the only other way would be to dredge the
50 lake and there are not enough funds to do the entire lake. Mike noted he is not a scientist but
51 believes, personally, that lowering the lake worsens the weeds. Interested to see how the lake
52 weeds are after not lowering the lake last year.

53 **Lisa Whiteway** wondering about any possible grants that could be applied for in regard to the
54 roads. Mike noted that Lake Chaffee would be towards the end of the list, behind all the other
55 towns and cities, to get a grant. The LCIA is open to any residents sharing ideas to find solutions
56 to improve the community. Mike noted that fundraising has always been hard for the LCIA due
57 to lack of attendance.

58 **Carmen** noted she has been attending meetings for the past year, and Kay has had a lot of good
59 ideas. Carmen mentioned *Caring For Your Lakes* is a great book that provides ideas that do not
60 cost any money. Noted two lakes that she had heard that they received grant funds and would
61 like Lake Chaffee to be added to the list. Carmen noted in the past there was a group that
62 wanted to release sterilized fish in the lake that would eat the weeds. Carmen noted that the
63 agenda is not online for this meeting. Mike noted it was sent to the webmaster to be posted,
64 but they are the only person who has the login information to make the updates, and they are
65 not waiting for an email to post on it. Agenda is always posted on the bulletin board outside the
66 Hall prior to the meeting and was posted for June. Carmen noted a few ideas about a tarp to kill
67 weeds and a metal mattress to cut the weeds. Mike noted that not everything is just about the
68 money, we do not have the volunteers to do the work. **Lynn Paine** noted you cannot cut the
69 allodia like with metal mattress idea, but you will actually seed the lake more with weeds.
70 Adding that the tarp idea poses safety issues for people, children, wanted to note that any plan
71 would need to ensure that no one is hurt, including the wildlife. Lynn also noted that she would
72 like to find a way to help the community be able to have more people involved.

73 **4. Approval of Treasurer's Report:** May 2026 Report. Tom made a motion to accept the report,
74 Jerry seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

75 **5. Remarks by the President:** See attached that was read by Mike at the meeting.

76 **6. Correspondence: 1. Resident/First Selectwoman – Hall gatherings/possible cemetery damage.**
77 Mike received a call from the First Selectwoman about Hall gatherings of the general public and ,
78 Phil and Mike both, separately, came down to the Hall and noted there was no alcohol, drugs, or
79 vandalism – it was just kids hanging out. **2. Several tax emails/questions answered. 3. Email Liz**
80 **Provencher sent in board resignation. 4. 49 Lakeview – new owner, general questions about**

LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278

81 **LCIA.** Also noted that there were cars parked on the road **5. Email with pictures of large tree**
82 **down on private yard on Armitage Ct.** LCIA checked on it that it will be cleaned up even though
83 it is not on LCIA property. **6. Resident – Complaints about speeding on Lakeview.** Mike
84 contacted the First Selectwoman to see if the speed limit sign can be moved closer to the turn
85 onto Lakeview Drive at the bottom of the hill. **7. AirBnb Questions – directed to town** This
86 matter was referred to the town attorney. **8. Loose raft** Tom was also told about this as well. **9.**
87 Tom had some tax information requests that he responded to. He also received an email about
88 the AirBnB questions and directed them to the town.

89
90 **7. Chairman's Reports:**

- 91 **a. Boat Launch and Boat Dock:** (Jerry Dufresne) Will be mowing the lawn and noted that he
92 saw Mike Paine was there attempting to fix the boat launch. Jerry noted that his son has
93 been attempting to keep the boat launch cleaned up regularly.
- 94 **b. Constable:** (Jerry Dufresne) Only complaint he had was about spray painting in the
95 cemetery. Compliant unfounded. In response to unregistered vehicles, he continues to
96 inform State police about the occurrences.
- 97 **c. Beaches – Main & Mothers:** (~~Liz Provencher, Mary Griffin~~) **1.** Rototilling? Jerry spent 4-5
98 hours rototilling the Main Beach, Mary was there cleaning up the beach. Mary noted to
99 Mike that Mothers beach needs attention and volunteers to assist. Tom added that Mary
100 was looking at getting longer ropes for the raft that is there since it has been noted that it is
101 not that deep there. Additionally, Mary would like to add carpet to the raft and provided
102 samples for review. Jerry made a motion to approve, Carol seconded. All in favor, motion
103 passed. Projected cost for carpet is \$114.
- 104 **d. Dam:** (no Chairperson) **1.** Carl Acimovic quote – Mike received the quote, this is mandated
105 by the State for the 5-year review of the dam. Carl kept the same price the same as it cost
106 five years ago. This must be done in calendar year 2026 we have \$4k+ in the budget. Tom
107 made a motion to accept the quote and get the work started, Jerry second. All in favor,
108 motion passed. Mike will sign and get back to Carl. LCIA seeking a volunteer to spray with
109 appropriate solutions or burn off the growth that is developing on the dam.
- 110 **e. Environmental Chairperson:** (Ralph Sherman) Planned within the next two weeks to get the
111 first June water sample and bring it to the lab. Need to have three days without rain before
112 you can put a water sample. Mike noted the three locations which are the areas with the
113 most public traffic, in between the two islands and at the two beaches, and asked Ralph if a
114 sample can be done in the cove where all the weeds are and then the two beaches. Ralph
115 noted that the testing is for E. coli, and it is the same tests that the State does for public
116 beaches.
- 117 **f. Roads:** (Phil Silverstein) **1.** Summer repairs initiated (Phil) – Mike noted that Phil and him
118 went around the entire lake and marked all of the spots that need attention on the roads.
119 Phil indicated that Oak Drive, Deerfield, and Union Road from Pine Hall over to Route 89 are
120 the three locations that are going to be worked on first. LCIA has 14 private roads, and these
121 were deemed the most critical on the list in the sense of damage and emergency

LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278

- 122 personnel/passage. Costing around \$4k, the road repair budget has already been exceeded
123 and this will put it over more, but the repairs need to be done immediately.
- 124 **g. Fund Raising:** (~~Mary Griffin~~) **1.** Summer Kick Off Party needs (June 28th) Mary emailed with a
125 list of updates/needs. Mike noted that his family would donate the hot dogs and
126 hamburgers. The Paine family will donate the hamburger buns. Lisa Whiteway will get the
127 tablecloths. Also need advertising/flyers done. Mary may not be back in time for the July 4th
128 Boat Parade.
- 129 **h. Tax Collection:** (Tom Martin) Tom noted that there has been some success with tax
130 collection and that some houses have been sold recently which likely would also clear up
131 more tax collections. Since putting the 20 liens on the property for unpaid taxes, 5 have
132 been paid and lifted. Mike brought up a suggestion that the Board consider posting the list
133 of unpaid taxes, similar to the Town of Ashford that is public and anyone would be able to
134 see it. It would only include the address and not names. There is currently \$40k in unpaid
135 taxes still, there are a number of people who have not paid this year's taxes.
- 136 **i. Hall:** (~~Lynn Fontaine~~) **1.** Clean-up of Hall Lynn provided Mike a list of various needs from
137 Lynn. Tom will contact the Fire Marshal to come down and provide a new occupancy
138 certificate for updated occupancy max for renting. Lynn has been deep cleaning so the Hall
139 can be rented. Water is off in Women's restroom, may have a leak and that the kitchen sink
140 needs to be repaired.
- 141 **8. Old Business: 1.** Geese quote for round-up received. Mike noted the Geese Round-Up Account
142 has \$4k and he got a contract from the same company who did it previously in 2022, they will
143 come and do the same things again (\$3,175 in 2022; \$3,840 in 2026). Tom made a motion to
144 accept the contract, Kay seconded, Erin opposed, and the motion passed. Mike will sign the
145 quote. Ralph noted last time they were here there are two phases but Mike noted that the
146 company will come as soon as possible—may need to wait until they are no longer flying
147 anymore. Kay noted that there is no complaint feature on the website. Mike noted that if we
148 have that online, it would be public and everyone would see it with the name. Mike makes great
149 efforts to keep complaints and correspondence anonymous. Kay noted a spot to volunteer
150 online may be helpful. Mike noted that there is a Willing Helpers list and Mary had posted on
151 the unofficial Facebook page for the beach clean up in addition to emailing that list and
152 unfortunately only three people showed up.
- 153 **9. New Business: 1.** DEEP/Inland Wetlands update RE: Lake Drawdown potential. Mike noted that
154 there were many questions from Inland Wetlands about the lake drawdown when the vote had
155 been made **not** to lower the lake. Mike reached out to the Inland Wetlands commissioner that
156 we vote at the August meeting to lower the lake as it was requested that the LCIA attend the
157 Inland Wetlands June meeting. Mike had also reached out to DEEP contact who oversees Lake
158 Chaffee, there is no official paperwork needed now but requires a 45-day advanced notice if the
159 vote is yes to lower the lake this year as there may need some items done but will need to
160 review as the vote gets closer. **2.** Joe Hall will be resigning his position on the board. **3.** New
161 proposed budget review (put on website) fund aux. accounts. Mike discussed the proposed
162 budget for the year with a side-by-side comparison with the 2025-2026 proposed budget, the
163 2025-2026 actual expenses, and the proposed 2026-2027 proposed budget. See the attached

LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278

164 proposal. Mike noted that the insurance policy is shopped around by the 6 companies in the
165 country that will insure the lake. You cannot use, for example, Progressive. Mike noted this past
166 winter had a lot of snow so we spent a significant amount more this year. Jerry made a motion
167 to proceed with proposing the proposed budget to the public as presented by Mike, Tom
168 seconded. All in favor, passed. Kay thanked Mike for his work on the budget and for presenting
169 it to the board. **4. Volunteer needed to put the signs out for the Summer Meetings**
170 **10. Adjournment:** Jerry made a motion to adjourn, Tom seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.
171

172 **Remarks from the President:**

173 I would like to take a moment to address the current mood and conversation surrounding Lake
174 Chaffee. I hope this message gets circulated throughout the neighborhood so everyone has the
175 opportunity to hear the facts.

176 Through numerous emails, anonymous phone calls, text messages, and social media posts,
177 many residents have shared their concerns and perceptions about the Lake Chaffee Improvement
178 Association and its Board of Directors. It is clear that there is a great deal of discussion taking place
179 within our community. Some of that discussion includes rumors, assumptions, and speculation regarding
180 the Board's motives, activities, and commitment to the lake.

181 I have heard claims that Board members hold secret meetings, do not care about the lake, own
182 Airbnb properties, have personal agendas, or simply do nothing. I refuse to allow these types of
183 comments to continue circulating without acknowledgment or response.
184 As President, I would ask those who continue to question the Board's efforts to consider a few things.
185 How many meetings have you attended? How many times have you reached out to a Board member to
186 ask a question, express a concern, or offer a solution? Have you taken the time to review the
187 information that is regularly shared with residents?

188 It is easy to criticize from the sidelines. It is much harder to volunteer your time, attend
189 meetings, participate in discussions, and help solve the challenges facing our community. Whether the
190 topic is road repairs, geese management, lake maintenance, finances, or any other issue, the Board's
191 work is conducted openly and with the best interests of Lake Chaffee in mind.

192 If you have concerns, questions, or ideas, I encourage you to bring them directly to us. My
193 contact information is publicly available on the LCIA website. Call me. Email me. Send me a text. Attend
194 a meeting. We welcome constructive feedback and new ideas. What does not help our community is the
195 spread of rumors and speculation on social media, where assumptions can quickly be mistaken for facts.
196 When inaccurate information is repeated often enough, people begin to believe it. That damages trust,
197 divides neighbors, and distracts from the real work that needs to be done. Before sharing information, I
198 ask everyone to take the time to verify the facts and seek answers from those directly involved.

199 The reality is that the Board is made up of volunteers who dedicate countless hours to
200 addressing issues that affect our community. While residents may disagree with certain decisions,
201 disagreement should not be confused with a lack of commitment or concern. Constructive criticism and
202 differing viewpoints are healthy for any organization, but rumors and unfounded accusations only create
203 division and distract from the work that needs to be done.

LAKE CHAFFEE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.
PO Box 231, Ashford, CT 06278

204 If there are questions about Board actions, decisions, or priorities, I encourage residents to
205 attend meetings, review available information, ask questions, and engage directly with Board members.
206 Transparency and communication are essential, and facts should always take precedence over
207 speculation.

208 At the end of the day, every Board member and every resident shares a common interest:
209 maintaining and improving Lake Chaffee and preserving the quality of life in our community. We may
210 not always agree on how best to achieve that goal, but we should all be committed to treating one
211 another with respect, seeking the truth, and focusing on solutions rather than rumors.