

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

Thursday, August 16, 2012

5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Sausalito City Council Chambers 420 Litho Street Sausalito, CA

PUBLIC COMMENT IS INVITED CONCERNING EACH AGENDIZED ITEM PURSUANT TO THE BROWN ACT. PLEASE LIMIT YOUR COMMENTS TO THREE (3) MINUTES.

AGENDA

5:30 PM - CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL

1. Adjourn to closed session. Public meeting should re-convene at 6:00 PM
2. Minutes of June 21, 2012 Meeting
3. Review report of Harbor Administrator
4. Approval of prior expenditures for June 10 – August 10, 2012
5. Discuss and Approve Resolutions 13-1 and 13-2 accepting funding from the State of California for vessel removal operations
6. Discuss and Approve Resolution 13-3: Application for CalRecycle grant funding for \$495K to augment derelict vessel removal operations over the next three years
7. America's Cup update
8. Public comments invited concerning items NOT on this Agenda (3-minute limit)
9. Staff comments
10. Board member matters

NEXT MEETING: Tentatively planned for October 25, 2012. Board members please review your calendars and advise Staff as to your availability.

A COMPLETE AGENDA PACKET IS AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING ON THE RBRA WEBSITE <http://rbra.ca.gov> , AND AT THE SAUSALITO CITY LIBRARY.

TO RECEIVE AN ELECTRONIC MEETING NOTICE, PLEASE EMAIL REQUEST TO DON ALLEE AT dallee@co.marin.ca.us

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

August 10, 2012

TO: RBRA Board
FROM: Ben Berto, RBRA Clerk
SUBJECT: August meeting

Board members:

First, thank you for your remittance of member dues from most jurisdictions. The transition to a new fiscal year's budget and funding can be tricky, so your prompt payment is noted and most definitely appreciated.

Second, you will note on your agenda that the date proposed for the next RBRA Board meeting is October **25**, not the normal third Thursday October 18 date. This date will allow full RBRA Staff attendance at the hearing. Please look at your calendars and let Staff know at this meeting whether or not you would be available.

Staff has been working on securing funding necessary to effect the Board's direction to step up removal of abandoned/derelict vessels from the Richardson's Bay. To that end, Staff is close to completing two grant applications, primarily a CalRecycle application for \$495,000 to assist in abandoned/derelict vessel removal. This meeting's agenda contains a request for Board approval of a resolution authorizing this CalRecycle grant application.

Staff continues work on the Cosco Busan Recreational Use Grant application previously authorized by your Board at the June RBRA meeting, towards that grant's September submittal deadline.

The State has reorganized the State Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) into Department of Parks and Recreation. Breaking with that move is the \$54 million Park and Rec hidden-funds debacle and staff turnover, so there's no telling where their (and our) situation will end up. Staff will keep the Board informed as we know more, as it may affect abandoned watercraft and vessel turn-in grant program funding. So far that has not changed, and in fact Staff has on the current agenda Board acceptance of two Boating and Waterways/Parks and Rec grants.

BCDC has a new Executive Director, Larry Goldzband (see attached press release). Staff has not yet interacted with Mr. Goldzband, but he brings considerable related business background to the post.

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY
MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2012
HELD AT SAUSALITO CITY HALL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Ken Wachtel; (Mill Valley); Emmett O'Donnell (Tiburon); Jerry Butler (Belvedere); Kate Sears (Marin County); Jonathan Leone (Sausalito); Herb Weiner (alternate – Sausalito)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Bill Price (Harbor Administrator); Ben Berto (RBRA Clerk)

Meeting called to order at 5:40 PM

Minutes of April 2012 RBRA meeting

Minutes were approved unanimously.

Review report of Harbor Administrator

Mr. Price told the Board that Susan Sykes from the Department of Boating had conducted a site visit in Sausalito, and she had informed him that there would be a 10-15% reduction (\$75K AWAFF – \$16K VTIP) in the 2013 grant awards. This is because the Department had been deluged with applications this year, due in part to the 10% Agency match requirement which can now be handled as in-kind contributions. Chair Wachtel asked if the abandoned vessel problem was getting worse lately and Mr. Price reported he currently had over 580' of boats to dispose of and without constant funding the list grows longer.

Mr. Price also reported on a Rapid Response action that had occurred today, and Member Butler asked if cost recovery would be pursued. Mr. Price stated that he had accomplished the response on his own during the course of normal patrol, so it was part of his regular duties. He said that if a contractor is hired those costs are assigned to the vessel owner and pursued accordingly.

Prior expenditures

Member Sears asked if the items on the balance sheet are expected to remain the same for 2013, and Mr. Price responded that County lab fees for water testing were undetermined due to the uncertain fate of the lab. Member Sears reported that the County lab was in the County budget so no changes were expected. Mr. Price also said that the line item for vessel repairs was increased, but that he was employing his community service crew to prep and paint the vessels in order to save money as well.

The expenditure report was accepted.

Review and approve the RBRA FY2010 and FY 2011 Audit conducted by Maher Accountancy

Mr. Berto provided a brief summary of the audit, which revealed no surprises. He noted that Staff would be implementing a suggested change in the reporting of expected revenue in order to keep better track of grant payments and cash transactions. He added that the auditor had chided the RBRA for not having enough reserves in our account to

cover unforeseen financial difficulties, and that we would have to address this in the future.

Member O'Donnell asked for more time to go over audit and he moved to hold an e-mail vote by July 1. This course of action was passed unanimously by the Board.

(NOTE: The email vote was conducted before July 1, 2012. The three members voting: Tiburon, Belvedere, and the County, unanimously passed the Audit report.)

Review and discussion of non-live aboard vessel reduction options

Mr. Berto began the discussion by addressing the Board's direction to remove a larger number of stored derelict vessels. He discussed 4 options.

Option 1: Continuation of current levels of disposal – This option is least expensive. Even though the RBRA does more with less money than Contra Costa Sheriff's Office with their 6 safety staff and over a million dollars in annual funding, the current expansion in the number of anchored out vessels is a significant concern. Funding for current levels must be increased in any case.

Option 2: Low hanging fruit – He explained that we currently have a backlog of low hanging fruit which cannot be disposed of with current levels of funding. Chair Wachtel pointed out that Option 1 is what we are budgeted for.

Option 3: Grant funded – Mr. Berto pointed out we are currently applying for grants through a Cosco Busan mitigation recreational grant and also a Cal Recycling hazardous site grant. However, these grants require more budget per vessel since the work would be done by contractors and not in house, with additional expenses due to increased storage, legal and hazmat requirements.

Option 4: Full-scale reduction – This would remove the stored vessels from the bay and be most consistent within BCDC's legal framework, but it would be prohibitively expensive, and is otherwise infeasible.

Member Sears pointed out increased costs due to grant preparation and County Services (Mr. Berto's time). Member O'Donnell questioned whether the rise in costs was correct. Mr. Berto pointed out that Staff currently works hard to negotiate voluntary release of derelict vessels by owners. If a regulatory approach is used, our costs will jump because of increased towing, storage, adjudicating and other legal costs. Our partners in law enforcement have similar budgetary concerns. Member Leone told the Board that the Sheriff had asked Sausalito Police not to cite boats, and that there was a limited traceability on vessel registration. Mr. Berto said that many of the vessel owners are judgment-proof, without assets to attach to compel action. Chair Wachtel noted that without a mooring option there is nothing to stop repopulating with new vessels once existing vessels are removed, since more will continue to arrive due to the current economic climate. Member Butler did not see a mooring field happening without BCDC cooperation. Bite the bullet – if it costs more, go to the council's for more money.

Both Members Wachtel and Sears felt that we should maintain current levels of disposal, to be increased accordingly if grant funds are secured. Member O'Donnell advised to go

full bore on Option 4 with the proviso of obtaining grant funds. Local agencies make up the partial balance. Member Leone referred to the number in the current budget being too low to do more, and he advised that Sausalito would not be chipping in any more budget dollars. He said that Sausalito views the anchorage as a safety and environmental issue, and that the Police and Coast Guard were much more involved. He expressed frustration that the Sheriff wasn't more involved and co-operative with increased efforts.

Mr. Berto said that sometimes in JPA's issues more of a concern for individual member agencies are individually funded by those members. Member dues ratios might also be adjusted. Member Leone advised that the local jurisdictions have a history of failure with a legal approach, and that while the RBRA's current method of disposal is cost effective, any new option would cost more than could be afforded.

Chair Wachtel asked if these vessels affect boaters and Lt. Skoog from the Sausalito Police Department advised the board that while theft may be unreported, there were no real issues. Mr. Berto updated the Board on the continued staff level meetings with BCDC, and that while the recent change-over at Executive Director has left some uncertainty, the staff has remained responsive and very key in developing the Cal Recycling grant proposal. Member Leone said that Sausalito was close to meeting low income housing requirements with live-aboards, and that the City was hoping to trade developable underwater land for fill concessions from BCDC.

America's Cup Update

Mr. Berto said that planning was in the works, but that the date is still out over a year.

Public Comments

Douglas Storms from Gates Coop said that he wanted to get a community workshop to work on these issues, and that he was interested in starting a volunteer boat-saver network to stop dragging vessels before they reached shore. Member Leone advised him to speak to Lt. Skoog about setting up a neighborhood watch.

Staff Comments

Staff presented Jerry Butler with a plaque commemorating his 8+ years of dedicated service on the Board.

Board Member Matters

None

The meeting was adjourned to closed session at 7:30 PM.

NOTE: The next meeting of the RBRA is scheduled for **August 16, 2012 at 5:30 PM** at the Sausalito City Hall Chambers.

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

HARBOR ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

August 8, 2012

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

- **Dept. of Boating and Waterways** – 1) Grant requests for AWAFF (\$75,000) and VTIP (\$16,000) have been approved. 2) The pump-out boat Operations and Maintenance grant is in its final stages and once approved, will provide \$60K to be used over three years. 3) Have been asked to advise on the re-convened Abandoned Vessel Advisory Committee (AVAC) to explore the enactment of new laws focused on removing impediments to abating derelict vessels
- **US Coast Guard** – Met with the Abandoned Vessels group on 8/7 to discuss regional issues and explore vessel removal through new regulations adopted through the State Lands Commission 2) Coast Guard has been red tagging vessels in Richardson's Bay with pollution advisory stickers. These vessels are entered into a database and are subject to increased scrutiny by the Coast Guard
- **Sausalito Public Works** – Cleared the Dunphy Park beach of large cement pilings, boulders and wreck remnants from the Pleistocene era so that the beach could be used by small boats, including the Hobie Cat Worlds held in late June. Planning on a major clean-up at Cass Gidley marina in early September
- **BCDC** – working with staff to prepare a grant application for Cal Recycling. If approved by State, it would make \$495K available for removal of derelict abandoned vessels over the next three years

DEBRIS REMOVAL

- Disposed of 7 vessels. One was a 65' powerboat. 2 vessels are currently awaiting demolition.
- 3 boats are currently impounded
- 7 boats are in storage awaiting disposal. One 65' powerboat is stored on its mooring and will be demolished early September
- Beach clean-up efforts ongoing using Marin Co. Community Service volunteers

RAPID RESPONSE

- Recovered one sailboat adrift in Sausalito, and one sailboat, one powerboat and a skiff from the waters off the Belvedere shoreline

WATER QUALITY

- Weekly monitoring of Schoonmaker Beach shows water quality standards for water contact recreation have been met throughout the summer, This site is constantly in use by swimmers, small boaters and children.

OTHER

- Annual haul-out and engine service complete on patrol boat. Sausalito P.D. is still sharing costs on maintenance, since they need to keep a shallow water asset available for their operations
- Obtained a vessel for Sausalito PD to use for training exercises
- Working with Angel Island State Park to remove a sunken anchor-out from their shoreline

Richardson Bay Regional Agency

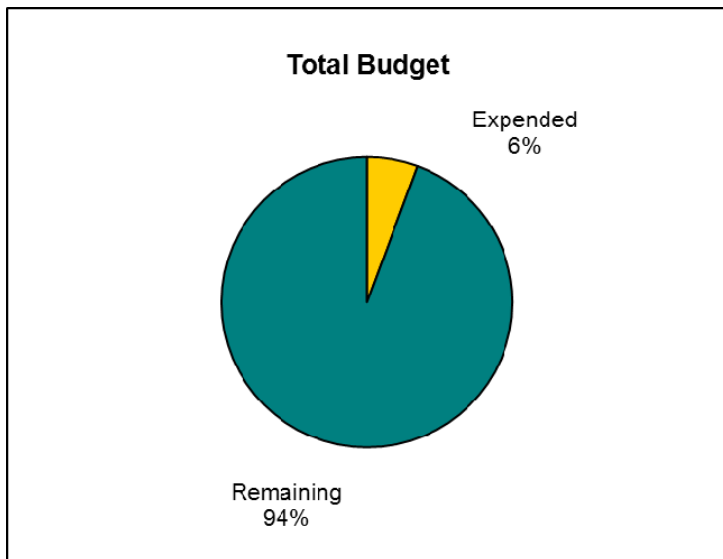
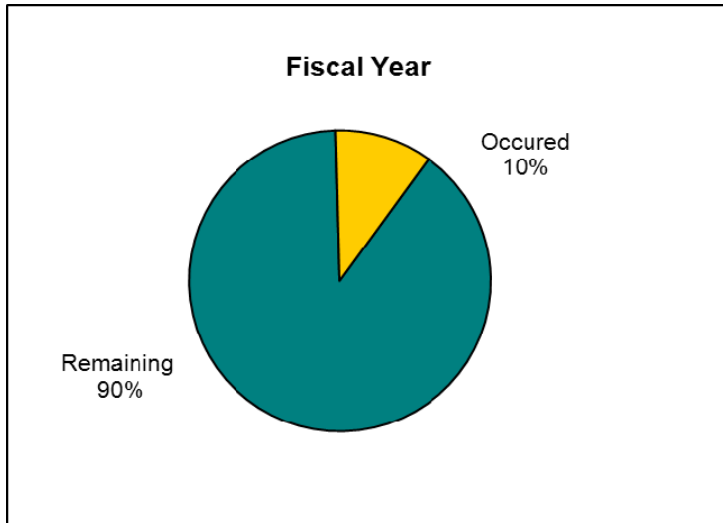
Vessel Disposal List April - June 2012

Date	Name	Type	Amount
7/13/2012	Dream Quest	28' Allmand f/g powerboat	854.00 abandoned * - VTIP
7/21/2012	Rebellion	36' wooden powerboat	900.00 abandoned - sunk - AWAf
5/12/2012	Dawson	27' wooden sailboat	723.00 abandoned - sinking - AWAf
5/12/2012	Clipper marie	26' f/g sailboat	250.00 abandoned - AWAf
6/2/2012	Moe & Larry	37' wooden Hunter powerboat	1338.00 abandoned - sinking - AWAf
6/2/2012	Cal 20 Blue	20' f/g sailboat	100.00 abandoned - adrift - AWAf
6/9/2012	Amazing Grace	65' wooden powerboat	18500.00 abandoned * - AWAf

8 vessels total 22665.00

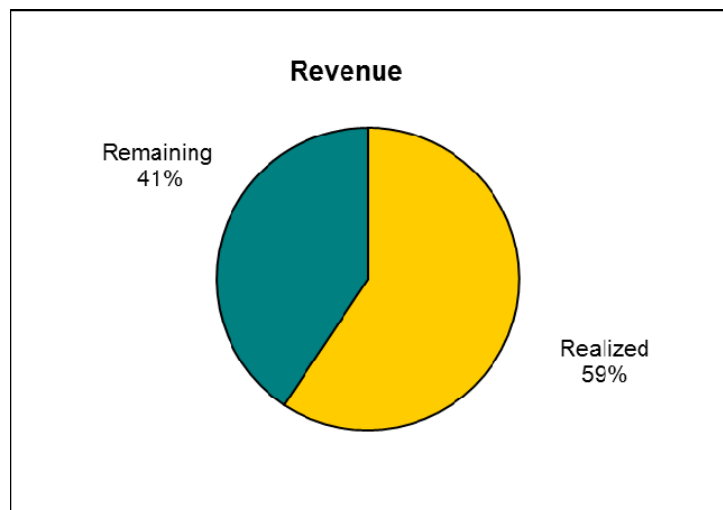
* indicates estimated invoices

Percent of Budget and Percent of Year as of August 7, 2012



Expenditures vs. Budgeted Expenditures

Expenditures	\$ 21,056
Adopted Budget	\$373,373



Realized Revenue vs. Budgeted Revenue

Realized Revenue	\$221,963
Budgeted Revenue	\$374,080

RBRA FY 2012/13 July 1 - August 6, 2012 BALANCE SHEET

COST ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES	REVENUE
City Contribution	County of Marin member dues		-101,776.00
City Contribution	Town of Tiburon member dues		-23,947.00
City Contribution	City of Mill Valley member dues		-11,974.00
City Contribution	City of Sausalito member dues		-83,816.00
Bldgs & Grounds Rent	Mooring rental		-150.00
Bldgs & Grounds Rent	Mooring rental		-150.00
Bldgs & Grounds Rent	Mooring rental		-150.00
		total revenue	-221,963.00
Rent - Off Space	Schoonmaker Point marina - slip rental	147.50	
Rent - Off Space	Schoonmaker Point marina - slip rental	276.12	
Rent - Off Space	Libertyship Dry Storage	240.00	
Prof Svcs - Other	MT Head - vessel pump-out service	425.00	
Rent - Off Space	ICB office rental	420.00	
Prof Svcs - Other	Wedlock Surveys - survey vessel	235.00	
Prof Svcs - Other	Fleshman - day labor	250.00	
Prof Svcs - Other	Parker Dive Service - Rapid Response	1,062.50	
Prof Svcs - Other	Fleshman - day labor	100.00	
		total expenses	3,156.12

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. 13-01

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY AGREEING TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

WHEREAS, the Department of Boating and Waterways of the State of California (DBW) has granted funds of \$75,000 in Contract #12-214-515 through their Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund (AWAF), to the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) to be used to remove derelict watercraft from the waters of Richardson's Bay, and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the RBRA will pay a 10% match (\$7500.00) for all invoices related to this work, and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency may submit invoices for in-kind services to cover the 10% matching funds.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

The Board of the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency approves and accepts the 2012-13 AWAF Contract #12-214-515 with the Department of Boating and Waterways, and designates Harbor Administrator William Price to be the authorized signatory to represent RBRA in all matters pertaining to the execution of this AWAF contract.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency, this 16th day of August, 2012.

**Kenneth Wachtel
Board Chair**

ATTEST:

**Clerk of the Board
Ben Berto**

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. 13-02

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY AGREEING TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

WHEREAS, the Department of Boating and Waterways of the State of California (DBW) has granted funds of \$16,000. in Contract #12-214-529 through their Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP), to the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) to be used to remove derelict watercraft from the waters of Richardson's Bay, and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the RBRA will pay a 10% match (\$1600.00) for all invoices related to this work, and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the RBRA may submit invoices for in-kind services to cover the 10% matching funds.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

The Board of the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency approves and accepts the 2012-13 VTIP Contract #12-214-529 with the Department of Boating and Waterways, and designates Harbor Administrator William Price to be the authorized signatory to represent RBRA in all matters pertaining to the execution of this VTIP contract.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency, this 16th day of August, 2012.

**Kenneth Wachtel
Board Chair**

ATTEST:

**Clerk of the Board
Ben Berto**

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. 13-03

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SITE CLEANUP TRUST FUND FOR THE FOLLOWING SITE CLEANUP PROJECT:

REMOVAL OF 45 ABANDONED DERELICT VESSEL SITES FROM THE WATERS OF RICHARDSON'S BAY, CALIFORNIA OVER A THREE YEAR PERIOD WITH A TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT OF \$495,000

WHEREAS, the people of the state of California have enacted Assembly Bill 2136 (Eastin, Stas.1993, Ch. 655) that authorizes the Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to initiate and administer a program for cleanup of solid waste disposal sites and for cleanup of solid waste at co-disposal sites where the responsible party either cannot be identified or is unable or unwilling to pay for timely remediation, and where cleanup is needed to protect public health and safety or the environment;

WHEREAS, said procedures established by CalRecycle require the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of the application before submission of said application; and

WHEREAS the applicant will enter into an agreement with CalRecycle for the site cleanup. California Department of Recycling (Cal Recycling) has proposed to grant funds of \$495,000 to the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) to be used to remove abandoned derelict watercraft from the waters of Richardson's Bay over the course of three years; and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the RBRA will remove 45 or more abandoned derelict vessels from the waters of Richardson's Bay, following strict environmental guidelines; and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that the RBRA may submit invoices for in-kind services to cover the 10% matching funds.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency hereby:

- 1. Approves the filing of an application for the cleanup of solid waste using grant funds from the Solid Waste Disposal Site Cleanup Trust Fund for the project specified above ; and**

2. Appoints the Harbor Administrator as agent of the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including but not limited to: applications, grant agreements, amendments, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 16th day of August, 2012.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 13-3ws duly adopted by the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency following role call vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

**Kenneth Wachtel
Board Chair**

ATTEST:

**Ben Berto
Clerk of the Board**

Lawrence J. Goldzband Appointed Executive Director of San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

SAN FRANCISCO, July 20, 2012 – The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) appointed Lawrence J. Goldzband as its new executive director. Goldzband was a member of BCDC from 2005 until February of this year and also from 1996-1998.

“I am honored and humbled by the Commission’s decision,” said Goldzband. “I am looking forward to furthering my work with BCDC commissioners, staff and stakeholders to ensure that BCDC remains the region’s leader in promoting, protecting and expanding the Bay’s environmental health and economic power. I cannot imagine a more exciting or rewarding position.”

BCDC, established in 1965, is a permanent state agency dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the San Francisco Bay and to the encouragement of the Bay’s responsible use. In his new position as executive director, Goldzband will lead planning and policy development efforts, guide disparate stakeholders to agree on difficult policy choices and increase BCDC’s productivity and efficiency. Goldzband brings extensive policy and planning background to complement BCDC’s dual functions of conservation and economic development.

“Our search efforts for our new executive director were extensive, and we are very pleased with our choice,” said BCDC’s current chair, Zachary Wasserman, a partner at Wendel, Rosen, Black & Dean LLP. “Larry’s experience and credentials at the local, state and federal levels give BCDC a strong footing to deal with the needs, opportunities and challenges that face our Bay, the Commission, our constituents and applicants in the coming years.”

Will Travis, BCDC’s previous executive director, who retired after 17 years, applauded the appointment. “Larry brings a unique combination of experience as a former member of the Commission, the head of a state agency, an educator and a corporate manager,” he said. “Climate change will bring difficult challenges to the San Francisco Bay and the Bay Area, and I know Larry will provide inspired leadership to ensure BCDC’s dedicated commissioners, outstanding staff and the people of our wonderful region can overcome these obstacles.”

Goldzband is a veteran public affairs and planning professional with extensive experience in creating and managing public policy, philanthropic and compliance programs in large and small organizations. He has served as program director at the California Building Performance Contractors Association, executive director of the corporation foundation and manager of charitable contributions at Pacific Gas & Electric Company and director of the State of California’s Department of Conservation. He has also served as vice chair of the California Coastal Conservancy.

“Larry is well-equipped to lead BCDC in protecting the Bay from emerging threats and capturing the tremendous restoration opportunities before us. Generations of residents have worked to save the Bay for people and wildlife, and Larry knows that improving the Bay’s health is central to our economy and quality of life. We are excited to work with him to build on the great accomplishments of the Commission that Save The Bay helped create forty years ago,” said David Lewis, executive director of Save The Bay.

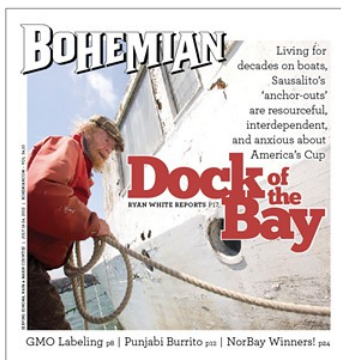
John Coleman, executive director of the Bay Planning Coalition (BPC), added: “BPC is very pleased with the selection of Larry Goldzband as the newly appointed executive director of BCDC. Having worked with Larry, I know he never underestimates the importance of the maritime and economic issues affected by the Bay, while protecting and enhancing our treasured environment. BPC looks forward to a long and successful working relationship with Larry, BCDC Commissioners and staff.”

In addition to his professional career, Goldzband is very active in the Bay Area community. He currently serves on the Board of Directors and is treasurer of the Foundation for Youth Investment, is a former chair of the Board of Directors of Coro Northern California and is an adjunct professor at Golden Gate University, teaching a graduate level course in “Management of Public Issues,” as well as English composition for undergraduates. Goldzband earned his M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University (1995), and his B.A. from Pomona College (1980).

The Anchor-Outs

In Sausalito's shadow, a community adrift

by [Ryan White](#) | July 18, 2012



[Michael Amsler](#)

Late last January, Phil McGovern's cell phone rang around 4am, that most ominous of hours. It was the U.S. Coast Guard on the other end, calling to inform McGovern that the anchored boat he called home was spouting flames, its hull inching lower into the dark depths of Richardson's Bay with each passing minute.

The fire, fueled by a deck full of hoarded clutter, quickly consumed the vessel, and with it, McGovern's beloved onboard library. As an unemployed carpenter, McGovern had spent the past year rebuilding the boat, whose charred remains would soon come to rest on the shallow bay's muddy floor. The fire's cause remains a mystery.

Tales of near-disaster and worse abound in a long-established but controversial floating community in the usually calm waters of southern Marin's Richardson Bay. Some 50 people live year-round aboard a motley collection of vessels in varying states of disrepair within view of the affluent hillside homes and mansions of Sausalito and Tiburon, but police say up to 130 call the bay home in warmer months.

While "anchor-outs," as they're locally known, have lived on the small bay for as long as anyone can remember, there's a fresh focus on the group now as Sausalito's newest police chief has simultaneously stepped up marine patrols and health initiatives. While police say they're just doing their best to ensure public safety along the waterfront, ask most anchor-outs and they'll attribute the heightened scrutiny to the run-up to the highly anticipated 2013 America's Cup Finals, which will take place in the main waters of San Francisco Bay and likely bring a flurry of visitors and media attention to nearby bayside communities such as Sausalito.

At a glance, the Richardson Bay anchorage presents a postcard maritime scene. Indeed, the vistas are so prized that a Belvedere couple recently made national headlines after buying a \$4.2 million house next door so they could tear it down to better their view. But for those who call the bay's waters home, it's often a life less than idyllic, one full of daily challenges and perils. Beyond harrowing winter storms and the practical difficulties of daily life afloat, chronic unemployment, substance abuse, mental health problems and poverty afflict many of the bay's residents.

While some vessels are kept seaworthy, others are little more than floating barges, precariously piled with debris. Fires and sunken vessels are common, and during periods of high winds and stormy seas, boats routinely drag their anchors, colliding with neighboring vessels or crashing into the Tiburon shoreline. At the U.S. Army Corps work yard along the Sausalito waterfront, a steady influx of maimed and sunken vessels add to a mountainous pile of flotsam plucked from the bay.



[Michael Amsler](#) **FEELING TIPSY** Peter Romanowsky plays guitar with Diamond Dog at the Ferry dock.

And yet the bay's protected waters have long served as a refuge for people who might otherwise be homeless. "This anchorage is a safety valve for people who've lost their homes, who're divorced, foreclosure, whatever," says Peter Romanowsky, 62, who moved onto an anchored vessel after a difficult divorce nearly three decades ago.

Romanowsky is widely known for his annual bids for local political office (he self-identifies as Republican) and for playing the guitar before tourists arriving off the ferry, his sunglasses-wearing dog under one arm. But these days he says he's looking for a home off the water, citing a growing number of friends lost in recent years to drowning and other causes. "People come out there to get a fresh start, or to die," he says. "A lot of people are just dead."

Chief among the daily hazards anchor-outs face is getting to shore and back from their vessels, which are sprinkled along more than a mile of Sausalito waterfront. Many of the anchor-outs come ashore in skiffs for almost daily free lunches at local churches and to hang out at Dunphy Park, where they play bocce ball and socialize. A few commute to jobs onshore.

Those who live here readily attest to the beauty and freedom of life on the bay's open waters. It's a community that's historically been known for attitudes of self-reliance and non-conformism. "I tell you, these are resourceful people," says Southern Marin fire captain Matt Bouchard, whose department will typically respond to several emergency calls a week on the bay. "When the rest of us guys are used to our hot water and fluorescent lighting, and the whole world comes to an end, those guys are going to make it. They know how to survive with nothing."

Suzi Olson, who varnishes and paints boats for a living, is notable both for being regularly employed and for being a woman in the mostly male anchorage. She's lived on a succession of boats on the bay for more than two decades. Last August, however, she finally opted for a slip at Clipper Yacht Harbor that, for a hefty monthly fee, allows her to live aboard her boat. Fear of falling into cold bay waters prompted her to leave the open waters for the ease and security of the harbor. "One night I almost ended up in the water," Olson recounts.

While exact counts are hard to come by, Olson can remember a number of anchor-out drownings over the years. "They don't fight. They're drunk, they're taking a leak, they fall in the water, hit their head, whatever," she says. "They find them with their zippers down most of the time, believe it or not."

According to Sausalito police chief Jennifer Tejada, a "significant percentage" of anchor-out residents struggle with alcoholism. "Some of them don't make it back to their boat," she says. "Some of them do, and then they fall over, and they drown," she says. "The first week I was here, we had a drowning of one of them who had fallen over drunk. You can't last very long in those frigid waters."



Michael Amsler **TO THE RACES** Increased police focus on the anchor-outs is causing anxiety among boat dwellers over the America's Cup finals, held in the Bay next year.

There are other concerns as well. Sewage stemming from vessels anchored in the bay has long been a topic of debate in Sausalito. While the Richardson Bay Regional Agency has offered free holding tanks and contracted with the company M.T. Head to offer free waste-removal services for anchor-outs, participation is low. Rick Mortimer, owner of M.T. Head, says only 15 of an estimated 50 boats were using the monthly service. The others, he believes, are "just dumping it out there in the bay."

For two days last November, the Sausalito Police Department teamed up with Marin County's Department of Aging and Adult Services and several nursing students in a public health outreach effort. Contacted on land and water, anchor-outs were offered flu and tetanus shots, eye exams, fire extinguishers and blankets, first aid supplies, brown bag lunches and information on basic services such as county healthcare, veterans benefits and dental care.

"As you get older, you can only deal with the elements so much," says Sean Stephens, veterans service officer for the county of Marin, who spearheaded the outreach events. "You have to come to the realization that 'I need healthcare,' 'I need a warm bed,' warm clothes, stuff like that."

Stephens says so far he's identified about 10 veterans living on the water. "Believe it or not, there are some people who don't realize they're veterans," he says. One initially wary anchor-out discovered he was eligible for VA health benefits and transitional housing. "He was about in tears," Stephens recalls.

While Stephens and his colleagues consider the outreach events a success, they're well aware of the community's deep-rooted suspicion of outsiders offering assistance. At the first on-the-water outreach on Nov. 1, some anchor-outs fled when word got out that county officials would be coming by with police to visit their boats, Stephens says.

Indeed, Sausalito's anchor-outs tend to be particularly wary if not outright resentful of local law enforcement. Tales abound in the community of unwarranted police searches, harassment, punitive fines or abuse. A common refrain among the anchor-outs interviewed for this article is that the outreach events are little more than political cover for a law enforcement crackdown.

"I can't tell you how many people thought that it was, myself included, an ulterior motive to get onto the people's boats," Olson says.

Stephens and his county colleagues say they're just trying to offer assistance to those that want help. "Nobody's trying to get these people off the water," he says. "Nobody wants to disrupt their way of life. We just want them to know that if you want to come off the water, if you need help, if you need benefits, let us know."

But with the 2013 America's Cup looming on the horizon, many anchor-outs are convinced local authorities want to "clean up" Richardson Bay before the Cup arrives. "There's always been pressure to get rid of the anchor-outs or thin them out," says Romanowsky. "It comes in waves. Every 10 years or so, there's a new movement."

Jennifer Tejada, responsible for increasing law enforcement on the water since she was named police chief last year, flatly denies any such allegation. "I have no intention of cleaning it up for America's Cup," she says. "My intention is to protect and serve this community."

The chief says she's well aware the anchor-out community is a politically sensitive topic in a town with a strong maritime identity. "The anchor-outs are historically the sacred symbol of bohemian Sausalito," she says. "Unless you really go out there and you meet and greet the anchor-outs, or you look at the statistics, or you're in this business, you don't see beyond that."

She insists the police's renewed focus on the bay is not about driving out the anchor-outs but about reducing the waterfront's comparatively high crime rate. Sgt. Bill Fraass, who leads the department's marine patrol unit, says 27 anchor-outs were arrested during the first six months of 2011 (the most recent period for which numbers are available), largely for crimes such as public drunkenness, methamphetamine use and possession of stolen property. In addition, Fraass says about 45 people who live on the water or frequent the waterfront area have criminal histories and are still active in crime.

"There's a pretty big percentage that are part of this revolving door of this quality of life crime trend, and so we want to address those," he says.

But ask most on the water and they'll say the anchor-outs have suffered a long history of persecution and harassment that predates even the houseboat wars of the 1970s and '80s. In the late 1980s, anchor-outs successfully fought the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's efforts to curtail long-term mooring in Richardson Bay. (In a move especially offensive to the anchor-outs, the agency had begun classifying many of the anchored vessels as "bay fill.")

Diane Linn, executive director of the Ritter Center, a nonprofit that works with homeless throughout Marin, isn't surprised the anchor-outs tend to have a strained relationship with local police. "Either by their own choices or by their own existence in a culture of poverty, the relationship with police officers tends to be traumatic for the most part," Linn says. "When you're poor, you really have those experiences. People should not be too surprised when there's not an openness or willingness."

Dominique McDowell is among a handful of social workers trying to overcome the residents' wariness. As a case manager for the Ritter Center, McDowell attends the weekly free lunch held at Sausalito Presbyterian Church, where he offers residents help obtaining IDs, bus tickets, clean showers, county medical services, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other services.

"It's a population that has learned how to survive with basic necessities and basic skills," McDowell says. "And that causes a lot of conditions. That causes depression, poverty, hunger, lack of showers . . . no funds."

McDowell, who says he struggled with drug addiction himself and spent time in prison earlier in life, voices wonder that the town doesn't do more for its maritime residents, such as provide public showers. "I know how it feels to be thrown away, to feel uncared for, to feel like your life has no purpose, to feel like nobody cares," he says. "When all the time you live on survival skills—that's how these people live—they just want to survive another day. It's a lonely place."

Those hoping the anchor-outs will eventually go away are kidding themselves, he says. "These people been here 30, 40, 50 years. Where are they going? They're not going nowhere. So if you can't beat 'em, join 'em—work with them."

McGovern, a Mill Valley native who was left temporarily homeless when his boat burned last January, says he has twice been turned down for SSI benefits. Blind in one eye from a firewood-chopping accident and diagnosed with emphysema three years ago, he struggles to navigate the medical system. "I can't believe the paperwork and tonnage of hoops I have to go through to see the doctor," he says. "I need an advocate is what I need."

Lack of accessible public showers in Sausalito is a particularly sore point for anchor-outs like McGovern and Romanowsky, who say they usually go without. Others depend on the kindness of friends or have managed to gain access to private harbor facilities. "I'm stuck out here, and they've closed every shower," McGovern says. "It makes a person like me become real angry."

Romanowsky says he'll easily go a year without a hot shower. "This town is so stingy that they won't provide any public showers," he says. "I have a big long bread knife. I just scrape my skin with a bread knife. I call it a knife bath."

Though some anchor-outs are just struggling to survive, others have managed to settle into a comfortable existence on the water. No one has been living at anchor here longer than Ale Eckstrom, a 76-year-old musician and poet who, after logging more than five continuous decades afloat on Richardson's Bay, can rightfully be called grandfather of the anchor-outs. With his spry, compact figure and lyric-laden speech, Eckstrom looks a bit like a seafaring leprechaun, the likeness accented by his knee-high socks and breeches, brown vest, Celtic brooch, scraggly orange beard, ruddy visage and tweed cap.



Michael Amsler LIFE ON THE WATER At 76, Ale Eckstrom is the grand elder of a maligned boating community that's been woven into the fabric of Sausalito for decades.

A Colorado native, Eckstrom first walked into Sausalito in 1957 after serving in the Navy. He made a living as a concertina player in coffeehouses and cabarets along the coast, and his entertainer's impulse is still audible in the limericks and sea shanties that pepper his conversation.

Most days he can be found aboard his 63-foot World War II-era aviation rescue boat *Yesterday* (after the Beatles' song), with its onboard workshop, claw-foot tub and eclectically decorated den of found objects, books, and large windows giving out on an ever-shifting panorama of water, shoreline and mountains. He reluctantly comes ashore every few days for supplies ("I like fresh milk," he says) in his motorized scow, but he's happiest at home on the water. Most days, he says, are spent "dancing around and playing with boats" and keeping company with his two feline shipmates, Siammy and Calicoco.

While he spent two decades brewing his own black stout aboard his vessel and many more years nursing a drinking habit, Eckstrom says he's been sober since 2001. "If I didn't quit drinking, I was on the verge of having a nasty accident," he says, citing the inherently perilous journey to and from shore in a small skiff. "Alcoholism is an entertainer's hazard," he says, adding that a particularly tumultuous relationship finally "drove him to sobriety." These days, he steams the alcohol out of his Sierra Nevada stout and drinks from a small jar in his pocket as he runs errands ashore on a rusty old small-wheel bicycle.

Even for a seasoned and sober seaman, threat of disaster is a constant companion. "There are times out here when if you make a misstep, it may very well be the last step you ever make," he says. During a fierce storm one night last February, Eckstrom nearly lost his boat when the wind and waves severed both chains anchoring the vessel to the bay floor, suddenly setting him adrift. He was able to set his spare anchor before his vessel crashed upon the Tiburon shoreline downwind. "Every time the boat needs saving," he recounts, "you have to save it again or all the other times don't count."

But for Eckstrom, life at anchor is infinitely preferable to what he views as the landlubber's indentured plight of rents or mortgages. "The real estate mentality just refuses to think of anyone having an alternative to leasing and renting property," he says. "If all you own is a boat, no matter how nice it is or expensive it might be, you're shit in most people's eyes." Mere mention of landlords makes him visibly shudder. "I'd live in a tree before I'd pay a landlord," he says.

It's a common sentiment among anchor-outs. Jan Zaslav, a public health nurse for Marin County who has worked with anchor-outs, says, "What's interesting is you go out there in the boat and you see all these mansions—Belvedere, Tiburon and Sausalito—and their point is, 'The people living in the mansions are the slaves. We're the free ones.'"

Or as Eckstrom, donning his poet's cap, puts it, "I rise and fall on every tide that flows, turn to face every wind that blows."

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