



SLPID Minutes
Proposed 2027 Budget Public Hearing
Regular Public Meeting
Malta Town Hall
August 20, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Chair Kathy Simmonds, 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Commissioners Present: Simmonds, Scalici, Mazzotti, Borisenok, Baker

Staff Present: Cristina Connolly, Lake District Administrator

Public Present: Paul Mattison (SLA)

PRESENTATIONS:

Chair Simmonds read the notice of public hearing.

Commissioner Mazzotti presented the proposed 2027 budget: total lake management, \$123,100; vehicle and equipment expense, \$22,000; office and general administrative, \$89,300.00; outside professional fee, \$56,000.00; and wages, \$240,000.00. Total budget \$544,008.00 including the county tax levy and municipal contributions.

Public Comment on Proposed 2027 Budget: limited to three minutes. Not intended for commissioners or staff to answer questions or speak, only to listen. The Board of Commissioners will not take action on an item presented during the public comment period.

Paul Mattison began with: "My question is: when do we know the final amount of taxes?"

Cristina said this is the final amount, and we were notified in mid-August.

Paul Mattison – The amounts that we get from the towns, has that changed over the last ten years?

Cristina said yes.

Paul Mattison – What is your estimate of the number of users of the lake that pay taxes to those that don't?

Cristina said there is no way to tell. A boat count could give an idea of how many boaters are on the lake versus how many are launching from the state launch. SLPID counts that way each year.

Paul Mattison - Does an in-lake boat count extra docks? And there seems to be an increase in private individuals renting dock space.

Commissioner Scalici said that does not have anything to do with the proposed budget.

Paul Mattison asked whether you have the ability to legislate that.

Cristina said SLPID does not enforce or ask people that; the reports are posted publicly, shared every year with the municipalities, and discussed if there is a need for it.

Paul Mattison - Essentially, the budget is not enough money to do anything.

Commissioner Mazzotti said we do an awful lot with the money each year.

Paul Mattison - Well, if you look at the budget, an awful lot is spent on weeds.

He then said We are reducing the increase but not reducing the weeds in the lake. How much do you think you need to reduce them?

Commissioner Simmonds and Mazzotti both said SLPID is doing a good job at managing the weeds.

Paul Mattison then said we did a survey at the annual meeting and basically asked what are you concerned about, and nine out of ten said weeds. So, people are upset.

Commissioner Borisenok said Do they realize that this lake, for over forty years, SLPID basically mitigated the Eurasian water milfoil. Now, with an earlier boating season, SLPID has conducted several treatments to reduce Pondweed in the spring. So, when you say we have not done anything or are not reducing the weeds in the lake, we just addressed the Water Chestnuts down to a small hand pull. There is an article in today's Gazette about how hard SLPID worked to get them down to a manageable amount. So, when you say basically we have not reduced them, that is wrong. This is a natural body of water; you are always going to have vegetation. Commissioner Borisenok then said, "I like how you did your survey and how you worded the survey questions. I can already give you the answers you want based on how you worded them".

Commissioner Simmonds said at the last meeting we went through explaining the weed population in the lake, and you cannot clear all the weeds out of the lake. This comes right back to education and your members getting information.

Paul Mattison said, and I know that there is an incredible amount of work being done with the money.

Commissioner Borisenok - You complain about the people using the lake; they would not even be on the lake if there was not SLPID. SLPID was created when no one wanted to be on the lake; it was completely milfoil, and SLPID managing it increased the number of recreational opportunities. How many marinas and houses are there? The quality of the lake has improved significantly, and property values have increased because SLPID took this lake and turned it around, and now everyone is enjoying it. So, when you come in here and say We did a survey and everybody's upset over the weeds not being reduced.

Paul Mattison then said No, I did not say that; I am using it as evidence.

Commissioner Borisenok - Evidence of what? Basically, you said 200 people we surveyed and nine out of ten complained about weed reduction.

Paul Mattison then said, no, that is not what I am saying.

Commissioner Borisenok said that there are currently over 1,300 people living in the District, and you say there are too many users on the lake. Well, it seems there are a lot of people who don't have a problem, except for those 200 you surveyed.

Paul Mattison then said I did not say you are doing a lousy job; I am saying you are not doing enough, and I am saying a realistic goal would be to get the weeds they were ten years ago.

All SLPID Commissioners replied - That would be way worse. Look at past history and reports.

Paul Mattison - anybody you talk to, what is the problem with the lake, and it is weeds.

Commissioner Baker said that is the problem; they do not know the facts.

Commissioner Mazzotti then said your members need to understand that you cannot, and are not allowed to, remove all the weeds in the lake; it will affect the entire environment, and Cristina may be able to explain that better.

Commissioner Mazzotti said, I believe, that the people who responded to the survey are not well educated about the conditions. They may perceive it as a major problem, and with combined management with the harvesters, herbicide treatments, and inspections, we have the least amount of aquatic invasive species now. Your members may perceive a problem with it; however, there is not much more that can be done beyond what is already being done, and that is the point.

Commissioner Simmonds then said – let's get back to the public hearing on the budget. Are there any more comments on the budget?

Paul Mattison said, well yes, harvester wages. No, does this budget have a wage line for Cristina because I think it should.

Commissioner Simmonds said, yes, it does, included in Administrative.

Paul Mattison said, well, that does not look like there has been an increase, and I would like to support that there is.

Paul Mattison continued, one more point on weeds: if you had another half-million dollars, what would you spend it on?

Cristina said more water quality monitoring.

Paul Mattison said, how do you feel about safety?

Commissioners said that is not under our purview; that is law enforcement

Paul Mattison - I thought you said you control the navigation channel.

Cristina said SLPID does not control it or if you mean, have law enforcement authority. SLPID collaborated with the town of Saratoga and the City of Saratoga Springs to create the navigation law, no-wake zone, and speed limits on the lake, and SLPID is responsible for permits, GPS marking of the channel, and buoy maintenance and anchoring.

Paul Mattison then said as long as people do not encroach on the navigation channels, they can do what ever they like right?

Commissioner Simmonds said no, there is a speed limit.

Paul Mattison then said, sure, but in terms of docks.

Cristina said there are some state regulations on docks in NYSDEC, under which you need to apply for a permit. Docks, mooring buoys, and platforms cannot interfere with another's navigation. Moorings and rafts must be no more than 100 feet from shore.

Paul Mattison said and who checks that.

Cristina said you would check with the permitting agency, either the Office of State Parks or NYSDEC.

Commissioner Simmonds said there are a lot of ongoing that interweave with other agencies.

Commissioner Mazzotti said the lake is patrolled seven days a week by marine patrol.

Motion to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting at 3:17 p.m.

First: Simmonds Second: Scalici All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Secretary Report (Commissioner Simmonds)

***Present July 2026 meeting minutes.**

Discussion: None

Motion to accept the July 2026 meeting minutes.

First: Mazzotti Second: Baker All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

Treasurer Report (Commissioner Mazzotti)

Year-to-date income is \$534,872.74, which includes \$522,983.33 from tax levies, \$3,000.00 for the Global Foundries grant, \$25.00 in donations, and \$8,864.41 from interest income. Expenses: Year-to-date expenses total \$227,637.46, which is primarily comprised of payroll expenses of \$105,971.05, Professional Fees/Contractor expenses of \$18,937.95, and \$88,587.33 in Lake Management. The remaining budget for expenses is \$294,012.54. Additionally, the budgeted surplus for the year is \$1,333.00.

Motion to accept the July 2026 Financial Report

First: Baker Second: Scalici All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

Motion to accept the paid July invoices.

First: Mazzotti Second: Baker All commissioners present voted: YEAH

Lake District Administrator Report (Cristina Connolly)

Water Levels

This last month, the biggest news was the storm and high-water levels. There was a lot of misinformation, which gave SLPID an opportunity to respond and correct it accurately. It was very positive and worked out well as more of the public began to reach out to SLPID. News Channel 10 did reach out to SLPID. However, it was a week after, when levels were back down, and they were under the impression the lake was closed and no one could use it, that there were special regulations with no wake and speed; they were also asking questions about Browns Beach being closed and inferring contamination in the lake from the lake levels. I directed them to Ed Kinowski for Browns Beach.

Water levels with the storm are back to normal summer levels 202.73. The USGS gauge experienced a recent power outage, which has since been resolved.

Harvesting

Lost a week plus of weed harvesting due to the high lake levels, as it was not safe for operations, and also the dump sites were flooded. The high-water levels and wake caused many plants to uproot and float freely; the storm was bad timing, as it is also the heavy-growing season. The northeast shore north of the Kaydeross and the area just south of the City Waterfront Park (Garside Road) were the heaviest for

floaters and topped out weeds when the water levels dropped. These two areas are extremely shallow, so the weeds top out quicker. Those areas are fairly clear now, and the harvesting operators have been catching up, working overtime last week and this week. They had a couple of late starts because of morning fog and a couple of challenging days with wind. This morning we put out a notice explaining and also asking that the operators be allowed to work without interruption. Time is lost when property owners flag operators in to talk from docks or pull up by boat. Both are also safety concerns. With heavy floaters blowing inshore, operators are directed to move as close to shore as possible to assist property owners.

Water chestnut pull was very minimal. This year. The last two years at Observation Pointe at Mangino's Park were thick with water chestnuts that we adamantly pulled, and this year we pulled half a muck bucketful. Today there was an article in the Daily Gazette about SLPID's management of water chestnuts. This was a good article. I did note SLPID's success in managing Eurasian water milfoil and frogbit plants. This success is due to the support of the current SLPID commissioners and their confidence in SLPID's management approach. That part did not make it into the article, and I thank all the commissioners for their support. Again, this comes down to outreach and factual information shared with the public.

A weed survey was conducted on Monday; we threw several rake tosses and found healthy, native weeds. We found a couple of Eurasian Water Milfoil plants. The Milfoil plants are not reaching their full potential and are dying off. No frogbit to be seen. Larry's annual survey is planned for three days next week.

Water Quality

Weekly probe monitoring continues. In the first week of September, the temperature recorders at the buoys will be pulled and reset for winter. Last week, I sent off water samples to Upstate Freshwater. The water remains amazingly clear, especially for this time of year, even after the heavy rains. There was one day that was calm, and the same beach area on the southeast side had moderate green algae for half the day; it did not look like cyanobacteria bloom at all. I recorded it with photos and sent it to the NYSDOH team. In the coming month, if I do see something or if they do on their satellite imagery, I will call them, and they will come right up and record it for their data and testing. The new county DOH Director reached out to me. I will keep them updated to go out as well

Legislative and Municipal Outreach

Last month, I mentioned a researcher from the Darrin Freshwater Institute at RPI who is submitting a grant to develop a five-year study on harmful algal bloom formation and the environmental factors that drive them. I submitted a letter of support, and we are awaiting the outcome to see if we could collaborate on that with Saratoga Lake.

The same scientist is proposing for the NYDEC HABs Research Grant to investigate how organic materials may both contribute to harmful algal bloom (HAB) formation and support bloom die-off. The project will examine whether nutrients from dissolved organic matter, such as leaf litter and soil, may promote cyanobacterial growth and toxicity. The research will also explore the potential use of native White Rot mushroom species for HAB bioremediation, building on previous studies demonstrating their ability to effectively reduce Microcystis and degrade microcystin toxins. I will be writing a support letter on this,

sharing how this work will continue to build and sustain the collaboration between Darrin Freshwater/RPI and SLPID projects and also help with other similar NY lakes.

Saratoga Lake is right on the cusp of what is called the Blue Line for the Adirondacks. Several years ago, SLPID had the opportunity to join the Mandatory Boat Inspections in the Adirondacks (Blue Line Rule). Unfortunately, at that time, Saratoga Lake was not included.

The law is designed to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by requiring a certificate showing that the watercraft was Clean, Drained, and Dried, either from a designated lake steward or via a self-issued certificate online. It may even save boaters time to bypass the inspection station if they have a certificate in hand. This is something that has recently come up in conversation with NYSFOLA as an amendment to add Saratoga Lake. It would also be more protection for Saratoga Lake, as there are many private launches around the lake and we do not know where they come from. Assemblywoman Woerner recently asked about mandatory inspections for Saratoga Lake. I can reach out to her for further inquiry if the board agrees. Would the board like to discuss this? I can look into what it would entail further. A motion would be needed.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked what is your recommendation?

Cristina said she recommends it and it will not hurt to look into it further. It may be more efficient for inspections and a certificate or self-certification.

Commissioner Simmonds said it is not a big deal; she does it when she brings her boat up to her camp. After they inspect and wash it, you receive a certificate so you are good to go without further inspection. It is not a big lift. You show the certificate to the Lake Steward when you arrive at the launch

A motion was made for Cristina to research further what it would take to be included in the Blue Line Rule

First: Mazzotti

Second: Scalici

All Commissioners: Yeah.

Cristina reported on the County Water Quality meeting. The committee members mentioned the information getting out to the public and commented, very good job with the SLPID responses and the corrected information on the dam and lake levels.

Last month, Carl Heastie, the NYS Speaker of the House, came for a boat tour of the lake and learned more about SLPID, our collaboration with Darrin Freshwater, and NYSDEC and municipalities on lake quality. Next week, some of the County Supervisors are scheduled to meet with me, and with others at a later date in September. Carrie Woerner and her staff came out again. Yesterday, the City building and planning department came out. They reached out with concerns about past and ongoing illegal projects, especially on steep slopes and in wetland areas, as well as future projects proposed within the District. They are requesting to go out again with other members and DPW before the end of the season. They also asked about setting up the annual meeting with all four municipalities and SLPID. The last meeting was a year ago in the spring, and not everyone could attend. I will reach out to the town Supervisors about that. The city also raised the topic of exploring funding options to update their road salt storage facility and equipment, while remaining fiscally responsible and maintaining road safety. They mentioned a grant for algae monitoring and will find out more about it and let me know. They are going to discuss ways for their department to have more direct contact with SLPID and NYSDEC.

Lake Stewards

This past month we had a day that NYSDEC sponsored with a contractor, two Aquatic invasive species dogs, and a handler to work at the launch alongside the lake stewards. They were sniffing zebra mussels. That day, no Zebra Mussels were detected. I did let them know that the boaters exiting the lake at that time of year are most likely day boaters and would not have enough time in the lake for Zebra Mussels to attach, and that after Labor Day is the time to try again.

Before the storm, planted a buffer at the Malta Park; high water levels took out about 4 plants. Replanted and looking well. The lake stewards created a video that I shared. It will be on the Town of Malta and SLPID websites, and a newsletter article and a press release will go out.

This past Tuesday, we began clearing for the model garden at the city waterfront park with the KOS Sauna owner. KOS Sauna is an association with many members, and the owner was asking about her members learning more about Saratoga Lake, Lake quality, and SLPID. I told her the procedure is to write out members' questions, and SLPID will reply; members can come to any of the SLPID public meetings; we have a website and social media pages, and the public is always welcome to call.

Coast Guard Auxiliary did their yearly safety inspections alongside the lake stewards last month and are scheduled to conduct another on September 5th.

Lake Stewards have completed a recreational survey. I had them stop at 200 since that was what we did in the last survey. This survey was a field survey directly one-on-one with boaters recreating. It was designed to gather direct information from lake users without presupposing a problem or suggesting a preferred solution. We tried not to influence how they answered. It included resident boaters and people launching. It was not a social media survey. Questions were designed to be objective, with firsthand experience not framed in a way that suggests anything is problematic. Surveys are all relative to the day, weather, etc., and this was done before the high-water levels. If we did it immediately after, maybe we would have different answers. Some of the questions were: how long were you out on the lake, what was the purpose, whether you were able to move around safely, navigation or weed problems, boat traffic, and how the fishing was.

Law Enforcement Update

Sheriff Marine Patrol continues patrols seven days a week. They are extremely professional and are doing another fantastic job. We greatly appreciate their continued presence and commitment.

New Business: None

Resolution #11-2026 8/20/26

WHEREAS the SLPID commissioners agree to approve the proposed 2027 budget as the approved, official 2027 Budget. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Commissioners direct the Lake District Administrator to make the proposed 2027 budget official and file it with Saratoga County. This action will be incorporated in the District's minutes.

First: Simmonds

Second: Mazzotti

All Commissioners Present:

RESOLUTION #12-2026

BE IT RESOLVED that 0.76 cents per mile be the designated official reimbursement for the official business use of the Commissioners' and staff's personal vehicles effective July 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. Pursuant to the IRS Federal Mileage reimbursement change.

First: Scalici

Second: Baker

All Commissioners present voted

Motion to conduct the next SLPID meeting on October 15, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at Malta Town Hall Board Room, 2650 Route 9, Malta.

First: Simmonds

Second: Borisenok

All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Paul Mattison spoke again, asking that the next survey include a question about whether users are taxpayers, but that is up to you. Secondly, could you explain how the dam works and what power we have to open and close the gates?

Cristina said, I can email you information on how it operates, or you can go on the SLPID website and read it.

Paul Mattison then asked do we have power?

Commissioner Scalici said FERC has ultimate authority, and they are under a contractual agreement regarding operations. SLPID has a legal agreement with them regarding seasonal lake levels, public information, and reporting.

Motion to close the meeting and enter into Executive Session to discuss a proposed litigation at 3:45 p.m.

First: Simmonds

Second: Mazzotti

All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Motion to reenter the meeting with no action taken during Executive Session and close the regular meeting at 3:52.

First: Simmonds

Second: Baker

All Commissioners present voted: YEAH