Board members in attendance (on conference call):

Michael Maguire (Co-Chair)
Rick Karney (Co-Chair)
Seth Garfield
Judy McDowell
Dale Leavitt
Chris Gargiulo
Andrew Cummings
Greg Morris
Ed Baker

Chloe Starr sent her regrets – she had another meeting scheduled at the same time

Potential new members and member of the public:
Diane Murphy, Matt Charette, Scott Soares

SEMAC Staff Members:
Josh Reitsma, Harriet Booth, Abigail Archer

1. Welcome from Co-Chairs Mike Maguire and Rick Karney

2. Official Swearing in of all members to the SEMAC Board
Janice O’Connell was scheduled to swear in everyone for a new term but that has to be done in person. This will be scheduled for the next time we can have an in-person meeting.

3. Funding Update – MDAR and Environmental Bond Bill
Abigail Archer (AA) summarized an email from MDAR Aquaculture Coordinator Sean Bowen. They received the SEMAC proposal and are working on issuing the contract. No word yet on the exact amount that will be awarded to SEMAC.

Josh Reitsma (JR) gave an update on the Aquaculture Centers meeting that took place in Plymouth on 2/12/20. The funds from the Environmental Bond Bill will not be available until 2021. The Centers each gave updates on their activities.

4. Water Quality Update
MM introduced the new staff member on the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension/Woods Hole Sea Grant/Southeastern MA Aquaculture Center team, Harriet Booth

Harriet Booth (HB) gave an update on water quality:

- all 5 YSI sondes have been deployed
- DMF issued an RFP with a very quick turnaround for funds – must be spent by June 30th
- CCCE/WHSG applied to purchase 4 new sensors from the company In Situ which would replace the aging YSI sondes
- In addition, the proposal asked for 3 sondes to help assess ocean acidification in nearshore environments.
Seabird Chlorophyll sensor, Seabird SeaPHox that measures pH and Dissolved oxygen, and a Pro Oceanus pCo2 sensor. The goal would be to move them around to different locations.

Dale Leavitt (DL) asked if there are plans to set up monitoring on the South Coast?
JR replied that for the time being the focus will be on evaluating the XXX.
Seth Garfield (SG) suggested checking in with Buzzards Bay Coalition

**TASK: HB will look into what sensors are currently in Buzzards Bay**

Greg Morris (GM) asked if the new sensors will be able to transmit real-time data?
HB replied that it depends on the amount of funding we receive but the goal is to have real-time data.
JR is looking into a buoy with an antenna that will enable this.
DL suggested talking with Chris Davis at the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center about the buoy system.

Scott Soares (SS) asked if there is a need to contact DMF to let them know that these sondes are needed by the industry?
JR and HB thanked Scott for the suggestion and explained that the RFP required only a short application and did not request support letters.

**5. SEMAC 2020 Activities**

AA gave a summary of the proposal SEMAC submitted on 2/28/20 (Attachment A)
JR asked if there are other needs than those that were proposed given the current COVID-19 situation, and asked what everyone has heard from the hatcheries they usually work with.

SG Fishers Island has seed and because colleges have closed he has got labor to get it out to the grant.
DL ARC is proceeding as normal.
RK The Martha’s Vineyard hatchery is proceeding as normal.
GM Island Creek hatchery is doing OK the difficulty is in paying farm hands since sales are low, growers might have to dip into their reserves.
RK asked if there is any word on federal relief?
SS replied that the East Coastal Shellfish Growers Association is getting the message out that it will be needed.

SS announced that Mass Aquaculture Association has a list of priorities and that funding for the Centers is one of them. MAA had scheduled some meetings on Beacon Hill with the Speaker of the House and the Senate President on Ag Day but now Ag Day is cancelled. MAA will pursue getting their message to them.

A discussion was had about what information was out there on how long the novel coronavirus can persist on the surface of different materials and how the seafood industry can help keep workers and consumers safe.

**TASK: HB and JR will do a literature review and get the results out to the Board**

Growers in many locations are putting product back in the water because wholesalers cannot sell it because of reduced sales due to people staying home and not eating out at restaurants. Most shellfish are consumed in restaurants. The shellfish warden has to be notified of these put-backs and in some cases must accompany the grower.

Ed Baker announced that Facebook has pledged to help $30,000 local businesses.
6. Review and propose updates to 1997 SEMAC Bylaws
AA had emailed everyone a copy of the 1997 Bylaws in Word format (Attachment B)

TASK: All Board Member to send Abigail Archer their proposed edits to the bylaws by Friday April 3.
AA will then compile all the suggestions and send out one document before the next meeting

7. Board membership and alternates
AA announced that Seth Garfield is the new MAA representative, and Chloe Starr is the new representative from a hatchery. At the last meeting in December 2019 the Board expressed interest in having Diane Murphy join. DM is interested in joining. Matt Charette is the WHSG Director and will also join.
Sad news – long time SEMAC Board member and current alternate Joel Fox passed away in February. 
https://www.capecodtimes.com/obituaries/20200216/joel-c-fox

8. Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest requirements
AA will send out reminders to do the Conflict of Interest and Open Meeting Law trainings after everyone has been sworn in.

9. Other Business
The Board continued to discuss COVID-19, how its impacting the industry, and how SEMAC can assist
SG would like the Board to look ahead to a month from now and how we should help people get back to eating seafood.
MC We can promote the home consumption of seafood. We have hard copy brochures but we can also feature content on the WHSG website and Facebook
RK The first Vineyard OysterFest was going to happen in May but now it has been postponed to October
Andrew Cummings (AC) brought up that when Norovirus occurred in Wellfleet there was a complete shutdown of access to grants. If there was a shelter in place order issued, growers need to be able to still work on their grants. They still have to be able to handle seed and to do off-site culling. If they are prevented from doing so it will impact the industry for years to come and people could lose a lot of product and money. This applies to ALL of agriculture – not just shellfish aquaculture.

TASK: JR will compile these concerns and convey them to Gabe Lundgren and Tom Shields at DMF

MM asked all the Board members to stay in touch with the SEMAC staff and let them know how to help with any other challenges that arise due to COVID-19

10. Schedule Next Meeting and discuss agenda
AA will send out a Doodle poll for a meeting time in mid-April
Agenda Items: Update on Funding, Update on Water Quality, Coronavirus effects, Discuss Bylaws