

## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

### NOVEMBER 20, 2019 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH, 03301.

Commissioners Present: R. Phillipson, E. Stohl, C. Luppi, F. Bird, M. Lachance, P. DeBow, D. Patch, P. McInnis, R. Green & C. Hodgdon.

Commissioners absent/excused: B. Temple

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chair reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1.) Commissioner Green moved to approve the October 9, 2019 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was carried with 7 in favor and 2 abstentions (C. Luppi & E. Stohl).
- 2.) Commissioner Green moved to accept the donation of \$50.00 from Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Rutter of Cumming, Iowa, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.
- 3.) Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, came before the Commission and requested consideration in changing the January 8, 2020 Commission Meeting to January 15, 2020, in order for the Wildlife Division to have adequate time to formulate DRAFT game species rule proposals to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Hodgdon moved to change the January Commission Meeting as requested, from January 8, 2020 to January 15, 2020, for the above stated reasons and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

- 4.) Jim Oehler, Habitat Program Supervisor, came before the Commission requesting to expend \$7,122.25 from the Wildlife Habitat Account to purchase an F-250 truck for use by habitat program staff to manage habitats, infrastructure, and property boundaries on the Department's 60,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas.

Much discussion ensued as to whether this was a proper use of funding from that dedicated account.

Mark Ellingwood assured the Commission that it was a responsible request before them and that he felt strongly that it was an appropriate expenditure out of the Wildlife Habitat Account.

Commissioner Luppi moved to support the purchase of the F-250 truck from the Wildlife Habitat Account for the above mentioned purposes and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1.) Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, reviewed the following with the Commission:

- \* A list of LSR's of interest.
- \* Overview of a tentative timeline for the upcoming rulemaking process. (See attached).
- \* Rulemaking report, status of the following:
  - a.) Inland Fisheries update and fishing tournament rules, at JLCAR on November 21, 2019.
  - b.) New proceeding, Marine Bait Dealer, public hearing on December 9, 2019.
  - c.) New proceeding, Off Highway Recreational Vehicles and Snowmobiles, public hearing on December 9, 2019.
  - d.) New proceeding, Wildlife Trafficking, public hearing on December 9, 2019.
- \* The petition of Kristina Snyder relative to a change to the gray squirrel season.

Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner Patch moved that the Department look into the validity of the petition to change the gray squirrel season and to get back to the Commission at the December 11, 2019 Commission Meeting and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

### **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**POLICY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Luppi, Chair; Commissioners Temple, Lachance & Bird. No meeting.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Stohl, Chair; Commissioners Green, Hodgdon, Patch & DeBow. No meeting.

**RIVERS COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee met on October 21, 2019 and heard a presentation on bio-solids management, given by Ned Beecher, Special Project Manager, North East Bio-Solids & Residuals Association. He reported that there were 2 items on the agenda. The first was the review of a surplus land transfer request for

a rail crossing, allowing the Pemi Campground, Thornton, NH, to expand into neighboring land that they wish to purchase. He reported that the second item was a follow up to CORD's (Commission on Resources & Development) decision to move forward with the Hampton SLR (part of the project is to redevelop the liquor store I-95). He reported that both items were addressed at that meeting.

**LAKES COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Temple was absent from the meeting.

**HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Green. No meeting. Committee will be meeting in the near future.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners Temple, Stohl & DeBow. No report.

**WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION:** Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the Wildlife Heritage Foundation and Operation Game Thief were holding their annual raffle. He stated, "This is a major fundraiser for both organizations that need our support. I'm selling tickets myself, so if anyone is interested, please see me."

Chairman Phillipson charged each Commissioner with selling a certain number of tickets to support the fundraising raffle.

**AWARDS COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Luppi, Chair; Commissioners Bird & Lachance. Commissioner Luppi reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and discussed ways of getting the announcement out to a broader group of people. She further reported that the committee discussed the potential creation of 2 additional awards, entitled, "Search & Rescue Award" & "R3 Award". Lastly, she encouraged everyone to nominate deserving individuals as instructed on the "Awards Nomination Form", located on the Department's website at: <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/about/commission-awards.html>

**SEARCH COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Stohl; Chairman, Commissioners McInnis, DeBow and Patch.

Commissioner Stohl reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting for the purpose of discussing how to proceed and to restructure and develop the Executive Director Job Announcement. He distributed a copy of the job announcement to all Commissioners and reported that it was developed by the entire search committee, along with the generous assistance of Director Normandeau. He thanked Director Normandeau for being an asset in the search committee meeting. (See attached announcement)

Commissioner Stohl moved to go forward with posting the job announcement as presented to all Commissioners, and Commissioner Patch seconded.

Commissioner Luppi expressed concern that the job announcement may be vague and require more detail.

Director Normandeau responded that it was a unique position, as it does not have an official job description and is written in statute.

After further discussion, the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:**

**COMMISSIONER BIRD:** Was absent from meeting.

**COMMISSIONER DEBOW:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER TEMPLE:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER LACHANCE:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER HODGDON:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER LUPPI:** Was absent from meeting.

**COMMISSIONER PATCH:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER MCINNIS:** Nothing to report at this time.

**COMMISSIONER STOHL:** Commissioner Stohl thanked the Commissioners, the Law Enforcement Division, and The Conservation Officers Relief Association for the beautiful flowers sent to his wife's funeral.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Normandeau reported that Doug Grout, Chief, Marine Division, would be retiring on November 21, 2019, after a lengthy career with the Fish & Game Department. He announced that Cheri Patterson, Marine Supervisor, would be serving as the Acting Chief until further notice.

He reported that soon the agency would have a security system in place, which will require key passes & permissions to move about the floors and building. He stated, "We are one of the few agencies left that has an open building to the public with no security."

He further reported that the deer harvest numbers were almost the same as they were last year at this time.

In addition, he reported that the Department continues to meet and work on efforts at the property known as the Emery Farm, potentially to be called Millcreek Farm.

Further, he reported that he met with the Governor's Office to discuss and obtain guidance on OHRV bills that involve & affect many agencies.

In closing, he reported that while at the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Conference in September, 2019, the topic of discussion was the relevance of state agencies with the public. He reported that illness such as triple-e, west nile virus, lyme disease, along with tuberculosis from venison, mercury & lead issues, etc., are causing much concerns as to whether it is safe to be outside & do outside activities. He reported that 15 deer were tested at Pease Air Force Base for PFOA's (Perfluorooctanoic Acid) and will have the results back shortly. He stated, "Once people believe it is not safe to eat fish and wildlife, we have lost the battle. I don't know what the answers are, however, I want you to know that these are the topics being discussed at a national level." He reported that these are big issues coming at us, animal health & public safety.

### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Julia Sinclair, Newmarket, NH, expressed her gratitude for being able to listen to the Commission's decision making processes. She further stated, "I would hope you would shut down others in the audience when they speak out of turn, as you do myself, and others when needed."

Weldon Bosworth, Gilford, NH – Referred to the Resolution recently passed by the AFWA (Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies). He reported that he hoped the Commission selects an individual who embraces the AFWA Resolution, to broaden the constituency and speaks to the governance of Fish & Game. (See attached resolution)

He further reported that he thought that the choice to not reappoint Director Normandeau was a bad one, as he felt Director Normandeau was well respected by all.

Commissioner Bird expressed his displeasure with the unnecessary hearsay and troubling assumptions made about him being an enthusiastic trapper. He reported that he would not apologize for having a trapper's license, however, clarified that he had not trapped in 3 years, as he does not have the time, being a professional, having a family, child care responsibilities, and volunteering for this position, Strafford County Commissioner, which is a volunteer position.

He encouraged constituents to reach out to him if they have questions, as he is happy to engage anyone in wildlife management and getting the facts straight. He reported that everyone should stick with the facts and the science and not be run on emotions. He stated, "The facts are a funny thing, when you operate under them you'll have a better narrative."

In closing, he stated, "I find it offensive that animal activists are using my pictures and creating their own narratives. I do not allow anyone to do that, please stop."

Kristina Snyder, Chester, NH, stated, "It has been an interesting meeting. I'm just going to say that through the course of my activism, I have been threatened to be sued a million times, and have never been sued to date."

She further referred to the squirrel petition she currently has filed with the Commission. She stated, "There is an obvious bias to me now by one Commissioner and I'm not sure the petition will be looked at seriously." She reported that since filing, additional information has

come her way. She reported that rehabilitators have provided data to support nursing baby squirrels being brought to rehabilitators during the month of September. She asked that the Commission seriously review the petition, as it has more than enough evidence to support the requested change.

Representative Cathryn Harvey, Chair, House Fish, Game & Marine Resources Committee, reported that she reached out to Chairman Phillipson and expressed the importance of the new Executive Director's willingness to continue the great working relationship the Department has with her and her committee. She reported that Director Normandeau treated her with a great deal of respect and was always willing to answer her questions, no matter how basic they were.

Commissioner Stohl assured Representative Harvey that the new Executive Director will be made aware of the importance of the good working relationship between her and the committee.

Colonel Jordan thanked Representative Harvey for running an open committee and being fair. He stated, "You are an advocate to do the right thing."

He further reported that the Department lost a K-9, Ruby, due to medical issues. He thanked the Commission & Department for their support of the K-9 program.

In closing, Colonel Jordan stated that it was the Department's honor to have the Law Enforcement Honor Guard at Commissioner Stohl's wife, Lois's funeral. The Colonel stated, "She was a great woman, the finest person you will ever meet. She will be forever in our hearts."

At this time, 2:42 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Ray Green, Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Phillipson, Chairman