

## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

### JULY 13, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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

Commissioners Present: J. Caveney, B. Temple, C. Hodgdon, P. DeBow, M. Lachance, S. Price, M. Hodgson, E. Stohl, P. McInnis, F. Bird & R. Green.

Commissioners absent/excused:

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Stohl 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 June 8, 2021 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chairman Stohl introduced and welcomed the 2 newest Commissioners appointed to the Fish & Game Commission; Meggan Hodgson, representing Rockingham County & Susan Price, representing Carroll County.

At this time, 1:05 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to go into a non-public session to confer with legal counsel on pending litigation and Commissioner Caveney seconded. Commissioner Green took a roll call of Commission members participating in the meeting: S. Price, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. DeBow, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, M. Hodgson, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, and R. Green, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

At 2:00 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to come out of non-public session and Commissioner Caveney seconded. Commissioner Green took a roll call of Commission members participating in the meeting: S. Price, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. DeBow, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, M. Hodgson, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, and R. Green, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Temple moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session and Commissioner Green seconded. Commissioner Green took a roll call of Commission members participating in the meeting: S. Price, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. DeBow, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, M. Hodgson, “Yes”, E.

Stohl, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, and R. Green, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner McInnis moved to approve consent agenda items 2a. – 2m., as presented below, and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$100.00 from Catherine Bernhard & John Weld, Concord, NH, to be utilized by the Wildlife Division.

2b.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$14,763.12 from the estate of Clarence W. Sleeper, Jr., to be utilized by the K-9 team.

2c.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$20,668.35 from the estate of Clarence W. Sleeper, Jr., to be utilized by the Nongame & Endangered Species Program.

2d.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$35.00 from Skip Warren, Stow, MA, in memory of Shirley Staples, Elkin, WV, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account. Shirley was an avid reader of the Wildlife Journal.

2e.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$250.00 from the Jaffrey Ice Racing Association, Jaffrey, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2f.) Commission accepted 3 donations totaling \$250.00 from Schwab Charitable Foundation, San Francisco, CA, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2g.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$1,000 from Ms. D’Auteuil, through Fidelity Charitable, Cincinnati, OH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2h.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$50.00 from Carl & Sandra Sipe, Bedford, NH, in memory of “Truder”, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2i.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$35.00 from Carol Haley, W. Swanzey, NH, in memory of Robert Gilbert, Nottingham, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2j.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$25.00 from Wendy Hazlett, Littleton, NH, in memory of Michael Robinson, Northumberland, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2k.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$50.00 from Nicole Pierce, Fairfax, VA, in memory of Michael Yeaton, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2l.) Commission accepted 2 donations totaling \$50.00 from Lewis Clark & Bonita Sarcione, Stoddard, NH, in memory of Brad Clark & Mike Mooney, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2m.) Commission accepted 2 donations totaling \$50.00 from Bonita & Joseph Sarcione, Stoddard, NH, in memory of Brad Clark & Mike Mooney, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

3.) Jessica Carloni, Waterfowl Biologist, came before the Commission requesting to expend Game Management Funds totaling \$96,480.00 to participate in a regional mallard research project & continued participation in a waterfowl habitat restoration program through Ducks Unlimited.

Commissioner McInnis moved to approve the expenditure of \$96,480.00 from the Game Management Account to participate in a regional mallard research project & continued participation in a waterfowl habitat restoration program through Ducks Unlimited and Commissioner Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

At this time, Chairman Stohl announced that Executive Councilor, Cindy Warmington, representing District 2, was present at today's meeting and welcomed her.

Councilor Warmington thanked Director Mason & the Commission for inviting her to the meeting. She thanked the staff & Commission for the important work they do in protecting and conserving fish & wildlife.

4.) Election of Officers Committee: Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners: Temple & Caveney.

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee contacted all Commissioners to inquire as to who may be interested in serving as an officer on the Commission. He further reported that 3 Commissioners expressed an interest.

Commissioner Hodgdon moved that Commissioner Stohl serve as Chairman, Commissioner Green serve as Vice Chairman & Commissioner DeBow serve as the Secretary/Treasurer, and Commissioner Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1.) Financial Statement (The June Financial Statement was not shared at this meeting due to the end of the year closing, and it was not available in time for the Commission Meeting).

Director Mason & Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, had discussion on the format of the financial report with the Commission regarding its contents, in order to provide a better view of the agency's finances. (The April 30, 2021 Financial Statement was used as a sample in order to review the format.)

Chairman Stohl reported that he preferred a prior version of the financial report that was previously shared with the Commission by former Director Normandeau.

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that he would like to see fund balances in the dedicated accounts, encumbrances made to them & fund balances over a two-year period, in order to see trends.

Much discussion took place.

Kathy LaBonte offered to review her files to see if she could locate a similar document to what Chairman Stohl was referring to.

At this time, Commissioner Bird announced that it was with regret that he would be resigning from his position as Strafford County Commissioner.

He reported that he is a big part of the support system for his 2 young kids and with his professional workload, he is not able to continue on. He stated, "It was an honor to serve on this board & to give back." He reported that he was still involved with the National Wild Turkey Federation and would continue supporting the department from behind the scenes. He further reported that he would continue to serve until a replacement was found.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Stohl thanked Commissioner Bird for his service.

Chairman Stohl further reported that once Commissioner Bird is replaced, it would be a full board. He stated, "The Commission is made up of a diverse group of intelligent people & I'm proud of each & every one of you".

2.) Pat Tate, Furbearer Biologist, came before the Commission and provided an overview of background information regarding a cooperative research project with the University of New Hampshire, which will evaluate the efficacy of additional non-harvest driven methods to index trends in the state's furbearer populations. (See attached presentation).

3.) Randy Curtis, Federal Aid Coordinator, came before the Commission and provided an overview of the Federal Aid in Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Programs. (See attached presentation).

**OLD BUSINESS:** N/A

**NEW BUSINESS:** Chairman Stohl announced that the August 10, 2021 Commission Meeting would take place at the Horse Pond Fish & Game Club, 13 Horse Pond Avenue, Nashua, NH, @ 6:00 p.m.

He further reported that the September 14, 2021 Commission Meeting would take place at the Bridgewater Town Meeting Place, 297 Mayhew Turnpike, Bridgewater, NH, at 1:00 p.m., in order to accommodate a side-scan sonar demonstration by the Department's Dive Team.

**COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:**

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the new committee structure consisted of 5 committees vs. 8. He described the new committees below:

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Public policy development & recommendations, as well as Commission advocacy before legislature.

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:** Commission professional development, education & policy recommendations related to Commission conduct & activities.

**SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Agency funding, development & oversight of strategic plan.

**RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE:** Policy recommendations related to agency infrastructure; including facilities, public access, habitat & wildlife.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION:** Engagement, partnership, awards, public recognition & education strategies for the public & interest groups.

Chairman Stohl reported that he would like to have 2 Commissioners on each committee and 1 staff member on each committee. He asked the Commission to contact him within a week to inform him which 2 committees each Commissioner wished to serve on.

He thanked Commissioner Hodgdon for the great deal of work & time he put into creating this committee structure.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:** Commissioners will report on their recent activities as it relates to Fish & Game Commission duties and responsibilities. This is an informational item only.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** The Director will report on recent department activities. This is an information item only.

Director Mason reported that he has been very busy with the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery and Alteration of Terrain Permits. He reported that the big question with the Alteration of Terrain Permits is how to pay for the additional position. He reported that there was a federal program called ARPA, (American Rescue Plan Act) and with the additional funding being distributed, we are anticipating an expansion of these reviews. He further reported that the Department has been granted permission to hire 1 temporary/fulltime person with these ARPA funds that will last approximately 2- 2 ½ years, at which time we will have to secure additional funding to keep the position, otherwise it will disappear when funding runs out.

He reported that HB-2, a law associated with bear damage, includes language that will allow the Department to write rules relative to bear damage. He reported that the department was currently compiling a set of rules, as we speak.

In addition, he reported that CWD (Chronic Wasting Disease) has become a big concern, as more & more people are interested in bringing reindeer to NH, who could potentially be carrying the disease. He reported that Pennsylvania is the closest state to NH to test positive. He further reported that the department tests approximately 400 ± deer per year for Chronic Wasting Disease, with none testing positive to date.

In closing, Director Mason reported that he wrote a letter to Governor Sununu requesting to keep the 13 open/unfunded positions from being abolished.

Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner McInnis moved that the Commission write a letter supporting the reinstatement of the 13 open/unfunded positions at the Fish & Game Department and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Weldon Bosworth, Gilford, NH, spoke relative to the camera study/cooperative research project with the University of New Hampshire, to evaluate the efficacy of additional non-harvest driven methods to index trends in the state's furbearer populations. He reported that he is familiar with those studies and cautioned the Commission, as he felt there was a great deal of uncertainty associated with them.

He reported that the catch per effort already does this right now and is used world-wide. He felt that several years of the study would be more beneficial to obtain the desired data.

Kristina Snyder, Chester, NH, reported that South East Land Trust, who came before the Commission requesting funds pertaining to the Leighton Forest Conservation Project, has secured alternative funding from other sources and upheld their decision to not allow trapping on the property in Barrington, NH.

At this time, 4:25 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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Eric Stohl, Chairman  
NH Fish & Game Commission