

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

NOVEMBER 9, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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

Commissioners Present: M. Lachance, B. Temple, P. DeBow, M. Hodgson, E. Stohl, P. McInnis, A. DeRosa & R. Green.

Commissioners absent/excused: S. Price, J. Caveney & C. Hodgdon

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 October 12, 2021 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner DeRosa seconded. The motion carried with 7 in favor, 1 abstention (A. DeRosa).

Chairman Stohl introduced and welcomed Albert (A.J.) DeRosa, of New Durham, NH, recently confirmed to serve as the Strafford County Commissioner on the Fish & Game Commission. He stated, "A.J. comes highly recommended and we look forward to working with him."

Chairman Stohl announced that the Commission would be going into a non-public session to confer with legal counsel on pending litigation.

Commissioner Green moved to go into a non-public session to confer with legal counsel on pending litigation & invite Director Mason to attend and Commissioner McInnis seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: M. Lachance, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Hodgson, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", A. DeRosa, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes" and P. DeBow, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

At 2:33 p.m., Commissioner Temple moved to come out of the non-public session and Commissioner Green seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: M. Lachance, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Hodgson, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", A. DeRosa, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes" and P. DeBow, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Green moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session and Commissioner Lachance seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: M. Lachance, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Hodgson, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", A. DeRosa, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes" and P. DeBow, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and were noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. The Commission voted to approve these matters as presented. Commission members may remove certain items if further public input or discussion is deemed necessary

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

2a.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$100.00 from Jeff & Taylor Thomas, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account.

2b.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$650.00 from the Nash Stream Camp Owners Association, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account.

2c.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$200.00 from Kimberly LaCrosse in memory of her husband, retired District Five Lieutenant, Scott LaCrosse, who passed away suddenly on April 2, 2019.

2d. The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$300.00 in memory of Alan Juza, Goffstown, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

- Rite Solutions, Pawcatuck, CT - \$100.00
 - John Oparowski, Manchester, NH - \$200.00
- Total: \$300.00

Due to time constraints in staff scheduling, the financial statement was heard out of sequence.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, came before the Commission and reviewed the financial statement.

Chairman Stohl thanked Kathy & stated, "Excellent job!"

Commissioner Green stated, "I think the new reporting is fantastic!"

3.) Mike Marchand, Nongame & Endangered Wildlife Program, came before the Commission and provided input relative to a rule change in reference to the take of wild passage Peregrine Falcons.

Mike provided comments relative to a petition submitted to the Department from Mr. Jeff Lemoine pertaining to a proposed amendment to Fis. 813.07(k), to allow wild passage Peregrine Falcons to be taken by a licensed falconer. Mike's comments focused on the legality and challenges of implementing the petition. He reported that modifying Fis. 813.07(k), as proposed, would be inconsistent with other existing NH statutory protections. Specifically, because Peregrine Falcons are currently protected as a state threatened species under the NH Endangered Species Act (RSA 212-A, Fis. 1000), take is prohibited.

After brief discussion, Chairman Stohl moved to deny the petition until further research has been done and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The motion carried with 6 in favor, 1 abstention (M. Hodgson) and 1 opposed (A. DeRosa).

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

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

Commissioner Green, Chair; Commissioners: DeBow, Price & Hodgson
Staff members: Kevin Jordan

Commissioner Green reported that the committee has not met yet, however, would be meeting in the near future, as bills are starting to come out.

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

Commissioner Lachance, Chair; Commissioners: Green & Temple.
Staff member: Cheri Patterson

Commissioner Lachance reported that the committee has not met as of yet.

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

Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney & Hodgson.
Staff member: Scott Mason

In Commissioner Hodgdon's absence, Chairman Stohl reported that the committee has not met as of yet.

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

Commissioner Temple, Chair; Commissioners: McInnis, Lachance & Caveney.
Staff member: Dianne Timmins

Commissioner Temple reported that the committee met on November 2, 2021, which was mostly an organizational meeting to begin to understand what the Commission's role is. He

reported that Director Mason was involved, which was helpful, as the discussion focused around hatcheries, access, etc. He reported that discussion took place relative to how to support a needs list & tell the difference between a wish list vs. a needs list, as it relates to infrastructure. He reported that the committee would meet again in December. In closing, Commissioner Temple stated, "I think everyone would agree that it was a good first meeting."

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

Commissioner DeBow, Chair; Commissioners: Hodgdon & Price.
Staff members: Nicola Whitley & Dianne Timmins.

Commissioner DeBow reported that the committee has not met yet. He reported that the Department has announced and solicited for nominees for the Commission Awards of Excellence. He reported that the deadline for nominations is December 31, 2021(postmarked).

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: Randy Curtis, Federal Aid Coordinator, briefly followed up on his July presentation to the Commission regarding the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Programs to provide information on the projected federal funding apportionments expected for the next year. He reported that the Sport Fish funding is expected to be down slightly, however, that the Wildlife Restoration funds have had a sizeable increase and the Department will need to consider how to take advantage of the opportunity. Further, he stated, "Meeting the non-federal matching costs for new projects is always a challenge."

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 The Governor & Council recently approved the transfer of \$1million dollars of ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funding from the Department of Environmental Services to the Fish & Game Department. He reported that those funds would be used to study solutions to address the effluent issue at the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery, to look at the entire hatchery system itself, and to make recommendations to reduce the environmental footprint.

He further reported that he met with the Association of Snowmobiles & ATV's and discussed online registrations, safety issues, and potential outreach options.

He reported that there has been an increase in meetings & calls relative to AOT (Alteration of Terrain) Permits this month. He reported that the Department was currently in the rulemaking process and have had a hearing and are taking public comments, and will be preparing the final package for approval.

In addition, he reported that he attended the North Country First Responders Banquet.

Director Mason reported that on the Human Resources end, the Department has been busy with the following:

- The Department has recently hired a Deer Biologist, who will be starting soon.
- Scheduling interviews for the Hatchery Supervisor position.
- Conducting interviews for the Legal Coordinator position.
- Scheduling interviews for the Wildlife Division Chief position.
- Advertising for the three (3) new AOT (Alteration of Terrain) positions.

He reported that the swearing in of three (3) Conservation Officers would take place on December 3, 2021, at F&G HQ.

In closing, he reported that he would be attending a joint meeting with the Trails Bureau and the NH OHRV Dealers on December 7, 2021.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Nancy Cowan, Falconer, expressed her displeasure with the Commission's vote to deny the petition on the take of wild passage Peregrine Falcons. She stated, "Peregrine take will go on in the Atlantic Flyway, whether New Hampshire is part of it or not."

Kristina Snyder, Chester, NH, spoke to her displeasure with the Commission starting the Commission Meetings and then going immediately into a non-public session for an extended period, leaving staff & audience members sitting, waiting for the start of the meeting. She stated, "When you invite people to attend your meetings, it is discouraging to have the Commission leave for an hour & a half & it's not helping with the Fish & Game image." In closing, she stated, "In moving forward, I hope that the Commission would reconsider having the non-public sessions take place at the end of the Commission meetings."

Chairman Stohl responded that the Commission did, in fact, have that same discussion, and will plan to have future non-public sessions prior to, or after Commission Meetings.

Linda Dionne, Raymond, NH, inquired as to why the Salmon Sunday event had been cancelled. Director Mason responded that the event will take place again next year, with some changes and expanded educational experiences.

At this time, 3:26p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission