

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 8, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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

Commissioners Present: M. Lachance (participating via Microsoft Teams, alone.), B. Temple, P. DeBow, M. Hodgson, E. Stohl, S. Price, J. Caveney & C. Hodgdon, A. DeRosa, P. McInnis & 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 Hodgson moved to approve the January 11, 2022 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded.

Commissioner Hodgson requested the below amendment to the amendment made in the December 14, 2021 & January 11, 2022 Commission Minutes, as it relates to HB-1230-FN and Commissioner Green seconded.

Amendment: Commissioner Green moved to oppose HB-1230-FN, as written, relative to permitting online presentation of deer for registration and adding language "by September 1, 2023" as well as provisions to support biological sample collection and suspension in the event of a wildlife or public health emergency with consent of the Commission and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating on the amended amendment: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", M. Lachance, "Abstained", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Hodgson, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", A. DeRosa, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes" and P. DeBow, "Yes". The motion carried with 10 in favor and 1 abstention (M. Lachance).

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating on the amended approval of the January 11, 2022 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Green seconded: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", M. Lachance, "Abstained", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Hodgson, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", A. DeRosa, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes" and P. DeBow, "Yes". The motion carried with 10 in favor and 1 abstention (M. Lachance).

Further correction, it should be noted that Commissioner McInnis abstained on voting on the December 14, 2021 Commission minutes, as he was absent from the meeting.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and 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 listed below, and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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.

2a.) The Commission approved the following donations totaling \$600.00, made in memory of Paul M. Hoffman, Amherst, NH, earmarked for educational purposes & deposited in to the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

- Charles & Marie Carter, Bedford, NH - \$100.00
 - Paul & Lorraine Murphy, Kingwood, TX - \$100.00
 - Photiades Wealth Management Team, Manchester, NH - \$100.00
 - John & Jennifer Vickers, Kingwood, TX - \$100.00
 - Kristin Murphy, Houston, TX - \$100.00
 - Louise Hansen, Conway, NH - \$ 50.00
 - Melissa Brewer, Dallas, TX - \$ 50.00
- Total: \$600.00

2b.) The Commission approved the following donations totaling \$365.00 made to the Search & Rescue Account as follows:

- Brenda & Preston Conklin - \$300.00
 - Marvin Swartz - \$ 65.00
- \$365.00

2c.) The Commission approved the donation of \$150.00 from Edward & Sarah Holden, Jefferson, MA, in memory of Jack Holden, deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2d.) The Commission approved the donation of \$100.00 from Schwab Charitable, San Francisco, CA, deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) There were no questions relative to the financial statement. The Commission thanked Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, for the quarterly expense to budget report.

2.) Patrick Tate, Furbearer Project Leader, provided an overview of the history of Furbearer Management in New Hampshire. He provided the attached presentation. (See attached)

Commissioner Hodgson inquired as to whether the Commissioners would hear more about the camera study being conducted by the University of New Hampshire.

Pat responded that the study is promising; however, the Department has not received a timeline as to the results yet.

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

Chairman Green reported that the Legislative Committee met the morning of the Commission meeting and discussed the following legislation:

Commissioner Green moved to change the Commission's position from opposing HB-490, to oppose as written, relative to the definition of "game cameras" and "hunting day" and relative to the use of game cameras, Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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 support the amended version of HB-1323, relative to authorizing the executive director of the fish and game department to establish the fee for a hike safe card and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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 oppose the amended version of HB-1356, relative to the executive director establishing a season for the year round taking of gray squirrel and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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 support HB-1498-FN, as amended, relative to establishing a committee to study the feasibility of implementing an OHRV and snowmobile safety training certificate program and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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 support the amendment to HB-1554-FN, relative to OHRV & snowmobile online payment of fines & fees and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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 reported that the Commission's position to support the repeal of HB-571, relative to repealing the prohibition against OHRV travel on Hoit Road Marsh stands as is, therefore, a vote is not necessary at this time.

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

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

Chairman Caveney reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and had a good first meeting & discussion. He reported that the committee is planning to meet again in the near future.

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

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

Chairman Hodgdon reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and took a deep look at how to develop the next 5-year plan. He provide a timeline and framework that identifies what that process could look like and reviewed it with the Commission (see below). He reported that he was looking for the Commission to adopt the guideline today to start the process.

**NH F&G Strategic Plan Development Process
2-2002 DRAFT
DISCUSSION DRAFT ONLY**

1. Create Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG) to include Commission members on the committee, Executive Director and Senior Staff representing each Division. Develop and propose to Commission Strategic Planning Principles framework, described in detail

in #2. Ensuring early coordination and partnership with Senior Staff is a key success factor.

2. Commission: Adopt NHF&G Strategic Planning Principles tenets and framework.

These tenets would guide internal and external discussions on Strategic Plan elements. They would represent a set of overarching “True North Principles” which are critical to the success of the agency and are consistent with the North American Conservation Model, conserve and enhance NH’s wildlife and habitat resources.

Another way to think about this is that these are core values which the agency can not deviate from and still accomplish its mission. Throughout the Plan development process these tenets will serve as reference points to guide public input and help ensure that plan action items developed by agency staff tie back to the tenets and agency mission.

Core Tenets:

Simplicity –

Transparency through communications –

Education -

Recruitment -

Opportunity -

Access -

Responsible and sustainable use of the resource -

Stakeholder engagement -

Strategic Partnerships -

Funding -

3. Using the tenets framework solicit input from key stakeholders on what they believe the department’s plan should be over the next 5 years to enhance or achieve the goals articulated in the tenets. This initial public comment period will ensure that the internal drafting process is informed at the beginning by public input.
 - a. Solicit input from the public through an initial 21-day public comment period during which time written comments can be accepted through USPS or digital.
 - b. Solicit input from all identified stakeholders through direct outreach via a written invitation for comment. Such stakeholders include, Law makers, executive branch, executive branch agencies, any non-profits or groups of affiliated citizens interested in the mission and function of the department.
4. During the public comment period on the framework, Division leaders will cascade the Strategic Plan framework and tenants throughout their teams in order to drive engagement and collaboration through all means including written comments to the

SPWG. Agency staff at the Division level will develop, in DRAFT form, a series of Division level goals which if accomplished would serve to advance the agency's tenets articulated in #2.

- a. Use of a common organizational structure by each division during this phase of the planning process will ensure a consistency and coordination between Divisions as the plan is executed.
 - b. The common structure will be finalized by the SPWG and will include the following key elements
 - i. Identification of NHF&G initiatives that must be continued to accomplish the mission
 - ii. Identification of NHF&G initiatives which are not necessary to accomplish the mission or can be discontinued in favor of higher priority initiatives
 - iii. Identification of new or expanded initiatives that must be started to accomplish the mission.
 - iv. Identification of barriers to starting, stopping or continuing initiatives highlighted in i., ii., and iii.
5. The Strategic Plan Working Group (consisting of Sr Staff/Division leaders) will review all comments received in #3 and align the input of the public and stakeholders with the work of the staff in #4 to develop a Draft Agency Strategic Plan. At the agency and division organization level the Draft plan will include both an identification of the desired outcomes as well as an identification of any necessary resource, statutory authority or organizational enhancements.
- The Plan will include required achievement benchmarks at the one-, three- and five-year mark to assist internal and external success measurement.
6. The Strategic Plan Working Group will present the Draft Plan to the Commission for initial provisional adoption.
 7. Once provisionally adopted by the Commission the Draft strategic plan will be published for public comment. The Commission will conduct public hearings around the state to solicit feedback on the plan and a comment submission will be encouraged.
 8. The Commission will meet with the Strategic Plan Working Group and provide feedback related to the public comment received during #7
 9. The Strategic Plan Working Group will revise as necessary based on input received in #7 and #8 in addition to input provided by Division leadership.
 10. The Strategic Plan Working Group will produce a Final Draft and present it to Commission for Final Adoption.

11. Commission adoption of 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.

Framework #		2022												2023		
		Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
1	Establish Stratetegic Working Group (SPWG). Develop framework and propose to Commission	█														
2	Commission adopt tenants & framework		█													
3	Solicit stakeholder feedback within the structure of the tenants			█												
4	Divisional staff cascade and goal setting			█	█											
5	Reconcile feedback and create draft plan				█	█										
6	Draft plan to Commission for provisional alignment and adoption						█	█								
7	Public comment/public hearing on provisional draft								█	█						
8	Analysis of feedback from public hearing										█					
9	SPWG revision of draft											█	█			
10	SPWG completion of final draft and presentation to Commission for the final adoption													█		
11	Commission adoption of 2023-2028 Strategic Plan															█

Commissioner Hodgdon moved to adopt & support the timeline and framework provided as it relates to developing the Strategic Plan and Commissioner Hodgson seconded.

Chairman Stohl announced that the Commission wanted to hear from the public and all stakeholders in regards to their thoughts on the creation & contents of the Strategic Plan. He reported that there would be a written comment period, as well as public hearings to provide input.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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.

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

Chairman Temple reported that the committee had scheduled a visit to the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery in New Durham, NH, however, it was cancelled due to inclement weather. He reported that he would be rescheduling that visit in the near future.

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

Commissioner DeBow, Chair; Commissioners: Hodgdon, Price & DeRosa.
Staff members: Dianne Timmins, Kevin Jordan & Cheri Patterson

Chairman DeBow reported that the committee met yesterday, February 7, 2022, to review and discuss the nominations received for the Commission Awards of Excellence. He reported that there were four (4) nominations received in total and that he would be scheduling another meeting in the near future to finalize the committee's selections.

Chairman DeBow further inquired as to what the criteria was for past Commissioners to be recognized. The committee will further discuss this and get back to the full Commission with their recommendations.

OLD BUSINESS: Chairman Stohl clarified that Commissioner Caveney toured the Armory in Lancaster, not Berlin, with Sergeant Lucas.

Chairman Stohl inquired as to why the word "trapping" was not included throughout the education program presentation provide to the Commission at the January 11, 2022 Commission Meeting, as it is a furbearer management tool.

Nicola Whitley, Chief, Public Affairs Division, responded that she would make Laura Ryder, Aquatic Resources Education & Hunter Education Supervisor, aware of the language omission of the word "trapping".

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner DeRosa inquired as to how the Commission could improve communication with the public and be more transparent to get more people involved, particularly younger people.

After much discussion, it was the consensus amongst the Commission that the new committee structure and committees are discussing these exact topics and want to address the same concerns that Commissioner DeRosa has.

Chairman Stohl thanked Commissioner Hodgdon for the extensive amount of work he put into compiling the new committee structure and stated, "These committees are active & doing things and I feel this is a step in the right direction."

Commissioner Hodgson reported that Senator Kahn requested that the Commission have a remote meeting in Seabrook, NH, and offered the Selectmen's Office as a location to do so.

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.

Commissioner Price thanked staff for the informative YouTube slide show regarding habitat work at the Kearsarge Wildlife Management Area. She recommended getting that information out to the public.

Commissioner Hodgson inquired as to whether there could be a schedule of presentations to come before the Commission.

Director Mason reported that he has a rotating schedule within the Divisions of topics of current interests to come before the Commission. He further reported that if any Commissioner has a particular request, that they please let him know and he will get it on the schedule.

Commissioner McInnis reported that he attended the Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries Committee. He reported that prior to the meeting, Cheri Patterson, Chief, Marine Division held interviews for the seats on the New England Fisheries Management Council.

He reported that HB-1297 was discussed at length, with some effort to try and change the minds of the committee relative to the scuba bill.

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

Director Mason reported that the following:

- He met with Trout Unlimited last month and discussed current legislation of mutual interest.
- He reported that he has been working on hatchery issues & legislation.
- The Department hosted a joint meeting with F&G staff, DNCR (Department of Natural & Cultural Resources) staff to discuss legislation and areas of joint concern and had good discussion.
- Director Mason reported that he would be meeting with AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club), National Forest & SPNHF (Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests), to discuss the Hike Safe Card Program & outreach on the sales of the program.
- He reported that Marty Mobley, Legal Coordinator, would be starting on February 11, 2022.
- He further reported that Joshua Davis, Chief, of the Facilities & Lands Division, would be starting on February 25, 2022.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Chris Schadler, NH Wildlife Coalition, spoke to her concerns about the decline in the red & gray fox population, along with the fisher decline. She reported that Weldon Bosworth has provided the Commission with good, statistically scientific based information, yet the Commission refuses to engage in discussion on it. She reported that she would like to have

further discussion with Dan Bergeron, Chief, Wildlife Division, on the subject, along with anyone else interested. She further expressed her concern over coyote hunting during mating season and stated, "The coyote gets the worst deal of them all and this is unethical". She stated, "We are not anti-hunters, we are really concerned ecologists & conservationists. She offered to provide a short presentation on coyote for the Commission, as she did 15 years ago.

In closing, she stated that she was happy to hear that the Commission is working on a new 5 year Strategic Plan and is interested in participating, along Meade Cadot, Weldon Bosworth & many other interested individuals. She thanked the Commission for their time & work.

Kristina Snyder, Chester, NH, expressed her frustration with the Commission's outreach for public input as it relates to the 5 year Strategic Plan. She reported that she has been attending Commission Meetings longer than any sitting Commissioner and felt her input has never been considered or made a difference. She referred to the squirrel petition as an example, and stated that the Commission never reviewed the testimony & comments received.

She further reported that she was very upset over the word "anti-hunter or anti" being used at the Lancaster Biennial Hearing & requested the Commission or legal counsel provide a definition of the word. She reminded the Commission that they were the "citizens" representatives, not just hunters, anglers & trappers.

In closing, she asked the Commission do as they say and listen to public comment regarding the Strategic Plan.

Cathryn Harvey, Ranking Democrat on the House Fish, Game & Marine Resources Committee, reminded the Commission that she is the only member of the committee that attends Commission Meetings and requested that they hold as many meetings as possible at F&G HQ, to allow her to do so. She further reported that she was excited about the Strategic Plan, as well, and stated that she would be happy to participate & provide input. In addition, she was happy to see the Commission's position on the squirrel bill.

Jim Morse, President, NH Wildlife Federation, reported that he & Eric Orff, Vice President, have been to the hatcheries, the Great Bay Discovery Center, and talked with some staff members and people are seeing the good work & effort on behalf of the agency & Commission.

Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: S. Price, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", 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.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission