

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

APRIL 12, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: Camp Sentinel, 29 Sentinel Lodge Rd., Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816.

Commissioners Present: M. Lachance, B. Temple, M. Hodgson, E. Stohl, S. Price, A.J. Derosa, P. DeBow, R. Green, & P. McInnis

Commissioners absent/excused: 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 March 8, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes and Commissioner Price seconded.

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 accept consent agenda items 2a-2j, as presented below, and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations made to the Search & Rescue Account:

- Two donations totaling \$765.00, from Laura Chandler.
- The donation of \$50.00 from Bette Frazier.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$200.00 from Judith Thompson, to be deposited into the Operation Game Thief Account.

2c.) The Commission accepted the following donations in memory of Paul E. Fortin, Laconia, NH:

- The donation of \$50.00 from Verna Jo Carignan, Laconia, NH, to be utilized by the “Let’s Go Fishing” Program.
- The donation of \$50.00 from Rick & Anita Carignan, Moultonborough, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$5,000 from the Meredith Rotary Club, Meredith, NH, made to the Aquatic Education Program, to assist with renovations to the Discovery Room.

2e.) The Commission to accept the donation of \$5,500 from Trout Unlimited NH State Council, made to the “Let’s Go Fishing” Program, to be utilized to purchase a new chiller for the Discovery Room cold water tank.

2f.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$165.00 from Lonnie Schorer, Moultonborough, NH, to be utilized for moose management.

2g.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$285.00 from Jodi & Marc Goudreau, Manchester, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2h.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$500.00 from Matthew & Kimberly Noyes, Merrimack, NH, in memory of Paul Hoffman, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2i.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from Margaret Meyette, Cornish, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2j.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$5,040.00 from Eugene & Judy Ratta Harrington, Nashua, NH, to be deposited in the Nongame Program Account.

3.) Dianne Timmins, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission, as a follow up to last month’s request to expend up to \$30,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to hire four seasonal employees in FY’22 & FY’23, in order to conduct fish habitat surveys in the Saco River, Connecticut River, and other northern watersheds.

Commissioner Green moved to amend the expenditure amount to \$25,000 and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Green reported that his motion reflected information learned last month that the amount requested was in error.

4.) Rulemaking requiring **approval** by Commission:

Commissioner Green moved to readopt **Fis 600 Sections** – Marine Fishing rules that were set to expire February 28, 2022 (Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries hearing was April 5, 2022), Commissioner Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Rulemaking requiring **consultation** with Commission:

Commissioner Green moved to support the re-adoption of the following and Commissioner Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Fis 303.02 & .03 – Small fur-bearers, set to expire June 5, 2022

Fis 807.11 & Fis 1110.09 & .10 – Derelict gear clean-up surcharges & exemptions

Fis 1400 – Amphibians & reptiles

Commissioner Hodgson reported that she would like to have a schedule to follow, that would allow the Commission adequate time to review the language & have discussions with constituents, and be able to bring that feedback to the Commission Meeting, prior to voting on it.

Rulemaking that is **information only** for Commission:

Fis 304.01 & .08-.12 – Bear damage (get from Dan)

Fis 602.09 – Marking gear (Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries hearing was April 5, 2022)

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, answered a few questions relative to the financial statement.
- 2.) Dianne Timmins came before the Commission & provided a fish stocking update as follows: (See attached)

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 & Marty Mobley

Commissioner Green reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and last week, as well.

Commissioner Green moved that from this point forward, the Commission's position on legislation will be to either support or oppose, and will provide staff with the reasoning on both positions, Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote unanimous in the affirmative.

He spoke to the following legislation:

Commissioner Green moved that the Commission remain opposed to HB-241, repealing the definition of brook trout and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Green moved that the Commission remain opposed to HB-490, relative to the definitions of "game camera" and "hunting day" and relative to the use of game cameras Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hodgson clarified that the Commission opposes the bill, however, supports adding names on tree stands & game cameras.

Commissioner Green moved to oppose HB-1269, relative to certain legislative study committees and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Green moved to change the Commission's position on HB-1297, relative to the taking of lobster while engaged in recreational scuba diving, from opposed as written to opposed, Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Temple thought keeping the position of "opposed as written" as an option, as the legislation could be good, however, may require some language tweaking.

Commissioner Green replied that the Commission would explain the reasoning for both being in support & opposed so it is clear to all.

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

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

Commissioner Temple reported that the committee met last week and reviewed pages 23 – 33 (policies & procedures) of the Commission Handbook. The committee decided to extend the review & comment period on that section in order to receive comments & input from staff & Commission members.

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

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

Commissioner Hodgson reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and discussed the letter sent from the Commission & Director Mason to the Division Chiefs introducing the Strategic Planning Process. She reported that they also discussed broader ways to engage with all staff to obtain their input & comments, as well.

She further reported that Director Mason has invited the Sustainability & Strategic Planning Committee to the next Senior Staff Meeting to have further discussion on the Strategic Plan & Planning Process.

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 the morning of the Commission Meeting at the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery, in New Durham, NH, with Dianne Timmins, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division & E. J. Malone, Superintendent, who provided a tour of the hatchery. Commissioner Temple reported that he was able to witness how the stocking process works and that he learns more about the process every visit to the hatchery.

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

Commissioner DeBow reported that the Awards committee met several times & reviewed all nominations & made their selections for the Commission Awards of Excellence. He distributed the confidential list of recommended winners for each category to the Commission for their review & input. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Hodgson moved to go forward with the committee's recommendation for the Ellis Hatch, Jr., Commission Award of Excellence and Commissioner DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner DeBow moved to go forward with the committee's recommendation for the Youth Conservationist Award and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner DeBow moved to go forward with the committee's recommendation for the Habitat Stewardship Award of Excellence and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The motion carried with 8 in favor, 1 opposed (R. Green).

In addition, Commissioner DeBow reported that the committee decided to purchase plaques for former Commissioners with a resolution, in addition to purchasing jackets for Commissioners serving more than 1 term.

OLD BUSINESS: Representatives and town officials from the Town of Ossipee attended the Commission Meeting & voiced concern over the management of the dam at Big Dan Hole Pond in Ossipee & Tuftonboro, NH. Their primary concern was the brook trout not surviving. Much discussion ensued. In closing, it was suggested that the Inland Fisheries Division work with the Ossipee town officials to find a solution and bring in the DES dam bureau, if necessary.

NEW BUSINESS:

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 reported that the Becoming an Outdoor Woman Program continues to search for sponsorship & donors for raffle items and for equipment needed to teach the classes, such as snowshoes, etc. She recommended that anyone wishing to donate to please contact her and she would put them in touch with the program coordinator, through the Executive Director. She further reported that she had conversation with a few female legislators, who were interested in extending this program to the secondary school system for young girls somehow.

Commissioner Hodgson reported that in the beginning of March, she & Commissioner Green attended the stripe bass hearing on the coast, a meeting in partnership with the ASMFC (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission). She reported that there were both people attending in person and by computer, and discussion took place relative to proposed changes to the management plan. She reported that the consensus was a strong desire for a more strict management of the stripe bass fishery. In closing, Commissioner Hodgson stated, “The meeting was very well run & organized.”

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

Director Mason reported on the following:

- The Department continues to work with partners regarding the Avian Influenza outbreak.
- The Department is in the process of testing two eagles found dead. He reported that VT & ME both have had two eagles test positive for Avian Influenza.
- The Department continues to work on the rulemaking process.
- He announced that Discover Wild NH Day would take place on April 16, 2022, at F&G HQ, from 10am – 3pm. Free event for all.
- The Department is in the process of developing a state budget. He reported that he has shared goals & initiatives with the Governor. He reported that his goals are:
 - The hatchery reinvestment program
 - Database improvement system
 - Funding for 4 unfunded Conservation Officer positions
 - Replacing the part-time Becoming an Outdoor Woman Program position with a fulltime-temporary position, in an effort to develop a larger program.
 - Increasing Business Office staff by one person.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

No comments heard.

At this time, 3:25 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission