

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JULY 12, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: Belknap County Sportsmen's Association, 182 Lilly Pond Rd., Gilford, NH, 03249.

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

Commissioners absent/excused:

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:02 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 DeBow moved to approve the June 14, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes and Commissioner Green seconded. The motion carried with 10 in favor, 1 abstention, (M. Hodgson).

Commissioner Price mentioned that she would like to see all Commissioner's Comments put into the minutes.

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 – 2c, as presented below, and Commissioner Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$200.00 from Jody McGarry, for assistance she received from the Department's Search & Rescue Team after sustaining an injury on Crawford Ridgepole Trail in Sandwich, NH.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$400.00 from Charles Boppe, for assistance he received from the Department's Search & Rescue Team after sustaining an injury on the Welch Dickey Trail.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$500.00 from Hope & Richard Lothrop, for assistance received from the Department's Search & Rescue Team in safely locating Richard.

3.) Commissioner DeBow moved to accept the donation of 1500 board feet of lumber, valued at \$1,100.00 from King Pine Industries, Wentworth, NH, to be used by the Warren

Hatchery and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

4.) Commissioner Green moved to accept the donation of \$100.00 from Marikate Coppez Taylor of Hooksett, NH, in memory of Mark Rapoza of Gilmanton, NH, to be split between the Hunter Education & Aquatic Education Programs, and Commissioner DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Election of Commission Officers: (C. Hodgdon)

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the Nominating committee reached out to all Commissioners inquiring as to their desire to seek a particular Commission Office.

He further reported that there were two individuals interested in being Chairman. He reported that the process was not exactly clear in the Commission Handbook. He reported that through a motion, he would hold the election by secret ballot, distributing a blank piece of paper to all Commissioners having them write their choice (who they want for Chairman) on the paper, then allowing each Commissioner seeking the Chairman seat to make a few comments, if they so wish. He reported that the results would then be tallied & reported back to the full board. Following the vote, the current Chair will finish out the remainder of this meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer – Running: Commissioner DeBow

Commissioner Hodgdon nominated Commissioner DeBow, to remain as Secretary/Treasurer, and Commissioner Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Vice Chairman – Running: Meggan Hodgson

Commissioner Hodgdon nominated Commissioner Hodgson to be Vice Chairman and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chairman - (Two candidates running) Eric Stohl & Ray Green

Commissioner Hodgdon moved to proceed with a secret ballot for the Chairman position, for this year only, as follows: Following nominations, both candidates will have an opportunity to make a few comments, ballots distributed to the Commission, nominating committee will then tabulate & report results to board, Commissioner DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hodgdon nominated Commissioner Stohl as Chairman and Commissioner DeBow seconded.

Commissioner Hodgdon nominated Commissioner Green as Chairman and Commissioner Caveney seconded.

Candidates Comments:

Commissioner Stohl stated, “If you think I’ve done a good job as Chairman, vote for me, if not, vote for Ray”. He reported that he would not be upset if he lost. He reported that if

nominated, he would do his best!

Commissioner Green reported that that he running for Chairman has nothing to do with Chairman Stohl's performance and that he has the utmost respect for him. He further reported that regardless of the outcome, he & Commissioner Stohl would remain working well together. He reported that the reasoning for his running was the need for change. He reported that Commissioner Stohl has been Chairman for 2 years and that some Chairman have remained in that role for numerous years. In closing he stated, "I wish Commissioner Stohl the best".

Commissioner Hodgdon distributed the ballots to the Commission and collected them.

Upon the Nominating Committee's return to the room, Commissioner Hodgdon announced that Commissioner Green won the vote and would be Chairman until elections take place again next year.

At this time, Commissioner Stohl introduced & thanked Representative Lang, of the House F&G Committee, for being present at today's Commission Meeting.

Representative Lang stated that it was nice to be in attendance today and reported that Director Mason, Colonel Jordan, Marty Mobley & Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator prior to Marty, have been great in representing the Commission & Department on policy decisions. Commissioner Stohl responded that Representative Lang has been a great asset to the Department.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) No questions on the financial statement.
- 2.) Dan Bergeron, Chief, Wildlife Division & Dr. Remington Moll, UNH, provided background information regarding two cooperative research projects with UNH, which evaluate the efficacy of additional methods to index trends in the state's furbearer and moose populations. (See attached presentation).
- 3.) Joshua Davis, Chief, Facilities & Lands Division, provided an overview of the Facilities & Lands Division & their responsibilities as follows:

GOALS

- Limit disruptions to daily operating and work-flow for the Department.
- Appropriately rank project requests.
- Provide assistance with technical review and construction efforts on capital improvements and major repairs as needed.
- Limit emergency work.

RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS THE STATE

- Responsible for operations and maintenance at the HQ Campus and Regional Offices 1, 2 & 4
- Aid with coordination and oversight for the majority of the Department's capital improvements.

- Fish & Game is one of only a few Departments in the state that is not required to go through DAS (Dept. of Administrative Services) and PW (Public Works) for projects under \$500,000.
- Manage the Boat Access Program.
- Responsible for maintenance at all boat access sites.
- Installing, removing, and repairing docks at several boat ramps.
- Acquire additional land for new sites.
- Fish & Game owns 130 dams, over 160 buildings, 142 boat ramps, and 6 fish ladders across the state.

COMMUNICATION

- External Communication:
 - Permitting
 - Contractors
 - Consultants
 - Dept. of Administrative Services (DAS)
- Internal Communication:
 - Upfront with schedule/timelines
 - Communicate disruptions to normal day
 - Indicate if local personnel will be needed to complete the work.
 - Heavy equipment and general tools
 - Tractor, backhoe, excavator, bobcat, trailers & dump truck

LIMITATIONS

- Most projects require the work of two people (Some requiring more)
- Remote Locations
 - Importance of Safety
 - Importance of clear scope of work
- Unable to complete electrical work in house
- Limited Funding

NEXT STEPS PROJECT TRACKING AND RANKING

- Add transparency to ranking system
- Help to better understand hard deadlines
- Final and intermediate
- Section for internal notes & contact information

4.) Mike Marchand, Supervisor, Nongame Program, came before the Commission and provided a presentation relative to U.S. Recovering America's Wildlife Act. (See attached presentation).

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 prior to the Commission Meeting. He asked that everyone review the updates sent from Marty Mobley, Legal Coordinator.

Commissioner Green moved to have all written testimony submitted to the Legislature copied to the Fish & Game Commission electronically for their records and Commissioner Price seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hodgson elaborated and reported that this will allow all Commissioners to stay updated, not just the Legislative Committee, and will help understand what & why the Commission took a certain position.

Marty provided the following updates:

Bills of Particular Interest:

[HB 490](#) (game cameras) – C of C report was not signed off; bill dies

[HB 571](#) (OHRVs allowed on Hoit Road Marsh) – signed in May; effective July 2nd

[HB 1230-FN](#) (on-line deer registration) – signed in June; effective August 6th; program/rules in place by September 1, 2023

[HB 1269](#) (membership on ACMF) – House concurred with Senate amendment that restores membership on ACMF to seacoast “tidewater towns” residents with marine fishery experience; bill not yet signed

[HB 1299](#) (wildlife importation) – signed July 1st; effective August 30th; rules slated to start in September

[HB 1323](#) (Hike Safe cards) – signed in May; effective July 2nd; rules to set fees already in process

[HB 1528](#) (boat access donations) – signed in May; effective June 19th; rules slated to start in October

[HB 1554-FN](#) (OHRVs on-line registration) – Senate amendment sets implementation date of September 2025; signed in June; effective August 16th

In process:

Fis 303.02 & .03 (Small Fur-bearers) – Hearing was May 26th; Final Proposal filed June 8th; at JLCAR July 21st; Commission Consulted in April

Fis 304.01 & .08-.12 (Bear Damage) – Hearing was June 22nd; Final Proposal filed July 6th; at JLCAR August 18th; Info Only in April

Fis 600 Sections (marine fishing) – Adopted June 28th; awaiting Proofing copy; Info Only in April

Fis 1006 (disbursing mitigation funds) – Fiscal Impact Statement received; hearing is August 11th; Info Only rules.

Fis 1106.07 (Hike Safe cards) – Hearing is August 2nd; [HB 1323 removed fees from statutes and mandates them for rules; Info Only rules; Initial Proposal attached](#)

Fis 1400 (non-game) – Hearing was June 2nd; Final Proposal filed June 23rd; at JLCAR July 21st; Commission Consulted in April

Next up:

Fis 807 and Fis 1110.09 & .10 (derelict gear clean-up) – new rules; mandated by SB 146 from last Session; expect to start into rulemaking this month; Commission Consulted in April

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

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

Commissioner Caveney reported that the committee would be meeting tomorrow, July 13, 2022, at F&G HQ.

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

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

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that he & Commissioner DeRosa have drafted questions for the public survey. He reported that this is to accomplish obtaining information from respondents on how they use our wildlife, lands and wild places, and what they feel is important for the department, the state, and themselves, in addition to what types of common demographic groups they follow. This will allow us to understand what they are thinking & believe.

He asked that the Commission & staff review the questions & provide feedback to the committee in two weeks.

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

No meeting.

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

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

Commissioner DeBow reported that awards are in and the committee will now decide what meeting to present the awards.

OLD BUSINESS: As a follow up, Commissioner Caveney reported that he was able to speak with Marine Patrol about the Swanzey Lake water ski slalom course permit & the issues related to it. He reported that Marine Patrol was very understanding and expressed that they are significantly understaffed. He reported that there is language in the permit that clearly state “If there are valid complaints, the permit could be revoked.” Colonel Jordan suggested that people file official complaints, to make it known there are serious concerns.

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 Temple complimented the people who work & maintain the fishing access on the Connecticut River on the western part of the state.

Commissioner Price reported that the Town has taken over the management of Big Dan Hold Pond and lowered the water level 6 inches, allowing the EBT (Eastern Brook Trout) to hold better in the Lake. She reported that when the campground owned it, they were managing it for the boating population and most likely wanted the water level as high as they could get it.

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

Director Mason reported on the following:

- The request for qualifications and interest for the engineering and design firm for the fish hatchery project was issued by the Department of Public Works. He reported that the 3 agencies are currently meeting every other week to stay in communication (Department of Environmental Services, Bureau of Public Works & Fish & Game), with the goal to have the firm selected by the beginning of September 2022, complete the design by the end of 2023, begin construction in Spring of 2024, and complete construction by December, 2026.
- HDR has begun the pilot testing program of different technologies to remove phosphorus from the hatchery discharge at powder Mill Hatchery. He reported that he would arrange a tour for the Commission to see how that works, sometime in August. He reported that this is a very critical part in the department’s decision making, as it relates to the future operations of Powder Mill & Berlin Fish Hatcheries.

- The Department has requested a capital budget request for the following:
 - ❖ Repair roof at F&G HQ
 - ❖ Purchase heat pumps for the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
 - ❖ Hatchery repairs
 - ❖ Build dock for safe boat as seacoast

- The Department applied for additional ARPA funds to rebuild our databases, as 15 databases will lose support by the end of the year. He further reported that the Department would be going to Fiscal Committee in the near future to split an I.T. (Information Technology) Lead position with another agency, giving Fish & Game 50% of their time to deal strictly with Fish & Game issues.

- The Business Office is in the process of rebidding the licensing software, in order to provide as many license and registration services online as possible for our license holders. The Business Office is working with other divisions on this, as well.

- The Public Affairs Division is working with Department of Information Technology on rebuilding the department's webpage.

- The Wildlife Division is actively working on developing the online deer registration.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Tyson Morrill, Gilmanon, NH, reported that he was not able to find the meeting minutes & agendas on the Department's website. The Chairman responded that he would look into that.

At this time, 4:05 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission