

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
October 14, 2014

The regular meeting of the Fish and Game Council was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on October 7, 2014.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Burke
Councilwoman Blumig
Councilman Brodhecker (arrived at 1:38 p.m.)
Councilwoman Brummer
Councilman DeMartino (arrived at 1:08 p.m.)
Councilman Gudmundsson
Councilman Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Link
Councilman Puskas

Division employees included L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, M. Chicketano, A. Petrongolo,, A. Ivany, L. Barno, and T. McBride.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that due to the lack of a quorum for the Council at the September meeting, the minutes for the August 12, 2014 meeting had not been reviewed or voted on. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Van Mater, to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

At this time, the minutes from the September 17, 2014 joint meeting with ENSAC were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilwoman Blumig, seconded by Acting Chairman Burke, to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

Acting Chairman Burke gave a brief review of topics discussed in the September meeting, including snapping turtle harvesting permits. He also mentioned a newspaper article he read describing a plan to put out quail at the Pine Island cranberry bog area for the next three years.

(Councilman DeMartino arrived at 1:08 p.m.)

Assistant Director Nelson advised that a video on conservation would be presented later in the meeting.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported on the bear fatality that occurred on September 21, 2014. He advised that he, Assistant Director Nelson, and Director Chanda were away for a meeting on the day of the attack, but were in constant communication with Division staff coordinating Division response and investigation of the incident along with the West Milford Police Department. No official cause of death issued by the medical examiner, and the results may take up to 4 months to receive. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that Supervising Biologist McBride would report on a recent coyote incident later in the meeting.

Assistant Director Nelson presented a video from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) on conservation efforts being made by states nationwide. The Blue Ribbon Panel is going to be looking for stable sources of funding for nongame species going into the future, and will be doing more listening sessions in the spring. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that the video can be found on the front page of the AFWA's web site (www.fishwildlife.org).

Acting Chairman Burke advised that voting on the 2014 pheasant and quail stocking schedule for Wildlife Management Areas was on the agenda for the meeting. The Division is working on a distribution model for stocking pheasants that will not go into effect until possibly next year. It was announced that Chief Petrongolo would be reporting on the stocking program later. Anyone requesting to make public comment on the stocking program at this time was advised that they would have three minutes to speak.

Jim Reiser from Barnegat commented on challenges to pheasant hunting in Ocean County. He presented suggestions on stocking changes in this section of the state, and commented that quail stocking has been excellent at Greenwood. He distributed a letter on the same subject from Stanley Romanek from Barnegat.

Janet Pizar from Millburn noted her opposition to the Rockport Pheasant Farm operation. She additionally commented on Division financial reports that she would like to see.

Barbara Sauchau from Whitehouse expressed her opposition to releasing pen-raised pheasants and quail into the wild populations and also to hunting these birds.

There was no representative available to report for the Agriculture Committee.

Councilman Van Mater was unable to attend the Federation meeting.

Councilwoman Blumig was also unable to attend the Federation meeting but advised that Federation members in Somerset County were inquiring about the ability to sell licenses directly after a student completes a hunter education course. She would also like for credit cards to be accepted to make license purchases. Assistant Director Nelson replied that credit cards can be used to purchase licenses

online but that Treasury does not allow credit cards for physical license sales at this time. Councilwoman Blumig requested contact information for whoever can change purchasing limitations.

Councilman Gudmundsson advised that he would be attending a meeting in Montvale tonight for a hearing ordinance to prevent the discharge of bows in the town as a way to stop bow hunting. This ordinance will also prevent people from practicing in backyards and will prevent scouts and schools from having any archery. He promised to find out more and report back next month. Representatives from Morris County and Bergen County are also attending the meeting tonight.

Councilman DeMartino still has questions about snapping turtles. Snapping turtle permit is only for freshwater now, but he would like this changed. Assistant Director Herrightly advised that this would need to be changed in legislature.

(Councilman Brodhecker arrived at 1:38 p.m.)

Councilman Gudmundsson noted that he gets contacted by hunters in the northern part of the State asking for an earlier bear season. He noted that there is a gap in understanding regarding the completion of the five year study and that this needs to be better communicated to sportsmen. Law cannot be changed immediately and there is a process to go through. As part of the outreach to sportsmen, he believes that hunters should be informed that any changes in bear season will likely not appear earlier than the 2017 Game Code.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that Cumberland County is coordinating volunteers for taking kids hunting and had questions about the Game Code. Atlantic County had routine business and had a Conservation Officer come for a question and answer period. It was brought up that the northern part of Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is undergoing Sandy cleanup, so that section may be closed to hunting. Assistant Director Nelson advised that the Division is still working on those details. It was suggested that refunds be given for hunters in this area. The Friends of Forsythe Refuge event will happen on October 25, 2014.

Councilwoman Blumig reported Union County had a question about community-based deer management. That project will be headed by regional biologists now.

Councilman Brodhecker from the Agriculture Committee noted that most farmers are done chopping but are still seeing a lot of bear damage to corn fields. They are also seeing bears hit on the way to corn fields. One farmer left a dead deer unattended briefly in his truck and then discovered that a bear had dragged the deer away. A lot of geese are also being observed on the fields.

Councilwoman Blumig has also seen more geese than usual for this time of year. Bigger numbers and earlier numbers are expected for bird migrations this year.

Councilman Van Mater read that the typhoon that hit Japan is going to make the eastern U.S. cold because of a jet stream, and this cold front may begin as soon as Halloween.

Acting Chairman Burke saw a report that corn production nationwide is up 50%, and that corn prices are going down.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that the Finance Committee tried to have a meeting this morning and agreed on a format for the future. They will have quarterly updates and meetings for reports. The Division is meeting on a monthly basis for the budget. Acting Chairman Burke has heard people asking about discounts for senior licenses. If the senior license permit price were reduced, then revenue would need to be increased elsewhere. Information will be reviewed and passed on as it is received.

Councilman DeMartino asked about the Saltwater Registry. Assistant Director Nelson reported that for 2013 there were 203,000 registrants, down from 250,000 the year prior. Not many people are registering. Councilman DeMartino asked why this may be and was advised there may be political reasons. He then asked what commercial fishing contributes to DFW and was advised that there is revenue for the different types of licenses.

There was no report from the Freshwater Fisheries Committee at this time.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Game Committee. Supervising Biologist Stanko has drawn up a draft of a legal document, sent it around for review, and the legal process will be starting soon. Attorneys have been sent the planned schedule, and the anticipated changes will take effect in 2015 for the fall season and in spring 2016 for turkey.

Assistant Director Nelson from the Legislative Committee reported on the only bill introduced since September meeting – S-2399. This bill would require all law enforcement officers, including Conservation Officers, to wear body cameras. Councilman Gudmundsson commented that monetary issues had prevented such action before. Assistant Director Nelson explained that violations will be paying for the cameras. Councilman Gudmundsson noted that per the Supreme Court, video is now a part of public domain.

Councilwoman Brummer advised there was nothing new to report for the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that tonight's Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee meeting was postponed until December. In the future, they will try not to schedule two meetings in one day.

Councilman Brodhecker advised that the next Wildlife Rehabilitators' Advisory Committee meeting will be held on December 3, 2014.

At this time, Division reports were discussed.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. This week 5,700 trout will be stocked, mostly brown but also some rainbow brood stock. The end of fall stocking will be from the rainbow brood stock. More fish will be released in November. All fish released in the spring will be rainbow trout. Per Assistant Director Herrighty's suggestion, a bar code will be printed on stocked cold water and warm water stocking signs. This bar code can be scanned to download a PDF of the complete trout stocking schedule, making information easier to be obtained by anglers and to be updated by the Division. Testing will be done in advance by putting signs on trees before printing, although UV ink cannot be tested in advance. P. Tarlowe will be able to track how many people are using the bar codes. Field surveys are almost all completed. All streams designated as wild trout streams have been surveyed, and will be looked at for the Fish Code two years from now. Reproductive checks are completed for bass and sunfish to assess water bodies on the list for supplemental stocking through Hackettstown. Round Valley

Reservoir will be checked next week for lake trout. The Bureau received 2,000 salmon from Massachusetts, 1,000 of which will be swapped out and held for next spring.

Acting Chairman Burke asked about production for next year. Chief Barno responded that the baseline for the formula is 570,000 rainbows, which will be 10.5-11 inches.

Principal Biologist Ivany reported for the Office of Information & Education. He thanked the staff, volunteers, and bureaus that participated in the WILD Outdoor Expo, which had 6,400 attendees (6,700 people with staff and vendors). Attendance was down on Saturday due to rain, but the Expo was very busy on Sunday. A debriefing meeting was held recently, and next year's Expo will be held on September 12th and 13th. Councilwoman Blumig asked about moving the date due to conflict with the first day of archery season. Principal Biologist Ivany advised that this has been discussed, but the date cannot be changed because it would either be too close to Labor Day or would be too late.

He also reported that there has been an increase in requests for bear education programs as a result of the tragedy in West Milford. Division employees are scheduling programs as they are able to. The Division is reprinting the main black bear brochures, and will also be updating the brochure later in the year. Other improvements will also be discussed. The Division is trying to expand educational outreach by encouraging the cooperation of towns and counties to get the word out. It will also be recommending signage to communities to have posted in areas where black bears are active. Other bureaus are participating in the outreach discussion, and ideas include reaching out to counties to have them reach out to mayors, reaching out into urban areas, and utilizing school systems and web sites.

Councilwoman Blumig pointed out that Michelle Smith does a great job with bear education presentations. Councilwoman Brummer supports the signage and that she is looking for standard signage for her northern preserves. Principal Biologist Ivany further explained that a customizable PDF will be provided. Additional discussion on the signage ensued, and concluded with Ivany stating that the sign can be brought to council prior to posting and reiterating that it will be available whether or not it is used.

A bear education program had been previously scheduled in West Milford for two days after the attack, and 46 people attended. Good feedback on the program was received. Additional bear brochures were dropped off to the community last week.

Rockport Pheasant Farm will be having an Open House on Saturday, October 25, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Division is looking into selling licenses and stamps there. Hunter education classes are filling as fast as they are posted. The Division has had an incredibly close relationship with the DEP press office lately for news releases including topics such as Fall Trout Stocking, Deer and Motorists (Fall Rut) and Bluetongue virus found in white tailed deer.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. A handout of the 2015 proposed pheasant and quail stocking schedule was distributed. The schedule is based on an estimate of 55,000 pheasants raised. Quail are purchased, so there are guaranteed to be 11,000 stocked. All that has changed from last year's calendar is the days to cover the calendar change. Councilman DeMartino asked if it would be possible to alternate the schedule in the future so that pheasant and quail are not stocked on the same day. Assistant Director Herrightly recalled an attempt at mixed stocking in the past and advised that it did not work well with hunters. He reported that there are no results of the model

yet to be presented at the Wildlife Society meeting tomorrow, but that the Division will probably be able to do less things rather than more in the future due to employees retiring.

Assistant Director Herrighty mentioned that he and Director Chanda met with police at Stafford Forge who are interested in opening supervised long-distance ranges for the public, and also with the Shooters store owner who wasn't happy with that plan. Councilwoman Blumig asked for clarification. The police department wants to have a range to be used regionally by the police departments in the area for rifle range training, and also to be used by sportsmen 1.5 days a week. Five benefits of this type of range, leased on an area of a WMA, are perceived: 1. Trained instructors will be available. 2. This type of range is not available elsewhere in the state. 3. There will be more parking available. 4. There will be bathroom facilities. 5. There will be regular police presence. Councilwoman Brummer asked if would be using lead-free shots. Chief Petrongolo advised that lead-recycling will be incorporated into the plan.

A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino, seconded by Councilman Van Mater, to approve the stocking schedule as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

Chief Petrongolo advised the Reigelsville boat ramp near the Delaware River is now open. The demolition of the buildings at Belvidere ramp has been completed. The Division is in discussion to purchase the property right at the ramp to demolish the house. These are the types of projects done with CBT money. Pending legislation will determine the funding of that money. Law enforcement is focusing on dumping issues at WMAs. There have been no additional closings for acquisitions, but the 1,000 acre Split Rock Reservoir property is expected to close within a couple weeks. The Division is in discussion with the Division of Parks and Forestry to add Farney State Park to become a WMA with Wildcat Ridge. There is also a contract with the Boy Scouts to buy Shepherd's Mill in Cumberland County, where the dam on the lake is currently being refurbished.

(Councilwoman Brummer left at 3:51PM)

Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He gave a brief review of some recent summons issued by conservation officers. He noted that Parker's Pit, especially, is a problem area. The Division is looking into closing off the area to make it less accessible to the public, but the forest fire service still needs to have access to it. Additionally, there is a constant problem with ATVs in the southern part of the state. Illegal harvesting of clams and mussels is a problem at Timber Creek.

Since the tragic incident in West Milford, it was predicted that additional incidents with bears would occur because people are on edge. As of today, three archery hunting incidents have occurred. More incidents are expected. Chief Chicketano has been asked by the command staff about what the policy will be for incidents with bears such as these. There is no definitive clear-cut policy. Each case will be followed through in its entirety to determine its merits and make every attempt to be as reasonable as possible. Not everybody possesses information on bear behavior. All bears involved in these incidents are being sent for necropsies. Councilwoman Blumig commented that individuals regularly hunting in North Jersey have probably encountered bears before.

Chief Chicketano reported that there are two conservation officer vacancies in the north and one in marine. The Bureau is working now to backfill all three of those positions. Chief Chicketano and his Deputy will both be retiring within a year, with additional retirements expected as well. Successional planning is critical for any law enforcement agency, as it is critical for officers to have proper supervision. Chief Chicketano is working with human resources for promotions and for backfilling

Lieutenant positions and Captains' vacancies. For the remaining year, potential replacements for Chief Chicketano and his Deputy will be aggressively working with them to see what the job entails.

On behalf of the Federation, Councilwoman Blumig asked where fines collected from summons go. Chief Chicketano provided a brief summary of where different funds go. For example, general treasury receives funds for charges resulting from Titles 2C (criminal), 39 (motor vehicle), and 58 (disorderly persons). Only funds for charges resulting from Titles 23 and 50 go to the Division. A second question was raised on the importance of having the license displayed on the backs of hunters in terms of prosecuting cases. Chief Chicketano answered that generally, the purpose of this display is to show proof of a license, but there are cases where information has been obtained from the displayed license to identify someone who has been hunting illegally.

Supervising Biologist McBride reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. A handout was distributed showing preliminary numbers for the fall bow deer season. Antlerless harvest numbers are higher than 2013, and antlered are lower. Superintendent Bob Carr from Rockport asked to have it noted during this meeting that the catch building is being currently being constructed. Rockport is hoping to get a certificate of occupancy before the open house on October 25, 2014, but it may not happen until afterward. The farm currently has around 69,000 pheasants, and if normal mortality and stocking occur in early November, then there should be about 67,000 pheasants on hand.

Wildlife Services staff are delivering check station materials for the upcoming fall season.

A 34-pound rabid male coyote attacked four separate individuals earlier this month near the Black River Wildlife Management Area. At least one individual was bitten and at least one was scratched by the coyote. The rabies strain in NJ is most common in raccoons, but is sometimes found in skunks and foxes. This is the first incidence in recent history of a coyote with rabies attacking a person.

Councilwoman Blumig believes that Council members should be notified in instances such as the bear attack. Supervising Biologist McBride will look into doing this. Councilman Gudmundsson also commented that he had calls asking about the bear attack before he was aware that it had happened.

There was no representative available to report for the Bureau of Nongame and Endangered Species.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that because Councilwoman Brummer and Councilmen DeMartino, Gudmundsson, Link, Puskas and Van Mater missed the joint meeting, Chief Jenkins has asked his staff to condense the snapping turtle presentation for presentation to the Fish Committee. Assistant Director Herrighty also advised that he received a letter from someone noting that a crossbow is not listed as a legal weapon for bow fishing in the Fish Code.

Acting Chairman Burke announced that he would not be able to attend the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2014. Councilwoman Blumig and Councilman Gudmundsson will also likely not be able to attend. The Council will probably not have quorum at the November meeting, and the next meeting after that is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, 2014. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker, to cancel the November meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

Public comment was opened.

Barbara Sauchau presented a letter to Council requesting for Chief Petrongolo to give the public a report on the lead damage at the Black River shooting range. She also presented a complaint on the publicity of the bear attack in West Milford.

Pola Galle from thanked the Council for all the work that it does. She is involved with the Federation and the NJ Outdoor Alliance.

There was no one else wishing to make comment, and **a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumig, seconded by Councilman Van Mater, to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor.** Meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.