

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office  
Robbinsville, NJ  
June 27, 2013

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

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman Burke. He noted that there was not a secretary present to take notes for today. (meeting recorded on audio)

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 May 22, 2013.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman David Burke  
Councilwoman Cathy Blumig  
Councilman Phil Brodhecker  
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer  
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson  
Councilman Robert Puskas  
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Joseph DeMartino  
Councilman Jeffrey Link

Division personnel included D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, A. Petrongolo M. Chicketano, L. Barno, J. Sciascia and C. Stanko.

Members of the public included representatives from the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and others.

Minutes of the May 14, 2013 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Puskas, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to accept the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

Acting Chairman Burke noted an adjustment in the agenda today, and that the vote on the proposed amendments to the 2013-2014 Game Code would be given after his and the Director's comments.

Acting Chairman Burke commented that he recently attended the retirement dinner for Tom McCloy, Marine Fisheries Administrator.

Director Chanda added that this Friday would be Bureau Chief Sciascia's last day, since he too was retiring. He noted the difficulty in filling certain positions from existing personnel since there are no incentives for taking on a management title. There was some additional discussion on this and other personnel issues.

Director Chanda commented on his efforts to give certain support staff the opportunity to visit field locations to see and learn more of what occurs at those locations. Yesterday, staff attended a shooting event at the Colliers Mills WMA where Hunter Education staff gave information on the National Archery in Schools Program and the hunter education programs that are offered.

The fiscal year is closing out, and Director Chanda noted that the budget should just be able to be covered. He also suggested that the Finance Committee plan for a meeting in the near future. He noted concerns regarding the unknown costs of fringe benefits for the future.

Acting Chairman Burke commented that the meeting would move forward to the vote on the Game Code, and opened the public comment period on same. Those choosing to speak were advised that they would have a three minute time period.

Janet Pizar from Millburn addressed the Council. She noted her comments were submitted late, outside of the public comment period, and had them in writing today. She asked for a timely response to her questions.

Barbara Sauchau commented on various matters, including science, staff and that all hunting and trapping should be eliminated and banned.

John Messeroll thanked the Division and Council for their work on the Game Code, and noted that the Federation of Sportsmen supports their decisions and the way the operation is run.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. She advised that the proposals for the Fish Code have been reviewed by the Office of Administrative Law, and should be published in the Register sometime in August. The public hearing is scheduled for September 10, 2013.

A handout was provided from the Research and Management Section, which included a summary of both Federal Aid and Hunter and Angler activities for 2012. Stream sampling and lake water work was also noted.

There was additional review of other activities and survey work that has been done. That information will be available in the future.

Chief Barno gave an update of the coastal lakes. The large amount of recent rains have helped to reduce the salinity in these lakes that resulted from the saltwater intrusion during Hurricane Sandy, and seven of the ten lakes affected are now back into the realm of freshwater. Three of these seven are due to be dredged, so any stocking at those locations will not be done until after dredging activities occur. The other four will be stocked later this week. There was some additional discussion on this matter.

Supervising Biologist Stanko was in attendance to review the proposals to the Game Code. She noted that there were only 74 comments received, compared to many more in past code cycles. A power point presentation was given, and reviewed information was discussed.

Special attention was given to the earn-a-buck proposal, and Supervising Biologist Stanko reviewed the program history for the Council. Comments and questions were reviewed. Assistant Director Herrighty also gave a detailed explanation of why the Division is making the request to remove the proposal regarding doing away with the earn-a-buck requirement.

A technical change to the text of section 5.19 on ammunition type for coyotes was also noted, and Supervising Biologist Stanko referred to section 5.24 where the text was written correctly. The technical change would be to copy the 5.24 language into 5.19 for shot size as listed.

Acting Chairman Burke commented on feedback that has been received, noting that most were in favor of all the proposals as given, with the exception of the earn-a-buck proposal. He recommended a vote on all the proposals and the technical change for section 5.19, but not the earn-a-buck proposal.

**A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater and seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to accept the proposed Game Code changes, minus the earn-a-buck proposal, as well as the technical change to section 5.19. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

**A second motion was made to adopt the Game Code in its entirety. A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson seconded by Councilman Puskas. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

There was some discussion on when this might be put into the Register. Publication is anticipated sometime in early September, and the changes would become effective five days after that date.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that the Game Committee would probably be meeting sometime in January. Items to consider for review were noted.

The regular meeting agenda resumed, and Council reports were given.

Councilman Brodhecker commented they are behind schedule in harvesting hay his area due to too many thundershowers each day. Councilman Puskas noted the great amount of damage done by geese in his area. The rainy weather has also had an effect on farming in his area.

Federation reports were given. Councilman Van Mater reported that they had no quorum at his last county meeting, so it was just a discussion session. Councilwoman Blumig had no new information to report. Acting Chairman Burke advised that he has been asked to represent the Council on the Chronic Wasting Disease Committee, and they would be meeting in July.

There was some discussion on the renewal date for rifle permits, and it was noted that the effective dates of the permits was set by Legislation and originally designed for woodchuck hunters. Director Chanda added that this may be something to be considered for change in the future if a Legislative package is put together.

Councilman Gudmundsson was at the May meeting in the Northern Region and presented information from the previous Council meeting. The June meeting was cancelled, so he had no new information to report to the Council, and he will not be able to attend the July meeting. Acting Chairman Burke reported that some Cumberland County Federation members had advised that they were supportive of the Game Code proposals, even though they would be losing days of hunting opportunity.

Director Chanda updated the Council on several Federation related meetings he has attended lately.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that the Finance Committee may meet in August, as mentioned earlier today.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported for the Freshwater Fisheries Committee. He has had many people reaching out to him regarding the Fish Code.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Game Committee. He noted that the Game Code vote today was the result of a lot of hard work over the past two years, and that work on the next Game Code cycle would probably start in January.

There was no new information to report for the Legislative Committee.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. Their July meeting has been cancelled, but they have been talking about topic proposals for the September Joint Council's Meeting. She briefly reviewed some program ideas they have considered. There was some additional discussion on ideas for the September meeting. Members were asked to have any suggestions available to be made at the August meeting.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that there were no new acquisitions to discuss, so the July meeting of the Waterfowl Stamp Committee has been cancelled.

Councilman Brodhecker reported that the Wildlife Rehabilitator's Advisory Committee met May 22, 2013. An avian rehabilitator has been appointed as a new member to the group. Topics discussed included updating animal relocation information, new recommendations of animal classification relative to permits, and disaster response. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2013.

Division reports resumed. Chief Sciascia from the Information and Education Section gave his final report before his retirement. He first shared some personal comments with the Council.

He reported that the Coldwater Conservation School is presently occurring. He gave a brief review of the program, which is run as a partnership with Trout Unlimited.

The Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) program has also been busy these past few months. Federal funding has become available, and Chief Sciascia reviewed aspects of the program and what it entails for the youth who participate. Changes to the implementation of the program were also noted.

The license and permit pricing package proposal was reviewed. Chief Sciascia noted that he has spent a lot of time and effort these past few years on marketing, and briefly reviewed some of the ideas that he has promoted. He also commented on two items he has developed which are pending legislation; the fishing buddy license and the apprentice hunting license bills.

Chief Sciascia was wished well in his retirement and thanked for his many years of service.

At this time, Acting Chief Chicketano from the Bureau of Law Enforcement presented the award for the 2012 Conservation Officer of the Year. This year's recipient was Lieutenant Steve Sutton. Lieutenant Sutton started with the Division as a seasonal employee with the Deer Project in 2005, and Chief Chicketano reviewed the timeline of his work history with the Division. In 2008 he received the

Distinguished Service Award from the Division as well as many other awards for his work in preventing someone from taking their own life. Acting Chief Chicketano remarked on the many attributes of Lieutenant Sutton, including his ability deal with all types of people. The awards were reviewed as they were presented to Lieutenant Sutton, and it was noted that his name will be added to the plaque that bears the name of those who have received this award before him.

Acting Chief Chicketano continued with the Bureau of Law Enforcement report. He reviewed some of the highlights from this past month, as noted in the monthly report.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He commented on looking forward to the report on early successional habitat that is proposed for the September Joint Council's Meeting and reviewed the importance of habitat management.

Much time has been spent recently on Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) reimbursement for projects that resulted from Hurricane Sandy. Debris management work on wildlife management areas should be completed by mid-July. Work continues at the Sedge House on the Sedge Island WMA, and Chief Petrongolo reviewed some of the projects that are occurring.

Boat ramp work at Spicer's Creek continues, and Chief Petrongolo noted the importance of making these repairs, adding that this project should be finishing up by the end of this month. Repairs are due to begin at the Rieglesville ramp along the Delaware River around the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, and will continue through October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Road improvements were scheduled to begin June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Ken Lockwood Gorge, and were anticipated to take about one week to finish. No additional information has been received as of this time on the status of this project.

Principal Biologist Dunne worked on a number of grassland bird surveys on wildlife management areas this past month. Some of the results from these surveys were reviewed.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He commented on the Spring turkey season, noting that harvest results were up 3.8% from last year. He also noted several different surveys that are being done by staff from the Bureau.

Additional Bureau projects were reviewed, including the work with private landowners on quail, and the pheasant hatching program at the Rockport Pheasant Farm.

Assistant Director Herrighty also noted that bear activity has been up.

There was no new or old business to discuss. It was noted that the next meeting would be August 13, 2013.

The public comment period was opened.

Barbara Sauchau again addressed the Council. She commented on bears, logging on wildlife management areas and state parks, bird decline, state agency policies and the language contained in them. (time expired)

John Messeroll addressed the Council. He thanked the Council for their work on the Game Code. He also noted recent Federation activities, and future events they will be participating including youth shoots, the WILD Expo and the Tuckerton Decoy Show. He also commented that the Game Code timeframe is for 2013-2014, and we are already six months into the cycle.

With no one else wishing to speak, **a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumig, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:20pm.