

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
Central Region Office
Robbinsville, New Jersey
July 12, 2016**

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Acting Chairman David 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 on June 29, 2016 and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press; published on July 8th.

Roll call was taken.

In attendance were: Acting Chairman David Burke
 Councilwoman Cathy Blumig
 Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
 Councilman Phillip Brodhecker
 Councilman James DeStephano
 Councilman Jeffery Link (late arrival at 10:13 a.m.)
 Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent:
 Councilman Joe DeMartino
 Councilman Agust Gudmundsson

Division employees included: D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, D. Golden, L. Barno, M. Brown, B. Stoff, A. Ivany, L. DiPiano, C. Stanko, D. Roberts, J. Heilferty, P. Winkler, K. Clark T. Nichols, T. McBride and S. Coltrain. Also present was the Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources, Rich Boornazian.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Approval of the June 14th minutes was pushed back to later in the meeting so Acting Chairman Burke could review them.

Acting Chairman Burke stated there will be a presentation on the Rockport Pheasant Farm at the beginning of the meeting and Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources, Rich Boornazian, is here to hear the presentation and provide the Council with input from the Commissioner's office from the revenue side. He also announced there will be an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter at the end of the meeting. There will be no further business other than to adjourn the meeting after the session. He informed everyone they could stay

outside the room and be invited back into the room after the Executive Session for the adjournment of the meeting. He asked to be informed if anyone was going to wait. The tentative change to the 2017-18 Game Code will be presented today, but there will be no vote, as these are tentative changes. There will be two stakeholders meeting for the game code. After the meetings, the changes will come back to the Council for a vote which will then begin the formal adoption and review process.

Acting Chairman Burke reported he attended the Batsto meeting on pheasant stocking. There were good comments by those in attendance. Overall most people are favorable to the pheasant stocking program.

Acting Chairman Burke reminded the Council Members to complete the online ethics training if they have not done so already.

Director of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, David Chanda, reported House of Representatives members Don Young and Debbie Dingell introduced a bill in House of Representatives to put \$1.3 billion a year in a trust fund that is to be used for fish and wildlife management. The hope is that in the next couple of years, the bill will provide funding so that state agencies can manage species of concern so they will not become endangered. As experienced in the past, once a species becomes endangered, it is very costly to work on protecting them.

If the bill is passed by the House and the Senate passes a companion bill and it gets signed, it would mean \$25 million per year for the State of New Jersey and the work performed by Fish and Wildlife.

The difference in this tax versus the other tax revenue the agency receives on hunting and fishing licenses is, New Jersey is a minimum state on most of the other taxes. This tax would include population density into the formula. If New Jersey were a minimum state, we would get \$13 million per year. Director Chanda stated he will continue to keep the Council apprised on the progress of the bill.

Director Chanda stated he has discussed the work of the blue ribbon panel. There are four committee members who have stepped up and taken on committee work. One group is working on the legislation. A second group is working on business relations, The third group is working on communications, and the fourth group is examining the impact of societal changes on wildlife conservation. Director Chanda has tried to provide whatever support he could to all of the individual leaders. The bill is moving forward, but the Division does not expect anything to come from it this year. The next step is to work with the Senate and co-sponsors on this House bill from both sides of the aisle. The expectation is that once a new administration comes in, we will invest three to five years to try and make this happen. Council may recall the Teaming With Wildlife Initiative came within two votes of having a \$350 million appropriation to state fish and wildlife agencies. In the end, what came out of Teaming With Wildlife was a congressional appropriation which was almost as high as \$100 million a year and as low as \$45 million a year. Because New Jersey was not a minimum state over the past ten years, the Division's ENSP crew

has received \$14 million dollars instead of \$7 million had we not been a minimum state. It has been a significant amount of funding.

This past week Director Chanda had the opportunity to attend what was labeled as a business summit for state agency directors. Director Chanda stated he had not been able to attend any of those meetings in the past. In the past several years the industry leaders who actually write the check for the PR, DJ dollars that come to the Division are asking “what are they getting for our money?” State fish and wildlife directors have made a concerted effort to meet with the owners of these companies that are writing a \$60 - \$70 million check to the IRS for the tax on hunting and fishing equipment so that they know what we are doing with the money.

One of the issues that has bubbled up over the years is that a significant amount of the PR dollars that we receive are tied to the shooting sports and not necessarily to hunting. Industry wants to know, “what are you doing to develop the shooting sports?” The director thinks our staff is doing a good job at developing a range improvement program with those dollars. There is money dedicated specifically for that. PR dollars cannot be used for law enforcement, wildlife control or fisheries management. Almost half is dedicated to hunter education and/or this type of development. New Jersey is well positioned to demonstrate to the industry that they are getting a good bang for their buck. The last thing we would want to see is them make an effort for congress to have that funding mechanism changed. Also on the flip side, the DJ money, there has been a lot of pressure on state agencies regarding what are you doing for the boater. Most of the money comes from a motor boat fuel tax and it is the significant portion of this funding. The boaters have been asking, what are you doing for us? We recognize that there is good information out there and many anglers also own boats. New Jersey has an aggressive program developing boat ramps and other access. We are in a good place for those meetings and have the industry feeling comfortable across the country that the money is being spent wisely.

Director Chanda reported the finance committee meeting was canceled again this morning. He noted the Council received a work plan format the Division is working on. The staff has been trained by two experts back in February on what a work plan is, what it means and how to develop it, with the idea in moving forward, that every element of this agency is going to develop a work plan for every project we have. The Division will know exactly how much federal aid and how much hunter and angler money is in each project and what it costs. More importantly, the staff is going to have to identify what they consider their priorities, so that the director does not receive ten work plans from any particular bureau that say these are all our top priorities. They are going to have to label those priorities 1-10, etc. Then we can come back, starting first with the finance committee, then with the whole Council and go over what those work plans look like, how much money we are investing. At the end of the day the big limiting factor is what can be put in these budgets for operating. Once the money is divided up across the bureaus, project number 9, 10 or 11 may get dropped off the other end. The Council will have an idea of what something cost the agency to implement and can weigh whether to consider it a priority just as the Division does. Marine Fisheries has done the same process with all of the projects they do in terms of what is a priority and what they may need to give up. They have not quite gotten there on their funding and they are doing the same exact process. The Director stated he hopes to have the work plans to the Council by October.

Acting Chairman Burke stated there are no agenda items today, so there will be no comments on agenda items. There will be the regular public comment period on the end.

Carole Stanko, Chief of Wildlife Management Bureau, gave a presentation evaluating the Rockport Game Farm pheasant production as requested by Council some time ago. The evaluation was started by Dave Golden when he was Bureau Chief of Wildlife Management. This was presented to the Game Committee in January. It was revised and re-presented in March. At that time it was voted to forward to the full Council. The presentation had several different cost scenarios. High production, high production plus sales to offset cost, normal production, purchasing of eggs, purchasing of one day old chicks, and purchasing of flight birds. Chief Stanko stated the farm is currently operating at the high production level. It was not intentional to be at the high production level, but the farm has improved its husbandry that the mortalities at every step of the process have been reduced so that there are now more flight birds.

Nomenclature includes:

- Utilities, all the incubator and breeder house cost
- Annual farm maintenance, repairs and replacements to farm proper
- Capital reinvestment, replacement of big ticket machinery and other items
- Feed, four types of feed depending on the growth cycle of the birds
- Salary, fringe and indirect

Chief Stanko noted that since this was started by Chief Golden, the salary, fringe and indirect are based on FY 2014 prices. A handout was given on this on this presentation with the various scenarios and is filed for the record.

After a question and answer period regarding the presentation, Acting Chairman Burke asked Rich Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner for Natural Historic Resources of the Department of Environmental Protection for comments on the presentation.

Assistant Commissioner Boornazian stated the administration's position is to break even on the farm. We would all like a lot of things to break even, but with government, we don't break even and we don't do return on investments. He stated that he likes having the game farm. It makes New Jersey unique. We have heard from our partners who buy stamps. They talk about the quality of the farm's birds and the longevity of having our own stock. Not subject to the whim of administration changes, if you go down the path of just buying birds, you are at a yearly discretion of budget cuts. Once you stop an operation, it would be hard to go back into production.

The Department lease farms all the time. They go out for auction and people bid on them. A lot depends on soil composition. That could be a viable option. Selling land is not a viable option and he would not present any kind of cost. It is very difficult to sell a state asset. It can happen, but in this case there is not a public need to do that.

The Assistant Commissioner stated quality is very important and he has visited the Game Farm several times. He has seen the quality of the birds, he has heard from the Federation and New Jersey Outdoor Alliance on several occasions of how great the Division's birds are. When

surveying out of state hunters, more are coming to our state, than going out of state to do this activity.

The Assistant Commissioner agreed with Chief Stanko's statement that the Division's fees are set by statute. Draft legislation has been sent to the Alliance and Federation to help move the setting of fees into rules to provide more flexibility. There are lots of things we can do to fix the revenue side of this formula. Based on the quality and sustainability of the stock year after year, he is going to assume we are running the farm as efficiently as we possibly can. The administration's position is they like having the Game Farm. These birds are not native to New Jersey. We need help in fixing the legislation. Having the Department introduce legislation to the Governor's office is not enough. He called on the Federation and Alliance members to get behind what was sent. Give us comments, we are happy to try to introduce it ourselves.

Our position is let's fix the revenue, let's get creative, and maybe model it more like the turkey licenses. We have people who only hunt on the weekend and take two or three birds. We have other people who take 40 and 50 birds at a time. Seems like an unequal distribution of a license issue. Rules are not easy either, but they are certainly easier than getting legislative fixes to something that should be current market condition parameter. This Administration is in favor of keeping the Farm and in favor of changing the revenue formula. This Administration believes the birds the Farm produce is a quality product and we think our outdoor groups are much more in support of it than getting rid of it.

Director Chanda added he would suggest taking the Game Farm Presentation to the constituents and present to them to see what they want because they are the one paying the bill.

Director Chanda stated he has expressed his concern with Council before, that as an agency, the only thing that pays its way for the Division, is trout, deer and perhaps largemouth bass. It concerns him to think that if you want to go down that same road with the Hackettstown Fish Hatchery, it is going to be even harder to wrap our arms around cost/benefit.

Director Chanda feels the work plans will help the Council sort through what is a priority, what is not, how many licenses does the Division sell and where is the best opportunity to grow our license sales. At the end of day, this is an issue that people who buy a hunting license or a pheasant stamp are the ones being affected by it.

After a question, answer and fact giving discussion, it was decided that Chief Stanko would make this same presentation to the Federation and any other interested sporting clubs to get feedback on what they think and come back to the Council with the results.

Acting Chairman Burke thanked the Assistant Commissioner for attending the meeting recognizing that he has other meetings to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture Committee Report:

Councilman Brodhecker reported seeing bears in and around the cornfields. There has been nice rain bringing the corn crop from their knees to up over their head within a seven day period. Corn crops have been really good or not so good, depending on when they were planted. He reported seeing a lot of deer and fawns. Councilman Brodhecker stated there is an anticipation of the need for depredation permits for the bears.

Councilman Link reported geese in Cumberland County are like the crows and turkeys in the cornfield picking off the plants. He asked is there a program statewide or is this a Federal issue? Tony McBride, Supervisor Wildlife Management, responded Wildlife Control issue permits between May 1 -August 31 and they are free. If someone has agriculture goose damage in the fall, they would call George Garbaravage and give him the number. Councilman Link asked who recognizes records of the largest blue crab. It was reported to him by someone who caught a blue crab that is larger than the one on record and was told that the state no longer keeps track. Chief Ivany will check on the fact for him and get back to him.

Acting Chairman Burke reported the blueberry crops have been really good this year. He also stated in south Jersey, the harvesting of sweet corn is going on in Salem County. Tomatoes are a couple of weeks behind due to late planting.

Councilman Link stated peaches are little or non-existent. Gloucester County 4H Fair, which normally has a peach festival, is not having one and has cancelled it for the future. Councilman Link is not sure if the cancellation is politically driven as one bad year should not cancel all future festivals. The late frost is what devastated the crop and some farmers are reporting a total loss.

Acting Chairman Burke stated that there has been variation in the rainfalls in his area. He also mentioned Stockton University is having a big bee meeting and training and asked Councilwoman Blumig if she knew about it. Councilwoman Blumig responded it is the Eastern Agriculture Society. It is a big deal and is all week long. People come from all over the country and Canada to the event. She is not attending but there will be conferences, training and master bee keeping certifications issued. New Jersey and nearby beekeepers were asked to donate hives for the certification in handling bees.

Dr. Sebastian Reist from New Jersey Department of Agriculture reported the State of New Jersey and multiple others states are dealing with a low impact avian influenza issue that came from ducks imported from Canada. These were supposedly the finest grade of ducks in Canada. The USDA is still trying to find out what that means in Canada. The ducks were tested negative before they came into the United States. The last week has been very busy tracing shipments through Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York and New Jersey.

State Federation Reports:

Acting Chairman Burke stated that most groups are inactive but some are not. Councilwoman Blumig reported Round Valley is concerned about launching boats and Middlesex has been asking questions about the pheasant farm.

Councilman DeStephano went to the pheasant meeting at Pequest and was surprised that there were very few complaints. The group was not happy, but they understood it was a safety issue and most were willing to accept it. They wondered if it would be possible to get quail since they are taking away pheasants. Assistant Director Herrighty responded in the past when the Division stocked quail, it was not successful due to the weather and the fact that you don't want to stock quail where you stock pheasant. Councilman DeStephano stated the group would accept stocking in another location as suggested by Acting Chairman Burke such as Flatbook or Greenwood.

Acting Chairman Burke reported Atlantic County is on summer break and will be back in session in September

Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee meeting was postponed until August 9th 9:00 am due to not having enough members to attend.

Fish Committee:

No report as Council Gudmundsson is on his way back from vacation today and not present.

Game Committee:

Acting Chairman Burke reported the Game Committee met on June 21. Changes will be introduced today, but no vote will be taken. During July and August there will be stakeholders meetings and hope to vote on the tentative changes at the September meeting.

Legislative Committee:

Councilman DeMartino was not present; Assistant Director Nelson gave the report.

HR5650, which Director Chanda spoke of earlier, amends the Pitman-Roberson Wildlife Restoration Act to make funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies.

A1616 and companion S2400 authorizes use of tracking dogs to search and recover wild deer during prescribed hunting season.

A2763 – Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, has passed the full Assembly and looking to get to Senate as soon as possible.

A3945 – Marine Fisheries - prohibits certain possession, sale, offering for sale, trade or distribution of shark fins. marine fisheries trade and sale of shark fins

NEW A3989 – allows use of stand-up-paddleboards for fishing on lakes in wildlife management areas. This bill is a result of someone fishing and was told they could not do it from a standup paddleboard.

ACR 49 and SCR 112 – Resolution proposes constitutional amendment authorizing creation of State lottery to fund conservation programs. This has been around before.

S1986 – establishes “Milkweed for Monarchs” program

S2044 – prohibits certain possession, sale, offering for sale, trade or distribution of shark fins. marine fisheries trade and sale of shark fins. This bill has passed the full senate.

S2369 – marine fisheries. Limits application of DEP shellfish habitat rules for certain dredging activities.

S2456 - dedication of revenue from CBT, revises State’s Open Space, farmland, and historic preservation programs; implements 2014 constitutional dedication of CBT revenues for certain environmental purposes. This law passed as of June 30th.

Assistant Director Nelson stated legislation is quiet now for the summer and not expecting too much activity until September.

No position will be taken by the Council at this time on the new bills.

Assistant Director Nelson announced the Division now has six VeriFone credit card machines as well as merchant I.D. numbers. Two of them will be wireless. She is still waiting for two tablets to be delivered. The Office of Information Resource Management has to connect everything into the state network. Pequest will be first for installation and Marine Fisheries will be next.

Endangered and Non-game Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC):

Councilwoman Brummer reported the July meeting was cancelled and there will be a joint meeting scheduled for September 21. Although it is a few months away, it would be good to talk about the joint session agenda. Director Chanda suggested discussing the Blue Ribbon Panel. Assistant Director Herrighty suggested getting an update on bobcats. Councilwoman Brummer asked the Council for ideas to add to the agenda. Acting Chairman Burke suggested snapping turtles and contaminants. Director Chanda suggested stewardship programs in light of what has happened with the Sparta Mountain and Columbia Lake projects. Director Chanda asked that a reminder be sent out to the Council and Advisory Committee about the combined meeting. After a brief discussion regarding the time, it was decided to have the Fish and Game Council meeting start at 9:00 and the Joint Meeting with ENSAC start at 11:00.

Acting Chairman Burke asked about the legal status of terrapins. Director Chanda stated the Commissioner, through an Administrative Order, closed the season. Assistant Director Nelson stated the bill is waiting for the Governor’s signature.

Councilwoman Brummer stated the ENSAC committee meeting has been canceled for the month of July.

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee:

No meeting scheduled – no report.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee:

Councilman Brodhecker the next meeting is scheduled for July 27.

DIVISION REPORTS

Barbara Stoff, Licensing and Permits, stated this is the quietest month throughout the whole year. The mid-year licenses have been enrolled. The VeriFone had a glitch with the rifle permits on July 1st, but that has been fixed. Waterfowl stamps, HIP certificates and rifle permits are available statewide and online through the internet. Councilwoman Blumig asked why did the Division go with VeriFone credit card processing machines versus The Square. Ms. Stoff explained we have to go with the state contracts and the commercially purchased Square does not handle governmental accounts.

Chief Lisa Barno, Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries, reported the Bureau has taken a lot of time with lake level management at Lake Hopatcong. The lake for two years straight has not reached full pool. The Bureau has been working with the Department, the Citizen Advisory Committee and the Lake Hopatcong Commission on what may be done within the parameters of the Water Level Management Plan to increase the probability that the lake will fill after the annual drawdown. There has been discussion regarding the need for the annual drawdown and the overall extent of the annual drawdown. The Department is going to propose reducing the annual drawdown from 26 inches to 22 inches. That is 4 inches that will not have to be made up every spring. If we had that the last two years, the lake would have reached full pool. There will be a public hearing for property owners as the reason for the drawdown is to protect the docks from ice damage over the winter months. It remains to be seen if it will be implemented. It is being proposed as a one year pilot. The property owners can then assess if there is any additional ice damage to their docks or not.

The other aspect of the plan has to do with the 12 cfs outflow requirement. Currently, there can be a reduced outflow to 8 cfs if a drought is declared by the Commissioner; if summer lake level is below 8 ft., and if 90-day precipitation in the spring is below 7 inches. What the bureau runs into most, is if the 90-day precipitation in the spring is below 7 inches. When precipitation is less than 7 inches, there is not a lot of water left in the streams so most of the time we cannot support a reduction as we cannot afford to reduce the outflow to the Musconetcong River. What is being proposed is when we initially begin to fill the lake, at ice out, we would start at 8 cfs. We would continue that up to April 30th, provided the river flow is at or above median levels. Right now, if it rains hard and the rivers full, we cannot reduce the outflow. That would be an opportunity where we would have a more probability of saying yes. Overall, as a reminder, the reduction in the outflow really does not have the significant benefit to the actual lake level as over a 30 day period, you only gain an inch in lake level. Precipitation is huge. We are doing everything in our power to help refill the lake and for some of those houses and docks that are in the very shallow areas and coves, a couple of inches can make a big difference in the ease of getting boats in and out of their slips. If we have good rainfall and we can get the proposal passed, we have an opportunity of making up 6 inches each spring. The proposal will be released at the Lake Hopatcong Commission meeting on Monday. All the mayors and Citizen Advisory Committee members have already been made aware of the proposal. Over the past year, we have been trying to work with local governments to come up with proposals, but there

is a wide array of interests on the extent of the lake level and the extent of the drawdown that we have not been able to get support for any one proposal over the other.

Chief Barno also reported a fish kill in Clove Brook in Sussex County. Conservation Officer Steve Sutton responded. The kill was due to lack of rainfall. There is a deep 12 foot pool at the base of the dam. Fish slowly make it over, when things were flowing but with the lack of rainfall there is little water flowing out of the lake into the pool. The fish were distressed. There were about 20 dead fish, but there were a lot fish at the surface gulping. A crew, made up of Freshwater Fisheries and Hackettstown Fish Hatchery staff and Conservation Officers, were able to salvage about 2,000 fish out of the pool and relocate them back into the lake. Chief Barno gave credit to Officer Sutton for his interest and efforts to save the fish.

Two sections of the Paulinskill River were sampled. One sampling took place along the Route 94, ½ mile from Paulina Dam. Chief Barno passed around a picture of a 21" Smallmouth Bass. It was 1 of 15 Smallmouth Bass collected from the river. This shows what the river can support. Lambert Road in Blairstown was also sampled but there were very few fish. It was noted that 21 rainbow trout were still hanging on in water with a temperature of 25.6 degrees C.

Sampling was also done in the West Portal Brook; in a section of the river that was affected by the detergent spill. More fish are starting to be restored back into that section. Eight (8) species of fish were found. There are less than 100 of each of the species which is considerably less than what we would expect. Brook trout were collected over the stretch which is promising in terms of Brook Trout restoration. In addition to the Brook Trout, there was 19 Brown Trout collected that had moved up from the Musconetcong River.

There will be an upcoming meeting on the new fish consumption advisory that will be coming out. Chief Barno noted that when you see new fish species listed under specific waterbody advisory, it is not because of contamination spreading, but due to not catching that species during previous sampling. She also noted that there is now a new statewide advisory for common carp. Of interesting note, there was a Largemouth Bass found in Farrington Lake with high levels of PCB's and there are no known local issues there. It is not known if the fish had been transported there by an angler into Farrington.

Staff member, Chris Smith, electrofished in Prospertown Lake to take a look at the fish population. The Prospertown Lake dam failed and was replaced a few years ago. The bass population is improving. An overabundance of Brown Bullheads was documented in the lake. A significant amount of Brown Bullhead were collected and put over into Turnmill Pond where the Division holds its Wildlife Expo. The fish will serve well for the kids when fishing during the event later this year. DOD Lake was also sampled to document the growing snakehead population. The lake's connection with the Delaware River makes any kind of eradication of snakeheads not worthwhile. We do however continue to monitor their presence. There was one snakehead over 21 inches in length collected and removed. The bureau will continue to monitor the bass population. The bass population seems to be doing better than when previously sampled two years ago.

Staff is working on the Freshwater Digest. The articles for the 2017 digest are going to be: The Benefits of Dam Removal, Truth About Hooks and Lures, Bass Fishing Tips and Waterbody Highlights Throughout the State. The Bureau is still working on new wild trout regulations with a goal of having the proposal by the end of the summer.

Assistant Director Larry Herrighty gave the report for Fish production. Assistant Director Herrighty reported Hackettstown Hatchery has been getting well deserved credit for their contribution in raising gambusia and fatheads minnows since Zika virus has everybody's attention. Assistant Director Herrighty checked with the Department of Treasury regarding the solar panels at Pequest. Treasury reported there have been some hurdles to get over with this type of contractor. Treasury is working with BPU to resolve the issues. Some of the issues were in the writing of bids where the State would allow a private vendor to come in and construct the facility on State property, working out the details for access where they come in and maintain and also the expectation of what kind of maintenance the State can expect for the facility. Treasury thinks they have it worked out as the first contract is going out to the State Police Headquarters and that contract is under legal review. Once that bid comes in, the Division will be in the next bid Treasury puts out.

Chief Al Ivany, Bureau of Information and Education, reported the Wild Outdoor Expo is coming up on September 10th and 11th. Staff member Matt Hencheck is doing a good job planning the event this year. We look forward to good attendance. Director Chanda asked if he was having trouble with sponsors contributing money from other Divisions in the Department. Chief Ivany responded that there has been a reduction in sponsorship from Forest Services. We are getting \$2,000 from the Forest Fire side but there is no money from Forest Services. Director Chanda asked Chief Ivany to go through Assistant Director Nelson to write a report on what kind of support has been received so far so that she can have a talk with the Assistant Commissioner if other Divisions are not carrying their weight. Acting Chairman Burke asked if Bass Pro will be in attendance. Chief Ivany reported Bass Pro will be there this year. Last year the event received a significant amount of funding from them because of their opening. This year they will be asked for a much reduced fee for a certain amount of booth space because we are providing a 40 x 100 feet area for them. Bass Pro also provides programs for the Expo like a fishing tank with fish, and programs with their experts. Mr. Hencheck is confirming with them today.

Chief Ivany stated he applied for an outreach grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to dramatically increase our outreach efforts within the Division. We have completed that grant and it is now in the system for review by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. If this goes through, it will be a boost to the outreach efforts for everyone in the Division. This will enable the Division to do printing, public service ads, signage of Wildlife Management Areas and more. Chief Ivany stated he is looking forward to positive results from the US Fish & Wildlife Service on this. We are expecting to hear back in the next few months and everything will be in place by the New Year.

Chief Ivany stated next year is the Division's 125th anniversary and 80th anniversary of the Pittman-Robertson Act, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration. If the grant comes through, it will be perfect timing to help promote the Division's anniversary along with the Federal Aid

program. The Bureau will be looking to plan big events, boosting the existing events next year and across the board, and getting the word out about what is going on with the Division and the Federal Aid Program.

Russell Dodge, who worked on the Clean Vessel Act (CVA), has officially retired. Russell has been with the Division since 2000. He covered a lot of boat shows and other events. Russell was a wealth of information regarding the CVA program. He will be missed and Chief Ivany will be looking for someone to fill the position to keep the word out about CVA.

Acting Chairman Burke asked Chief Ivany to explain what is CVA. CVA is a federal aid program that funds pump out stations at marinas and pumpout boats off-shore. It has worked extremely well in New Jersey. New Jersey has a public - private committee set up. The committee has done a great job funding pump-out stations at marinas and pump-out boats, and providing information and education programs to remind boaters to use pumpout stations and keep our water clean. The program continues to do well. The Division has done very well with receiving federal funding to construct the pump-out stations. New Jersey has a very prominent program. Acting Chairman Burke asked if there were any in inland waters such as Lake Hopatcong. Chief Ivany responded there has not been any inland water pump-out installed in a long time. It was promoted, but the interest is along the coast.

Chief Dave Golden, Bureau of Land Management, passed around a summary sheet from the pheasant formula stakeholders meeting. There have been meetings in three regions, north, central and south, over the past month. The meeting consisted of a presentation and a question and answer period where attendees' concerns were addressed and given more details. At the end, everyone was asked to complete a feedback sheet in order to gauge their understanding and acceptance of what has been proposed. The numbers on the sheet are responses from the feedback form. Chief Golden reviewed the sheet line by line. He stated some people gave valuable feedback and ideas. At the presentation, Chief Golden presented implementing the plan this fall and continued phasing in over the next two years. The strategy has been to have the meetings, re-group internally to talk about the feedback and make modification to the model as appropriate and come back to Council in September which what is believed to be the final model to move forward.

Director Chanda stated he has heard many good comments on the staff presentation. He asked if the Bureau was comfortable that they have a good representative sample of people that would translate into the 13,000 people who are buying stamps. Chief Golden stated the sample is small. There was a lot of effort put into letting people know about the meetings. Two email blasts was sent to 9,500 people, information was on the website and there were two announcements on Rack and Fin Radio. Chief Golden stated the initial response was to reject the changes, but once it was explained how the Bureau came up with the numbers and after answering some questions, the proposal was more accepted. He stated one thing that could be done is to put together a follow up public meeting in October to announce what changes will take place in November. Director Chanda suggested doing a direct mail campaign to market the program. He suggested coordinating with Information & Education to help drive the program. Councilman DeStephano complimented Chief Golden on a job well done at the northern meeting. He too felt after the

facts were laid out as to why the change was being done, the group was more accepting of the change.

Chief Golden noted the north region added a lot of valuable suggestions on different things that can be done on the Wildlife Management Areas to increase safety separate from redistributing birds. As an example, reconfiguration of the parking lot so all the hunters are not walking across the field in one direction at one time will increase safety.

Councilwoman Blumig asked if the low number in attendance was due to local sports clubs sending a representative instead of each person attending. Chief Golden did not have a sense of that theory. Assistant Director Herrightly felt the people in attendance were the die-hard hunters who were concerned about the safety.

Councilman Brodhecker asked is the change going to be for one year and re-evaluating before any further changes be made. Chief Golden responded the presentation was given as a phase-in change over a two-year period and the premise is that people will follow the birds.

Chief Golden stated he was copied on an email by Larry O'Donnell that was sent to the Council. The email gave his concerns on the reduction at Millville. Chief Golden has been in communication with him and it is understood and there is some validity to his recommendations. Chief Golden informed the Council he responded to Mr. O'Donnell.

Chief Golden reported the Wildlife Management Area survey is moving forward. By the end of July, there will be a quarterly report with some preliminary results from Stockton which may be ready for presentation at the August Council meeting. The survey is a stratified random design. There was a target of surveys needed to reach in order to maintain the statistical rigor of this approach. The survey is two months in and has obtained one-third (450 of 1,500) of the desired target number.

Lunch 12:15 - 12:53

Acting Chairman Burke noted the minutes had been held over to vote on after lunch in order to give everyone a chance to review and asked for correction, addition or a motion.

Motion was made by Councilman Van Mater and seconded by Councilman DeStephano to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2016 meeting as presented. Vote taken, six (6) in favor one (1) abstention; motion carried.

Chief Matt Brown, Bureau of Law Enforcement, reported on illegal activities at the Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. In the south White Oak and Winslow Wildlife Management Areas there are approximately 80 summonses issued a day on the weekends. Most are Wildlife Management Area violations with a few ATV activity. The problem is when individuals are recreating, they do not have their proper identifications which prompts officers to run them through the computer system. This sometime end in outstanding warrants or some other type of paperwork, which increases the enforcement hours spent with them like taking them to post bail

because of outstanding paperwork. These are things that as law enforcement, cannot be overlooked.

Officers worked on complaints of an individual selling freshwater fish fresh out of the lake on the internet. Officers did a buy-bust operation where they were able to make contact with the individual and charged him with a case of commercialization of wildlife. The individual had ten fish, pickerel, largemouth bass and eel for \$60 all caught out of New Jersey waterways - the individual was charged accordingly. This is the type of activity the officers can get involved in when they are not involved with the activities on the Wildlife Management Areas.

Lt. Petruccelli had an interesting case in Atlantic County involving Bluefin tuna. The federal government put strict regulations on to protect the stock due to a decline of over 82% in the last 40 years. Over the weekend, Lt. Petruccelli apprehended a rod and reel fisherman who landed two undersized Bluefin while engaged in commercial Bluefin tuna fishery. After interviewing the fisherman Lt. Petruccelli was able to ascertain that he had landed two additional undersized Bluefin on the July 4th holiday and failed to report within 24 hours of landing them. The fisherman also failed to complete a trip report because he was in possession of the highly migratory species on board his vessel he is required by federal law to file a report. The fisherman was a restaurateur from Philadelphia and was very familiar with our marine enforcement unit. In February of 2014 he was apprehended by an officer with 300 blackfish during closed season. He takes these species and turns into sushi and sells them accordingly. That matter was turned over to National Marine Fisheries for the continued enforcement but without the interaction of our officer out there he could have got away with it. It is a very important species for us to keep our eye on.

On July 13th Chief Brown will attend graduation, with Assistant Director Herrighty, for Matthew Heil, the newly trained conservation officer coming into Monmouth County. He still has to go to warden school, but he will be on the streets in the fall.

Councilman Brodhecker asked if law enforcement can get the Department of Health involved with the restaurant owner. Chief Brown responded that person was in Philadelphia but when it is a New Jersey restaurant, the Bureau does get the Department of Health involved.

Kathy Clark gave a report for Nongame and Endangered Species in Chief David Jenkins' absence. The Bureau is still in their field season. The bald eagle project, still tallying the numbers but probably will be similar to last year 150 - 160 known active pairs. There is a growing percentage of eagles that is out of the bureau's eyesight. There are 80 project volunteers who do all the nest monitoring for the bureau. They are using online recording for the first time this year. It's a transition, but will make things easier for the bureau. A couple of aerial surveys have been done. The helicopters were donated by Forest Fire and Cape May County Mosquito Commission.

Piping plover, for the first time since 1989, is beach nesting. They are being protected using standard procedure with the Fish and Wildlife Service which calls for a 1000 meter buffer on each side of the nest. The nest has hatched and has three chicks. Nongame staff is monitoring it

every other day and Park staff is monitoring along with ENSP. Closure of that nest area will be enforced until a few days after fledging, August 7th.

Staff member Christine Davis has been doing aerial colonial water birds surveys for gull-bill and wading birds. Ms. Davis reports it looks like a an average year, what was notable was that nearly every every island is showing signs of extreme wash over from storms. There seems to be evidence of sea level rise and the storm effects on these islands that could pose danger for these birds in the future

The Delaware Shorebird Projects has wrapped up. It took place May through early June. The count documented similar number of red knots as was recorded last year. There was hope for an increase in the population, but it was the same or a little lower based on a count that is done by coordinated air boat and land of 24,000 red knots. The other method of estimating the population of red knots is by band re-sighting. That data will not be available for a while. There is an intensive re-sighting effort.

Horseshoe crab spawning was good except for the week in the middle of May that was really cold, stormy and windy. The weather suspended spawning. All of the study species reached optimal takeoff weight by the end of June. Nearly 1,900 birds of those three species were banded. There was a 10 percent recapture rate.

Ms. Clark gave an update on the Wildlife Action Plan. The Bureau has a huge database in the hands of a professional database company. It is the database of threats and actions that has to be a part of our wildlife action plan. We have had to increase the contract because it was a big job. It is almost completed and will be an exported product that comes into our wildlife action plan. Staff member Pat Woerner attended a regional Northeast meeting designed to map the regional conservation areas of concern. The areas that are best suited for management actions in the future. It shows conservation opportunities in New Jersey and how they fit into the whole northeastern region.

Acting Chairman Burke asked about ospreys count. Ms. Clark stated the bureau is not doing censuses any more. There is a website called ospreywatch.org. All known nests were uploaded to that database a few years ago and it is a portal for a lot of people who watch ospreys to report nest-occupancy and offspring. The ospreys are at a historic high, 600 nesting pairs. The Bureau does not see putting time into it anymore. The Conserve Wildlife Foundation has taken on this job with great success. Acting Chairman Burke asked, what is the official status of ospreys? Ms. Clark responded the breeding status is threatened and non-breeding status is of special concern. She also noted that bird status has not been reviewed in over ten years. The status of all non-game birds has been initiated and the osprey is expected to come off the list. Acting Chairman Burke asked, what is the process to have the status changed? The advisory Council makes the recommendation and the department regulations will make the decisions.

Carole Stanko, Chief of Wildlife Management reported the last hatch at the pheasant farm for this year will be next Monday July 18th. The Farm set over 92,500 eggs, hatched out 73,609 chicks and put 21,431 into pens so far in Rockport. This week there were four Category One bears. There was a house entry in Denville. It was an unoccupied dwelling. The bear came in

through a basement window. The local police department responded and buckshot the bear. If it returns, it will be euthanized. A yearling female was euthanized in Worthington State Forest. It was approaching within feet of hikers. The State Park Police conditioned the bear with buck shots and it did not work. Another yearling female showed no fear, approaching campers as they were barbecuing. Wildlife Management staff advised the camp staff on garbage containment. A 197 lb. male bear in West Milford walked on a porch while a woman was on her cellphone with her back turned. She threw a chair and the bear ran away but was later identified and euthanized; all bears were untagged.

Chief Stanko made a presentation on the Draft Proposed Amendments to the 2017 Game Code. Before the presentation, Chief Stanko explained the process of amending the Game Code. Internal meetings take place as well as meetings with the Game Committee. Today will be a review of the amendments with the Council without a vote. Assistant Directory Herrightly recommended having stakeholders meeting before the Council takes their preliminary vote in order to amend any of the proposals for something which had not been thought of. The proposed language is to give an idea of what the intent is of the amendment. The vote in September will officially start the rule making process. Chief Stanko will write a legal document which goes through many edits and attorney reviews. When published in the New Jersey Register a 60-day comment period begins. Two weeks after the publication a public meeting is held. After the 60-day comment period closes, the comments from the public meeting will be combined with the responses from the comment period. Another document to explain what the comments were will be produced for publication. A review of all comments will take place before the Council's final vote. At that time the proposal cannot be changed, but a yes or no vote will be taken. After the Council's final vote, another document will be published in the New Jersey Register and that second publication that is when it becomes legal. Chief Stanko passed around the proposal and reviewed the draft proposed amendments line by line.

PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ, commented path to enrichment that industry is using the government to push archery. She stated this is similar to what the coal industry did on the scholastic magazine. Ms. Sachau commented on what open space meant to her. She stated everyone pays open space taxes for 30 year or more and turn it over to an agency that logs trees, kills wildlife. She feels the public in NJ is being scammed. Ms. Sachau referenced an article of which New Jersey stakeholders are.

There were no other comments. Acting Chairman Burke asked if anyone was staying for the official adjournment after the Executive Session. There was no response. The Council took a five minute break at 2:05 pm.

Everyone was dismissed from the room and the Council began their Executive Session at 2:10 pm. The Executive Session ended at 4:20pm and the meeting was adjourned.