

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

**Central Region Office
Robbinsville, New Jersey
November 14, 2017**

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 Chairman David Burke.

The flag salute and pledge of allegiance were completed.

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 November 3, 2017 and delivered to the designated newspapers for the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press; published on November 8, 2017.

Roll call was taken in attendance:

Councilman Phillip Brodhecker (late arrival at 1:08 p.m.)
Chairman David Burke
Councilman Joseph DeMartino (late arrival at 1:06 p.m.)
Councilman James DeStephano
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Jeffery Link
Councilman Robert Pollock
Councilman Frank Virgilio

Absent:

Councilman Rick Lathrop

Division employees included: L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, D. Golden, A. Ivany, F. Panico, B. Stoff, L. Barno, C. Stanko, M. Brown, A. Quirk, new employee R. Risher and S. Coltrain.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Burke asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes. There were none.

A Motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to approve the October 17, 2017 minutes, seconded by Councilman DeStephano. Vote taken, six (6) all were in favor; motion carried.

Chairman Burke stated the Fish Code hearing is tonight at 7:00 in the Assunpink office conference room. He and Councilman Gudmundsson will be in attendance and asked if anyone else would be attending. Councilman DeStephano confirmed he would attend. Chairman Burke announced there will be two license restoration hearings. Hunters in the south are happy with pheasant and deer hunting this season. Also, they are quite happy with the quality of birds purchased from out of state too. Later, there will be a discussion and presentation on pheasant production. Chairman Burke announced that the NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs has nominated his replacement, and a replacement for Cathy Blumig. If the replacements are not appointed in January, it may be quite a while before someone is approved. Chairman Burke asked the Council to think about who would you

like to see as chair of the Council. Councilman. Gudmundsson asked if a succession plan should be made in advance or wait until it is known that a replacement is coming. The response was that it is a little bit premature, because the process could take two years.

Chairman Burke asked Director Herrighty for comments.

Director Larry Herrighty stated he attended the Farm Bureau Convention on the afternoon of November 13th and attended a leadership seminar for young farmers. He discussed what the Division of Fish and Wildlife does and the role of the Fish and Game Council. Later in the afternoon, he addressed the convention. He went over the deer and bear status and gave an update on activities in the Division. During the question and answer period, farmers were concerned about the overabundance of deer and access issues with neighboring properties. Several farmers gave compliments to the Division's law enforcement staff in the marine region and the central region for issuing permits and in the way they handled the public.

Director Herrighty stated the Division has their eyes on a few pieces of property. We are continuing to look at two different buildings for the Northern Region office to consolidate staff. We have come to the conclusion, we can buy an existing building cheaper than we can build one. Green Acres money can be used for that purpose. Acting Assistant Director Dave Golden has been working with the Green Acres staff. Acting Assistant Director Golden visited Piney Hollow Range and provided pictures. We are very impressed with the facilities and Green Acres is working with the seller to see if there is negotiation room on the price before they go any further.

Director Herrighty and Acting Assistant Director Golden met with Monmouth County officials at the Pleasant Run WMA, which is the old Princeton Nursery property. Since the archery park did not get funded, the Division is interested in building an Olympic sized outdoor field for archers. Studies indicate that target shooters, both archery and firearm, contribute a substantial portion of the excise taxes collected by the Pitman Robinson Act, which provides grants to state wildlife agencies. Central Region superintendent Pete Winkler suggested Pleasant Run. It is a flat area, with a lot of fields and it is not stocked with pheasants. Monmouth County has a few buildings, one of which is a big farm building that is an acre in size that would be conducive to an indoor range. Unfortunately, the vice president of the National Field Archery Association was sick and could not attend, so another meeting will be arranged. We are looking into a cooperative agreement with Monmouth County to manage the facility.

The Division had its usual roundup of pheasants at Rockport on Friday the 10th, the birds looked good and was glad to hear the birds stocked in south Jersey was good as well.

We continue to work on hiring new people for phase 9 and 8. As reported the \$1.2 million of appropriations was awarded to the Marine Fisheries Administration and we are working on that. We received permission to promote staff. We are still waiting on the Governor's office to give approval to hire 19 new positions for the Marnie unit. This will help the Division greatly in gathering the data needed to bring to the federal councils and commissions that we attend to determine what the needs are in New Jersey compared to other states. Currently, the staff is down in Annapolis, Maryland, meeting on menhaden and a few other species. Russ Allen and Tom Baum are retiring and, at their request, they are not having a retirement celebration. Together they represent 60-70 years' worth of knowledge that the division is going to lose. We are desperately trying to hire a replacement for Brandon Muffley, former Marine Administrator. It was announced statewide as an assistant director position and received five candidates, none of whom worked for the state so they were ineligible. The Division requested that Civil Service have the announcement include marine fisheries background because right now it just says wildlife freshwater fisheries. We will try to announce it nationwide, but have not received that approval yet.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture Committee Report:

Councilman Link reported the agricultural harvest is moving along nicely. There has been a lot of rain. Deer harvest is moving along nicely too. Councilman Brodhecker reported the northern region being happy to see the goose season open again. Having the hunters keeps the geese out of the crops. He reported attending the Farm Bureau Convention and Director Herrighty spoke to the general group and did a great job communicating data, statistics, and a lot of good information. Councilman Brodhecker believes the presentation really helped people understand a little more. The farmers are grateful for Director Herrighty attending the convention. He also reported still getting feedback regarding bears and the way they affect livestock.

Councilman Brodhecker reported the Farmers-Sportsmen Relations Committee meeting was held today before this meeting to address depredation permits and possibly getting joint permits for bear and deer. There are challenges with making one permit for both, so the Committee discussed what could possibly be done to allow permits to be completed at the same time. Conservation officers are getting the permit put on the website as an online PDF. Once completed with all the individual names, license checks will be performed and can be printed and signed, completing the process more quickly. This should help some of the farmers in being able to do both permits at once. If they have existing bear permits it will be effective in getting them out quicker and less paper work.

We talked about documentation and tracking of deer that are harvested with the depredation permit. Hopefully the new automated check-in system will be able to tie it in with that to where there is a section to report the depredation permit deer. That way the farmer does not have to keep track of all the paperwork and it will be the shooter's responsibility to report it. It will also give ID numbers without tags floating around, and it will be easier on the conservation officers. In the meantime, they are just going to use the same system they have been using until there is a new vendor for the automated licensing system.

The Committee discussed the farmers needing sportsmen to shoot on depredation permits and hunting clubs who will be managing the deer properly. Some farmers have hunting clubs that are not necessarily managing the deer for what farmer needs, but are managing it more for what the sportsmen wants, which are the big bucks. Councilman Brodhecker recommended to Councilman Virgilio, if the sportsman can get a booth at the State Ag Convention in February, it might help connect some links for the farmers and sportsmen. It may possibly give some gun clubs the opportunity to gain some land. The Committee talked about boom guns and noisemakers; some challenges it addresses with the public and some other ways or options to handle conflict. The Committee discussed the black bear rating and response policy, or responses when there is bear livestock issues.

The Committee will have to look at policy language a little closer for the long- term solution.

Dr. Sebastian Reist from New Jersey Department of Agriculture gave an update on the recent human brucellosis cases, resulting from the consumption of raw milk, reported last month. He reported that the investigation has not moved very far due to the broad multijurisdictional nature of the case. It appears that the products may be being illegally sold from Virginia to New Hampshire. Many federal and state agencies are involved. It looks like milk is moving from an Amish farm in Pennsylvania, perhaps, not confirmed, moving through a distribution center in New Jersey. The head office of this company is in York, PA. They were served with cease and desist orders from various governmental agencies. They immediately had a California lawyer respond to the orders. The California lawyer is not on the bar in New Jersey, New York, or Pennsylvania so he cannot represent them.

In Whitesbog, Ocean County, New Jersey, there was a pig issue, worked on jointly with the USDA Wildlife Services, NJ Dept. of Ag, and the Division. Two potbelly pigs were released on State property. One of them was pregnant. This incident brought up a lot of issues of what we do as a group. Wildlife Services did the capture, the Division found the place to put them, and Agriculture is trying to get the animals rehabilitated so they can enter back into the domestic herd. We all need to get together to come up with a way to move forward with these types of situations in an expeditious manner. There were a lot of communication issues that had to occur before we did what we needed to do. Dr. Reist visited the place where it was believed the animals came from, but there was no response and hoped the Division's Enforcement staff would have better luck. Director Herrighty stated the Division paid a visit and found they were issued summons by the local municipality for abandonment, but they never showed up to municipal court. Director Herrighty asked Dr. Reist to comment on the exotic tick issue in Hunterdon County found on sheep. Dr. Reist noted that his documentation was confidential and could not make comments at this time.

State Federation Reports:

Councilman Virgilio stated he met with a captain from Fish and Wildlife Bureau of Law Enforcement as a member of a special taskforce called Operation Game Thief (OGT). It is a private group outside the Federation and the Foundation. OGT has their own funding source and advertise donations for people who turn in wildlife violations of all sorts.

This year there were 237 OGT investigations. Thirty-seven (37) apprehensions were made from the initial complaints. Sixty-nine (69) were determined to be no violation. An example of no violation would be, if someone reported someone fishing and they could not see a fishing license displayed on their person. When the CO shows up, the sportsperson actually has a license that was not as conspicuously displayed as others would have liked it to be. There were two business violations. OGT receives field reports which is used to make these determinations of giving out rewards. The money is in a special account, which is wired over to the Division of Fish and Wildlife's special account and the Division of Fish and Wildlife actually cuts the check. Everybody is anonymous in the entire process. The business complaints generated two payments. OGT is paying \$500 for each of those complaints to the individuals who provided the information.

OGT also looked at needs and improvements for the program. OGT is unique to all the citizens of New Jersey not necessarily just sportsmen. The taskforce would like to move this program outside of the sportsmen realm into the public realm. There are non-game, exotic, and all sorts of violations that OGT can receive from callers who feel concerned about wildlife. OGT would like to increase advertisement and purchase a trailer and call it the "Wall of Shame." This has been seen in other states. The Wall of Shame displays all of the illegal mounts along with the name of the person who illegally harvested it. This shows sportsmen what happens when there is an illegal harvest. It is surprising how people gravitate toward the display. When someone goes and shoots a deer at night, it is un-sportsman-like conduct, it's dangerous, it's illegal, and nobody benefits from that type of kill. The trailer can be taken to different shows.

Councilman Virgilio reported attending the state Federation meeting. Two Fish and Game Councilmen were elected. There were four candidates, two from the southern region, and two from the central region. An election was held and the winners were Loren Robinson from central region, replacing Cathy Blumig, and Kenneth Whildin, replacing Dave Burke. Their paperwork and applications have been sent to the governor's office and governor's appointment office.

Councilman Virgilio attended an awards banquet where New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen were given the Youth Education Award for their work over the past eleven years for the on Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) program. Councilman Virgilio congratulated the Division's staff in their work of getting the ball rolling and taking this effort all around the state.

Assistant Director Nelson stated she reviewed a draft video on the HOFNOD program and it is very nice. She stated they would like to get the video out to all the legislators in the near future.

Councilman Virgilio also reported attending the southern region meeting where a discussion took place on the youth pheasant hunt which took him back to his childhood and reminded him of the fun he had with his family. He commended the Hunter Education Program for the dog handlers and for putting the program together. He also went to a non-mentored hunt at Glassboro WMA. There he saw a lot of smiling faces and happy children. The birds were very decent.

Councilman Virgilio also reported the Camden and Cumberland County chapters had proposals for deer season which will be brought to the Southern Region Deer Committee first, then the State Deer Committee before bringing to Council's Game Committee in their entirety. Councilman Virgilio gave a quick overview of the proposals. The hunters in Cumberland County are starting to see more bow hunters in trees while they hunt due to season overlap. They feel it is time to look at hunter orange for bow hunters during the firearm seasons. It was also discussed to move two muzzleloader days up towards the beginning of the season. He also attended the New Jersey Fur Harvesters Convention. There were some educational demonstrations on the proper use of a dog-proof trap and releasing mechanisms. They are planning next year to have an educational booth where they will solicit input from the public and inform the public on the safety of dog-proof traps.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported not attending any meetings but did get a number of calls on the pheasants. The complaint was on bird numbers. Acting Assistant Director Golden responded there are three things affecting bird numbers up north. First, we are in the second phase of the pheasant allocation formula, so numbers are going down for that reason; second, overall statewide, we have fewer birds this year; third, we standardized the percentage of birds that get stocked on each day. In some areas, that led to a decrease percentage of the season total being stocked on opening day.

Councilman DeMartino reported he has been out hunting in the southern region and has seen birds.

Acting Assistant Director Golden explained the rationale behind making the changes was to increase hunter safety and satisfaction. The thought was, that if we spread out the birds, we would spread out the hunters. Steps were taken to make sure the hunters knew where the birds were going to be stocked. He stated it looks like it is working, but there are some unhappy people where they are used to seeing a lot of birds.

Finance Committee:

Assistant Director Paulette Nelson reported the finance committee will meet on January 9, 2018, before the Council meeting, at 9:00 am.

Fish Committee:

Councilman Gudmundsson reported there will be a hearing this evening on the fish code.

Game Committee:

Chairman Burke reported there will be a pheasant report later in the meeting.

Legislative Committee:

The legislative activity report was distributed. Assistant Director Nelson stated there has been little activity due to legislators campaigning. One bill, S-3450, has been introduced to expand authorization for clamming on Sundays. Director Herrighty noted all current legislation dies on January 9th when the new legislators take office.

Endangered & Non-Game Species Advisory Committee:

Councilman Lathrop was not present, Acting Assistant Director Golden reported for the committee. The State Wildlife Action Plan is expected to be returned from the commissioner's office and should be up on the website within a week. There will be a 30- day public comment period.

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee:

Chairman Burke reported the next committee meeting will take place in March.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee:

Councilman Brodhecker reported a meeting was held on October 25th. Topics discussed were direct membership, and vacancies and replacements. He stated his term expires in 2018. The mammal position is open; Dr. Lewis is replacing Lisa Lambert in the veterinary position. Meeting dates were scheduled for next year.

Councilman Brodhecker stated the committee discussed having a division training program by the rehabbers in 2019. This will give staff members an idea of what rehabbers do. Pest control regulations were discussed.

At the start of the committee it was decided a statement of intent to form the subcommittee was needed. The Committee looked at who is going to be on the subcommittee and identify participating members who will be on there. Some ideas they had was WRAC chair, two people from the WRAC, pest control operators, trappers, USDA, veterinary officers, possibly HSUS. The statement of intent from the committee will talk about who they need representation from, and the requirement of a letter of intent and representation from a group or organization so they will have a little more purpose and function.

The committee talked about veterinary communication and how veterinarians interact with wildlife. There was a suggestion for the rehabbers go to the veterinary conference to set up a table and get feedback and communicate with and educate the veterinarians. A lot of veterinarians don't know about the whole rehabilitation world and they are going to be one of the first places where wildlife is turned in and handled.

There was a trapping presentation by one of the Division's staff regarding the encapsulated foot hold traps.

Next year there will only be three meetings, February, April and October. The next meeting will be February 21st, 2018

Public Member:

Councilman Pollock reported seeing CO Klitz apprehend a group of people at one time. He gave compliments to CO Klitz for his professionalism. Councilman Pollock asked about the history of displaying fishing licenses and is there any initiative to try to allow concealed licenses when freshwater fishing. As an example, in New York you can keep it in your pocket. The response from various members present was that the law states licenses for hunting, fishing, and trapping, must be conspicuously displayed on outer clothing.

Chairman Burke reviewed the schedule for next year's Council Meetings. **A motion was made by Councilman Brodhecker to approve the Council meeting dates for 2018, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson. Vote taken, all were in favor; motion carried.**

Chairman Burke reviewed the Committee member lists. There will now be four members with one alternate on most committees. He asked for comments. Councilman DeMartino noted on the Game Committee he was an alternate and he is the senior to two other members. Chairman Burke asked for a volunteer to be the alternate. Councilman DeStephano volunteered to be the alternate.

DIVISION REPORTS

Barbara Stoff, Licensing and Permits, reported spending a lot of time testing the electronic licensing system for the 2018 license year. Everything else has been status quo. The beaver and otter lottery has run and notifications went out. It is currently the beaver and otter pickup period. Bear permits went back on sale November 1st with no problems and the 2018 licenses are supposed to go on sale on December 4th. We are currently right on target. They should be on time. The past couple of years we tried to get the licenses out by the first week of December but failed.

Chairman Burke asked how the actual sales of licenses were going. Ms. Stoff replied sales are down. Fishing licenses are down 1% as compared to last year, deer permits are the same, fall turkey permits were down by 20%. There is a lack of interest in fall turkey season. She stated she was not sure what the weather was and if that may have played a part. Bear permits are down, Zone 1 is really low but everything else is still available.

Chief Lisa Barno, Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries, reported the comments for the Fish Code are starting to come in more regularly. Most are favorable for the majority of changes being proposed. The public comment period is open until December 1st. At the December 12th Council meeting the public comment will be reviewed and a vote will be taken.

The final winter trout stocking for the season will take place on November 20th & 21st. There will be 4,300 two-year old rainbow trout going out into 18 waters. Hackettstown is wrapped up for the year. The hatchery is about as empty as it has been in decades as far as fish. They drained a lot of the large muskie ponds and emptied the education ponds, in lieu of trying to get dredging work done on ponds that have not been worked on in a while. The education pond and the fish were doing so well that there really was not much forage left in the waters. This is setting up for changes in shifts in some of the fish rearing and numbers the Division will stock next year. In response to the coolwater assessment project, there are now several tanks of muskies in the intensive building to over-winter; those will go out next spring before we start the brood stock collection.

Chief Barno gave an update on the Route 31 spill. Mother nature has greatly assisted the clean-up efforts going on by clearing through a lot of the lower section of the quarry sediment out of the creek and down into the lower portion where it meets the reservoir. It is anticipated to be complete by the end of this month. They still have to go back through and do pocket areas. Basically, 3-4 weeks of clean-up has been cut off with the rains that we have had regularly.

Unfortunately, we have had a similar event from Johanna Farms in Flemington into the First Neshanic River. The facility has an onsite sewage treatment plant. There was a sludge release into a drainage ditch connected to the river. The sludge is food waste material that is now in the First Neshanic River reaching all the way to the Rt. 202-31 bridge, about a third of a mile downstream. There will probably be a similar approach to the clean-up utilized at Spruce Run Creek. Both of these spills are in Shawn Crouse's area. Shawn, in the spare time between bouncing back and forth between the Route 31 and now Johanna Farms sites, has been working on a brook trout reclamation project at Rhinehart Brook in Hacklebarney State Park. Since mid-August to last week, they have been doing intensive electrofishing to remove all brown trout out of the creek. Previous data indicated there was only brown trout in the creek. As they got further in the head waters, brook trout were found. It then intensified Shawn's efforts to remove the browns. We are now looking to see what happens. The brown trout were moved back down into Black River. There are three natural impediment waterfalls that separate the brook from Black River. We fin clipped all the browns that were relocated down in order to keep track to see how far they are able to make it up into Rhinehart's Brook. Follow-up will take place next spring and summer

with additional electrofishing to keep tabs and hopefully get the brook trout. There's no reason, as far as habitat or water temperature, to limiting brook trout in Rhinehart's Brook.

Councilman Gudmundsson asked if brook trout would be stocked. Chief Barno responded there was a lot of in-house discussion about whether to relocate brookies from Trout Brook, which is right alongside Rhinehart's in Hacklebarney, but because of Pat Hamilton's work on the genetics, which basically identifies that the gene pool in each tributary is so distinctly different, that we are opting to see what the population will do on its own with brown trout removal. Depending if we start to see a decrease, then we may relocate brookies to it; but if the population starts to increase then we will just continue to monitor it.

Chief Al Ivany, Information and Education, gave a report to the chairman on the duck display at the Pequest office, as requested from the October meeting. There have been approximate 5,200 visitors, which include open house, who may have seen the display over the last year. Chief Ivany introduced a new employee, Ryan Risher, who started on November 13th and will report to Nate Figley in Hunter Education. Mr. Risher will be the point person in the R3 efforts (recruit, retention, reactivation), military appreciation, pheasant hunt work, track chairs, and other things. Chief Ivany allowed Mr. Risher the opportunity to introduce himself.

Mr. Risher stated he was excited for the opportunity to work for the Division and look forward to the work ahead.

Acting Assistant Director Golden reported on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management and gave an update on the winter cover crop project. The goal was 300 acres on leased farm and Wildlife Management Areas. As of this week, 385 acres have been planted. The project is now completed and signs will be put up stating this area of winter cover was provided through partnership of The Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Federation.

There was a discussion regarding the laws and use of planted fields for hunting.

Councilman Virgilio gave comments on the Millville Range and how a good job was done in rearranging it.

Acting Assistant Director Golden called attention to maps that were given out for the southern region, Cumberland County, Heislerville WMA marinas to give the Council an opportunity to make comments/recommendation. The property was acquired 25 years ago with an agreement that the marinas were to be operated by lease under the original leaseholder and leases were not to be conveyed. The leases have been conveyed multiple times since then, and it was only realized 8 years ago when someone was going to sell their existing lease and the Division told them they could not do it. The property has since been abandoned. There are now 4 active leases and 3 lease owners. The Division would like to divest from the leases. The original plan was to evict everyone and demolish the building, but the township has expressed some interest in maintaining this area as a marina district. The Division is willing to give the town the property in a swap for some land. The swap would be the Division's 7-acre marina for two separate parcels in the town; one in Dennis Creek WMA and the other would go to Parks and Forestry's Belleplain State Forest.

After a brief discussion, the Council made its recommendation. **Councilman Virgilio made a motion to inform the Commissioner that the Council is in favor of the land swap; it was seconded, all in favor, motion carried.**

Acting Assistant Director Golden noted this was the first year of having a week-long youth pheasant hunt and it was a great success.

Acting Chief Matthew Brown, Law Enforcement, reported the Bureau was in support of “No Shave November” for the national campaign for cancer awareness at the request of an officer who lost his father to cancer over the past year. The Bureau has been working on a name change for the officers to add “Police” to the title. They will now be called “Conservation Police Officers.” The Bureau felt they were being left out and not recognized as a police agency in the State of New Jersey and critical mandated training.

The Bureau was involved with the youth pheasant hunt statewide. The officers enjoyed the facetime with the youth and general public. There were two hunting harassment issues. In northern New Jersey a hunter on a piece of private property, decided to remove and relocate items belonging to another hunter. The hunter who moved the items was charged with hunter harassment. He plans to challenge it in court. The second incident took place in Medford. An officer investigated a complaint from a bow hunter of a low flying drone while he was hunting. At first the drone owner stated he was out there to push the bow hunter away, but under official comment he was just doing it to protect his property. The investigation is still ongoing to get to the root of what was going on. Drones are not only going to be problematic for the general population, invasion of privacy, but also it is a route for people to get out there and harass other people in the course of their recreational activities.

There were some inland officers involved in the Newark Bay Complex who made a Facebook post. There were several undersized striped bass being caught. There was a total of nine summons issued for those activities. Another incident was in the Meadowlands, where a kayaker went out catching his limit of tautog, storing them in his vehicle and then going out again. The officer set up surveillance and issued summons for undersized fish and over the daily limit of fish. This tip came in over OGT. There were two pollution related matters. One in Ken Lockwood Gorge in the upper end. There was bridge repainting on Hoffman Crossing Road. The construction company did not pay due diligence to the oncoming weather system and left the scaffolding assembled in the river, complete with planks, and when the rain came in, it washed it down to the gorge. A notice of violation was issued. The other incident took place with an individual on the Musconetcong where he tried to drive his bulldozer through the Musconetcong just to see if he could make it through. His initial excuse was that he was doing stream work improvement. When asked for his permit, he told the truth. This investigation is still ongoing with water enforcement.

Colliers Mills is becoming the burning ground for vehicles. In the past month, there were two vehicles that were abandoned and torched; one beyond recognition, and the other one is still being investigated and the owner tracked. There are still ATV issues, especially in the Central Region, conflicting with non-hunters. Some birders were almost run over this past weekend. Officers are still investigating, trying to track down all participants. They are coming out of New York in this case.

Acting Chief Brown and the Deputy Chiefs recently interviewed and assigned detectives in the southern region and in the marine region to be force multipliers in the hope of getting to take them out of just strictly field work and start delving in the larger cases such as the Ken Lockwood Gorge and bulldozer. In the marine region, the Bureau envision a lot of activity with the new aquaculture regulations coming, and the change in the aquaculture allowing for oyster industry. We will have our hands full, a need for someone to get more involved into checking and monitoring these permits that are out there. Especially dealing with things that can affect public health. At the end of the month the Bureau received notification Lieutenant Szulecki, from Central Region, put in his paperwork for retirement effective November 1st. We wish him well. A conditional offer of employment was made to one CO recruit candidate. They will be assigned to District 1 in the northern region. She is undergoing her medical testing with a hope of a start date the second week of December. She will be on board with an academy start date of March. We are still looking to fill two additional vacant positions. We will be working with Human Resources and Civil Service Commission on the possibility of posting for a new CO recruit exam in 2018 in hopes of filling those positions. Acting Chief Brown announced this will be his second to last

meeting. After 28 years, with the last 7 in command and the last 2 as acting chief, he will be retiring effective January 1st. He thanked everyone on the Council for what they do, and for their dedication and patience. He thanked the directors for their leadership and how they guide the Division.

Chief Carole Stanko, Bureau of Wildlife Management, reported that the deer harvest numbers through November 12th are 18,951. This is down 8% from the same time last year, but we are catching up. When the numbers in October were reviewed, they were down almost 21% from the same time period the year before. That was due to unseasonably warm weather and abundant acorns. The Bureau is still waiting on the lab results for EHD deer that were tested from the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge. Samples were taken on October 26th. A technician had to kayak down the river to get the samples. The results should be in very soon. There has been a hard frost, so we are out of the woods with EHD. The test results will tell us what serotype it is, and whether it is bluetongue or EHD. If it is bluetongue, it will be of interest to the Department of Agriculture since that is transmissible to cattle.

There was a second rabid bobcat attack on a person. It was on a contract worker at the Hercules plant in Kenvil in Morris County. Hercules is a decommissioned military contractor site where explosives were made. It has been in remediation for years and has contractors working there. The contractor had been driving into the property and saw two bobcats, one growling at the other. When he got out of his truck and starting working, one of the cats came up to him and was growling and ran towards him, so he defended himself with his shovel. The Division took possession of the carcass and had it tested . It tested positive for rabies.

Early License Restoration Appeal Hearing

Captain Linda Quirk read the statement for revocation appeal for Mr. Stephen W. Schelder who was present. Mr. Schelder was convicted of a violation on July 12, 2012 for undersized flounder and two warnings for mutilated marine fish, and on June 5, 2017 for failing to register a turkey at a check station and possessing a loaded firearm with 300 feet of a baited area.

Mr. Schelder testified as to why the Council should restore his license. Chairman Burke asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

Councilman Virgilio made a motion to open the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson, all were in favor, motion carried.

After the Council discussed Mr. Schelder violations, **Councilman Gudmundsson made a motion to close the discussion, seconded by Councilman DeStephano.** Chairman Burke moved the hearing to table, restore or not restore.

Councilman Virgilio made a motion not to restore Mr. Schelder's license due to knowingly, purposefully with intent to deceive and hide. This does not qualify as extenuating circumstances or minor violations, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker, all were in favor, motion carried

Chairman Burke informed Mr. Schelder that his request has been denied.

Captain Linda Quirk read the statement for revocation appeal for Mr. Giancarlo Spano who was present. Mr. Spano was convicted of a violation on December 20, 2012 of attempting to take over the limit of deer during Fall bow hunting season, and on January 24, 2017 for possessing an uncased firearm in a motor vehicle.

Mr. Spano testified as to why the Council should restore his license. Chairman

Burke asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

Councilman Gudmundsson made a motion to open the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Virgilio, all were in favor, motion carried.

After the Council discussed Mr. Spano' violations, **Councilman DeStephano made a motion to close the discussion, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson.** Chairman Burke moved the hearing to table, restore or not restore.

Councilman Virgilio made a motion not to restore Mr. Spano license based on the facts that both violations are not minor and there were no extenuating circumstances, seconded by Councilman DeStephano, all were in favor, motion carried

Chairman Burke informed Mr. Spano that his request has been denied.

Chief Carole Stanko gave a status report on the 2017 pheasant season. There were a few issues on the farm this year. As of November 10th, there are 22,794 birds on the farm. Since the last count mortality was 2.9%; the projected mortality was 6%. On Friday, the crew caught and boxed 880 birds for the dog training areas, and 2,280 birds for Take-A-Kid pheasant hunting week, and another 3,710 birds for the opening day in the northern and central regions.

Even at high mortality rates, we are going to be ahead of the game this year because 45,000 birds were promised to be stocked for the sportsmen. Even at 20% mortality with the birds remaining on the farm, we are going to be somewhere between 49,000 and 55,000. The Bureau went low on what we promised because there was a lot of things going on and we were not sure how things were going to work out. We would rather under-promise and over-perform than the opposite.

Director Herrightly suggested not to immediately start stocking extra birds, but wait until after Thanksgiving and later when college students will be home.

Chief Stanko agreed and stated since we don't know what the weather will be, it is best to wait and put the extra birds out in the end. Birds will also be given to the special veteran's hunt.

Chief Stanko reported there was a game committee meeting on October 3rd, and Lisa Lambert from the NJ Department of Agriculture was present at the meeting so she could review with the committee what the National Poultry Improvement Program (NPIP) may mean for the Division. After Ms. Lambert left, there was a discussion as to whether the Division wanted to invest in the farm's infrastructure and maintain business as usual or to purchase birds to save the agency both money and staffing. Everyone at the committee meeting unanimously was in favor of purchasing birds.

There was a suggestion to look into leasing the farm. The different scenarios for buying birds were to buy all adult birds for 2018, to buy six-week old birds bypassing the brooder house, or to buy a combination of six-week old and day-old chicks. Although the majority of the Committee wanted to buy adult birds for next year, we are unable to do that because we did not have enough time to work with Treasury to get a contract for the purchase of those birds. Additionally, any suppliers would have to gear up for the sale of a significant number of additional birds. We also did not have the time to put through a contract for all six-week old birds. We are about to put out a request for pricing for however many birds \$249,000 will buy and the rest will be made up in day-old chicks.

After a brief discussion regarding raising chicks and purchasing them, Chief Stanko stated that for 2018, at the same time we are buying some six-week old and some day-old chicks, we are also going to try to put through a contract for all six-week old birds for the following year and 2019 and beyond. At the same time we are trying to get a contract for six-week old, we are going to put out a request for information so that suppliers can respond back with any interest they may have in supplying adult birds to us and when they will be available for purchase.

Buying adult birds would free up the staff at the farm, and save the Division hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the option to leasing out the farm, the most logical place to start would be to speak to the suppliers we currently work with, Trace Pheasantry and Mahantongo. Both companies have been to the property so they are familiar with it. They were not optimistic about the options for leasing out because they thought a lot of infrastructure improvement would have to go into the farm. If someone is going to lease it out, we didn't say it was for them to supply us with birds, they would have to put all those improvements in for the NPIP program if they wanted to sell birds out of state, or if they raised over 25,000 birds as a commercial producer. We are not a commercial producer so we can side step some things. Both companies didn't think that they had enough staff that they could trust personally to run two separate locations at the same time. They had a lot of reasons why they did not think it would work, but at least we asked the question.

Chairman Burke asked for a motion from the committee. **Councilman DeMartino made a motion to support the game committee recommendation to purchase six-week old birds and one-day old birds to meet the quota for next year, second by Councilman Brodhecker. Vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENT (3MINUTES)

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ stated we just talked about these pheasants being raised on the farm and now they are going to be put out on the field to be shot to death and the thought of it is in my mind about it the thought of it because we call ourselves you used to call yourself the Division Fish and Wildlife but instead you're not wildlife. These birds are not wildlife, they're raised on a farm. It's like going out and shooting a chicken you know. It's not wildlife. Now when are you changing your name to the division of fish and game because it isn't wildlife. It's a whole fraudulent process that you're putting out there so the hunters can go out and kill them. It like a game you are providing for them. A game in the sense of playing you know it has no truth to it and no validity what it is, is just a fraud on the public. There should be no further bear killing this year. It should be over. You've done enough killing of bears and it should be done with now. I also want to call out again no follow-up on the lab test. We keep reading in the reports on forensics that lab tests are pending and we never get the results. I called that out last month and I'm calling it out again and I'll keep calling it out because if you're going to say the results are pending than the results should be there and they should be documented. They are not documented we never get the results. I don't know where they go, they end up waste basket or what? We also would like to see the Fish and Game Council members changed to include people who care about animals and animals intelligence because the self-interested slanted group that is here is not representative of the New Jersey Public. I also find that what the public comes here and says to you is not properly documented in the minutes. I mean you can come here and say things and the minutes so often just have maybe one sentence which have no relevance to what people here come and say to you. The public comment member who never comes out with anything for the general public of New Jersey that should also be noted in the minutes. I don't know why, but you know, certainly he's got some viewpoint from something, but it not representing a lot of the general public here in New Jersey. I mean just like we heard them talk about the deer lady who came out because this deer had come up on her property. I mean that shows the kind of not everybody likes what you're doing here. Certainly not everybody likes it. Of course if you keep it very quiet, which most of the time you do, they don't even know about it.

Janet Pizar, Millburn, NJ made reference to the Bureau of Wildlife Management Report for the month of

October. On page 6, black bear unit, it states the goal for session B of the bear hunt in December, there is a 20% goal to be reached but not exceeded. If it is not reached between December 4th – 9th, it will be extended to December 13th – 16th. Ms. Pizar wanted to know how many bears will comprise that 20% number. After a discussion, Acting Director Golden stated he would explain it one on one with Ms. Pizar after the meeting.

Director Herrighty announced the passing of retired employee, Debbie Zook, secretary to the Director. Her funeral will be held on November 15, 2017.

Councilman Brodhecker asked if an orchard farmer who has 100% fenced in property can get a year-round depredation permits. Director Herrighty responded to have the individual call him.

A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino and seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to adjourn the meeting at 4:11 pm. Vote taken, all in favor, none-opposed; motion carried.