



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth, Secretary, Bob Durand, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Eve Schlüter/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Chief/Information and Education, Pat Huckery/Northeast Wildlife District Manager, Todd Olanyk/Central Wildlife District Manager, Caleb Slater/Hatchery System Supervisor, PUBLIC: Wendy Larson, Dave Morin, Liz Manger

DATE: July 16, 2021

LOCATION: MassWildlife Field Headquarters, Westborough

Chair Larson opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to table the minutes from the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Secretary Booth.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he had no comments at that time.

Director Tisa reported that Commissioner Amidon had a previous commitment that day and was not able to attend.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that he had no comments at that time.

Personnel Report (Caleb Slater)

Hatchery System Supervisor Caleb Slater reported to the Board that he and the interview committee recommended the following new hire.

MASSWILDLIFE

<i>Employee</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Location</i>
Chet Thomas	Assistant Hatchery Manager Fish Culturist II	Belchertown

Dr. Slater reviewed Mr. Thomas' background and extensive experience in hatchery management.

Secretary Booth moved to accept the Personnel Report as submitted; Vice Chair Roche seconded.

Board members commented that they appreciated the professional background of the candidate and commended Dr. Slater and his team for their selection.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Larson called for a vote.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Vote of Support: License Fee Proposal (Mark S. Tisa)

Director Tisa thanked the Board for meeting on such short notice, and for the trust, confidence, and support the Board has given him throughout the long process of reaching a final proposal and completing the public hearing process on the proposed license fee increases for the agency. He highlighted the length and depth of the process, the number of meetings and hearings, and the intense participation of sportsmen and -women across the state. He reported that the sporting community really appreciated the public process and the fact that the Board and the agency listened to their comments and, working with the administration, were able to reduce the proposed increase for permits and stamps as well as phase in the license fee increases over the next 5 years. The Director stressed that they couldn't have done it without the sportsmen. He also thanked the state's sporting leaders, through guest Dave Morin of the Worcester County League and the Massachusetts Conservation Alliance, for all their work and engagement with the agency in the process.

Director Tisa then asked for a vote of support to move the proposed fees to EEA and ANF.

Mr. Durand so moved; Mr. Sears seconded.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Pheasant and Quail Regulations (Mark S. Tisa)

Director Tisa outlined the staff's proposal to create a pheasant and quail permit and requested that the Board approve to develop proposed regulations and move to a public hearing.

The proposal outlined by Director Tisa also included, along with the establishment of a pheasant and quail permit:

- eliminating the season bag limit for pheasant and quail,
- removing rooster-only restrictions where they exist, and
- eliminating the hunter registration process for pheasant hunting at Martin Burns WMA.

After a brief discussion, Vice Chair Roche moved that staff be directed to develop the regulations as outlined by the Director and take them to a public hearing; Mr. Durand seconded the motion.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Durand commended the legislature and the environmental non-profits for their support in relation to the license fee proposals. He noted that the idea of a family license was raised during the listening sessions and stated that he thought the agency could explore extending license discounts for low-income people.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

The Chair reported that he had not attended the previous Advisory Committee meeting due to connectivity issues. He reported that the updated Heritage Atlas comment period has closed and on August 1 the final mapping recommendations will be published. He also reported that BioMap3 is underway, with funding for the second year in place, and he believed that the plan is to close and finalized BioMap3 in the spring of 2022.

Set Meeting Date

Members discussed dates for the August Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting. Members selected Tuesday, August 24, at 10:00 a.m., and it was subsequently decided, after consultation with the Director, to hold the August meeting via a Zoom webinar.

Member's Comments

Vice Chair Roche reported that 5 years ago he was made aware that the potential was there for financial problems on the horizon for the agency. Having been involved in the license-increase process in 1996, he could state that this time was totally different. He commended the hard work of everyone involved, including especially Director Tisa, who spent so much time and energy in the effort. Vice Chair Roche stated that the agency is at the end of the process and can soon move forward with other efforts. He also noted that MassWildlife is well-positioned to be one of the most secure fish and wildlife agencies in the country.

Mr. Sears offered his thanks to the Director, his staff, Commissioner Amidon, and the agency's many partners. Though the issue was contentious at first, Mr. Sears observed that the tone changed to very positive because the Director and his staff listened to the sporting community's concerns. Director Tisa brought sportsmen back together positively through the process, he thought, and was very glad to see it. He also noted that in a strange way COVID and its consequence, Zoom, actually worked to the agency's advantage because it allowed so much participation that wouldn't have happened if everything

had had to take place in person. He also thanked Director Tisa for the proposed pheasant program improvements and the quick turnaround of the proposal. He opined that the Berkshire County League will appreciate the support of the agency in this matter.

Secretary Booth added that the work of the Worcester County League was also pivotal to the success of the licensing effort and commended its members.

Mr. Foster noted that he was very happy with the make-up of current Board and the way the members discuss issues and work together toward solutions. He stated that he hopes to continue and develop as a Board going forward. He also observed that the Southeast county leagues have risen to the challenge of acknowledging that the sporting community is more than men. He believed that the MCA is a good model and thought that everyone's language should change to 'hunters and anglers,' to be more inclusive. He also complimented the speed with which the pheasant and quail program proposal was developed.

Mr. Durand stated that legislative issues are still hanging out there and that he intended to not forget about and would forward those issues where he could.

Chair Larson reported that he was a strong supporter of using listening/information sessions as part of the agency's outreach efforts as evidenced by the strong public appreciation and support during the license fee process.

A motion was made by Mr. Durand to adjourn in memory of Tom Olanyk, father of Central Wildlife District Manager Todd Olanyk. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth

Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its July meeting packets

July Agenda

Handout: Public Comment Summary and Agency Response document: Fee increase public hearing process

Handout: Proposed Pheasant and Quail regulation changes

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2019)

MassWildlife's *Young Forests* brochure