

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 5, 2024 SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

Commissioners Present: M. Hodgson, R. Green, B. Temple, E. Stohl, S. Price, J. Titone, C. Hodgdon, P. DeBow & A.J. DeRosa.

Commissioners absent/excused: J. Caveney

Belknap County Commissioner seat is vacant at this time.

Chairman E. Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Chairman Stohl announced that the purpose of the Special Commission Meeting was to establish an Executive Director Search Committee.

Commissioner R. Green moved to establish a sub-committee of the Fish & Game Commission, titled, "Executive Director Search & Nomination Committee", Commissioner B. Temple seconded.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa inquired as to whether it was clear that the search committee would be operating under the procedure of hiring a public official going forward, as advised by the Commission's legal counsel.

Commissioner E. Stohl responded, "Yes".

Commissioner M. Hodgson clarified, "We are not hiring, we are nominating."

Commissioner P. DeBow inquired if Commissioners not serving on the search committee would be afforded an opportunity to submit suggested questions to be asked of the candidates, and what interaction those Commissioner would have with the sub-committee.

Chairman E. Stohl responded that the full Commission had a great deal of input in the last Executive Director hiring process. He reported that the Commission provided input & feedback to the search committee and then the committee followed through with those tasks.

He outlined how the Executive Director Search process unfolded the last time:

- Resumes were shared with the full Commission, with Commissioners initialing the envelopes of each candidate's application, indicating that they read it.
- The Commission recommended 5 or 7 names for the Search Committee to interview.
- A vote took place on the nomination of a certain candidate.

- A nomination was submitted to the Governor.
- The Governor denied the nomination and asked for three more nominations.
- Three additional nominations were submitted.
- Governor selected one of the three candidates for the Executive Director position.

He stated, “The process is wide open. In the end, The Commission still votes on the name of the candidate for submission to the Governor.”

He reported that the Search Committee would compile the Executive Director Advertisement, establish the application timeframe & deadline, after the deadline, the full Commission reviews the applications and provides a list to the Search Committee of recommended candidates for interviews.

Commissioner M. Hodgson reported that she and Chairman Stohl reviewed the process for the last hiring of an Executive Director and stated that it appeared to be very transparent, much like the Strategic Planning Committee in developing the Draft Strategic Plan. She stated, “Everything will be shared and where there’s a place for a vote, everybody will have a vote.”

Commissioner S. Price stated that her take away from the advice/guidance from the Commission’s legal counsel was that once candidates are selected for interviews, those interviews are required to be conducted in the public. She stated, ‘I find it refreshing to stop the criticism that the deck is stacked and encourage the transparency of the process.’”

Chairman E. Stohl confirmed her interpretation of the guidance from legal counsel.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa asked, “To be clear, are the interviews going to be conducted in the public?”

Chairman Stohl responded, “Yes, that is the advice from legal counsel.”

Commissioner B. Temple inquired as to what the process was for Commissioners to share a desired characteristic for the Executive Director advertisement.

Commissioner M. Hodgson, Chair, Search Committee, suggested that recommendations from the Commission relative to questions, criteria, characteristics and qualifications for the Executive Director Advertisement be forwarded to her.

Commissioner R. Green recommended that Commissioners who have a desire to provide questions, criteria, characteristics and qualifications attend the Search Committee Sub-Committee Meetings and provide input at that time.

Attorney Mark Lucas agreed and encouraged Commissioners to attend the Search Committee Sub-Committee meetings to relay their input & questions.

Commissioner M. Hodgson stated, “I like that everybody is excited and looking forward to this

process. We have not had a committee meeting yet. There has been a lot of feedback, some of which I almost take as criticism, although I am not sure it was intended to be. We have not put forward an outline of the interview process, therefore, let the committee meet to outline the interview process, after that, the committee will come back to the full Commission with the process and see if you are all in-line with the committee's recommendation."

In closing, Commissioner S. Price asked for confirmation that if Governor Sununu were to have someone interested in the Executive Director position, that they would also be interviewed in the public.

Chairman Stohl responded, "Yes."

Commissioner R. Green stated, "This is getting way beyond the scope of what this meeting was intended for."

At this time, the vote to assemble the Executive Director Search & Nomination Committee was unanimous in the affirmative. (Commissioner M. Hodgson, Chair; Commissioners: R. Green, J. Caveney, C. Hodgdon & E. Stohl)

Commissioner C. Hodgdon moved to adjourn at 1:35 p.m., Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission