

Fish and Wildlife Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 14, 2023

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board held a virtual meeting at 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 14, 2023, one Board member, eight department staff, and four members of the public attending in person at the Dewey Building, 1 National Life Dr, Montpelier, VT 05620. A recording of the meeting is available on the department's YouTube channel.

Agenda

1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (November 1 and November 30, 2023)
2. Public Comments (Limited to 2-minutes per speaker)
3. Furbearing Species Rule – Final Vote
4. Commissioner's Update

Board Members Present: Brad Ferland (Chair)

Virtual: Brian Bailey, Michael Bancroft, Nicholas Burnham, Jamie Dragon, Allison Frazier, Neal Hogan, Michael Kolsun, Bryan McCarthy, Paul Noel, Robert Patterson, Jay Sweeny, Martin Van Buren

Absent: David Deen

Department Staff Present: Commissioner Christopher Herrick, Counsel Catherine Gjessing, Wildlife Director John Austin, Game Warden Major Sean Fowler, Game Warden Katie Palmer, Game Warden Lieutenant Mike Scott, Game Warden Cody Jackman, Principal Assistant Abigail Connolly

Virtual: Project Coordinator Chris Saunders, Wildlife Management Program Manager David Sausville, Furbearer Project Leader Brehan Furfey, Wildlife Specialist Tyler Brown, Outreach Coordinator Megan Duni, Information Specialist John Hall, Director of Outreach Alison Thomas

Members of the Public Present: Rod Coronado, Bob Galvin, Nancy Fitzpatrick, Maureen Dwyer

Virtual: Leo Wood, Ann Smith, Anne McKinsey, Jules O'Guin, Chris Knapp, Jane Fitzwilliam, Chris Bradley, Ryan Kilborn, Emma Cotton, Cathy, Katie Nolan, Barbara Felitti, Anthea Dexter Cooper, Lianne Thomashow, Jeff, Frank Thompson, Abagael Giles, Shayla, Doug, Dennis Fournier

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Board Member Bailey noted that the November 30 meeting minutes time should be changed to 12:00 pm instead of 5:00 pm and that he would abstain from voting on the November 1 meeting minutes since he was absent. Board Member Bailey moved to approve the November 30, 2023

meeting minutes with the edit. Board Member Patterson seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the minutes unanimously. Board Member Patterson moved to approve the November 1, 2023 meeting minutes. Board Member Sweeny seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the minutes unanimously.

Public Comment Period

Rod Coronado, Orange, regarding the furbearer rule
Jane Fitzwilliam, Putney, regarding the furbearer rule
Chris Knapp, regarding the furbearer rule
Jules O’Guin, regarding the furbearer rule

[The recording of the public comments and the meeting can be viewed here.](#)

Furbearing Species Rule – Final Vote

General Counsel Gjessing explained that the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) voted to file the furbearer rule and certified the four objections on December 14, 2023 after the department responded on behalf of the Board on November 30, 2023. General Counsel Gjessing outlined the options for the Board.

Board Member Noel asked about the moratorium on hunting coyotes with dogs. Board Member Bancroft moved to submit the furbearer rule to the Secretary of State’s Office as last voted on by the Board on November 30, 2023. Board Member Patterson seconded the motion. Commissioner Herrick asked if the Board would like to amend the motion to have an effective date for the furbearer rule of January 1, 2024. Board Members Bancroft and Patterson agreed to the amendment. The Board voted by roll call to approve the motion (13-0).

Commissioner’s Update

Commissioner Herrick thanked General Counsel Gjessing and the Board. Game Warden Major Fowler announced that game wardens will be attending more Board Meetings in order to gain a deeper understanding of the rulemaking process. Commissioner Herrick announced that the department will be looking at legal options in respect to the moratorium.

Motion To Adjourn:

Chair Ferland announced that Board Member Bancroft will be acting chair for the next three months, while Chair Ferland will still be attending remotely. Board Member Sweeny thanked the department staff. Board Member Noel asked about how the law guides will be updated with the

new furbearer rule. Board Member McCarthy asked for the 2024 Board schedule. The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:30 pm.