

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

1 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Commission Chairman William "Billy" Deviney, Commissioners Bill F. Cossar, and Robert Taylor

ABSENT: Commissioners Clay Wagner and Scott Coopwood

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Jennifer Head, Colonel Steve Adcock, Chad Dacus, Larry Pugh, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman Deviney, having noted for the minutes that a quorum was present, gaveled the meeting to order at 1 p.m. Special guests recognized were Senator Philip Moran, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks; Senator Mike Seymour, and Representative Scott Bounds, Chairman of the House Committee on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

OPENING PRAYER

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Services, opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

The Chairman noted for the record that a Special Meeting had been called and held on November 17, 2016, specifically to review and adopt the minutes of the regular November meeting held on November 16. This was done so that the November 16th minutes could be presented at a meeting of the State Personnel Board later that same week. Therefore, the Commission needed to approve the minutes of the November 17th special meeting and in so doing, ratify the minutes of the November 16th meeting.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the minutes of the November 17, 2016, meeting were approved, and the minutes of the November 16, 2016, meeting, were ratified.

AGENDA

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the agenda for December 14, 2016 was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no members of the public present who wished to make comments.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of November 2016. Total sales are up \$540,000.00, which is a 5% increase.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – up \$765,000, a 20% increase
- Sportsman license sales – up 23%
- All Game Licenses - up 47%
- Small Game Freshwater Fishing licenses – up 20%
- 3 day Freshwater Fishing licenses – up 30%
- Sr. Exempt Licenses – up 18%
- Non-resident licenses – down 4%
- NR Freshwater 3 day – up 15%
- NR Freshwater 1 day – up 10%
- Other Licenses – down \$26,000
- Lifetime License category – up 10% (43 more licenses sold this year)

WILDLIFE

PROPOSED Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 WMA

Rule 1.6 – WMA User Permit

Chad Dacus, Director of Wildlife Bureau, reminded the Commission that he had presented a request from the public in South Mississippi, to reinstate the One-Day WMA User Permit. This permit will allow non-hunters to enjoy other activities, such as bird watching. The one day fee for Mississippi residents would be \$5 and non-residents would be \$10.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, PROPOSED Rule 1.6 was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

Deer Management Zones

Dacus requested permission to table this item for review at a future date. Chairman Deviney agreed that this should be tabled for now.

Harvest Report for WMA's

Dacus distributed to the Commission a handout labeled "2016-17 WMA Harvest Report." Waterfowl harvest averaged 1.3 ducks per hunter this past year.

LAW ENFORCEMENT**Update**

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout which highlighted citations, shooting range attendance, and the National Sportsman's Caucus in Biloxi.

Col. Adcock asked Lt. Chris Reed to come forward and report on Stuff the Truck Toy Drive for Blair Batson Children's Hospital. Lt. Reed reported that 16 refrigerator boxes full of toys would be delivered by Santa tomorrow. Around \$15,000 in cash donations will be presented to the hospital to be used to make the children's stay as pleasant as possible.

Reinstatement Requests (4)

Colonel Adcock presented the following four reinstatement requests. All violators had taken their Hunter Education classes and paid their fines. Adcock asked that each come forward and state the circumstances of their arrest before the Commission. Following each statement a motion was made by the Commission.

- *Brandon Morgan, Meridian, MS*

Mr. Morgan stated that he and a friend headlighted a deer. His friend shot the deer and an officer arrested them. His fines totaled around \$3,000.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, Morgan's license was reinstated by unanimous consent.

- *Austin Odom, Mendenhall, MS*
- *Steven Ginn, Bogue Chitto, MS*
- *Thomas Jones, Pearl, MS*

Colonel Adcock stated that all three offenders (Austin Odom, Steven Ginn, and Thomas Jones) were together when arrested for headlighting and shooting a deer. They were each fined around \$2,250. Col. Adcock recommended their reinstatement.

ACTION: Upon motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously voted to approve all three reinstatement requests.

OTHER BUSINESS

LEAP, Inc. – Life Enhancement & Achievement Program, Inc.

Joshua Friedel, Executive Director, presented a folder to the Commission with detailed information on LEAP and its request to use Lefleur's State Park Golf Course for its charter, The First Tee of Central Mississippi chapter, which would introduce the game of golf to youth in the metro Jackson and tri-county area. Their request would require 250 hours per year at Lefleur's and would be promoted through the National School Program.

Michael Bolden, Director of Administrative Services, added that he has been talking with LEAP for a long time developing this relationship and concept.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, Mr. Friedel's request to use Lefleur's State Park Golf Course was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission.

LICENSE EXEMPTION REQUESTS

- **Warrior Bonfire Program** – Two Wounded Warrior events will be sponsored January 6-8, 2017 at Valley Park, MS. Exemption of hunting license fees was requested on behalf of the participants. Hunter L. Fordice, co-founder of the Wounded Warrior Program, presented this request and shared information on Texas law which waives fees for certain disabled veterans. He is hoping for future Mississippi legislation so that he does not have to present this request each year before the Commission. He shared several Wounded Warrior participants' stories with the Commission.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Warrior Bonfire Program exemption request was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

- **Wounded Warrior Hunt**

Chad Dacus, Director of the Wildlife Bureau, presented a request to exempt Wounded Warrior participants in a January 12-15, 2017 Deer Hunt to be held in Copiah County. Fifteen veterans will be participating. Two qualified guides will be accompanying each veteran.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Wounded Warrior Deer Hunt in Copiah County exemption request was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

No other business was presented.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at Delta State University, Hugh Ellis Alumni Foundation House Conference Room, 1003 West Sunflower Road, Cleveland, MS 38733. The Education Session will begin at 12:45 p.m. and the Business Session will begin at 2:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Deputy Director stated that there was need for a brief Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter and potential litigation.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific individuals in specific positions, and a strategy session (or negotiation) with respect to prospective litigation.

Counsel announced that the meeting was closed to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific individuals in specific positions, and a strategy session (or negotiation) with respect to prospective litigation. The room was cleared.

The Commission determined that Executive Session was needed for the discussions regarding a personnel matter involving job performance of a specific individual in a specific position, and a strategy session (or negotiation) with respect to prospective litigation. Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter involving job performance of a specific individual in a specific position, and a strategy session (or negotiation) with respect to prospective litigation.

Counsel announced that the Commission had entered Executive Session for the stated discussions.

Counsel then informed the Commission that an inquiry regarding a recent rule promulgated by the Commission had been received. The inquiry or comment regarded whether or not the rule, as passed, might violate the separation of powers provisions of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890. Mr. Mann had prepared a request for an Attorney General's Opinion for this issue, but staff had not decided if the issue required such formal action at this time. The issue was presented to the Commission for informational purposes only and no decision had been made yet as to whether or not the Opinion request would be presented.

No action was required of the Commission.

Mr. Robert L. Cook, Deputy Executive Director then addressed the Commission regarding the non-appropriated realignment of the Executive Director's compensation that had been approved at the November 16, 2016 meeting. The State Personnel Board had requested that the Commission spread upon its minutes the date that they wished the realignment to be effective. Mr. Cook informed the Commission that the Governor's Office had recommended an effective date of January 1, 2017.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted unanimously that pursuant to the *"Proposed Job Class Realignment for FY 2017"* prepared by the State Personnel Board for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks ("MDWFP"), consistent with the authority set forth in the FY 2017 Appropriations bill, the position of DWFP Executive Director, PIN 7679, be realigned to a start step of \$113,345.22, with a top end salary of \$147,348.79; that the incumbent Executive Director's salary be set at \$147,215.96; and that this action shall be in full force and effect on January 1, 2017.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive Session and open the meeting.

Counsel announced the actions taken by the Commission during Executive Session to any members of the public remaining on the premises.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Billy Deviney, CHAIRMAN

1-18-17

Date



Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

1-18-17

Date