COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

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IN RE: QUARTERLY MEETING

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BEFORE: DAVID J. PUTMAN, PRESIDENT
Brian H. Hoover, Vice President
Timothy S. Layton, Secretary
Ronald R. Weaner, Commissioner
Robert W. Schlemmer, Commissioner
Charles E. Fox, Commissioner
James R. Daley, Commissioner

HEARING: Tuesday, February 2, 2016
8:32 a.m.

LOCATION: PA Game Commission
2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Reporter: Seth R. Baier

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APPEARANCES

Executive Director Matt Hough
Deputy Executive Director Bryan J. Burhans
Deputy Executive Director Rich Palmer
Bureau Director Peter Sussenbach
Bureau Director Thomas Grohol
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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE RECITED

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Let's start off with the roll call of Commissioners. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
President Putnam?

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Present.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Vice President Hoover?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Present.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Commissioner Weaner?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Here.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Commissioner Schlemmer?

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Present.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Commissioner Fox?
COMMISSIONER FOX:
Here.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Commissioner Daley?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
Present.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
And Commissioner Layton is present.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you, Mr. Secretary. The first order of business will be approval of the minutes of the Commission meeting held September 29, 2015. Do I have a motion of approval?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Motion.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
We need to vote?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Yes.
PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
We have a second. Sorry.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? That motion carries.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Before we get into our prepared agenda, I have a couple things I'd like to say and one of the first items is I look out across the audience and I see a lot of familiar faces. There's one face out there that I don’t see, Larry Mummert. Larry's been a longtime supporter, a Deputy, for about 40 years and he's been a very regular attendee at our meetings. He would offer quiet advice and not be always Mr. Pushy, push us around, but he was always out there and this is the first meeting that I don’t look out and see Larry out there. I would invite any of the Commissioners or staff if they want to say anything about Larry that he was a trusted friend.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
I knew Larry for a lot of years. He
will be missed.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. Now, we've had two ---

Charlie, do you want to say something?

COMMISSIONER FOX:

Well, I came to know Larry through his work with youth programs. He did a lot with Harrisburg Hunters and Anglers. And my main goal would be that I happen to run across his path a lot of times, and he was always a gentleman and we used to converse with and longtime deputies. He'll be missed.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you, Commissioner Fox. And I'm mentioning Larry because we lose a lot of Game Commission family between each meeting, but I mentioned Larry because I can look up and see Larry and he's not there now.

We've had two days of meetings. We've had a lot of very good presentations by our staff and comments from the public and there's some things that are common or common themes of what we receive in comments. And there will not be an end to the difference between statute and regulation. There are certain things that we as a Board can do through
regulation and there's other things that are done by staff. Sunday hunting is a prime example of that issue. We get calls all the time. We get letters and personal contacts that say you guys are idiots for not doing Sunday hunting. It would mean a huge amount to me if we would do Sunday hunting. We can't do anything about Sunday hunting because that is in the statute. And there are a number of bills out there right now that will affect the Game Commission and I wanted to mention a few of those because some of that also came in through our testimony.

So I'm reiterating the support of the Board of Commissioners and I will invite their comments when I finish. But the leashed tracking dog legislation, we would support using leashed tracking dogs to recover wounded big game animals. I know that other states do that. And anything that helps us recover a wounded animal I think is very good. The Board has expressed support in the past for Sunday hunting and we reiterate our support for that.

One piece of legislation that has been circulating is the revision to Title 71, which is the law enforcement retirement for all conservation officers. They're the kind of parsing. The Fish
Commission has had this for many years and we would support doing that for our conservation officers. We also support giving the Game Commission the authority to regulate a number of things. The reporting period, right now, another reoccurring thing is we don’t know how many deer there are because it's such a low reporting rate, and we can't do anything the reporting period at least because it is specified in statute that there's a ten-day period. We feel that shortening that period could significantly increase the reporting rate.

The regulation of semi-automatic firearms and air powered arms are two more bills that are out there and we support giving the Game Commission the authority to regulate those. There's a number of options and, I think, giving us the authority, it will give us some flexibility with regard to magazine capacity, the calibers and what species can be hunted as opposed to legislating very specific rules for those items.

A license increase is one thing we've been working on. And a parallel ruling, the Fish Commission already introduced is allowing the agency to set our own fees. We would support both of those options. And I guess, there's one other thing that
comes up very frequently is trespass legislation. We have a very small force of field officers out there. It's a thin green line. They have priorities which is dealing with wildlife enforcement and not trespass. It's been our policy forever that our officers do not make trespass a priority. But because we're out there and we're out in the field, people want to call us as the first line of defense when there's 25,000 sworn police officers out there now that all enforce the trespass laws. Another 150 officers will not make a huge impact on trespass, but it could make a significant impact on our ability to do our primary mission of protecting wildlife.

I guess those are the specific items I wanted to cover. I will invite other Commissioners to fill in what parts I missed. And I would like to ask Director Palmer on that license increase, we did hear from some people during our last few days testifying about the license increase, and I would like to ask him to give us his perspective on the support that we've received so far.

DIRECTOR PALMER:

Yes, Mr. President. Just in public comment at this meeting, we have a total of 17 public speakers and I think it's significant to note that
out of 17 public speakers, 6 of the speakers provided
testimony in support of the license increase. Four
of those speakers are on behalf of various
conservation organizations including the Kinzua
Quality Deer Cooperative, Pennsylvania Trappers
Association, United Bow Hunters of Pennsylvania and
Pennsylvania Beagle Gundog Association. That adds to
the list of some of the testimony that we had at the
September meeting from National Wild Turkey
Federation and Pheasants Forever, as well as formal
letters of support for license increase from
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsman Clubs,
Pennsylvania Sporting Dog Association, Rocky Mountain
Elk Foundation, Quality Deer Management Association
and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

We also have indications that there's a
number of other organizations that are in support,
they just have not provided an official letter or
official testimony at this time.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
And I think to date pretty much every
group that we've worked with has supported that
license increase with a notable exception of one
group. Okay. Before we get a little bit further
along, I guess I'll just ask the Commission if
there's any other items that we missed that have come up in the last couple days that they would like to mention now? Okay. We're going to our formal agenda.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:

Yes, Mr. President. The first item to come before the Board is from the Bureau of Wildlife Management. It concerns proposed Rulemaking to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 139.4 regarding 2016, 2017 seasons and bag limits. Proposed changes to small game seasons include, making youth and regular seasons for squirrels and rabbits concurrent to simplify regulations and to expand rabbit hunting opportunity, and making snowshoe hare season dates consistent statewide to simplify regulations, facilitate species monitoring programs and reflect the fact that harvest mortality is not a major driver of population trends for this species.

In regards to wild turkey seasons, in accordance with Wild Turkey Management Plan guidelines, we are recommending fall season reductions in 4 WMUs. Specifically, seasons would decrease from two weeks plus three days to one week plus three days in WMUs 1A and 2A and from one week plus three days to one week in WMU 1B, and from three
weeks plus two days to two weeks plus three days in WMU 4C.

The only change proposed for black bear seasons is the addition of a four day extended firearms season which would run concurrent with the Wednesday through Saturday of the first week of firearms deer season in WMU 1B. This season is intended to prevent further expansion of bears into the western portion of this WMU where potential for bear-human conflicts is high.

Concerning furbearer seasons, the proposal is to increase the length of the fisher trapper season --- trapping season from the current 6 days to 12 days in the 13 WMUs with open fisher seasons. A text and visual aid is shown on pages three through ten of your agenda.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. We have a procedure for reviewing our season and bag limits. We ask for a motion to approve this motion --- this proposal and then we'll have a discussion on it, so I need a motion to approve the season and bag limits.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:

So moved.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Seconded?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Seconded.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
I’d like to have a little bit of a discussion about the expanded rabbit plan and the hunting opportunities.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Yes, sir. Go ahead.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
This is one of the situations where we heard from the public and from the hunting community where they’ve asked for an expansion of the small game hunting season and the squirrel seasons and in combination with rabbit. This is for junior and hunters. So we've actually moved that season forward to October 1st. Last year's squirrel season and rabbit season actually started October 10th of last year, so we're moving it forward ten days to give the youth of our community an opportunity to hunt these animals before we give the rest of the season out. I
just wanted to point that out to everybody. We've heard that a lot.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
And they've responded to it.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
We hear a lot of comments that we don’t hear what people are saying, but we really do listen. And the problem is a lot of times what we hear is diametrically opposed to what the other person said.

Okay. Anyhow, we're going to go through these page by page and make amendments as we go through them.

Okay.

Page one --- oh, page three, the first page is page three. No comments on page three.
That’s where we --- page four?  Page five?  Page six?
Page seven?  Page seven deals with whitetailed deer, the seasons and, as you can see, no Commissioners are making a proposal to change anything in the season dates on white-tailed deer.

Page eight?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Mr. President?

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Mr. Weaner?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
The third item form the bottom, Bear, extended and firearms seasons, WMUs 3A, B, C and D. I move to amend this by deleting WMU 3A.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do we need a second on that?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Yes.

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
So given. And then we vote.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
No. Then we have discussions.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
There you go. Yeah, now we're going to have a discussion on the amendment by Commissioner Weaner. One thing I would point out to the people in the audience watching remotely is that all the presentations on these vary species were giving yesterday. We had some very good presentations that are available on our website, if you want to go back and review what the biologist says about the various species, especially turkeys and bear where we're
making some changes. Mark Ternent, the bear
biologist, had a pretty lengthy discussion about the
effect of the extended seasons.

3A is one that he felt could be
maintained in the concurrent season or in the
extended season. However, our field officers out
there who are actually working with the bears and
tracking them and our regional staff have recommended
that we not have the extended season for at least a
short-term period. It was established mainly because
we got testimony here by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
complaining about a large amount of bear damage they
were experiencing.

We implemented the extended season and
we reduced the population by 25 percent in the first
year, which is really a wildlife management success
story. You know, at least there's one season that we
knew we had some ability to control. The staff of
the Farm Bureau is not reporting the same number of
complaints. Our staff is not reporting the same
number of complaints. And we also received testimony
from an adjoining, from people who are in an
adjoining unit requesting that they get an extended
season because they were getting many of their deer
hunters siphoned off to go hunting in 3A and they
thought they weren’t meeting the appropriate pressure
on the deer and on 2F.

So some of that is we are recommending
or we're going to eliminate that extended season for
this year. Any additional comments or discussion?
Commissioner Weaner is our parliamentarian so I have
to look at him. Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor to amend
page eight with the proper second. All those in
favor, aye?

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We'll move
onto page nine? Page nine does include an extended
fisher season which now will allow tracking over the
Christmas holiday. There's another point that we
received a lot of comments from families who trap
together over the Christmas holiday. They want to be
able to see that we extended that through that period
and our biologist agreed that we could extend it
through there. So we'll now have Christmas fisher
season.
Page ten? Now, we have --- there's one comment I wanted to make on the porcupine season. Many of you know I've been very interested in the status of our porcupine population. We've discussed moving porcupine season into the furbearer category and have it managed as a furbearer. We've seen some bag limits set by WMU. I'm not going to make that proposal this year, but we will work with staff, and I expect to request that again in the next year's regulations.

Now, we have an amended motion on the floor to accept the season bag limits. Do we have any additional discussion on season bag limits? Do we have motion to accept the season bag limits?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We had that already.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Oh, we had it already? We have a motion on floor to accept the season bag limits that has been seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye?

AYES RESPOND

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Opposed? The motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item before the Commission is the proposed rulemaking to amend Section 139.17, a uniform system of wildlife management units, the WMUs, was implemented in 2003 to replace the system of multiple, species-specific management units. These wildlife management units are based on physiographic, land cover and use, human population density and land ownership.

Wildlife management unit's boundaries were defined using readily recognizable features on the landscape rather than hard-to-identify political boundaries. The Commission has conducted an evaluation of the structure of the wildlife management unit system and has developed the following WMU map revisions. Expand 5D in the northeast corner to provide a more logical boundary.

This proposed change represents a 24,826-acre increase in the size of WMU 5D and the area proposed is shown in magenta on the map on page 12. The text of this change is shown on page 11 of your agenda and the map is on pages 12 and 13 of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER PUTNAM

Do we have a motion to accept this
proposed rulemaking?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
So moved.

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? This is largely a housekeeping issue. We do receive comments. Again, we’ll have the staff move forward on. Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item comes from the Bureau of Wildlife Protection and concerns the proposed rulemaking to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 141.4., to replace the current hunting hours table and migratory bird hunting hours table to accurately reflect the dates and hours of legal hunting for the 2016-2017 hunting license year. The text of these changes is shown on pages 14 through 16 of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
So moved.

COMMISSIONER FOX:

Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Mr. Secretary?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:

Do we have discussion?

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Oh. Does anybody want to discuss the proposed change to the hunting hours table? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:

We have a motion on the floor to accept the hunting hours table. It's been moved and seconded. All those signify --- those who want to approve signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:

Opposed? This motion is carried.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL

Next item is to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 131.6. Increasingly, the Commission is identifying significant overlap and interconnectivity between its investigations into wildlife, habitat or other environmental crime and other types of general
crime. The Commission's policy to attempt sever and transfer all general crime matters to other state or local law enforcement agencies has largely proven unsuccessful. Not only does this process often create significant procedural complications for both organizations, but more importantly, these other agencies have consistently rejected their adoption of cases that they did not initiate.

In an effort to reduce legal challenges, reduce potential civil liability, but also provide recognition of the importance of the relevant competing interests on this issue, the Commission is proposing to amend Section 131.6 to redirect the extent and manner in which it authorizes wildlife conservation officers to engage in the administration of police powers. The text of this change is shown on pages 17 and 18 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Second.
PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion?

DIRECTOR GROHOL:
Mr. President?

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Yeah?

DIRECTOR GROHOL:
Could we have just a capsule explanation of how this ultimately affects the hunter, if it does?

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Sure.

DIRECTOR GROHOL:
Thomas Grohol.

This really doesn’t change much at all as far as the authority that our officers are granted under this section. What it does is just eliminates some of the restrictions that we as an agency imposed on them when we wanted them to use these powers. So by statute, our officers are allowed to enforce not only the Game and Wildlife code, but also Title 18, both --- all the summaries, misdemeanors and felonies and any other misdemeanor or felony of any other title that we have in this state.

As an agency, we put some restrictions
on when we wanted them to be able to use these powers because we wanted their main job to be the protection of wildlife. There's some wording in here, if you see on page 18, the first sentence where it's struck, where it says to the degree necessary to protect life and property. We've had some district attorneys that interpreted that sentence in our own regulations to put some restrictions that were unnecessary on our offices and they felt that many of the cases that our offices were running into that those two words, to protect life and property, put a restriction on them that they were not comfortable with our officers prosecuting cases with that wording in there.

So we're removing that wording and removing the guideline that says if our officers encounter any of these types of crimes when they're out there acting within the scope of their employment that they automatically have to contact the appropriate police agency before moving forward and that complicated the whole legal process and the majority of the times, those other policy agencies are not interested in prosecuting cases that we encounter.

So we're just removing those restrictions. There's no new authority that's
transferred to the officers under this regulation.

DIRECTOR GROHOL:
Thank you.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Is there any additional
discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s
been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by
saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item is to amend 58 Pa. Code
Section 141.18. The Commission has recently been
requested to formally review the use of electronic
rangefinders, including both handheld devices and
those contained within a scope or archery sight. The
Commission has determined that use of these devices
for hunting purposes has no or negligible negative
impacts to the above mentioned principles.
The Commission has historically
maintained an open use policy towards these
electronic devices due to their ubiquitous use,
however their use could be construed as technically contrary to the Commission's restriction on the use of electronic contrivances while hunting.

Therefore, in an effort to more formally approve their use, the Commission is proposing to amend Section 141.18 to add both handheld rangefinders and those contained within the scope or archery sight to the list of approved devices that may be used to hunt or take wildlife. The text of these changes is shown on page 19 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? I will ask Director Grohol to explain this.

DIRECTOR GROHOL:
Sure. You know, historically we allow the use of handheld rangefinders without them being
added to the list of approved for electronic devices because we didn’t really look at their use as being opposed to the fair chase doctrine. So it lends itself to some confusion on whether they were legal and we got a lot of questions on it, so we just wanted to clarify it and make sure that the hunters knew that handheld rangefinders, electronic rangefinders are now legal.

And in addition, there's a lot of hunters using scopes equipped with the same type of technology and we view their use the same as handheld, that we felt that it didn’t violate the rules of fair chase. So we just wanted to make sure that everyone was clear that these are legal to use while hunting.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Any additional discussion?

Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor say signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.
ATTORNEY BECHTEL:

And the next item is to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 141.41. Each year the Commission investigates numerous big game violations involving improperly marked animals. A concerning portion of these violations involve a hunter's placement of a prior year's expired harvest tag on the big game animal rather than the current year's harvest tag.

The Commission has determined that some of these violations are purposeful and intended to give the hunter the appearance of eligibility to harvest an additional animal with their unused current tag. However, the Commission also recognizes that other hunters are merely engaged in the habit of carrying prior years' licenses and harvest tags and are mistaking the similarly colored harvest tags for the then current year's harvest tags during the stress induced by a successful harvest.

Therefore, in an effort to reduce the number of either purposeful or mistaken improperly marked big game violations from ever occurring, the Commission is proposing to amend Section 141.41 to prohibit the possession of an expired, revoked, suspended or invalid hunting license or big game harvest tag while in engaged in hunting or trapping
activities or while in the fields, forests or on the
waters or highways within or bordering the
Commonwealth.

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
Mr. President, I know I've got questions as a Commissioner about this that I've
directed people to look at the digest right now. The
digest suggests that you shouldn't carry an old license to avoid a mistake, but it doesn't say you have to. This kind of makes it a have to. I think it's kind of putting it into language what we'd like to see to that people aren't putting the wrong tags on there. So I fully support that.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Commissioner Weaner?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
And one thing I would add, a lot of
people have asked us, why we don’t change the colors of the license every year. And as you well know, the PALS system that we use is shared with the Fish & Boat Commission. Their license year is the calendar year. Ours is the fiscal year. And to make everything work seamlessly, we have to maintain the same color. And that’s why we haven’t simply gone out and changed the colors every year. I fully support this, and urge you to vote yes.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Any additional discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item before the Commission is the proposal that comes on the green replacement page, page 21. I call that to everyone's attention. It is to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 143.50. The Commission has been asked to review the preference
given to resident license holders in the timing that antlerless deer applications can be submitted to county treasurers. Currently, resident license holders can apply two weeks sooner than nonresident license holders.

While this timing does not affect the availability of antlerless deer licenses for nonresident license holders in most WMUs, it often eliminates the availability of antlerless deer licenses in a number of low quota, highly preferred WMUs. The Commission has reviewed this resident license holder preference policy and determined that the nonresidents most impacted by this negative preference are former residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that return back to this state annually to hunt.

Therefore, in an effort to narrow the gap, the Commission is proposing to amend Section 143.50 to allow nonresidents to submit applications for antlerless deer licenses on the third Monday in July, one week after resident applicants. The text of this change is shown on the replacement page, page 21.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Do I have a motion?
COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Motion.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Mr. President? This is a situation that we've been faced with ever since I've been on the Board and I know that President Putnam talked about this, too. We had a lot of former Pennsylvania residents who write to us every year to say, you know, we just want to come back, spend some time with family. We all go to camp together.

Initially, we had directed staff to look at allowing this the first week that antlerless licenses go on sale. The staff felt that it wouldn’t be a problem if we did that. However, we got some opposition from some of our organizations who support us in our other endeavors, and we wanted to respect at least their position. And we thought that it would still be fair if we opened antlerless license to the second week to out-of-state hunters.
So while we don’t feel that this is going to affect Pennsylvania residents, we’re certainly going to look at this again next year to make sure that we’re on an even playing field and that we’re doing everything correctly. And I would urge all the Commissioners to support this.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Any additional discussion? Mr. Daley?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
Yeah, Mr. President. One of the things we saw this past year were 5 WMUs were sold out before any nonresident could apply, and that’s the ones, as it says here, have a lower quota. But none had sold out within one week so this one week does help address the nonresident issues while still maintaining our relationship with other organizations so it’s a very good compromise.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. We did receive a small amount of comments on this issue, including from our friends from the United Bow Hunters, which we appreciate. They opposed the initial change, which was going to allow a two-week period --- or no period it was going to be open concurrently to everyone.
And so we compromised and opened it at one week after. And as Commissioner Layton said, most of our nonresident hunters that we hear from, at least, are Pennsylvania residents coming back home to hunt. So with that?

SECRETARY LAYTON:

We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:

Opposed? Motion carries.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

And there are additional copies of this green page down here at the front also.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:

The next item before the Commission is from the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management concerning the acquisition of real estate. Contract Number L-3689, State Game Land Number 79, Cambria County. Charles J. Merlo, III is offering a donation of 14.2, more or less, acres of land in Jackson Township, Cambria County that adjoins State Game Land Number 79, as shown on Exhibit RED 1 of your agenda on page 23. The property is mostly forested with
mixed hardwoods in early succession and has approximately 1.5 acres of reverting old fields. Access is from U.S. Route 22.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor signifying by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item is also an acquisition of Contract Number L-3690, State Game Land Number 264, Dauphin County. The Estate of Constance Garber is offering a donation of 10, more or less, acres of
land in Williams Township, Dauphin County located
approximately 3,000 feet south of State Game Land
Number 264 as shown on Exhibit RED 2 on page 25 of
your agenda. The property is forested with mixed
hardwoods. Wiconisco Creek flows along the northern
boundary. Access is from Water Street which
parallels the western boundary.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion that’s been duly
seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item is also an acquisition of
Contact Number L-3691, State Game Land Number 170, Cumberland County. Central Pennsylvania Conservancy is offering for sale 7.6, more or less, acres of land in Silver Spring Township, Cumberland County adjoining State Game Land Number 170, as shown in Exhibit RED 3 on page 27 of your agenda. The option price is $400 per acre to be paid with funds from the Game Fund. The property is forested with mixed hardwoods and has sassafras and witch-hazel in the understory. Access is from existing State Game Land Number 170.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? Hearing none, Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly seconded. All those in favor signifying by
saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
The next item is Contract Number L-3692, State Game Land Number 188 in Snyder County. The Estate of Norma M. Fetterolf is offering for sale ten, more or less, acres of land in Adams Township, Snyder County which is an indenture into State Game Land Number 188, as shown on Exhibit RED 4 on page 29 of your agenda. The option price is $20,800 lump sum to be paid with funds from the Game Fund. The property is forested with oak, maple and hemlock. The property adjoins Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission property along its north boundary. Access is from existing State Game Land Number 188.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Motion?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON:
Second.
PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON:
I guess I'm going to ask Director Sussenbach to explain why would we pay $20,800 for one property and only $400 an acre for another property?

DIRECTOR SUSSENBACK:
That's a very interesting question. Obviously on the first property, the one prior to this, there's a partnership involved in that acquisition and that was basically a deal that was struck based off a previous Commission agenda item. This one is an interesting property. It's only $20,800, but as you can see fills an indenture and indentures are tremendously valuable for us to provide road access or increased access to hunters, to other opportunities on the Game Lands. There's many indentures that are not filled in that prevent us from doing so. So obviously the value through an appraisal process, you know, is a little higher. And through the appraisal process identified the fact that we were not overpaying, per se, for this type of property. Some of the other properties that we see here we've gotten a deal on.
PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Any additional discussion?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Yeah, I just want to thank you for bringing that up. There are reasons we're in a budget crisis. When we're spending money on properties, we're spending money on properties that are very valuable to the Game Commission and to the sportsmen of this state. So we're not out there to just needlessly purchasing property, we're trying to fill in, you know, pieces of property that provide us access to roads and close indentures into the State Gaming Lands. So thank you for bringing that up.

DIRECTOR SUSSENBACK:
Mr. President, if I may add briefly? Again, looking at the latest strategic plan, when you look at the goals and the objectives that are outlined there, you know, all of these donations and acquisitions fit into the strategic plan in furtherance of wildlife and wildlife protection management for the Agency and the Commission.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s
been duly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:

Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:

Next item before the Commission concerns oil/gas and minerals and restricted surface use oil and gas cooperative agreement bid offering for tract 12/36A-15, State Game Land Numbers 12 and 36, Bradford and Sullivan Counties.

The Commission offered its oil and gas ownership under portions of the State Game Land Numbers 12 and 36 in Overton and Elkland Townships, Bradford and Sullivan Counties, for oil and gas development by a competitive royalty bid. Tract 12/36A-15 containing approximately 5,870 acres, was announced for competitive royalty bid in November 2015 with a one-time bonus/rental payment of $2,500 per acre for a five-year paid-up primary term, and a minimum bid of 20-percent royalty. This tract is shown on Exhibit OGM 1 on page 31 of your agenda. Additionally, the bid provides the Commission a well pad location fee of $75,000 per well pad if well pads are necessary on the Game Lands Surface. The
agreement restricts surface use to two well pads and access thereto for development.

Oil and gas development will be regulated by the Commonwealth's Oil and Gas Regulations and the Commission's Standard Restricted Surface Use Oil and Gas Development Cooperative Agreement to include a $50,000 performance bond. The agreement will include the Commission's standard wildlife and environmental protection measures. The total bonus payment will amount to approximately $14,675,000 which shall be deposited into the Game Fund or into an interest bearing escrow account for the future purchase of wildlife habitats, lands or other uses incidental to hunting, fur taking and wildlife resource management. Further, the Commission will receive an annual payment of $1,400 in lieu of free gas usage.

Bids for this tract were opened on December 18, 2015 with Chief Exploration and Development LLC of Dallas, Texas submitting the highest royalty bid of 20 and 55/100s percent of the market value or sales price for each thousand cubic feet of gas (Mcf) produced and sold from the premises.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
We will have some discussion on this.

Commissioner, do you want to start out?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Mr. President, I'd be interested in knowing, the $14,675,000 is that, quote, new money or is that money that has already been put into our budget for this year?

DIRECTOR SUSSENBACH:
Yes. You know, in the past there was significant revenue coming in from OGM, which this is significant but, you know, a portion of that was offset in the budget and a portion of that was put into an escrow account for future land acquisitions and some other things. But this money is part of our revenue projection for this year so this is part of our budget revenue for this year.

This is something that, you know, what
we're seeing for the next few years is pretty unique.

The downturn in the gas and the prices that are out there, most companies are not willing to stretch out right now and spend those kind of resources. They're not really sure when they're going to be able to recoup some of those expenses.

So, you know, in a roundabout way I'm answering your question. But yes, this is not new money. This is money that we've had for revenue projection from back in June or July, anticipating something was going to happen on Game Lands 12 and 36, and fortunately things came through here.

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Thank you.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Commissioner Hoover?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
That was basically what I was going to point out. We're not dealing with new money. We're dealing with money that we already projected to come in to the stream. So this doesn't fix anything that we're into right now because it's money that we've already put into the budget.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
But we're going to discuss a Policy
Manual in a little bit and one part of our Policy Manual deals with our oil and gas revenues. And it’s the Commissioners' policy and intent that that's the sportsmen's money and we can harbor our oil and gas resources and use them for the benefit of the sportsmen.

Almost, you know, historically or throughout the first years of my tenure on the Commission, most of all that money went into land acquisition. We're causing disruption and we're doing some surface disturbance, although when you see the total amount of surface disturbance for the amount of land we've leased, it is really miniscule. But we're causing some destruction of the game lands and we're paying the sportsmen by buying new lands other places.

We have a team of people that work on both the oil and gas and the land acquisition and I --- you know, I can see them sitting out there. And I know they kind of feel that we're going against what we've done for so long by putting this money into our operating budget. We're providing it so that we can go and use it in the operating budget or the escrow account. This money should be going to the future, but because of our budget situation and
the fact that we haven’t had a license increase in
the memory of most people in this room, you know, we're kind of forced into that. Our oil and gas
resources are limited. We don’t have unlimited resources to go forward and we can't depend on this
to be a substitute for a licensing increase.

We received comments. There's a group of negative people who are going to be providing negative comments no matter what we do. We receive comments like, what did you do with all the money that you got? Well, starting out with every dollar that comes in is approved at this meeting, it's in the public record. You can see what we took in and you can see where it went through our budget process.

It goes into the escrow accounts. It goes out to purchase land. But when the oil and gas revenue first started to come in, it was about the time when our lack of a license increase was catching up with us. And we had vehicles out there that we couldn’t take off the game lands. They couldn’t pass a state inspection and we were still using them. And the Game Commission has always been, --- of all the state agencies you'll find that when we throw something away, there's nothing left of it.
So the revenues came along and they've helped us, but we're getting towards the ends of that. And I just really want to point out that some people say well, what did you do with all the money, well it's all out there. It's all on record where it did go, but much of that was spent to catch us up because we were in such a hole from so long without a license increase. Any additional discussion?

Commissioner Fox?

COMMISSIONER FOX:

Was there any other bids received on this?

DIRECTOR SUSSENBACK:

This is the only one we did receive. And the interesting thing about that is they have an extremely strong holding just to the south of us. And that's why, you know, they're on a 5,000 acre lease, they're not going to impact a tremendous amount of game land because the maximum they could have are two well pads. Right now, you know, they've got plans to drill wells down and this was approved. They will be drilling right to our boundary line. Certainly in the future, we'd have more impacts on game lands at that point.

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Where I live in Bradford County, I will say they're cheap and will be better operators. That I think they have a good reputation.

**MR. PUTNAM:**
Additional discussion?

**COMMISSIONER DALEY:**
I just wanted to congratulate your staff on getting this kind of deal, to bring this much revenue in. I know it was projected but, you know, in today's market to get $2,500 an acre and get still 20.55 percent as a royalty is really unheard of, so I think your staff did a good job, and I’d like to let them know that.

**PRESIDENT PUTNAM:**
Mr. Secretary?

**SECRETARY LAYTON:**
We have a motion on the floor that’s been duly second. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

**AYES RESPOND**

**SECRETARY LAYTON:**
Opposed? Motion carries.

**ATTORNEY BECHTEL:**
The next item concerns Non Surface Use Oil and Gas Cooperative Agreement Tract 245A-16,
State Game Land Number 245 in Washington County.

EQT production, or EQT of Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, has requested the Commission offer its oil and gas rights under a portion of State Game Land Number 245 for non-surface use development. The proposed tract containing approximately 305.7 acres is located in East Finley Township, Washington County as shown on Exhibit OGM 2 on page 33 of your agenda.

EQT has a strong, privately-owned oil/gas lease position surrounding this portion of the State Game Land Number 245. They have initiated unconventional well drilling and development in the vicinity of the proposed tract, and also have the ability to unitize and develop the Commission's oil and gas reserve under the proposed tract by horizontal drilling with no surface use or disturbance to the State Game Land. OGM staff has negotiated the proposed terms of the agreement with EQT in an effort to prudently develop the Commission's oil/gas reserve and simultaneously protect the wildlife resources and recreational use of State Game Land Number 245.

The terms of the Agreement are a five-year paid-up Non-Surface Use Oil and Gas Agreement, a $3,000 per net oil and gas acre bonus
payment and 20 percent royalty for all oil/gas and
other liquids or condensates produced and sold from
the proposed tract. The bonus payment of
approximately $917,100 may be deposited either into
the Game Fund or into an interest bearing escrow
account to be used for the future purchase of
wildlife habitats, lands or other uses incidental to
hunting, fur taking and wildlife resource management.
Future rentals and royalties owed the Commission
shall be directly deposited into the Game Fund.

Oil and gas development will be
regulated by the Commonwealth's Oil and Gas
Regulations and the Commission's Standard Non Surface
Use Oil and Gas Cooperative Agreement.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Motion.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? We've pretty much
discussed the principle behind the --- our oil and
gas development in the previous item. Any additional
discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that’s
been duly seconded. All those in favor signify by
saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL:
And the next item concerns Bituminous
Surface Coal Mining Agreement, Tract 153A-16, West
Wheatfield Township, Indiana County.

Amerikohl Mining, Inc., of Butler,
Pennsylvania has requested an Agreement to mine and
remove approximately 15 acres of Lower Kittanning
coal beneath a portion of State Game Land Number 153
located in West Wheatfield Township, Indiana County,
as shown on Exhibit OGM 3 on page 35 of your agenda.

The Game Commission owns the surface and surface
support rights, but does not own the coal. Amerikohl
has secured a lease with the coal owner.

The terms are a five-year agreement, a
royalty rate of six percent of the F.O.B pit price
for all coal mined and sold from the premises, or
$2.50 per ton, whichever would be the greater.

In exchange for the Agreement, to offset the surface impact to the State Game Land, Amerikohl shall cause to convey a minimum of 30 acres of land acceptable to the Commission. Royalties will be credited against the land value and once reached, payment of royalties will begin at the greater of the rates noted above.

All coal royalty payments will be deposited in the Game Fund. Mining will be regulated by the Commonwealth's Mining Regulations and the Commission's Standard Surface Coal Mining Agreement.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Second?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Discussion? I guess I'll have a little bit of a discussion on this that the Game Commission has a very, very good track record on land dealings. And this particular, this is good example of it, we
got 15 acres that's going to be mined. We don't own the coal so we really can't --- you know, you can't really --- we don't have 100 percent control on the situation. They're going to mine 15 acres, but they're going to give us 30 acres in exchange and when it's reclaimed, I guarantee you it will not just be a --- you won't recognize it as a strip mine. It'll be reclaimed under our guidance and direction. And it will be a good quality habitat when we're done. So they're going to mine 15 acres and give us back 30 plus 15 more acres are going to be reclaimed and have in good shape. Got anything else to add to that, Director?

DIRECTOR SUSSENBACK:
Just to add, you know, the revenue aspect of the deals going on here is approximately $27,000 based on the value of the timber. There's going to be offsets there with habitat enhancements that could be done to the property above and beyond what we require under the standard DEP guidelines. So this is an exciting opportunity. Again, we don't have 100 percent control of what's going to happen there, but we've really done a great job here ensuring we are filling an indenture at the same time so it's beyond just the impacts of those lands. I
think we're getting, you know, a great amount in return.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. Any additional discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that's been duly seconded. All those in favor say aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? Motion carries.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Okay. Now we're on to new business. I believe we have a number of items that we're going to discuss in new business. Commissioner Layton had a topic of the boundary to 2C.

SECRETARY LAYTON:
I do. Thank you, Mr. President. I think at the Board meeting, I would like to see wildlife management take a look at the northern boundary of 2C, which currently --- it's the beginning of Route 22. And for some odd reason, takes a right turn up 422 and then back down to 22. I'd like to see if we could make that a boundary go straight across. I think we could eliminate a couple
of problems for us.

One is that we've had some concern this past pheasant season about hens being released in that portion of 2C and 2C is a cock bird only area. And when I looked into it, I found out from the people in the fields is that just because of where those birds are distributed from, it's just a problem. They ends up putting hens there and they can't be harvested and we're wasting birds. So that would eliminate one of many problems I think in that area. So if we could take a look at that, I would appreciate it.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. Commissioner Weaner would like to discuss DMAP reporting.

COMMISSIONER WEANER:

For our next meeting, I would like our staff to prepare a report on the feasibility of removing the postcard from the deer reporting and big game reporting system. That's been one of our drawbacks, having the ten-day reporting period. The ten-day reporting period we have no control of as a legislative issue. But whether or not we use the postcard is something that apparently we can control and maybe there's a good reason to keep using it, but
I'd like to hear a report for next meeting about that feasibility. Thank you.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. Commissioner Layton would like to discuss rule change --- a highlight of rule changes in the digest.

SECRETARY LAYTON:

Thank you, Mr. President. One of the things that we do is change rules a lot around here. And it gets confusing after a while, so I think what I'd like to see I&E do is write proposals to us where we can highlight those rule changes in the front of the digest or maybe the first couple pages are the rule changes that have been made for the upcoming season and those areas that we will highlight are how those rules are going to affect our hunting. I think it's just makes it easy. We bury those rule changes in the digest and I just think we've lost a lot of time because there's a lot of confusion. And if we could make it easier for our hunters to know what changes we've made, how they're going to affect them, I think it would be easier.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. Now the people who do our digest are out there cringing because every inch of
every column/line of that digest is already spoken
for. Travis will give us problems. I believe
Commissioner Schlemmer wanted to give a report on the
latest happenings in Punxsutawney today.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Phil didn’t see his shadow today. It's
spring.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Yes. Our friends over on Elmerton at
the Fish & Boat Commission are going to have a
shorter ice fishing season I guess. So maybe that'll
be up to Commissioner R. Weaner, see what he can do
about that. We have a Commissioner Policy Manual
which I mentioned earlier. It's revised from time to
time and Commissioner Daley has spent a good amount
of time going through it, cleaning up some of the
prior mistakes from the other people that did it.
And he would like to discuss that now and then we'll
vote to adopt the revised manual.

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
All right. Well, as President Putnam
has told you, we do have a Policy Manual, one for the
Game Commission itself which is very broad. It talks
about everything from use of herbicides to you name
it. It's all in here. But we also have a Policy
Manual for the Board of Commissioners and it really defines the expectations of our Board, how we interact with our Executive Director, who really is our only staff person, and setting limits on the authorities of each of the Board and our Executive Director. And so therefore, it certainly differs from the more generalized PGC Policy Manual of June of 2003. That one's a much broader scope. Both are actually are on our website and can be viewed there.

But this one is one that we've kind of looked as a living document because it is there's always changes in expectations. We get new Executive Directors coming in. It covers everything from Board accountability, governing style, working groups, on down to all the limitations on the Executive Director, partnering, outreach. It's comprehensive, but it really just deals with us, the people at this table.

So the changes that we've done, some improvements in the formatting of the document. We've gone in and taken all of the various resolutions of the Board, put those on one or two tables in the back so you can see what's being done, kind of just as, you know, kind of a record of what's
been done. There's some slight changes regarding the
Executive Director's authority to accept funds. We
have more latitude in terms of emergency spending if
necessary, let's say the roof leaks and it costs more
than $15,000, his hands used to be tied. And that
just didn't make, you know, great sense. So we got
rid of that.

We also developed a Policy Manual
checklist so because of the various expectations that
are in this Policy Manual, things that we expect of
the Executive Director, monthly, quarterly, we have
now a whole checklist that we can just use that as a
means to make sure that we're treating each other in
ways that we wanted to.

And then we've had an emphasis on who
should be delivering our legislative agenda to the
House and Senate Game and Fisheries Committee. We've
now made that to the Executive Director because it's
so important. I think with that, we've captured all
of the official Board positions and any that we have
today, we'll be continuing to do that. So I think
with those, President Putnam, if we could vote to
approve that we can certainly get it up on our
website.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Oh, we will if I can get a motion.

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Any additional discussion?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON:
Yeah, Mr. President. I would like to thank Mr. Daley for the work he put into this. He said we, we, we a lot, but I think what happened was we threw a lot of stuff at him managerially and it was really he, he, he. He did a lot of work. He put a lot of work into it. Last night, we got together and, again, refined it a little bit. He went back to his room, finished up a copy. And we certainly just want to appreciate and let you know that we appreciate the work you put into this. Thank you.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
And I would reiterate that as well.

This will be published on the website so the full text will be available if anybody wants to ever read it. Any additional discussion? Mr. Secretary?
SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor to accept the Policy Manual. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.
AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? That motion is carried.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
The next order of business are proposed Commission meeting dates of April 4th and 5th, 2016. Additional new business? Sorry.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
We've had a lot of discussions lately on the cull permit regulations and what I'd like to do is request Executive Director Hough to request staff actually to draft a change to the cull permit regulations to require a hunting component that would be approved by the Commission prior to the issuance of the cull permit. In other words, what we're asking for now is to put back into the regulations the hunter, let's put the sportsmen back into regulations. He gets the opportunity first or we don't issue a cull permit unless it's impossible to use them hunting. And have that ready for us for the next working group meeting.
PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Some of these situations we've faced are our barriers because the Board of the Home Association or whatever the group is have set barriers up there, and I guess we'd like them to reevaluate. Just because they say they don’t like hunting, I think we want to put a little pressure back on them to accept hunting as the first line of defense in these situations. Any additional discussion? Commissioner Daley?

COMMISSIONER DALEY:

Yeah. Based on some of the testimony we got in the last couple days and also a recent meeting I attended in one at the local sportsman's organization, there's a lot of angst, I guess, based on what, there's about three bills I think out there now that would potentially move hunting and fishing related trespass to misdemeanors beyond some of the current crimes code levels. And also, it's starting to put a burden on our enforcement officers, as you said at the beginning of the meeting, you know, our 150 versus 26,000. So I'd actually like to ask staff that they would work with the legislative members to help address these sportsmen's related concerns.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
In some states, a significant portion of the conservation officer's is time spent enforcing trespass laws and we'd rather have our officers enforce the wildlife laws. Any additional new business?

COMMISSIONER:
Yes.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Commissioner Fox?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Director Hough, if you would look at the staff to take a look at our fluorescent orange. Right now we have fluorescent orange in our digest which covers two pages. And I understand it’s not going to be a simple task, but if that process, what we require and what kind, could be looked at, I think that would be helpful with both hunters and the people who try to enforce it.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Thank you. We'll keep dragging along if there's no new business. Okay. Now, the next order is the proposed Commission meeting dates of April 4th and 5th, 2016, July 11th and 12th, 2016 and September 19th and 20th, of 2016. Do any of the Commissioners have any comments on those dates or
request a change?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
I move we approve these dates.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER FOX:
Second.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor duly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? The motion is carried.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Okay. The next order of business is election of officers. The Commissioners select a Nominating Committee. Commission Schlemmer is the Chairman of the Nominated Committee and he will conduct the election.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Thank you, Mr. President. I have received the following names for Secretary, Commissioner Charlie Fox. For vice president,
Commissioner Tim Layton. For President, Brian Hoover, Commissioner Hoover. Do I hear any other nominations from the floor? Okay. Hearing none, I would like to vote on this as a package. Do I hear a motion?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:
Mr. President, I move that we get the Secretary to cast the ballot for these three candidates.

COMMISSIONER DALEY:
Second.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Covered on that.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY LAYTON:
We have a motion on the floor that was duly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

SECRETARY LAYTON:
Opposed? The motion's carried

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Before I hand the gavel over, I still have it. I just want to thank the staff, the
executive staff and the staff of the Commission and
the Commissioners for a really good year with the
Pennsylvania Game Commission. We didn’t accomplish
everything that we might have wanted to see, but I
think we had a very good year. It's been a
tremendous pleasure working with the following group
that I've had the opportunity to work with for the
last seven years and continue a working relationship
with some of these people for more years, how long do
we go back, 17 or more years? But I've worked with
some of these people for more than 30 years and it's
been a real honor to serve as president for this last
year. So with that, I'll hand the gavel over.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:

I just want to thank the Commissioners
for placing their support behind me. I know for the
last two years we've all worked very hard to bring
the agencies around and turn it back to the
sportsman, and provide some great things and I think
the future of this agency is very good.

We've got a management team in place
that’s far above all the management agencies in the
game industry. Executive Director Hough, Deputy
Executive Director Burhans, Deputy Executive Director
Palmer. I think that the work and collaboration that
has occurred in the last year or so amongst the Commissioners has brought, you know, great things to this agency, and I think we're moving forward from here. We do have an agenda going into next year to try to get some things done and I think we can get it done. So I thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
Mr. President, I do have one last thing I'd like to say. As you know, I've been trying to get the magic number. Doctor Rosenberry was here yesterday. I do have the magic number. I want to ask the Council if he thinks I should read it. As a matter of fact, all I got was it depends. So that's it. The magic number is now out there.

COMMISSIONER SCHLEMMER:
Mr. President, I have to recognize one person today, Mr. Miller. Mr. Robb Miller, Governor's Advisory Counsel is with us today. Thank you for coming.

PRESIDENT PUTNAM:
You're the President, you get to close the meeting.

COMMISSIONER HOOVER:
I have the gavel now. Before I do
that, I'll just point out that we have the Committees decided for 2016 led up, I.E., the Chairman will be Commissioner Daley, Weaner and Fox; Wildlife Management, Chairman Commissioner Putnam, Hoover and Layton; Wildlife Habitat Management, Chairman Fox, Putnam and Daley; Wildlife Protection, Commissioner Layton, Fox and Schlemmer; Budget and Finance Commissioner Hoover, Daley, Schlemmer; Legislative Chairman Schlemmer, Layton and Hoover; Executive Committee will be --- the officers this year are Hoover, Layton and Fox; our Parliamentarian is Commissioner Weaner as always, Professor Emeritus, Commissioner Weaner. The Deer Committee will continue as Layton, Hoover and Putnam. And we have a new Arrangements Committee and that will be Commissioner Schlemmer. He's scheduling everything for us, although sometimes he did mess up a little bit, but we'll give it to him. Thank you very much. Meeting adjourned.

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MEETING CONCLUDED AT 9:40 A.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, hearing held before President Putnam was reported by me on 2/2/2016 and that I, Seth R. Baier, read this transcript, and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Seth R. Baier
Court Reporter
Seth R. Baier