

Minutes of the Telephonic Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Friday, August 27, 2010
Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85086

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

In Person:

Chairperson Jennifer L. Martin
Commissioner Norman W. Freeman
Commissioner Jack F. Husted
Commissioner John W. Harris

In person:

Deputy Director Gary R. Hovatter
Deputy Director Bob Broscheid

Via telephone:

Assistant Attorney General Jim Odenkirk

Via telephone:

Vice Chair Robert R. Woodhouse

Chairperson Martin called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and introduced the Commission. This meeting followed an agenda dated August 25, 2010. There were no members of the public present.

* * * * *

1. Commission Discussion of the Department Employee Survey.

Chair Martin briefed the Commission on her reasons for calling this meeting. Prior to the last meeting she talked to the Director regarding his upcoming evaluation process. The Director as well as a couple of Commissioners had previously voiced that they would rather see the informal discussion portion of the evaluation take place sooner rather than later (sooner than the scoring portion of the evaluation scheduled for December). Some of the specific items identified for discussion in the informal discussion with the Director were budget management, employee morale and external relations. The Commissioners all interact regularly with the budget and each Commissioner has a pretty good idea of the Directors external relations, but the Commission did not have an objective window on what was going on with Department employees. In her discussion with the Director, he suggested that the Employee Satisfaction Survey could serve as a tool for that. But, in looking at the survey and survey process, the following concerns came up: 1) There are no questions on the survey that pertain directly to the Director's performance, and 2) there is potential for bias and potential for a skewed survey due to work units being identified in the survey and some survey questions identify the hierarchy level at which people function, and that could narrow respondents to the survey, especially in smaller work units. It is also possible that people are concerned about potential compromised anonymity due to taking the survey at their computers with the technology available that could identify them.

Chair Martin proposed a process to the Commission to address these concerns. She indicated that she and the Director had discussed repeating the survey and inserting questions pertaining to the Director's performance, removing any questions that may act as identifiers, and having the survey taken at communal computer terminals. This could be conducted Monday through Friday

of next week. Doing this survey quickly, following the survey that was just completed, could identify if that type of bias existed and could inform how this process is done in future years. If the proposed second survey is not completed for a couple of months, factors within the agency could change.

Commissioner Husted expressed that he was not in favor of accelerating the process (evaluation discussions with the Director) and that he has already informed the Commission that he will not be available for the September meeting and therefore unable to be a part of the discussion. Further, the modifications to the survey and doing it in this fashion will only serve up skewed data. He believes this is an ill-conceived idea.

Commissioner Harris stated that he too was not in favor of the accelerated process and he also had some concerns about controls in using a communal terminal such as making sure it was only used once by each employee. Even more important is that the Commission's role is to evaluate the Director and this seems like the Commission is trying to manage the day to day operations of the Department. That is not the Commission's role and he is very opposed to this.

Commissioner Freeman stated that he has been on the Commission for three years and has yet to perform an evaluation on the Director. There is a misunderstanding about this being accelerated because the Commission is actually very tardy. He needs to be able to understand how productive the Department is and not how much paperwork it can generate. He believes the first survey is skewed and that the Commission needs to get in touch with Department employees and measure productivity for getting the core mission done.

Commissioner Woodhouse felt he needed more pertinent data and information about the Director before the Commission does the Director's evaluation that is coming up. He believes that the new version of the survey will give them more information and will not be skewed as he believes the first one was. At the recent Commission Workshop, Commissioner Woodhouse asked for input from Executive Staff about recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce. He wanted that verbally at that time, but for several reasons he was told that it was time for the Commission to talk and that staff would go through the same exercise and the Commission would get a paper copy of that. He needed more and that is what this is about. In response to micro-managing the Department, the Commission has never been about micro-managing the Department. What is being proposed is a refined method and basis to thoroughly perform the evaluation which is the Commission's contractual responsibility to the Director.

Loren Chase, the Department's Human Dimensions Coordinator, discussed the first survey and the proposed second survey with the Commission. Mr. Chase answered questions regarding bias in the current survey as well as in a survey if it were done next week following this meeting or in six months from now. Mr. Chase stated that there is bias in all surveys and it is impossible to measure to what degree surveys are biased.

Commissioner Freeman asked Chair Martin if she and Commissioner Woodhouse had the opportunity to work on some new survey questions pertaining to the Director (similar to two Commissioners working on legislative matters).

Chair Martin stated that she had discussed with Mr. Chase what she was looking for in survey questions relating to the Director's performance for a potential second survey that she thought

would be valuable to the Commission. Mr. Chase generated a list of questions and Chair Martin requested of Deputy Director Hovatter that the list be sent to her and to Commissioner Woodhouse so they could review them prior to presenting them to the Commission at this meeting, but the list was not sent to them.

Deputy Director Hovatter stated that he had talked to the Director and the Director indicated that because this was breaking new ground for the evaluation process and had not existed for previous Directors, it probably needed the entire Commission to have an opportunity to deal with it. Also, in talking with counsel it was discussed that the new questions document would need to have a public component in order for the Department to receive direction from the Commission. Counsel indicated at that time that if the Department was going to provide those questions to any Commissioners, it needed to provide those questions to all Commissioners.

Motion: Freeman moved THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE THAT THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR WORK TO REFINE LANGUAGE FOR A PROPOSED SECOND SURVEY AND BRING THAT BACK TO THE FULL COMMISSION EARLY NEXT WEEK EITHER TELEPHONICALLY OR IN A MEETING.

Commissioner Woodhouse asked Chair Martin what she would propose for the refinement process and when would they anticipate being able to call another telephonic meeting.

Chair Martin stated that while she appreciated the direction that Commissioner Freeman was going, it would make it impossible to conduct the survey next week, which would be a valuable thing to do. Since there were only eight new questions, Chair Martin suggested that the Commission accomplish that on the floor at this meeting.

Motion Withdrawn.

Commissioner Woodhouse stated even though he and Chair Martin did not get to discuss the exact wording of these questions, they did discuss the basic format and what they wanted to search out with the new survey.

Commissioner Husted restated his concern for bias in creating something this fast and his concern about not being present for the discussion in September.

Commissioner Woodhouse stated that each individual Commissioner at some time or another has to weigh whether to attend a Commission meeting or to attend some other responsibility outside from their Commission responsibilities, and so Commissioner Husted not being able to attend the September Commission meeting did not really carry any weight on how this goes forward.

Commissioner Husted asked what the acceleration schedule is, since this was traditionally handled in December and now three Commissioners have evidently been discussing the need to move it up.

Chair Martin stated that two Commissioners, separately, said that it would be beneficial to do the discussion portion sooner and the Director agreed. Her intention was not to hold the Director's informal evaluation process in September, which she indicated to the Director, because Commissioner Husted would not be present. So, she was sensitive to that, but in terms of the

survey her intention would be that it would be very beneficial for the Commission to discuss in September and she hopes that Commissioner Husted can be there.

Commissioner Woodhouse stated that Commissioner Husted's comment about the three Commissioners discussing the need to move it up, assuming he means Chair Martin, Commissioner Freeman and himself, was insinuating suspicion and accusation that a violation of the Open Meeting Law has occurred. Commissioner Woodhouse made it very clear for the record that with Chair Martin, in her leadership, there has not been any kind of three way discussions going on.

Chair Martin confirmed with Commissioner Harris that he was one of the Commissioners that mentioned that it would be good to do the discussion portion of the evaluation sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Harris stated that in a discussion with Chair Martin, his point exactly was that if the Commission was going to evaluate the Director's performance in December, they need to at least sit down with the Director, as a Commission, prior to that time and discuss the issues, the parameters, and the Goals and Objectives, and further that these discussions need to be ongoing and not one time a year.

Commissioner Husted stated that his comment came from not knowing anything about what was going on with the survey and the new survey questions.

Commissioner Freeman explained that some Commissioners will always have some knowledge that other Commissioners don't have (unless it is discussed at a public Commission meeting) because that is the dynamics of the Open Meeting Law.

Motion: Harris moved and Husted seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE THAT THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR WORK ON PROPOSED SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR THE ADDITIONAL SURVEY AND BRING THOSE BACK TO THE FULL COMMISSION AT THE SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING IN TWO WEEKS.

Vote: Aye - Husted, Harris
Nay - Martin, Woodhouse, Freeman
Failed 3 to 2

Commissioner Woodhouse commented that all Commissioners, individually, at some point may take exception to what another Commissioner is doing. He recently learned that Commissioner Husted and the Director have spent some time with the Governor and he doesn't know what they talked about or anything about it, although the Commission does have two Commission Legislative Representatives (of which he is one) that are assigned to deal with state government matters, so he takes some exception to that and it needs to be talked about in the future.

Motion: Woodhouse moved and Freeman seconded THAT THE COMMISSION PROCEED WITH THE SURVEY WITH THE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE DIRECTOR'S PERFORMANCE AS PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSION AT THIS MEETING.

Chair Martin discussed with Mr. Chase about changing the wording on the survey question pertaining to whether the employee felt his time was valued by the Director, and recommended to the Commission to add that changed question to the motion and to add a contingency that Mr. Chase have a chance to reflect and feel comfortable with the question. Commissioners Woodhouse and Freeman agreed.

Amended Motion: Woodhouse moved and Freeman seconded THAT THE COMMISSION PROCEED WITH THE SURVEY WITH THE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE DIRECTOR'S PERFORMANCE AS PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSION AT THIS MEETING INCLUDING THE CHANGED WORDING ON THE QUESTION PERTAINING TO WHETHER THE EMPLOYEE FELT HIS TIME WAS VALUED BY THE DIRECTOR CONTINGENT UPON MR. CHASE HAVING A CHANCE TO REFLECT AND FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE QUESTION.

Vote: Aye - Martin, Woodhouse, Freeman
Nay - Husted, Harris
Passed 3 to 2

* * * * *

Motion: Freeman moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

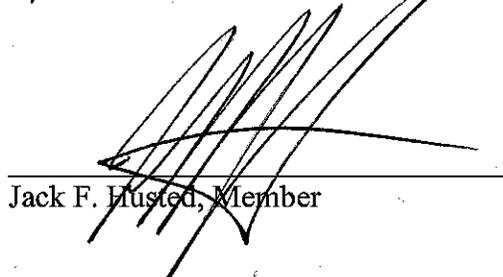
Meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

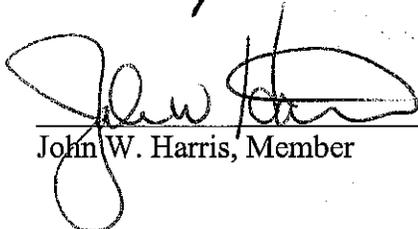
* * * * *


Jennifer L. Martin, Chair

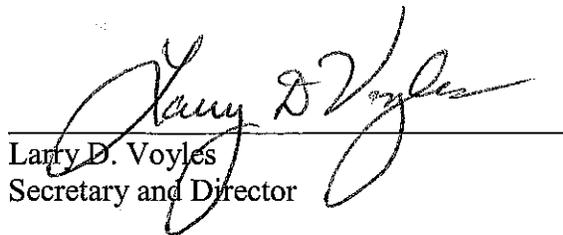

Robert R. Woodhouse, Vice-Chair


Norman W. Freeman, Member


Jack F. Husted, Member


John W. Harris, Member

ATTEST:


Larry D. Voyles
Secretary and Director