

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

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IN RE: RESIGNATION OF BRYAN J. BURHANS AND  
APPOINTMENT OF STEPHEN P. SMITH

SPECIAL MEETING

\* \* \* \* \*

BEFORE: SCOTT H. FORADORA, President  
Dennis r. Fredericks, Vice President  
Allen J. DiMarco, Secretary  
Stanley I. Knick, Jr  
Kristen Koppenhafer  
Michael F. Mitrick  
Todd A. Pride  
Haley J. Sankey  
Robert C. Schwalm

HEARING: Monday, May 13, 2024  
12:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Videoconference

WITNESSES: None

Reporter: Madeline Helmstetter

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STEPHEN P. SMITH

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ROLL CALL

By Commissioner DiMarco

5 - 6

DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES

6 - 13

CERTIFICATE

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SCOTT FORADORA: Okay. Well, hello everybody. This is a special meeting of the board of commissioners for Monday, May 13, 2024. We're going to call the meeting to order. Mr. Secretary, could you do the roll call of members, please?

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: President Foradora?

PRESIDENT FORADORA: Here.

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Vice President Fredericks?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Here.

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner Koppenhafer?

COMMISSIONER KOPPENHAFER: Here.

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner Knick?

COMMISSIONER KNICK: Here.

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner Mitrick?

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Here.

COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner Pride?

COMMISSIONER PRIDE: Here.

1                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner  
2 Sankey.

3                   COMMISSIONER SANKEY: Present.

4                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner  
5 Schwalm?

6                   COMMISSIONER SCHWALM: Present.

7                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner  
8 DiMarco, is present. All are present, Mr. President.

9                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you, Mr.  
10 Secretary. For the purpose for our meeting this  
11 morning is the Board of Commissioners held an  
12 emergency executive session on Monday, April 29th,  
13 for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.  
14 Today's special meeting is to formally adopt the  
15 recommendations of the executive session and to  
16 finalize the process that began at that time. There  
17 is one agenda item for today's meeting. To accept  
18 the resignation of Bryan Burhans from the position of  
19 executive director. And to confirm the selection of  
20 Stephen Smith as executive director.

21                   So with that, the agenda item under  
22 new business is exactly what I said. To accept the  
23 resignation of Mr. Burhans and appoint Mr. Smith as  
24 executive director. Is there a motion to move this  
25 item forward?

1                   COMMISSIONER MITRICK: So moved.

2                   PRESIDENT FORADORA:

3                   We have motion. Do we have a second?

4                   COMMISSIONER SCHWALM: SECOND.

5                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: We have a motion  
6 and a second. Is there any discussion for the item?

7                   COMMISSIONER MITRICK: I'd like to say  
8 that I think Steve Smith is an excellent selection.  
9 He was serving as the deputy executive director prior  
10 to Mr. Burhans' resignation. He's been with This  
11 agency a long, long time. He got an incredible  
12 curriculum vitae and I think he fits the bill.  
13 That's my opinion.

14                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you, Doctor  
15 Mitrick. Other comments?

16                   COMMISSIONER KOPPENHAFFER: Yeah, Mr.  
17 President, if I may? Just extending a personal  
18 thanks to Mr. Bryan Burhans for his dedication and  
19 his leadership over the years and wish him the best  
20 in the future. With that being said, I'm super  
21 excited to see where this agency goes under the  
22 direction of Mr. Smith. Looking forward to working  
23 with him and you know, all the new things that come  
24 with the change at the helm will be happening at the  
25 Pennsylvania Game Commission. So it's exciting

1 times.

2 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner Koppenhafer. Other comments?

4 COMMISSIONER PRIDE: Scott, this is  
5 Todd. I'd just like to also add that. Just want to  
6 thank Bryan for his commitment over the years, and  
7 the succession plan that effectively put in place  
8 with what I feel is a strong senior staff. I've  
9 known Steve for several years and been working with  
10 him over these years on the activities that he was in  
11 charge of in his previous role. And really think  
12 he's going to do a great job, particularly with his  
13 background in marketing. A lot of the activities  
14 I've been involved with Steve have to do with, you  
15 know, crafting new messages and strategies for, you  
16 know, our urban metro areas, which is a, you know,  
17 huge area of opportunity for increasing more  
18 participation in hunting and wildlife and supporting  
19 the agency. So I'm excited about this next phase for  
20 the agency under Steve's leadership with the solid  
21 team we have in place.

22 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you,  
23 Commissioner Pride. Other comments?

24 COMMISSIONER SCHWALM: Mr. President,  
25 I would just like to say that I'd like to thank Mr.



1 Burhans for his years of service. Greatly  
2 appreciated. Very much looking forward to working  
3 with Steve. As the other commissioners have stated  
4 that he brings a lot of experience to the table.  
5 He's a big hunter, and I am especially appreciative  
6 of the passion that he brings with this position. I  
7 very much look forward to working with Steve and  
8 thank him for stepping up to the plate.

9 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner Schwalm. Others? I'd like to add,  
11 everybody had said about Steve's background and the  
12 extensive experience. Steve, you know, one of the  
13 legislative options that you were heavily involved in  
14 2013 was the mentored youth hunt. So I know that you  
15 have that with pride, and I can tell I wasn't  
16 involved in the commission at that time, but my three  
17 boys loved that. So thank you for that involvement,  
18 as well as and what you did for the Pennsylvania and  
19 the hunting community.

20 But also, you know, your dedication  
21 and what you've accomplished in the Game Commission  
22 on your high-level roles over the last 18 years. So  
23 thank you. Appreciate that. Other commissioners  
24 would like to comment. Okay. Hearing? None. Mr.  
25 Secretary, we have a motion and a second. We have

1 the discussion. Could you call the vote, please?

2 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Okay. Those  
3 who approve of the proposed motion, please signify by  
4 saying yes. Those who are opposed, no.

5 President Foradora

6 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO:

8 Foradora, I'm sorry.

9 PRESIDENT FORADORA:

10 That's all right.

11 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Vice President  
12 Fredericks?

13 COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Secretary

15 DiMarco, yes.

16 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

17 Koppenhafer?

18 COMMISSIONER KOPPENHAFER: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

20 Knick?

21 COMMISSIONER KNICK: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

23 Mitrick?

24 COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

1 Pride?

2 COMMISSIONER PRIDE: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

4 Sankey?

5 COMMISSIONER SANKEY: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Commissioner

7 Schwalm?

8 COMMISSIONER SCHWALM: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: President

10 Foradora, there is a unanimous decision for approval.

11 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you, Mr.

12 Secretary.

13 COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: I've got that  
14 thing. I'm sorry. It's ingrained in there.

15 PRESIDENT FORADORA: There's a lot of  
16 vowels in the name. You're close and you got it. So  
17 thank you, Mr. Secretary. Appreciate it. So with  
18 that, with the vote, Steve, could I call on you to  
19 make an introduction to the public here?

20 MR. SMITH: Sure. Well, thank you,  
21 board members. Thank you for your kind words today.

22 And thank you for the confidence that you've shown  
23 in me. I step into this role very much well aware of  
24 the awesome responsibility that comes with it. It's  
25 truly an honor and a privilege to lead what I think

1 is the premier wildlife agency in the country. One  
2 that is comprised of hundreds of dedicated and  
3 talented staff who made - really made this agency's  
4 mission their life work. So I thank you for this  
5 opportunity. I thank you for again, the confidence,  
6 the trust that you put in me. And I thank you for  
7 the support you've shown me throughout this process.

8 I'm glad that we can finalize it today and I'm ready  
9 to get back to work.

10 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you, Steve.

11 And congratulations from all of us. I know I speak  
12 for all of us, that we're unanimously behind you. We  
13 were in a great place to have a person like you to  
14 succeed. So thank you for your dedication to the  
15 agency. And whatever you need in the future, we will  
16 listen and take it under advisement from you and be  
17 supportive.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT FORADORA: Any other  
20 business to come before the board? If not, this  
21 concludes our special meeting of the Board of  
22 Commissioners. Our next regular meeting will be held  
23 on July 12th and 13th at the agency's headquarters in  
24 Harrisburg. I want to thank all the commissioners  
25 and appreciate your time. And thank you, Steve.

1                   MR SMITH: Thank you.

2                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: This adjourns our  
3 meeting. Thank you. Mr. Secretary. No, we could  
4 just do it at once.

5                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Okay. Those in  
6 favor of the proposed motion, please signify by  
7 saying aye.

8                                           ---

9                                           ALL RESPOND AYE

10                                          ---

11                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Opposed, same  
12 sign?

13                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: Thank you.

14                   COMMISSIONER DIMARCO: Mr. President,  
15 motion carries.

16                   PRESIDENT FORADORA: Carriage meeting  
17 adjourned. Thank you all and have a great day.

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19                                           MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:10 P.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, meeting was reported by me on 05/13/2024 and that I, Madeline Helmstetter, read this transcript, and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Dated the 15th day of May, 2024



Madeline Helmstetter,  
Court Reporter