

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
 DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

# BIG GAME COMMERCIAL SERVICES BOARD

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD MARCH 26-28, 2024

*These draft minutes were prepared by staff of the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing. They have not been reviewed or approved by the Board.*

By authority of AS 08.01.070(2) and in compliance with the provision of AS 44.62, Article 6, a scheduled meeting of the Big Game Commercial Services Board was held March 26-28, 2024, at Pike’s Waterfront Lodge, 1850 Hoselton Rd., Fairbanks, Ak.

<b>Dates:</b>	March 26-28, 2024
<b>Time:</b>	March 26: 9:00 a.m. (9:15 a.m.); March 27: 9:00 a.m. (9:04 a.m.); March 28: 9:00 a.m. (9:03 a.m.)
<b>Location:</b>	Pike’s Waterfront Lodge: 1850 Hoselton Rd., Fairbanks, Ak
<b>Board Members Present:</b>	Jason Bunch, Aaron Bloomquist, Martin Boniek, Mike Flores, Pete Buist, Clay Nordlum, Larry Kunder
<b>Board Members Absent:</b>	Dave Lorrington (excused for entire meeting)
<b>Division/SOA Staff Present:</b>	Thomas Bay (Executive Administrator), Janet Brown (Occupational Licensing Examiner), Lee Strout (Investigator), Stefanie Davis (Regulation Specialist), Melissa Dumas (Administrative Operations Manager), Sylvan Robb (Division Director)
<b>Present from the Public (includes all three days):</b>	Darren Bruning (ADF&G), Dianna Leinberger (DNR), Jim Wessel (DNR), Jason Anderson (USFS), Major Aaron Frenzel (AWT), Shay Rosser, Mark Richards, Matt Snyder, Aaron Carter, Jeffrey Callison, Coke Wallace, Virgil Umphenour, Michelle Heun, Henry Tiffany, Chris Zwolinski, Art Andreis, John Martinez, Joe Want, Zach Decker, Thor Stacey, Dick Rohrer, Dan Montgomery

Day One		
<b>1. Review Agenda</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	No discussion to amend the agenda.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to accept the agenda as written (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	

<b>2. Ethics Review</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	There were no ethical disclosures by any board members or staff.	
<b>3. Review/Approve Meeting Minutes:</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b> -December 2023 Excerpt -February 2024	The board reviewed their February 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2024, meeting minutes, which they approved without any changes. Mr. Bay also provided the board with a draft excerpt of their December 2023 board meeting minutes, specifically the section regarding the board's discussion to pursue legislation to create a full-time executive administrator position dedicated to their program instead of splitting time with the Board of Marine Pilots.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to accept the February 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2024, meeting minutes and December 2024 draft excerpt as written (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>4. State &amp; Federal Agency Updates</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b> -Department of Fish and Game -Division of Wildlife Conservation	Darren Bruning, the deputy director for the Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC), provided an update for the board. He informed the board that their division has 281 positions, that 31 of them were vacant, and that all but five of the vacant positions were in recruitment. He said that they had some impending retirements that would be big losses for the division, but that leadership staff had recently been hired. He said that there were five legislative bills that could affect DWC, which included municipal trapping, illegally seized game, guide concessions on state land, license application fee reduction, and a constitution amendment for world priority. He said that DWC was facing a significant number of legal challenges and that it was taking up a lot of their time. He said that they were working on DWC's FY25 budget and would be requesting slightly more than their FY24 budget. He also said that Pittman Robertson funding had gone down nationwide by 19%, and that they were expecting around seven million dollars less. He informed the board that the Board of Game (BOG) meeting was held the week before this meeting. He said that there were 162 proposals considered by the board. There were 17 proposals related to GMU 19C, sheep proposals were deferred to the next state meeting, and that a sheep working group would be activated to address 19C issues. There were 13 intensive management (IM) proposals. He said that staff and funding for them was becoming limited, and that it needed addressed. He said that there would be additional opportunity to take bears, which included bear baiting. He informed the board that they did not see any moose on the Kenai River last Fall, and that they were expecting a decrease in the reported harvest. He said that the IM program for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd will continue in Spring 2024, which would include the removal of wolves and bears near calving grounds. Mr. Kunder asked if there were any plans to let the public take bears or wolves prior to the IM program going into effect, to which Mr. Bruning said he was not sure, but would get back to the board with an answer. Lastly, he informed the board that they were	

	<p>continuing wood bison restoration. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Mr. Bruning for his time.</p>
<p><b>-Department of Natural Resources</b> <b>-Division of Mining, Land and Water</b></p>	<p>Dianna Leinberger, a natural resource land manager, in the Northern region, from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW), was in attendance to provide an update for the board. She informed the board that Jim Wessel, the primary adjudicator for permits for guide-outfitters, transporters, and trapping cabin permits in the Northern region was also in the room if they had any questions for him. She started discussion on legislation. She said that SB253 had been introduced and was a bill created to establish a guide concession program on state land and proposed a pilot project in GMU 19C, with the idea that it later be expanded throughout the state in areas of need. She said that they were also monitoring HB125, which was a bill to issue trapping cabin permits for existing cabins to new people. She informed the board that ATVs/UTVs that weigh between 1,500lbs and 2,500lbs are authorized for use on general state land. Aaron Bloomquist asked her how they deal with bear baiting. She said that they do not get a lot of commercial operators that deal in bear baiting in the Northern region. She said that the confusion comes in when a bear baiting station stays on state land for more than 14 days, which requires land use authorization. She reminded the board that DNR has over-the-counter storage permits, which allows guides to keep their bear baiting equipment in the field outside of the season. Mr. Bloomquist said that the board's frustration with bear baiting had always been that they receive different answers each time the question is asked. He said that it would be nice to have something in writing with clear direction on the topic by their December meeting. As previous bear baiters, Mr. Bloomquist and Mr. Buist offered to help draft something with DNR as board liaisons. Ms. Leinberger said that she would give them her card so they could continue the discussion. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Ms. Leinberger for her time.</p>
<p><b>-U.S. Forest Service</b></p>	<p>Jason Anderson, a recreation supervisor for the United States Forest Service (USFS), was in attendance to provide an update for the USFS. Mr. Anderson reminded the board that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BGCSB, ADF&amp;G, and the USFS would be expiring soon. He said that the USFS was looking to continue the MOU, which the board agreed. He reminded the board that there was an upcoming prospectus towards the Fall/Winter of 2024, which would issue additional capacity for black bear, brown bear, and mountain goat hunts on the Tongass National Rainforest. Lastly, he said that the collaborative process between big game guides and tourism operators, on small to medium vessels that work in the same area, has worked to reduce conflict in the field and operate effectively. Chairman Bunch thanked him and the USFS for being so open to communication with the guiding industry and said that it has really helped in a lot of different areas. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Mr. Anderson for his time.</p>
<p><b>Off Record: 10:14 a.m.</b></p>	
<p><b>5. Division Update: Current Fiscal Report</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 10:45 a.m.</b></p>	<p>The board welcomed the division's administrative operations manager, Melissa Dumas, to the meeting. Ms. Dumas provided the board with their FY24 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> quarter fiscal reports, which ultimately came to a large surplus, something she said would be reduced over time because of their recent fee changes. Mr. Bloomquist asked if their fee changes that took place the prior year warranted any changes to existing license fees, application fees, etc.</p>

Ms. Dumas said that it was too early to tell and that there would be another fee analysis closer to their next renewal to see if any fees needed reduced/increased. Mr. Bloomquist asked about the legislative bill that removes investigative costs from their program. Ms. Dumas informed the board that there was a bill they were hoping would get passed that would essentially remove investigative costs from programs and instead have those costs paid by excess business licensing and corporations revenue, something that normally goes back to the general fund. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Ms. Dumas for her time.

**6. Discussion with Director Robb: Division Annual Expenditures Allowance/Online Self-Service Tools Education**

**Brief Discussion:**

The board welcomed Director Sylvan Robb to the meeting. Chairman Bunch said that one of the most frustrating parts of running such a big board is understanding how money is appropriated to the division and how the board is able to spend their money. He asked her to explain how the legislative expenditure process works. She informed the board that the legislature makes appropriations to all divisions, one for each of them. Each appropriation is broken down into line items the money can be spent on, such as personal services, travel, services, commodities, etc. She said that the division cannot spend more than what is authorized. It would not matter if someone donated millions of dollars to the division and/or board, the legislature would still need to approve it to be accepted and spent. She explained that the division then has to do fee setting for each program, and statute requires the fees to cover the costs of the program without overcharging/undercharging licensees. She said that 88% of their expenditures go to professional licensing, but that there are 45 programs sharing them. The expenditures then go to each program's needs, such as personnel, memberships, legal, travel, general fund, etc. She said that all license fines go to the general fund. Chairman Bunch asked if the general fund money goes back to the division in some form or another, to which she said no. Chairman Bunch asked where the money, in regard to the cost of a regulations project, goes. She said that the cost of a regulations project goes to whoever is coding their time towards the project, and that it depends on how big the regulations project is. In addition to staff time, some of the costs go to notifying the public and their licensees of the regulations project, in an attempt to receive any type of public comment. Chairman Bunch asked how close the division gets to hitting their ceiling on expenditure, to which she said that it varies since the pandemic, due to staffing issues. He asked if the division is able to spend money that is not spent on staffing on other areas of need, to which she said it depends on the line item. She said they can move money around from one line item to another, but that it had to be approved by the Office of Management and Budget. He asked her if there was an avenue to have the board work with the division on next year's budget to promote expenditures of money for a special project, such as something that goes out for bid. She said that if the board wanted to contract for something, it would require the division to do so. She said the procurement process for something, such as the board's current IT project regarding the ability for contracting guides/transporters to upload their own hunt records/transporter activity reports (including the information on the hunt records) into their licensing files, would likely be a lengthy process. She said that, while it might include reaching out for three bids, it might also include possibly soliciting bids for many more, to make sure everyone has a chance to take advantage of government contracts. She suggested that the board continue

with the division working on their IT project because she still anticipated it would be the faster route. She said that if they did not, they would need to spend money ensuring that a contractor got up-to-speed with how their system works, in terms of interfacing. In addition, due to cyber-attacks, a contractor would need to demonstrate that they can meet the State's security requirements. Mr. Bloomquist asked what the board needed to do in order to get travel approved for board members to get to other work-related events, such as BOG meetings. She informed the board that the division puts together a travel plan every fiscal year, which includes all travel for all board members and staff across all programs, and that the division was aware their board wanted to be able to travel to BOG meetings and providing in-person testimony to the legislature. He asked if the board needed to motion to add a board member to the travel plan for BOG meetings, to which she said no, that they just needed to add it, and all other requested travel, to their annual report, which is statutorily due June 30<sup>th</sup> every year. He asked her how the board can have in-person legal representation at their board meetings, something they used to have at each of their regularly scheduled meetings. He told her that it saves a ton of hours having someone there when they go over regulation projects because they can immediately tell them if what they propose is something they can do. She said that the division has three attorneys that can provide guidance to the division's 45 programs, as well as their corporations/business licensing sections, and that they are not always available. She said that normally the division is happy to help get an attorney to specific portions of a meeting, where value is added to have an attorney there. She suggested the board come up with questions in advance of their meetings where they think they might need legal counsel, so that their attorneys can do some prep in advance. He asked her what they needed to do to have an attorney at their meetings for two days during their meetings where they discuss regulations. She said that they could ensure that everyone's not on leave at that time, but that it would be helpful to know exactly what the board wants from their attorneys, so they are not taking their time unnecessarily, having the board pay for it, and to make sure they are prepared to answer the questions that do come up. She ensured the board that the division is always interested in making sure that the board has the resources it needs to be successful. Mr. Bloomquist said that it is frustrating to spend a lot of time on regulation projects, only to find out later that they cannot do what they were trying to do and hoped that the board could get an attorney approved to be at their next meeting in December. Chairman Bunch said that he really wanted their licensees to be able to a lot more things online, such as applying for GUA registrations. Director Sylvan said that it was high on their list of things to get done, that they were working on getting more and more applications online for all 45 licensing programs, but that it would take some time. Chairman Bunch said that he would be speaking on agenda item "Online Self-Service Tools Education," likely on day three of the meeting instead of right now. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Director Sylvan for her time. The board went to lunch.

**Off Record: 12:00 p.m.**

**7. Lunch**

**8. APHA Update**

**Brief Discussion:**

**On Record: 1:34 p.m.**

Back from lunch, the board continued the meeting. Thor Stacey was not yet available to discuss the APHA update, so the board moved along on the agenda.

**9. Investigations Unit**

**Probation Monitor Report**

<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Investigator Lee Strout was in attendance to provide the report for the probation monitor. Mr. Strout informed the board that there were currently 15 licensees on probation, as of the date of the report, and that two licensees were released from probation since the last report. Two licensees were also out of compliance, both of which had previously been discussed with the board. With nothing left to discuss, the board moved onto their investigative report.
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**Investigative Report**

<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Investigator Strout provided the board with their investigative report, which was for the period of November 28, 2023, thru March 20, 2024. He informed the board that there were 70 open cases and that 37 closed since their last report. Chairman Bunch asked what trends he was seeing, which he replied that a lot of cases were application involved due to “YES” answers under the Professional Fitness Questions (PFQs) sections of the initial and renewal applications. He said that there was a little bit of an uptick from the troopers, which mainly included the taking of sublegal animals. He also said that he had not recently seen many conflicts in the field cases, which is a reduction from the past. The board discussed the application problem and maybe changing the PFQs to be more specific, so they do not have so many applicants not answering “YES” when they should have. With nothing left to discuss, and Mr. Stacey having shown up, the board moved onto the APHA update.
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**10. APHA Update**

<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Thor Stacey, the Alaska Professional Hunters Association’s (APHAs) Director of Government Affairs, introduced himself and thanked the board for having him. He asked if the board had any specific questions for him. Chairman Bunch asked him to speak to the issues that APHA was tackling on behalf of its membership. Mr. Stacey said that APHA was monitoring various bills in the legislature that affect hunting and fishing. He said that they were working in support of the reauthorization of the board, the executive administrator position for the BGCSB, SB253, which would be the result of the task force efforts that the BGCSB led to develop a recommendation for hunting guide concessions on state land, as well as the reauthorization of the Citizen’s Advisory Commission on Federal Areas (CACFA). He said that they just attended to the BOG meeting in Kotzebue, and that the main issue was the declining Western Arctic Caribou Herd. He said that federal land managers had closed federal lands in the herd’s range but that state lands remained open. He said that the decline had gotten to the point where there may not be a surplus for uses that are not subsistence. He said there was a lot of discussion between stakeholders in the NANA region and the North Slope region, as well as discussions with the APHA and others. At the end of the discussion, the BOG capped the number of nonresidents in the area, which resulted in guiding for caribou in that portion of the state as pretty much gone. He said that the BOG did not take action on any of the sheep proposals in 19C, and that they postponed the discussion until their next statewide meeting with the hope that there would be a management program in place to assist with the issue. He informed the board that APHA had been involved in litigation in a number of federal issues, including certain rules that would affect hunting in Alaska. He said that there was a proposal to add seats to
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<p><b>Off Record: 2:13 p.m.</b></p>	<p>the Federal Subsistence Board, with all three of them being tribally aligned. He encouraged the BGCSB to watch the arguments held in front of the State Supreme Court, in the Robert Castle vs. SOA BOG litigation case, that was held about a month before this meeting, which APHA was allowed to provide arguments at, because it is very informative for everybody involved in the industry. Chairman Bunch asked if APHA needed anything from the board regarding current legislation, to which Mr. Stacey answered that a letter supporting SB253 would be helpful, and that the legislature would be surprised if they did not provide one. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Mr. Stacey for his time. The board took a break.</p>
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**Consent Agreement Review Panel**

<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 2:24 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Back from break, the board began discussion on possibly creating a consent agreement review panel, which would be a four-person panel reviewing guide-related investigative cases and provide consent agreement recommendations to the board. Chairman Bunch said that the reason for the discussion is because the board has a very large number of cases that take a long time to review, and that only licensed guides on the board review them. Mr. Bloomquist said that this was his idea and reassured the audience that the review panel would not make any board decisions, and that the cases would still be discussed at the board level, with the ultimate decision being a board decision. The board asked what Mr. Strout (their investigator) needed from them to get things started, to which he said he needed something in writing from the board specifying what they are asking for. He thought the discussion was going to be a review panel comprised of board members and told them that having non-boarded guides reviewing cases would be a really tough hurdle to get over because of perceived conflicts of interest, actual conflicts of interest, and the legality of the request. He said that he understands that the board needs help reviewing cases and suggested that maybe the board expand seats on the board to help review them. The board discussed the topic but said it would be difficult to add seats on the board because it would require a statute change. The board discussed possibly having all board members, not just licensed guides on the board, review guide-related cases. Mr. Strout said that the reason that licensed guides on the board review guide-related cases is because they have the knowledge required to review them. He said that, if the board had a non-licensed guide on the board review guide-related cases, they would be attacked in court because they would not have the knowledge that a guide does. The board decided to discuss the matter later in the meeting, with the intention of approving a letter that would go to investigations. With nothing left to discuss, the board moved onto their next agenda item.</p>
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**Matrix Review and Update – Add Sublegal Harvest Criteria**

<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch said that there had been a lot of sublegal harvests recently, mostly by assistant guides. He said that, for the first time, a decision was made by a reviewing board member, to restrict an assistant guide, through a consent agreement, to be able to guide for a species they had a sublegal harvest on until they had successful harvests while guiding with another licensed guide, essentially making them a packer for that species until they can prove they can harvest legally on that species. Mr. Buist said that he really liked the approach because it put responsibility not only on the assistant guide, but on the contracting guide as well. Chairman Bunch asked Mr. Strout how they add the process to the board’s matrix, to which he said that they would need to draft something that would</p>
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<p><b>Off Record: 3:05 p.m.</b></p>	<p>include what they want to see in certain scenarios, provide evidence that it is supported by statute, and that they want to add it as a new sanction option to the matrix. After discussion, the board agreed that they should look into the matter more before adding it to their matrix because there are certain scenarios where a sublegal harvest might be entirely accidental, and that, for example, there would be no reason to limit someone who had been successfully guiding for a species for 20 years. With nothing left to discuss, the board took a break before moving into executive session to review investigative matters.</p>	
<p><b>Executive Session</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 3:20 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Returning from break, the board decided to go into executive session to review confidential investigative matters.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b>  <b>Off Record: 3:18 p.m.</b></p>	<p>I, Pete Buist, move that the Alaska State Big Game Commercial Services Board enter into executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c), and Alaska Constitutional Right to Privacy Provisions, for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion; and matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential. Board staff Thomas Bay, Janet Brown, and Lee Strout to remain during the session (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - Yes</p>	<p>Flores - Yes</p>
	<p>Boniek - Yes</p>	<p>Kunder - Yes</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - Yes</p>	<p>Nordlum - Yes</p>
	<p>Bunch - Yes</p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 4:30 p.m.</b> <b>Off Record: 4:30 p.m.</b></p>	<p>No action was taken during executive session. With nothing left to discuss for the day, the board recessed until the next morning.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day Two</b></p>		
<p><b>1. Review Agenda</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>No discussion to amend the agenda.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b></p>	<p>Move to accept the agenda as written (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - Yes</p>	<p>Flores - Yes</p>
	<p>Boniek - Yes</p>	<p>Kunder - Yes</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - Yes</p>	<p>Nordlum - Yes</p>
	<p>Bunch - Yes</p>	
<p><b>2. Summary/Motions from Executive Session</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch informed the audience that the board would be voting on investigative matters that were discussed in executive session at the end of day one.</p>	



<b>Case No. 2023-0001192</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board considered the consent agreement for Case No. 2023-0001192. An assistant guide harvested a sublegal ram, his second offense. The consent agreement was in accordance with a plea agreement. The reviewing board member recommended a one-year license suspension, \$4,000 fine with \$3,000 suspended, and probation for three years. The assistant guide is restricted from guiding Dall sheep hunts by himself until he provides evidence, via hunt records, of his participation as a packer in four successful guided Dall sheep harvests with another licensed guide present at all times. Mr. Buist said that he was a proponent of the restriction to guide Dall sheep hunts because it is a mentor-type approach.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to accept the consent agreement for Case No. 2023-0001192 (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Case No. 2024-000001</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board considered the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000001. A registered guide-outfitter working as an assistant guide harvested a sublegal moose, his second offense. The consent agreement was in accordance with a plea agreement. The reviewing board member recommended a \$6,000 fine with \$4,000 suspended, probation for two years, and a board reprimand. There was no discussion.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000001 (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Case No. 2024-000018</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board considered the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000018. An assistant guide was found guilty of a license, tag, or permit violation, and possessed/transported illegally taken game, both misdemeanors. He also failed to disclose information on an application and had a violation of unlawful method and means using a wireless trail camera. The consent agreement was in accordance with a plea agreement. The reviewing board member recommended a five-year suspension of his assistant guide license, with four years stayed, a \$5,000 fine with \$0 suspended, probation for four years upon reinstatement, and a board reprimand. Mr. Bloomquist said that there was a major violation previously with the licensee and another in a different state, which is why the penalties were so steep.	

<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000018 (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Case No. 2024-000207</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board considered the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000207. An assistant guide harvested a sublegal moose. The reviewing board member recommended a \$500 fine, probation for one year, and a board reprimand. There was no discussion.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve the consent agreement for Case No. 2024-000207 (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Case No. 2022-001145</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board considered the consent agreement for Case No. 2022-001145. A registered guide-outfitter turned in six inaccurate hunt records and refused to initially cooperate with the board's investigator after he was requested to provide nine client hunt contracts, violations of both statute and regulation. The reviewing board member recommended a \$10,000 fine, with \$7,000 suspended, probation for three years, and a board reprimand. Chairman Bunch said that the penalties might seem steep, but refusing to cooperate with the board's investigator is not something the board takes lightly.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve the consent agreement for Case No. 2022-001145 (First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>3. Public Comment</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Mr. Bay created a list of attendees that wanted to provide public comment. The board began public comment.	

<p><b>Mark Richards</b></p>	<p>Mark Richards, Executive Director of the Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK), began discussion on the GCP. He said that, after the bill was introduced, he went to Juneau personally and talked to Senator Kaufman about the legality of the bill, asking how they got the language in the bill because it was not the language provided by the Big Game Commercial Services Board. He said that Senator Kaufman said it was the language came from the task force and the APHA, and that they were a little upset and rewriting the bill. He said that, during the board’s last winter meeting, each board member said that the GCP should have nothing to do with DNR regulating guides. He said that, at the last GCP meeting, the chairman said that they just needed to get the bill through, no matter if it is run through ADF&amp;G, DNR, or whomever it ends up with. He said that there was a lot of conflicting information that the board had presented, and that the current iteration included the commissioner of ADF&amp;G having the decision-making authority over how many guides would be in each concession area. He said that he was asked by several guides, at the BOG meeting, why RHAK could not support the GCP, and told them that it does not really limit guides. He said that RHAK discussed the possibility of supporting a program that would help, and that they concluded that if it were like the federal concession program it would help avoid the crowding and conflicts in the field, while also reducing the number of nonresident hunters in the field. He said that the senator and his staff had no idea about the formerly proposed GCP through DNR. He said that the current GCP also does not have a fiscal note attached to it, and that when there is one attached to it, the legislature likely will not like the cost. He suggested that the board either limit guide use areas or break current guide use areas into smaller areas. He said that APHA came out last week, on the record, stating that they would never support draw hunts for nonresident sheep hunters because it does not support guide-related businesses. He asked, “How do other guides in the lower 48s survive? How do guides that are currently operating on lands that have draw permits, how do they survive?” In his experience, he said that most of them have other businesses to fall back on. He said that if guides continue to only support a GCP then how do they expect RHAK to ever come to a compromise with them on anything else. Mr. Kunder said that he has only ever heard of RHAK discussing sheep issues and asked Mr. Richards if they supported other species, to which he said yes, they are in support of all species, and that the only reason he kept bringing up sheep is because it was the main reason behind discussion of creating the GCP. Chairman Bunch clarified that, if he said that he did not care who runs the program and that they just needed to get it through, in regard to the GCP being approved through legislation, it was out of context. He said that the workgroup discussed who should run the program and came to the realization that it needed to either be the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional licensing (CBPL) or DNR. After reviewing a draft for both options, and through a law review, it was more appropriate to have DNR run the program, and that the decision was a culmination of everything the workgroup’s efforts. He also wanted to clarify that he had been in pleasant discussions with the legislature, and that they knew the GCP bill needed amended but only had 12 hours to get it filed, so they filed it as it was at the time. With nothing left to discuss the board thanked Mr. Richards for his testimony.</p>
<p><b>Virgil Umphenour</b></p>	<p>Virgil Umphenour, a master guide-outfitter, said that, in response to Mr. Richard’s testimony, he had had served three terms on the Board of Fisheries and not once did anyone of the Board of Game want to go to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), and that the commissioner had him represent both fishing and wildlife</p>

	<p>in Alaska, due to him being a hunting guide. He said that during his last time attending the WAFWA annual event, he went on a tour of the Deseret Ranch, a 2,000-acre ranch in Utah. He said that the ranch cut back on half of the beef and sheep, did habitat restoration, and focused on guiding. He said that Utah, along with many states have landowner tags, but also allow subsistence hunters to hunt substandard animals on their land (not trophy animals) while landowners received all the trophy permits, which is how guides in other states survive. He said that he attended the BOG meeting and that they provided a good presentation on the current state of sheep in Alaska. He said that even with all of the sheep population depressed in the Alaska Range and the Brooks Range and having them required to be sealed, while also meticulously aging them, over half the sheep taken were legal the previous year. He said that this meant that, even with the overcrowding of guides, it is not as blown up as much as RHAK wants you to think.</p> <p>Mr. Umphenour informed the board that there was a massive decline in king salmon and coho salmon returning to the rivers in Alaska and a massive decline in spawning. He brought this up because fish is one of the main sources of food for wolves and bears. He said that, with the decline of fish, the next food source for wolves and bears are calves, so it is going to and likely already is declining the number of animals in the field. He said that the cause is the fish hatcheries in Alaska, which primarily hatch pink salmon and chum salmon. The board thanked Mr. Umphenour for his testimony.</p>
<p><b>Zach Decker</b></p>	<p>Zach Decker, a registered guide-outfitter, began testimony on the proposed regulation requiring a sticker on transporter/guide aircraft and vessels. He said that the sticker should only be for transporters and not for guides, and that it should include all vessels and aircraft. He said that the problem, and reason for the proposed regulation, began with transporters being identified in the field, and that it has now turned into a service-type regulation for all licensees. He said that another problem is the 12-inch numbers that would be required to be put on aircraft/vessels. Who's license numbers would be put on the side of the aircraft/vessels? Would it be the contracting guide? Would it be the assistant guide who's in the field with the client? Would it be the transporter, if one is hired by a contracting guide? Chairman Bunch informed him that the regulation was not complete and that he had made changes regarding the stickers that the board would review later in the meeting. The board thanked Mr. Decker for his testimony.</p>
<p><b>Thor Stacey</b></p>	<p>Thor Stacey provided public comment on behalf of the APHA, in regard to the GCP. He said that APHA first had to grapple with where the program was going to be run. They were excited that the task force was formed with impartial members from various backgrounds and diverse perspectives, including agency members, a BGCSB member, a licensed guide, and a public member, to address the problems on state land. He said that there were a lot of compromises APHA had with the GCP being formed. He said that APHA had hoped that the GCP would be run through ADF&amp;G or DCCED but understood that legally the program was safer in DNR. He said that the second big compromise is that the program is not designed to be statewide. APHA had always wanted a statewide GCP but came to a compromise because of the substantive testimony from guides and public members describing not having problems in their areas, while at the same time other testimony described significant problems in other areas on state land. They saw that the task force heard those diverse viewpoints and looked at creating a program that would target problem areas instead of a blanket implantation on all state land around the state. As for</p>

<p><b>Off Record: 10:22 a.m.</b></p>	<p>transferability, he said that the APHA could not get behind a program that did not at least have emergency transfer provisions in case of guides having significant health issues or passing away, which includes a transitional period that can be very difficult to deal with. They appreciated that the task force made a recommendation that was legally sound, allowing businesses to be sold along with permits for concessions, but that, after the end of the term of the permit, the permit would go back out for bid, providing an equal opportunity for everybody to compete for it. He finished with the topic of entitlement versus stewardship. He said that right now a licensed guide is entitled to access to state land. The APHA has always been very consistent that they support a stewardship approach to access to state land, meaning a guide is incentivized to do the right thing, including not having conflict with substance users, resident hunters, other land users, and that there is some ability for them to lose their land access or not be awarded land access based on a history of compliance. The board thanked Mr. Stacey for his testimony. The board decided to take a break.</p>
<p><b>4. Workgroup Updates/Formation of New Committees</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 10:44 a.m.</b></p>	<p>Back from break, the board began discussion on current workgroups and the formation of new committees/workgroups.</p>
<p><b>Exams</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch said that the RGO written exam had been updated. He said that there are a lot of questions on the exam and that the board was thinking about adding an online hunter/safety course with an exit exam as a prerequisite to sit for the RGO written exam, which would allow them to get the exam down to 100 questions. He said that he was still working on the Game Management Unit (GMU) exams, which are a bit outdated. He said that, in his opinion, they should just get rid of the GMU exams completely and require an applicant to have more time in the field within the unit and use hunt records to confirm that days in the field. However, he said that change would require a statute change, which would be difficult. He suggested that they just update the exams now and think about his idea in the future.</p>
<p><b>Transporters</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch said that the transporter workgroup was almost concluded and that the last discussion needed was the matter earlier discussed in the meeting regarding the addition of <b>12 AAC 75.405. Marking of Aircraft and Vessels Used by Guides and Transporters</b> (the discussion will take place later in this meeting). He updated the board regarding the Kodiak AC Transporter Subcommittee, informing them that the number of transporters in the area had doubled and that they were not respecting the local users there. He said that the subcommittee was following the board's transporter regulation projects and would attend the December 2024 meeting to provide public comment. He said that they had a few problems with the regulation projects. They wanted to make sure that transporters providing overnight services is not segued to just large vessels. They were also likely to provide comment on drop offs on tidelands and below mean high water mark lands.</p>

<b>Concession Program</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Chairman Bunch said that Thor Stacey covered the GCP very well during his earlier discussions and that if anybody wanted to learn more about discussions during the meetings, all of the meeting minutes from the task force are on the BGCSB website.
<b>Workgroup for Jason Bunch</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	<p>Chairman Bunch said that he would like the board to think about topics that he can help them out with, since he would no longer be on the board after this meeting. He said that he would like to continue with the exams workgroup and that, if the board wanted, he would continue working in some aspect regarding concessions, on behalf of the board. He clarified that he would not make any decisions for the board, but just work as a liaison.</p> <p>Before the board finished with workgroup updates, Mr. Bloomquist reminded the board that he was tasked with working on legislative projects. He said that the board had a number of projects currently in legislation and that the other projects would have to wait. Speaking on legislation, Chairman Bunch said that the board should make survivorship a top priority. With nothing left to discuss, the board moved onto their next agenda item.</p>
<b>5. Ongoing Task List Review</b>	
<b>Transporter Information Letter</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Chairman Bunch reminded the board that they thought their regulations project would be going onto the next stage of the regulations process, public comment, right around this meeting, but they were not ready yet. He also reminded the board that Mike Flores was tasked with writing a transporter information letter entailing the changes that would take place if the regulation projects were adopted as law. He informed the board that the division did not want to send the letter out because of a few reasons. It would cause a lot of transporters to reach out to the division regarding something that may not happen and cause confusion among licensees. Also, the public comment period is there to provide information to all licensees, so the information would already go out to transporters and allow them to provide feedback. Chairman Bunch informed the board that he learned that they could do a 90-day public notice if they wanted to, and attach the letter to the notice, which would provide transporters the amount of time needed to address anything they needed to. He said that he spoke with the division on having a Facebook page and, that at first, they were not interested. He said that he thinks that they can still get it done, that it would be a platform consisting of up-to-date information for the public such as reminders to renew GUAs or providing deadlines, and that comments would be disabled.
<b>Education Letter for Hunt Planners and Booking Agents</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board discussed the issue of hunt planners and booking agents, both of which they do not have legislative authority to regulate. They discussed writing a letter to the Department of Law (LAW), informing them of what is happening and getting advice on what they can do moving forward without being able to regulate them. Chairman Bunch asked the board if they wanted to keep the education letter on the task list, to which they agreed. Mr. Bloomquist said that maybe they should have a meeting with LAW to address the issue, to which the board agreed.

<b>6. Public Comment</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Ahead of schedule, Chairman Bunch opened public comment back up for a few people in the room.
<b>Chris Zwolinski</b>	Christ Zwolinski, a master guide-outfitter, said that he thinks the GCP should be statewide and not doing so is going to cause issues. He said that he thinks that guides should be limited on how many animals they can take because it is a public source, and everybody should have access to it. He said that he really liked the idea of putting 12-inch numbers on aircraft because of illegally run outfits in the state, and that it would hold them to the same standard as all other guides. He said that he did not want to get rid of the \$300 annual filing fee because it went into the board's funds, which pays for things such as attorney fees. Chairman Bunch asked him if he was in attendance the previous day, to which he was not, so he informed him of the conversation the board had with Director Sylvan Robb on legislative authority and the ability to spend the money their program has. The board thanked Mr. Zwolinski for his time.
<b>Dick Rohrer</b>	Dick Rohrer, a master guide-outfitter, said that the big unknown with their budget is how much money is spent on LAW when a case goes to a hearing. He said that, after reviewing the board's fiscal reports over the years, sometimes LAW costs run upwards of \$250,000 and sometimes quite a bit less than that. He asked the board to support the governor's bill, SB225, and HB314, which address these types of fees being paid through other means instead of their budget. The board thanked Mr. Rohrer for his testimony. The board went to lunch.
<b>Off Record: 11:42 a.m.</b>	
<b>7. Lunch</b>	
<b>8. Public Comment</b>	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 1:31 p.m.</b>	Back from lunch, the board began public comment.
<b>Coke Wallace</b>	Coke Wallace, a master guide-outfitter, mentioned that he was on the GCP and thanked everybody for putting their time and effort into the work group. He specifically thanked Chairman Bunch for all of his work, not only on the GCP, but with the board. He said that it was a grave mistake to term him out of his seat on the board but understood that it was statutorily required and that he needed the break. He said that, regarding the GCP, he thought guides were very cooperative and tried to compromise with RHAK. He said that nonresident hunters pay for more than 80% of the game management in the state and, overall, only take about 11% of the animals, although they do well with sheep hunts. He said that part of the problem with more sheep being taken by nonresidents versus residents is that nonresidents usually spend more time in the field to get the sheep. He gave an example of nonresidents staying out in the field 10-14 days versus a resident staying out in the field 3-4 days. He also said a big problem with the sheep issue is that it is not being managed to the best of the state's ability. He said that he thinks that the GCP should include the entire state but understood that starting in problem areas would be a good start, but that starting in one area would only push guides into the surrounding areas. The board thanked Mr. Wallace for his testimony.
<b>Dan Montgomery</b>	Dan Montgomery, a master guide-outfitter, said that he did not think the marking of aircraft and vessels was necessary, that it would not make a difference at all, and that it is

<p><b>Off Record: 1:50 p.m.</b></p>	<p>just another regulation that can easily be violated. He said that guides should be eliminated entirely from the marking of aircraft and vessels because the problem arose from a transporter issue. Mr. Bloomquist asked him, if there was an option between a sticker and 12-inch numbers, what his preference would be, to which he said, if he had to choose, he would choose a sticker. The board thanked Mr. Montgomery for his testimony and took a break.</p>	
<p><b>9. Regulations Project Update: 12 AAC 75.405 – Marking of Aircraft and Vessels Used by Guides and Transporters</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 2:02 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Back from break, the board began discussion on one of the regulation projects within their regulations package, <b>12 AAC 75.405. Marking of Aircraft and Vessels Used by Guides and Transporters</b>. Chairman Bunch informed the board that he did a rewrite of the regulation since they discussed it at their last meeting and provided a copy to the board and put a copy on the projector for the audience. Mr. Bloomquist asked what prompted a rewrite of the already proposed regulation. Chairman Bunch said that there were a lot of questions from the division/regulations specialist that they did not establish answers for in the previous version and that it was lacking detail. The board discussed his recommended amendments to the language drafted at their last meeting. During the discussion, Mr. Boniek challenged the merit of enforcing the marking of aircraft and vessels used by guides and transporters and motioned to remove the regulation project from the regulations package.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b></p>	<p>Move to stop discussion on and remove the proposed regulation <b>12 AAC 75.405. Marking of Aircraft and Vessels Used by Guides and Transporters</b> from the regulations package (First: Boniek; Second: Bloomquist).</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - No</p>	<p>Flores - No</p>
	<p>Boniek - Yes</p>	<p>Kunder - No</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - No</p>	<p>Nordlum - No</p>
	<p>Bunch - No</p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>The board continued discussion on the regulation. During the discussion, Mr. Bloomquist suggested removing the marking of aircraft from the regulation. Mr. Nordlum said that he was not in favor of removing it because there are a lot of small aircraft flying around where he lives and that it comes down to public perception of who is and who is not a transporter. After discussion from the board and a lot of back and forth, Mr. Bloomquist motioned to remove the marking of aircraft from the regulation, specifically <b>12 AAC 75.405(a)</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b></p>	<p>Move to remove <b>12 AAC 75.405(a)</b> from the proposed regulation (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - No</p>	<p>Flores - No</p>
	<p>Boniek - Yes</p>	<p>Kunder - Yes</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - Yes</p>	<p>Nordlum - No</p>
	<p>Bunch - No</p>	



<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p> <p><b>Off Record: 3:33 p.m.</b> <b>On Record: 3:47 p.m.</b></p>	<p>The board continued discussion on the regulation. Referring to subsection <b>(a)</b>, Mr. Boniek informed the board that letters on the side of a plane have to be specific sizes, depending on what they are used for. After discussion on subsection <b>(a)</b> and the suggested changes that Chairman Bunch made to the rest of the drafted language, the board decided to amend the drafted language in <b>12 AAC 75.405</b>. The board took a quick break before reading the motion into the record. Back from break, Mr. Bloomquist read the motion into the record.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b></p>	<p>Move to amend the drafted language in <b>12 AAC 75.405</b> to remove subsections <b>(c)</b> and <b>(d)</b>, and to read as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) aircraft used by a guide or transporter shall be marked with 12-inch registration numbers. Characters must be formed by solid lines 1/6 as thick as the character is high in accordance with CFR 14. Part 45 Subpart C.</li> <li>(b) Any vessel or boat used by a guide or transporter shall be marked with an activity identification decal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decal must be clearly displayed on each side of the vessel. They do not have to be permanently affixed to the vessel; they can be placed on plexiglass, plywood or metal for easy placement and removal.</li> <li>2. For each vessel required to display an identification sticker, a set will be provided by the division, one for each side of the vessel to be placed in an unobstructed location easily visible.</li> <li>3. Services provided under registered guide-outfitter statutes require identification decals yellow in color.</li> <li>4. Services provided under transporter statutes require identification decals red in color.</li> <li>5. Identification decals which become worn or discolored shall be replaced at a fee established by the board through the division.</li> <li>6. Decal is not intended to be tracked by vessel therefore, a set of decals can be utilized for multiple vessels or boats.</li> <li>7. For a person who possess both a transporter and guide license, the color of decal should be used for whichever is the majority of the overall service being provided.</li> <li>8. A temporary printable decal is authorized upon notification of change to the division.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder)</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - Yes</p>	<p>Flores - Yes</p>
	<p>Boniek - No</p>	<p>Kunder - Yes</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - Yes</p>	<p>Nordlum - Yes</p>
	<p>Bunch - Yes</p>	

**Day Three**

**1. Review Agenda**

<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	The board added the following agenda items under Board Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wood Bison Report (added to Correspondence)</li><li>• Liaison for Bear Baiting</li><li>• FAA presentation</li><li>• State Park Fees for Transporters</li></ul>	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to accept the agenda as amended (First: Bloomquist; Second: Buist).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	

**2. Alaska Wildlife Troopers**

<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	<p>Major Aaron Frenzel, from the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT), introduced himself. He said that AWT had some recent retirements, and their numbers were a little bit low, but they had recruits coming in. He said that their vacancies were staying about even. He said that some new posts came on within the last year, including Galena. He said that they are looking to get posts in Nome and St. Mary's. He said there are a lot of problems in St. Mary's and surrounding villages because people are operating as licensed transporters and likely acting as registered guide-outfitters. He informed the board that they got a few more helicopters based around the state. Mr. Buist asked if the clientele of the unlicensed transporters were residents or nonresidents, to which Major Frenzel said that quite a few of them had been nonresidents. Mr. Buist asked if they looked into how these people are getting in contact with the unlicensed transporters, to which Major Frenzel said that most are word of mouth, but that some of them had been advertising. Mr. Bloomquist asked if there was a way that the board could get a report from AWT consisting of the convictions they receive, to which he said he could provide them the numbers at the end of the year. Mr. Flores asked what Major Frenzel's opinion was on putting identifiable stickers on the side of skiffs. He replied that the sticker would be helpful, and in a perfect world would be on all boats, including skiffs. Chairman Bunch asked his opinion on having identification numbers on the side of aircraft, to which he said that it would be helpful because it is another way to spot transporters doing more than they are supposed to do, such as scouting, which is outside of their scope or practice. Mr. Flores informed him that they were in the middle of updating the transporter activity report, and asked if they should have more than one line for location of the transport. Major Frenzel said that a secondary location on the TAR could help, but that there has not been much of a problem with how it is written now. With nothing left to discuss, the board thanked Major Frenzel for his time. The board took a break.</p>
<b>Off Record: 9:32 a.m.</b>	

**3. Public Comment**

<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 9:59 a.m.</b></p>	<p>Mr. Bay created a list of attendees that wanted to provide public comment. The board began public comment.</p>
<p><b>Michelle Heun</b></p>	<p>Michelle Heun, a transporter, thanked the division for being quick with a request to update the online renewal application. She had tried to renew online but there was not an option for her type of business. She said that, within an hour, she was contacted by the supervisor and the application had been updated. As a previous board member, holding a transporter seat, she said that she had seen the chair move from Henry Tiffany to Jason Bunch, and was excited to see the chair move once again to whomever the board voted. She thanked Chairman Bunch for his time and dedication to the board. The board thanked Ms. Heun for her testimony.</p>
<p><b>Mark Richards</b></p>	<p>Mark Richards, representing RHAK, provided public comment a second time. He said he wanted to speak on behalf of sublegal sheep. In 2022, there were 12 sublegal sheep taken on guides hunts and only three were cited (25% cited). There were 22 taken on nonguided hunts and 13 were cited (59% cited). He reminded the board that someone at the last meeting asked why the public was not seeing all of the sublegal sheep numbers, and just wanted to inform the board that they are not even close to seeing what is going on. He said that, at their AC meeting when AWT testified, they were asked if there was a policy to cite hunters if the curl is close to legal, and they said yes, if annuli is within 1/16 of an inch they generally just give a warning. He said that, if this is what guides are being told, it could be causing problems. Mr. Bloomquist asked if he knew why there was such a disproportion between the cited numbers between guided hunts and nonguided hunts, asking if it was really that close on the annuli or if there was favoritism. He responded that a lot of it depends on the district attorney and if they think the case would be prosecuted successfully. He said that the AWT trooper that testified brought up a case where the biologist and the tech disagreed on a sheep, with one saying it was seven years old and one saying it was eight. The judge asked the department if they could definitively tell him if the sheep was seven or eight years old, which they could not without cutting the horn in half, something the defendant did not agree to do. He said that this is an example of how it is tough for DAs to prosecute sheep that teeter on the line of sublegal and legal. He said that the big problem seems to be that a lot of people are only counting annuli for age of sheep. Chairman Bunch said that, if you look at the big picture, with all of the numbers of legal sheep taken versus the sublegal sheep taken in 2022, between seven and eight percent of the total number was sublegal sheep, and about three to four percent of that was from guided hunts. He said that there is always going to be human error and that three to four percent is not really that bad in the grand scheme of things. The board thanked Mr. Richard for his testimony.</p>
<p><b>Dick Rohrer</b></p>	<p>Dick Rohrer, a master guide-outfitter, said that he wanted to put on the record and acknowledge the loss of one of their professional members, Joe Klutsch, who passed away a few weeks prior. He said that the industry is certainly going to miss the historic perspective he always brought to the board and industry. He said that it points out once again the need for consideration of survivorship/emergency regulations from time to time. He said that wanted to point out what happened in Joe Klutsch's situation. He had hunters booked for bear hunts in Kodiak. The refuge manager was able to reassign his permit within a couple of days, division staff worked to prioritize the necessary permitting that had to take place, and troopers were involved to make sure that the hunters that were</p>

	<p>booked could come in and hunt while also being adequately serviced. He said that it took about a week to get everything together, and that it included a bunch of Chairman Bunch's time and commitment to do so. Chairman Bunch informed him that the board is going to prioritize survivorship in legislation and asked him if he would be willing to help the board, to which he said yes. The board thanked Mr. Rohrer for his time.</p>
<b>Dan Montgomery</b>	<p>Dan Montgomery, a master guide-outfitter, said that during his testimony the day before he had answered a question about whether he would prefer a sticker on his aircraft or numbers. He had originally answered that he would prefer a sticker, but after thinking more about it, said that he would prefer numbers.</p>
<b>Zach Decker</b>	<p>Zach Decker, a registered guide-outfitter, said that he appreciated the discussion the board had the previous day regarding marking of aircraft/vessels. He said that, like many others, he does not want a sticker on the side of his boat and reiterated that the problem came from not being able to identify transporters in the field, not guides. He said that he hopes the regulation project will get cleaned up when it comes back from public comment. He thanked Chairman Bunch for bringing up the big picture, speaking on the sheep discussion from earlier, when it came to percentages of sublegal sheep from guided hunts versus sublegal sheep from nonguided hunts. He said that you must look at the whole picture, not just pull pieces from it. Chairman Bunch thanked him for that and, speaking on behalf of the bigger picture and after some quick math, informed everyone that only about one percent of all licensees are doing something unlawful in a calendar year. The board thanked Mr. Decker for his time.</p>
<b>Henry Tiffany</b>	<p>Henry Tiffany, a master guide-outfitter, said that about 25 years ago there was an issue before the board, and he testified. About a day later he received a phone call from Joe Klutsch thanking him for calling in and testifying. He said that the phone call directed him to be more involved with the industry and at one time chairing the board. He shared the story because he wanted younger guides to get more involved. Speaking on behalf of the sheep issue, he said that he has two rules when guiding sheep. The first is that, and this is for all species, if in doubt, do not direct harvest of the animal. The second is that, if you cannot count to nine annuli, do not direct harvest of the sheep. He provided comment on a few of the proposed regulation projects. He said that he was in support of <b>12 AAC 75.200</b>. He said that he was against the amendment to <b>12 AAC 75.240(a)</b>, which allows a contracting RGO to be able to supervise a hunt while being anywhere in the state. He said that he did not understand why <b>12 AAC 75.240(d)</b> had to be repealed. He said that if they repeal it, then all guides would be required to get into contact with their hunters within 10 days of a hunt, which is the requirement in <b>12 AAC 75.240(c)</b>, or they would get into trouble. He said that <b>12 AAC 75.240(d)</b> was there in case you could not get ahold of your hunters within 10 days and gives you up to 60 days to contact your hunters. The board said that it was an oversight, and they would discuss it later in the meeting. He said that he was in support of the marking of aircraft/vessels. He said that he does not see it hurting anyone and potentially sees it as benefitting many. The board thanked Mr. Tiffany for his time.</p>
<b>Joe Want</b>	<p>Joe Want, a registered guide-outfitter and ADF&amp;G technician, said that, in reference to the sheep discussion earlier, the 1/16 has to do with degree of curl, not inches. He said that even though there had been an increase in sublegal animals, they improved their ability to detect them. He said that if a sheep comes into his office and there is ever a question of whether it is seven or eight years old, it always goes to the runner in his office. He said that</p>

<p><b>Off Record: 11:03 a.m.</b></p>	<p>some of their records have sheep at 356-degree curl, which is technically sublegal, but it would never be cited, nor should it be. He said there is a story behind some of the numbers discussed earlier, so be careful to take them at face value. He also said that in the last two years, the same uptick of sublegal sheep seen in Alaska was seen in British Columbia. Chairman Bunch said that it would be nice to get Mr. Want at one of their board meetings to do a presentation on sheep. The board thanked Mr. Want for his testimony. The board took a break.</p>
<p><b>4. GUA Boundary Changes</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 11:22 a.m.</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch informed the board that they received a petition from a guide to amend the GUA boundaries around his current GUAs, to coincide with his federal concession area. He also informed the board that there is a specific regulation, <b>12 AAC 75.265</b> that deals with GUA boundary changes. He read <b>12 AAC 75.265 Guide Use Area Boundary Changes</b> on the record. The regulation requires the board to publish, in a newspaper of general circulation, a notice soliciting petitions to propose amendments to GUAs at least 90 days before the date of a board meeting at which GUA boundary changes are proposed. If the board proposes to amend GUA boundaries after the meeting, during the public comment period they must mail notices to all registered guide-outfitters with a valid license who are registered for GUAs the boundaries of which are proposed for amendment, as well as DNR, ADF&amp;G, and DPS. In addition to the petition, he informed the audience that one of their previous boards had discussions about combining GUA 25-03A and 25-03B into a singular GUA, 25-03, but that they could not find the official change in the meeting minutes, so they would likely be proposing to add them together during the GUA boundary change meeting. After discussion, the board approved to have a meeting on July 18, 2024, to discuss GUA boundary changes. With nothing left to discuss, the board moved onto their next agenda item.</p>
<p><b>5. Board Business</b></p>	
<p><b>Wood Bison Report</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Pete Buist, the board’s liaison for the Wood Bison Reintroduction Planning Team, provided an update for the board. He said that there was a plan to reintroduce 40 yearlings in Minto Flats, but that it was met acrimoniously. He said that they narrowed down where the bison would initially be put, closer South of the Tanana River and closer to the Kantishna River. While that is a good spot to start, he said that they do not likely stay where you put them, so they are likely to move. Chairman Bunch asked if he was willing to stay on the board as a liaison to the board, which he said he would if a board member accompanied him.</p>
<p><b>12 AAC 75.240(c)</b></p>	
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Based off an earlier discussion regarding <b>12 AAC 75.240(d)</b> being repealed, the board decided to amend the drafted language in <b>12 AAC 75.240(c)</b> to include certain language from <b>12 AAC 75.240(d)</b>, to still require a contracting RGO to write to their client within 60 days to evaluate the performance of their guides and themselves, if the attempt to verbally communicate with the client is unsuccessful.</p>

<b>Motion:</b>	<p>Move to amend the drafted language in <b>12 AAC 75.240(c)</b> to read as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(c) To comply with (b) of this section, the contracting registered guide-outfitter shall [VERBALLY] communicate, [BY TELEPHONE OR RADIO, OR IN PERSON,] with the client and the assistant guide, class-A assistant guide, or registered guide-outfitter involved in the hunt, separately or together, at least once within 10 days after the conclusion of the hunt. The contracting registered guide-outfitter shall obtain the necessary information to evaluate the performance of the assistant guide, the class-A assistant guide, or registered guide-outfitter and determine whether the big game hunting services were provided safely, in accordance with state and federal law, and to the satisfaction of the client. <b><u>If the attempt to communicate with the client is unsuccessful, the contracting registered guide-outfitter shall write to the client and request the necessary information to evaluate the performance of the assistant guide, the class-A assistant guide, or registered guide-outfitter. The contracting registered guide-outfitter shall write to the client within 60 days after the conclusion of the hunt.</u></b></li> </ul> <p>(First: Bloomquist; Second: Boniek)</p>	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Liaison for Bear Baiting</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	After discussion, the board appointed Mr. Bloomquist and Mr. Buist as liaisons to DNR for bear baiting discussions.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve Aaron Bloomquist and Pete Buist as liaisons to DNR for bear baiting discussions (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Correspondence: Days in Field for RGO License</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Mr. Bloomquist informed the board that they received a letter from a class-A assistant guide who had challenged how the board counts days in the field, as it pertains to the RGO application requirement to have participated in contracted hunts for 125 days. Chairman Bunch said that the board has always counted the "FROM" and "TO" dates on submitted hunt records for when a client was in the field. Mr. Bloomquist said that using hunt records is the only viable way to confirm that an assistant guide actually has 125 days in the field. He said that the alternative would be an affidavit attesting to having the 125 days,	

<p><b>Off Record: 12:21 p.m.</b></p>	<p>however, he said that leaves room for people to lie on the application and possibly not having the experience they should have. Mr. Kunder said that assistant guides should get an extra two days for each hunt, with one being on the front end and the other being on the backend, because they are out in the field putting camp together and taking it down before and after the client is in the field. Chairman Bunch and Mr. Bloomquist disagreed because they think that the days in the field should be guiding experience. Chairman Bunch said that there is no better way to get the experience of guiding than to have the hands-on experience with a client and that they should continue to count days in the field they way they have been doing it. After discussion, the board agreed to have Chairman Bunch write a position statement on the topic that would be approved later at this meeting. The board went to lunch.</p>
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<p><b>6. Lunch</b></p>	
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<p><b>7. Board Business (continued)</b></p>	
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<p><b>FAA Presentation</b></p>	
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<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b> <b>On Record: 1:34 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Back from lunch, the board continued discussion on Board Business. Mr. Boniek, the board’s aviation transporter, provided a presentation on the FAA rules and how they apply to flight operations of guides and transporters. He said that a guide contacted the division to see if a lodge could do transporting for him. For informational purposes, he did an overview of what guides and transporters should understand before providing aviation services. He provided a document from the FAA in Anchorage where the subject of the document was ‘Alaska Guide Pilots.’ In summary, the document says that Congress passed a resolution in 2000 that established operating rules for Alaska guide pilots, and that, historically, the enforcement policy considered flights made by pilots and guides as <b>incidental</b> to their underlying hunting, guiding, or fishing business, where lodging was also provided. In 2020, Congress intervened due to litigation concerning long-term enforcement policies in Alaska and directed the FAA should not regulate lodge and guide operations under Part 135 if those operation meet specific criteria listed in the document. The recommended action is for pilots in command to evaluate their operations considering the statutory and regulatory framework outlined in the document, and that operators and pilots are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the regulatory requirements of Parts 119 and 135 to ensure compliance. Mr. Boniek said that ‘<b>incidental</b>’ is the key word in the document. To answer the inquiry from the guide who reached out to the division, when asked if whether a lodge could do transporting for a guide’s clients, the answer is no, because hauling his customers is not incidental to the lodge’s business, unless the lodge owner was also a transporter or was an air taxi that did not charge more than the usual tariff or charter rate for the carriage of big game hunters, their equipment, or big game animals harvested by hunters, per AS 08.54.790(12)(B)(i).</p>
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<p><b>State Park Fees for Transporters</b></p>	
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<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch informed the board that state parks used to handle transporters, that were dropping clients off on state park land, while providing overnight accommodations while anchored, like water taxis, charging a daily fee per client. They recently changed their fee schedule to include these types of transporters and would charge them the same amount, per client (\$300), as they charge for clients of registered guide-outfitters that sleep on the actual land. He said that it was brought to his attention and that he put a lot</p>
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	<p>of thought into it, ultimately coming to the decision that he does not think that it is in the purview of the board to fight for fee schedules. He said that transporters are welcome to collectively get together and have a sit down with the state parks and articulate their position, but it is not the board's responsibility. However, he said that state parks are referring to transporters as transporter-outfitters, which he was not happy with. He said that outfitters cannot outfit and informed the board that he wrote them a letter advising them that their language conflicts with the board's statutes/regulations. He said that he did not take a stance on the topic and that the letter was just informational.</p>	
<p><b>Website Changes, Updated GUA Maps, Delete Assistant Guide Schools Information</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch reminded the board that there was outdated assistant guide schools information on the board's website and that it was going to be taken off.</p> <p>Mr. Bay and Chairman Bunch went over the process of signing up for a MY LICENSE account. Chairman Bunch shared his screen and showed everyone what it looks like from a licensee's point of view. Mr. Bay did a walkthrough of what is available to licensees in their MY LICENSE account, explaining that the 'Events' section includes all documents in their licensing files, including hunt records/transporter activity reports, copies of their licenses that they can print off at any time, the ability to upload documents, seeing what documents are incomplete or missing, the ability to pay for certain things online with a credit card, etc. He also informed them that they can change their contact information at any time, such as updating their address, using the 'Actions' section in the blue box on the top right. He also said that they have the ability initiate a new filing, which essentially creates a new even within their 'Events' section. The filings available at the time of the demonstration included the ability to file misplaced or lost hunt records, request additional hunt records/transporter activity reports, and the ability to upload hunt records/transporter activity reports.</p> <p>For informational purposes, Chairman Bunch showed the audience where to find the supplemental GUA maps on the website. The board took a break.</p>	
<p><b>Off Record: 2:33 p.m.</b></p>		
<p><b>8. Business as Needed</b></p>		
<p><b>Brief Discussion:</b></p>	<p>Chairman Bunch said that the renewal application did not have a spot on it for non-navigable water transporters, which held up a license to renew. After receiving an email from the USCG stating that the transporter in question, Deadhorse Outfitters, LLC, is not required to have an MMC or a "six-pack" license because he is operating in non-navigable waters, the board approved the renewal of the license. Mr. Bay said that he would update the application moving forward, to include a spot on it for non-navigable water transporters.</p>	
<p><b>Motion:</b></p>	<p>Move to approve the renewal of Deadhorse Outfitters, license #157934 (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).</p>	
<p><b>Recorded Votes:</b></p>	<p>Buist - Yes</p>	<p>Flores - Yes</p>
	<p>Boniek - Yes</p>	<p>Kunder - Yes</p>
	<p>Bloomquist - Yes</p>	<p>Nordlum - Yes</p>



	Bunch - Yes	
<b>9. Task List</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	<p>The board discussed and created the following task list from the board meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change application wording (Bay/Brown/Bloomquist)</li> <li>2. Breaking out PFQs in applications (Bay)</li> <li>3. Annual Report (Bloomquist) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Funding for one board member to attend Board of Game Meetings annually</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Letter from board in support of GCP (Bunch) and SB 225/HB 314 (Bloomquist)</li> <li>5. Review panel for INV board reviews (Bloomquist/Strout)</li> <li>6. Position statement for days in field (Bunch)</li> <li>7. Begin the process of survivorship on their own (Bunch/Rohrer)</li> <li>8. Coordinating a response with the FAA (Boniek) and update website (Bay)</li> <li>9. Meeting minutes (Bay)</li> <li>10. Bear baiting liaisons with DNR (Bloomquist/Buist)</li> <li>11. INV matters (Strout)</li> <li>12. Matrix review (Bloomquist)</li> <li>13. Regulations/FAQ Sheets (Bay/Board)</li> <li>14. GUA boundary changes meeting on 07/18/24 (Bay)</li> <li>15. Exam Workgroup (Bunch)</li> <li>16. Education letter for hunt planners and booking agents (Bloomquist)</li> <li>17. Renew Deadhorse Outfitters, LLC (Bay/Brown)</li> <li>18. December meeting in Kodiak 12/10-12/24 (Bay)</li> </ol> <p>The board motioned to do several of the items on the task list.</p>	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve Jason bunch writing a letter supporting the Guide Concession Program (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - No	Flores - Yes
	Boniek – Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve Aaron Bloomquist writing a letter in support of SB225/HB314 (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	

<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve Jason bunch writing a position statement on behalf of the board regarding days in the field, as related to the registered guide-outfitter requirement to have participated in contracted hunts for 125 days (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to appoint Jason bunch to the existing exams workgroup (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to approve funding for one board member to attend Board of Game meeting annually (First: Bloomquist; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>10. Administrative Business</b>		
<b>December Meeting</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	After discussion, the board decided to have their meeting in Kodiak from December 10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.	
<b>Chairman/Vice Chairman</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Chairman Bunch was terming out at the end of this meeting. The board discussed a possible replacement for the chairman position and the addition of a vice chairman. Mr. Boniek nominated Aaron Bloomquist as the new chairman and Mike Flores as the new vice chairman. Chairman Bunch said that Mr. Bloomquist is an appropriate nomination because he has been amazing since he joined the board, has followed the board for a very long time, knows most of the licensees, understands the nuances of state government, and did not see why he would not be a good replacement. Mr. Boniek told Mr. Bloomquist to not worry about the workload and to spread it out as needed. With nothing left to discuss, the board decided to appoint Aaron Bloomquist as the new chairman.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to appoint Aaron Bloomquist as the board's new chairman. (First: Bunch; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes

	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Mr. Boniek said that Mr. Flores would be a good vice chair because he has a lot of experience with boards, subcommittees, workgroups, task forces, etc. He also said that it will be beneficial to have a transporter alongside a registered guide-outfitter to run the board. With nothing left to discuss, the board appointed Mike Flores as the board's new vice chairman.	
<b>Motion:</b>	Move to appoint Mike Flores as the board's new vice chairman. (First: Bunch; Second: Kunder).	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	As the previous chair for the board, Henry Tiffany provided a heartfelt speech to the exiting chair, Jason Bunch, acknowledging the time, effort, dedication, and hours he dedicated to the board and industry. He said that the board, the state, the resources, and the industry are better off because of his leadership, setting a very high bar that he hopes all future chairmen can attain or pass. Mr. Buist motioned to pass a board resolution.	
<b>Motion:</b>	<p>Move to pass the following resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whereas Jason Bunch of Kodiak, Alaska, thankfully served on the board since March 2018, most lately as chairman, and, whereas Jason has served with enthusiasm and distinction, and, whereas Jason dedicated literally thousands of hours without any monetary compensation to board projects and workgroups. Therefore, be it resolved that the Big Game Commercial Services Board meeting in Fairbanks, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024, sincerely thanks Jason Bunch for his time and incredible dedication on behalf of the State of Alaska and the outfitting, guiding, and transporting industry.</li> </ul> <p>(First: Buist; Second: Bloomquist).</p>	
<b>Recorded Votes:</b>	Buist - Yes	Flores - Yes
	Boniek - Yes	Kunder - Yes
	Bloomquist - Yes	Nordlum - Yes
	Bunch - Yes	
<b>11. Adjourn</b>		
<b>Brief Discussion:</b>	Chairman Bloomquist said that it was going to be impossible to fill Mr. Bunch's shoes, and that it would be impossible for anybody to do so because he worked above and beyond	

	<p>what was expected of him. He said that, while he will do his best to run the board, do not expect the same amount of work out of him.</p> <p>Chairman Bloomquist ended the meeting with a quick story about Joe Klutsch, the master guide-outfitter discussed earlier in the meeting that recently passed away. He said that in his earlier days as a guide he kind of idolized Mr. Klutsch, who was known as one of the giants of the industry. At that time, he said he was nominated for a seat on the APHA board, and that it was the only time he had ever seen someone speak against a nominee, which is exactly what Mr. Klutsch did when he was up for nomination. He had no idea why. A few months later at the sheep show, he went to talk to him. Mr. Klutsch pulled out a signed letter from the chairman of the Anchorage AC, who he (Bloomquist) was at the time, in favor of removing the guide required for brown bears requirement in predator control areas. He was very angry about the situation. Chairman Bloomquist looked at Mr. Klutsch and asked him if he had ever signed anything he did not vote for as chairman. Having been a chairman before, Mr. Klutsch apologized profusely, and they had a good relationship moving forward.</p> <p>Having nothing left to discuss, the board adjourned.</p>
<b>Adjourn:</b>	4:15 p.m.

Date Final Minutes Approved by the Board: <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> OnBoard	
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