**NH Traffic Safety Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: March 28, 2019**

**Attendance**

**Members/Members Representative**

Gary Abbott (Associated General Contractors NH)

Paula Bedard (Bike-Walk Alliance)

Dan Bennett (NH Auto Dealers Association)

Patricia Conway (Commission Chair - Rockingham County Attorney)

Marilyn Costa (NH Driver Education Association)

Mike Dugas (NH DOT)

Dan Goodman (AAA of NNE)

Captain William Haynes (NH OHS)

Howard Hedegard (IPC-CHAD)

Lisa Lienhart (NH DOS)

Michelle Marshall (Federal Highway Administration)

Mark Raposo (NH School Transportation Association)

Brittany Shute (DMV)

Pat Sullivan (NH Police Chiefs Association)

**Guests**

Traci Beaurivage (President – NH Motorcycles Riders Association)

Chelsie Mostone (IPC-CHAD Guest)

Sherman Packard (NH State Rep)

Jennifer Tramp (NH OHS)

**Meeting Agenda Items Discussed**

The meeting was called to order by Patricia Conway who introduced herself and informed those in attendance that she had been appointed to serve as the commissions chair person. She proceeded to discuss RSA 21- P:64, revised in August of 2016, that establishes the commission and defines its responsibilities. She then introduced the guest speakers, Chelsie Mostone from the Injury Prevention Center, Sherman Packard from the NH State Legislature and Traci Beaurivage from the NH Motorcycle Riders Association.

Captain William Haynes nominated John Clegg as the co-chair of the commission. Howard Hedegard seconded the motion and it was approved by a majority vote.

Captain Haynes then reviewed the information in the weekly fatality report stating that New Hampshire had the highest percentage of increase in highway deaths during 2018. In 2018, one hundred and forty-seven lives were lost compared to 102 lives lost in 2017. This appears to be correcting itself in 2019 as we are trending some 40% below the 2018 year to date count.

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Sherm Packard asked why the 2018 death total was so high. Captain Haynes stated that Drugged driving, alcohol impaired driving and distracted driving and speed (excessive for conditions) were primary causes of New Hampshire’s crashes during 2018.

Captain Haynes also pointed out that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is concerned about the changing attitude that is allowing increased speed on a national level. He stated that there is an enforcement related problem, i.e. that fewer tickets are being written for speed and distracted driving.

This was followed by conversation about open law enforcement vacancies around the state. Captain Haynes stated the problem is more about the total number of positions that are authorized.

Dan Goodman asked what drugs are most commonly being used by drugged drivers. Captain Haynes stated that the opioids, marijuana and prescription drugs.

Pat Conway asked about the percentage of pedestrian deaths to the total. There was follow up conversation about why the pedestrian death rate was increasingly high. Mike Dugas stated that pedestrian safety is one of DOT’s priority areas and that DOT is using crash data to define their priority areas for roadway improvement planning. Their goal is to have a totally data driven system. Mike also discussed public workshops that they are holding in Manchester on April 9, Dover on April 10 and Claremont on April 11 to obtain public input.

Traci Beaurivage gave an overview of the NH Motorcycle Riders Organization. This group was founded by Sherm Packard. They are opposed to helmet legislation and are in support of the hands-free law. Traci discussed the motorcycle safety training program. Their group actively advocates for motorcycle safety education with an emphasis on distracted driving. Traci identified impairment and speed as being primary causes of crashes caused by motorcyclists. She identified that May is motorcycle safety month and stated that her group would like to partner with the NH Office of highway safety (NH OHS) for increased motorcycle safety education including the funding of a new public service announcement. She also discussed their ride smart program. Her group hopes to hold a motorcycle safety rally in Manchester during May of 2020.

There was discussion about New Hampshire’s unbelted fatality rate. It is one of the highest and often the highest in the country. This rate the tracks the number of deaths of people in crashes in vehicles that have seat belts and who were not using them. New Hampshire’s high rate is directly related to NH typically having the lowest seat belt usage rate in the country. New Hampshire continues to be the only state in the country without an adult seat belt law.

Pat Conway encouraged us all to communicate with her and one another about future initiatives with an emphasis on the fact that both enforcement and education are necessary.

Chelsie Mostone discussed the traffic safety conference planned for May 6 at the Grappone Center in Concord.

The meeting was convened by Captain Haynes thanking everyone for being in attendance and urging everyone to do everything possible to improve highway safety within New Hampshire.