

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

April 1, 2014

10:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Eric Feige
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Bob Herron
Representative Kurt Olson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):

Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council

Larry Bartman - Manokotak

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Fisheries

Frederick Thrane "Fritz" Johnson - Dillingham

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

LARRY BARTMAN, Appointee
Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council
Manokotak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council.

CLAY BEZENEK, Member
Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council

Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Larry Bartman, as appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council.

JIM HERBERT, Member

Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council

Seward, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Larry Bartman, as appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council.

FREDERICK THRANE "FRITZ" JOHNSON, Appointee

Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)

Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

PAUL HOLLAND, Member

Chitna Dipnetters Association

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on Frederick Thane Johnson as appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:04:02 AM](#)

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Representatives Seaton Feige, Olson, Herron, and Gattis were present at the call to order.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council

[10:04:22 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the first order of business would be a confirmation hearing for an appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council.

LARRY BARTMAN, Appointee, Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council, stated his interest for serving as a member of the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council and provided a brief history as a generational, Alaskan fisherman participating in the set and drift net fisheries. Additionally, he is employed at the local secondary school as a part-time teacher and technology liaison, managing the facilities network and

maintaining the technical equipment. Having filled the advisory position twice, he said he feels he has the time to accept the re-appointment and is prepared to carry-on with the duties required.

[10:06:12 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON inquired about the advisory facet of the council.

MR. BARTMAN responded that when fishermen are injured on the job and with no way to afford medical bills, the fund provides relief.

CHAIR SEATON opened public testimony.

[10:07:24 AM](#)

CLAY BEZENEK, Member, Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council, stated support for the appointee and offered that serving on the council with Mr. Bartman has been a "joy." He cited the appointee's valuable village perspective, which he brings to the council, stressing that, although other members have fished in the area, it is Mr. Bartman's home. Further, he said, despite a busy work schedule, the appointee prioritizes his attendance at the council meetings, persevering through logistical challenges and foul weather conditions but still managing to bring a positive influence. He urged the reappointment of Mr. Bartman.

[10:09:47 AM](#)

JIM HERBERT, Member, Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council, stated support of the appointee and echoed the positive sentiments of the previous speaker regarding the village perspective and knowledge that Mr. Bartman brings to the council. As a Native speaker, the appointee has been invaluable in assisting applicants approaching the council for support. He urged the reappointment.

[10:11:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS moved to forward the name of Larry Bartman to the joint session of the House and Senate for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmation of Larry Bartman was advanced from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

[10:12:14 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON reminded members that signing the report regarding appointment to a board or commission in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointee, and that the nomination is merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):
Board of Fisheries (BOF)

[10:12:22 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the final order of business would be a confirmation hearing for an appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

[10:12:56 AM](#)

FREDERICK THRANE "FRITZ" JOHNSON, Appointee, Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), stated interest for serving on the Alaska Board of Fisheries. He said that, since coming to Alaska in 1978, he has commercially fished for salmon, herring, and halibut. Working a census position, shortly after his arrival, required extensive travel and allowed him to visit every community in the region. With a background in writing, he began publishing a weekly newspaper, The Bristol Bay Times, and gained further insights and a comprehensive familiarity of the region. He said he served on a number of local boards and is currently the Regional Fisheries Program Coordinator for the Bristol Bay Regional Economic Development Association. Since becoming an appointee, in October 2013, he said he has experienced six different BOF meetings, which have given him an understanding of the scope of the responsibilities that are expected.

[10:15:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked what has surfaced as a surprise, and what has represented disappointments, in the meetings attended thus far.

MR. JOHNSON shared that the volume of material is incredible. Additionally, he observed, how the divergent opinions among the stakeholders, which often seemed irreconcilable, were addressed resulting in workable solutions being identified by the board. The process appears to move faster than expected, he said, and three years seems to be a minimal length of time to enact regulations and subsequently gain a full understanding of the ramifications manifesting in the fisheries - considering the life cycle of the species.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS commented that she arrived in Dillingham at about the same time as the appointee. She expressed appreciation for what he has brought, thus far, and said the Matanuska-Susitna district supports the appointment.

[10:18:20 AM](#)

PAUL HOLLAND, Member, Chitna Dipnetters Association, reported that 42,000 dipnetters participate in the personal use fisheries, and he asked for the appointee's view on what position the dipnetters hold regarding harvest priority.

CHAIR SEATON asked how the personal use fishery is weighted in comparison to the commercial harvest.

MR. JOHNSON responded that the personal use fishery has been the state's response to federally defined subsistence use. The personal use fishery is as important as the subsistence fishery. He said that it is important to keep in mind that the commercial fishermen are also Alaskan families. The topic of prioritizing fishery use is important to the board, and striking a balance is difficult. He stressed that all Alaskans have a constitutional right to harvest the resource.

[10:21:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS moved to forward the name of Fritz Johnson to the joint session of the House and Senate for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmation of Fritz Johnson was advanced from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

CHAIR SEATON reminded members that signing the report regarding appointment to a board or commission in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointee, and that the nomination is merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[10:21:56 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON congratulated the appointees and thanked the meeting participants.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.