

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2021

Call to Order: Roll Call

- Regular meeting of the Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals was called to order at 1:02 pm via Zoom by Co-Chairs, Jeri Zezula and Jennifer Eber.
- Roll call introductions of current board members were made to the newest commission members and public attendees. We welcomed our newest members, Barbra Comtois – NH State Representative, and Kurt Ehrenberg, NH State Director for Humane Society of the United States-National Humane Organization.

Members Present

- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau (phone)
- Barbara Comtois – (R-Center Barnstead) NH State Representative
- George Cook – Dog Owners of the Granite State & NH Mushers
- Marga Culp – General Public
- Dr. Stephen Crawford – State Veterinarian
- Tom DeRosa – General Public
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Kurt Ehrenberg – National Humane Organization
- Elaina Enzien – UNH Co-Op Extension
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
- Sheila Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Gary Lambert – NH Sportsmen (phone)
- Patricia Morris – Equine Associations
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinary Technician Association
- Tom Seymour – General Public
- Steven Sprowl – Humane Cruelty Investigator
- William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public

Members Absent

- Jane Barlow Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Regina Birdsell (R-Hampstead) – NH State Senator
- Cynthia Collins – General Public

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021

- Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association

Public Present

- Joanne Bourbeau, Humane Society of the United States– Former Commission Member,
- Jana McMillan – ACO
- Jonathan Melanson – NH Governor's Office

Review and Approval of February 8, 2021 Minutes

- George Cook made motion to approve the minutes. Sheila Johannsen seconded the motion. The vote was 16 for, 0 against, and 2 abstentions. Rep. Barbra Comtois and Kurt Ehrenberg abstained due not being at the previous meeting. Jozi Best noted a typo which will be corrected.
- **Next Steps:** Jeri to upload minutes to the Commission website.

Vote to Approve New Secretary

- Jennifer Eber made motion to approve Tom Seymour as the Commission's new secretary. Shelia Johannsen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Legislation

- Per our discussion on the role of the Commission, we agreed to continue tracking the following bills. Brief discussion summaries are included in the following table.

HB 174	TEXT	Title:	The Governor has authorized the Commission to give testimony on the Commission opinion for this proposed legislation relative to reporting a collision between a cat and a motor vehicle. However, hearing dates have past and only written testimony will now be considered.
HB 246	TEXT	Title:	The Governor has requested the Commission refrain from giving testimony for this proposed legislation establishing a protective order for vulnerable adults.
HB 250	TEXT	Title:	The Governor has requested the Commission refrain giving testimony on the Commission opinion for this proposed legislation relative to pet vendors.

NH Governor’s Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2021

			Animal volume has been amended and now stands at 35 dogs and/or cats.
HB 338	TEXT	Title:	<p>The Governor has authorized the Commission to testify the Commission position for this proposed legislation relative to penalties for dog theft and tampering with a dog's radio collar. However, hearing dates have past and only written testimony was submitted.</p> <p>Rep. Comtois advised this bill has had the original penalties reduced. Dr. Jeri Zezula noted there seems to be a disconnect between this bill and current civil and criminal codes. It was further noted that this bill added references specific to tracking collars and microchips.</p>
HB 532	TEXT	Title:	<p>This proposed legislation creating an animal records database has been amended and passed on to Ways & Means. The bill will return to the floor before heading to the Senate.</p> <p>This Commission will further review with the intent of providing a formal opinion after House vote (April 6, 7, & 8) and prior to cross over. A “Special” meeting may be called in order to make the deadline.</p>

- During discussion of HB 532, Jonathan Melanson, of the Governor’s Office, confirmed that it falls within this Commission’s prevue to take a formal position on amended bills.
- A “Special” meeting may be called in order discuss amended laws and present the Commission position to the Governor before crossover.
- Bill “Cross Over” will be after full house vote scheduled for April 6 through 8, 2021.
- **Next Steps:** Commission to stay in tune with amendments as best we can. Be prepared for the potential “Special” meeting regarding amended bills.

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2021

EO Changes

- Jonathan Melanson, of the Governor's Office, advised the revisions to the EO have been made and are now being reviewed by legal counsel.
- **Next Steps:** Jonathan Melanson to report status of revised EO during the next scheduled meeting, if not before.

DOJ Involvement in Animal Cruelty Reporting

- Jonathan Melanson, of the Governor's Office, has authorized the Commission to reach out to Jane Young to work with DOJ on gathering data. Jennifer will reach out to Attorney Young to streamline the process for gathering cruelty data. An outline of activities to-date was given for the new Commission members. It was also noted that the last report delivered to the Governor's Office is posted on the Commission's website.

Commission Manual Update

- The Law Enforcement Manual is complete and now posted on the websites of the NH Attorney General, Police Standards & Training Council, and the NH Governor's Commission on The Human Treatment of Animals.

New Cruelty Cases

- Hooksett: Man arrested for suffocating a cat after a domestic incident. The suspect first denied any involvement, but later confessed.
- Londonderry: A Massachusetts man was arrested for stabbing a dog in the head. He was charged with a felony and misdemeanor for purposefully mutilating an animal. The case is due to be heard on March 19, 2021.
- Manchester: Man was arrested for leaving severed rabbit heads on a woman's car. While the investigation is ongoing, the event is considered an off-shoot from a domestic incident.

Document: Use of Henneke BSC

- Dr. Steve Crawford, NH State Veterinarian, led a discussion on the use of the Henneke Body Score method. A case was referenced where a woman pleaded guilty to a charge of neglect of a number of horses. Dr. Crawford noted that the prosecution elected to pursue the case making use of a single indicator, that being the Henneke BSC. There were multiple indicators to further support that case that were intentionally set aside. Despite the prosecution's successful efforts

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021

and gaining the win, Dr. Crawford wanted to emphasize that all indicators should be researched and documented in every case. The woman was found guilty on the misdemeanor charge and was sentenced to a 6-month suspended sentence and prohibited from owning more than 4 horses for the next 2 years.

Cost of Care Rules – JLCAR

- Dr. Crawford emailed the draft rules to the Commission a few weeks ago. The Department of Agriculture held its hearing on March 10, 2021. Members of the public may now send written comments to the Department by March 26, 2021. Once the comments are reviewed, the Department will send the proposed rules to the JLCAR for concurrence. Next, JLCAR will schedule a second hearing. Overall, the process can take several months depending on the number of rounds of edits made.
- Questions were raised over the origin of the dollar values assigned to the rule. Dr. Crawford advised the numbers were purely arbitrary based upon typical cases seen by the Department. Dr. Crawford confirmed the cost of care funding process has been established via the 2019 budget, which created the fund and put in \$200K seed money, and former Rep. O'Connor's 2020 bill, which allows for animal feed fees to be diverted from the general fund to the cost of care fund.
- Other questions regarding the Commission's role in formally providing an opinion were raised. Where this is strictly administrative in nature and the law has been established, the Commission elected to hold any opinion until such time as the rule has been applied.
- **Next Steps:** Members to review the rule and be prepared to discuss feedback.

Member/guest comments/questions

- The floor was opened to additional questions from Commission membership and members of the public in attendance. No comments or questions were raised.

Subcommittees

- Subcommittee #1 – Data & Laws: Heather Faria, Chair.
 - Draft report is well underway and expects to have the first draft ready for the Commission to review no later than the next scheduled meeting.
- Subcommittee #2 – Propose Legislation: No Chair.

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021

- Meetings have been difficult to achieve. They expect to have reportable progress by the next scheduled meeting. The Commission was asked to forward any feedback or thoughts to this subcommittee regarding proposed legislation.
- Subcommittee #3 – Reporting: Wendy Munroe, Chair.
 - Charged with evaluating incident reporting, they noted difficulty in obtaining information. They expect to have a draft ready soon and indicated they might email to Commission members for review.
- Subcommittee #4 – Training: No Chair.
 - Jeri Zezula is acting as the subcommittee coordinator until a chair is chosen. They have met several times to date. Part of their plan is to email or contact current and potential resources for updates or inclusion. Resources would include shelters, rescues, funding sources, and other such items. This information will be transitioned to the Police Standards & Training Council website once they have their new servers installed and operational.
- Subcommittee #5 – Legislation Tracking: George Cook, Chair.
 - Tom DeRosa continues updating the legislative bill tracking spreadsheet the results of which are defined earlier in this report.
- **Next Steps:** Subcommittees continue meeting and pulling together their respective draft reports and prepare updates for the next scheduled meeting.

Adjournment

- Dr. Steve Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting. Tom DeRosa seconded. Vote was unanimous.
- Dr. Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 2:35 pm.

Next Meeting

- Scheduled for Monday, April 19, 2021 at 1:00 pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Seymour
Secretary