

NH Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2022

Call to Order

- The regular meeting of the Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals was called to order at 1:02 pm by Co-Chairs, Dr. Jeri Zezula and Jennifer Eber.

Roll Call:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
- George Cook – Dog Owners of the Granite State & NH Musers
- Marga Coulp – General Public
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Kurt Ehrenberg – Humane Society of The United States
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
- Sheila Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Chief Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Tom Seymour – General Public, Secretary
- Steven Sprowl – SPCA Humane Cruelty Investigator
- Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public

MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Jeb Bradley – (R-Wolfeboro) NH State Senator
- Cynthia Collins – General Public
- Barbara Comtois – (R-Center Barnstead) NH State Representative
- Dr. Stephen Crawford – State Veterinarian
- Tom DeRosa – General Public
- Elaina Enzien – UNH Co-Op Extension
- Gary Lambert – NH Sportsmen
- Patricia Morris – Equine Associations
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinary Technician Association

PUBLIC PRESENT:

- Jackson Bouley of Dennehy & Bouley

Review and Approval of the October 18th Meeting Minutes

- Amendment requested to include the Committee's decision to monitor SB202 which was omitted from the LSR Listing. Sheriff Wright motioned to accept the minutes as amended and it was seconded by Chief Rondeau. With no further discussion, eleven (11) voted in favor, none voted against, and two (2) abstained.
- **Next Steps:** Dr. Zezula to upload minutes to the Commission website.

Old Business

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:

- **Subcommittee #1 (Data/Laws):** Current member assignments include Dr. Stephen Crawford, Heather Faria, Sheriff William Wright, and Tom Seymour.
 - No report currently as the subcommittee is seeking consensus on the new, more detailed, NIBRS report format.

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- **Subcommittee #2 (New Legislation):** Current member assignments include Marga Coulp, Trish Morris, NH Representative Comtois, and NH Senator Bradley.
 - No report currently. Kurt Ehrenburg plans to speak with Senator Bradley and the rest of the subcommittee regarding the inclusion of starvation in legislation.
- **Subcommittee #3 (ACO Reporting):** Current member assignments include Wendy Munroe, Steve Sprowl, and Jozi Best.
 - Wendy Munroe will be focusing on goal 2 from the 2021 Report to the Governor and will be going to the subcommittee for input regarding the goals for the gathering of data and to determine the role of the ACO. She will also speak with Sheila and Sheriff Wright about ACO issues.
 - NOTE: Subcommittee member Gary Lambert has resigned from the Committee (see under New Business) and his seat on this subcommittee is now vacant.
- **Subcommittee #4 (Training):** Current member assignments include Cynthia Collins, Elaina Enzien, Sheila Johannesen and Chief Dean Rondeau
 - Currently, there is nothing to report.
- **Subcommittee #5 (Legislation Tracking):** Current member assignments include Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy, George Cook, and Tom DeRosa.
 - A detailed report is found under New Business.
- Dr. Zezula and Jennifer Eber reminded the Commission that members may also volunteer to assist other Subcommittees.
- Jennifer Eber offered to provide remote meeting tools to any Subcommittee needing such tools to conduct its work.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SURVEY

- Dr. Zezula reported that the survey was sent out, and it is expected we will have some information at the next meeting. Hanna Popovitch at DOS is submitting to all of law enforcement. Qualtrics is being used as the survey platform as it is more secure than Google Surveys and offers more reporting features. Survey responses have deadline set for February 28, 2022.

RIGHT-TO-KNOW: COST OF CARE INFORMATION REQUEST

- Jennifer Eber made a right to know request to the Department of Agriculture, through Dr. Crawford for Cost-of-Care information. Dr. Crawford reported that one applicant has successfully been awarded cost of care relief totaling \$3,013.16 in July 2021. Dr. Crawford further said a total of three (3) applications have been received since June 2021. There are two more applications in process. Jennifer has asked if we can have copies of the actual applications submitted and will share any further information that Dr. Crawford is able to provide.

New Business

FALL LSR UPDATES

- George Cook led the discussion. The following is a breakdown of Commission's position on LSR listing:
- *SB368 (Animal Vending Licensing)*

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- George Cook felt that the current language would be amended. Chief Rondeau feels the current language sets up law enforcement for failure where most police departments cannot hold animals of any volume. Heather Faria commented that there are many humane agencies would be positioned to assist, as needed.
- Commission voting: Support 0 / **Monitor** 13 / Oppose 0

- *HB1107 (Renting or Leasing to Pet Owners)*
 - George Cook advised that a landlord's association is expected to raise a great deal of questions as it could restrict options for landlords.
 - Commission voting: **Support** 11 / Monitor 2 / Oppose 0.

- *HB1066 (Animal Health Aspects of Cyanobacteria Blooms)*
 - George Cook remaindered everyone this legislation is just to create a commission. Dr. Zezula questioned if this is related to animal cruelty or the Commission's mission. Chief Rondeau related the issue to the Great Dane case in Wolfeboro where animal wastes were found leaching into the nearby lake, thus creating environmental hazards.
 - Commission voting: Support 0 / **Monitor** 13 / Oppose 0.

- *HB 1340 (Definition of Domestic Violence)*
 - George Cook described the relationship between animal abuse and domestic abuse and violence. Dr. Zezula felt that this was already covered under other existing RSA.
 - Commission voting: Support 0 / **Monitor** 13 / Oppose 0.
 - NOTE: At the December 2021 meeting the Commission voted to DELETE this legislation from consideration.

- *HB1226 (Prohibiting Declawing of Cats)*
 - George Cook noted that this is a hotly debated topic. Jozi Best indicated many on the Farm Bureau were against this legislation because of the impact on elderly pet owners who predominantly keep housebound cats. Kurt Ehrenberg strongly supports this bill and described the de-knuckling of cats as inhumane and will last the life of the cat. Dr. Barlow-Roy stated that surveys find veterinarians are split, 50/50, on the subject. Dr. Barlow-Roy further said that many were against the practice, but also did not want to see this become a matter of criminal law. Steve Sprowl felt it was not good to intentionally leave a cat defenseless. Dr. Barlow-Roy did acknowledge there are medical situations that would support the declawing of a cat, but also noted that the practice is quite limited these days. Each circumstance is unique and defined with the applicable VCPR (veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) is the basis for interaction among veterinarians, their clients, and their patients and is critical to the health of animals - source AVMA.Org). Dr. Barlow-Roy also noted that there a half-dozen, or so, methods of claw removal that does not involve amputation of any portion of the toes. Heather Faria raised concern about the Commission taking a stand either way where such a stand could easily be misinterpreted. Dr. Zezula suggested the Commission would need to provide specific reasoning for its position, with details going to the Governor.
 - Commission voting: Support 0 / **Monitor** 13 (with concerns – Co-Chairs to define) / Oppose 0.

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- HB1186 (Companion Animals During States of Emergency)
 - Heather Faria and Dr. Zezula both noted that emergency plans already must account for the sheltering and care of pets. Jozi Best questioned if there was an obligation to allow the pets to stay in emergency shelters with their owners. Steve Sprowl re-affirmed resources are readily available to assist with pet care and sheltering in an emergency.
 - Commission voting: Support 0 / **Monitor** 13 / Oppose 0.

- HB1004 (Failure to Provide Info After Animal Injury)
 - Dr. Zezula described that bill as assuring the pet's owner would be held responsible / liable for the pet's biting a person.
 - Jennifer Eber motioned to **DELETE** this bill from Commission consideration. Heather Faria seconded the motion. Motion passed: 13 yea, 0 nay.

- HB1433 (Penalties for Poisoning of Dogs)
 - Little debate took place.
 - Commission vote: **Support** 13 / Monitor 0 / Oppose 0.

- SB202 (Prohibiting Sale of Cosmetics Tested on Animals)
 - Dr. Zezula described the bill as prohibiting the sales of cosmetics that used animals in safety testing. Kurt Ehrenberg related that five other states have such a law. While many agreed with the sentiment, George Cook questioned if this germane to New Hampshire where the practice does not occur in NH and does not involve NH animals.
 - George Cook motioned to **DELETE** this bill from Commission consideration. Sheriff Wright seconded the motion. Motion passed: 11 yea, 2 nay.

CRUELTY CASES:

- Chief Rondeau reported on two (2) pending cases in Wolfeboro. One for the shooting of a dog, the second involving the mutilation of cats. In the mutilation case, an arrest has been made and the suspect is being held in the county house of correction. Felony charges have been levied and the court case is pending.

- Sheriff Wright was contact regarding a potential neglect case. The claim was for a dog left out without proper sustenance or shelter. With investigation by the Sheriff in the locality, it was determined that the dog's care was within the requirements of law. Sheriff Wright then described how education of the public is key.

- Tom Seymour reported that the ongoing Franklin case is heading to court tomorrow (21 January 2022) at 11:30am and will have information for the next meeting.

COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

- No Report

WEBSITE DESIGN / CONTENT

- No Report

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GARY LAMBERT RESIGNATION

- No Discussion

Member/Guest Comments/Questions

- No Comments Presented.

Adjournment

- Jennifer Eber moved to adjourn the meeting. George Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.
- With no further business to conduct, Dr. Zezula and Jennifer Eber adjourned the meeting at 3:06pm.

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, February 9, 2022; 1:00pm to 3:00pm at the State Department of Safety, 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH (Second Floor Conference Room). Future meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month through the rest of this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Seymour, Secretary
Dr. Jeri Zezula, Co-Chair
Jennifer Eber, Co-Chair