

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
June 8, 2022

**Call To Order**

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

**Roll Call**

Commissioners Present

- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
- Representative Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
- George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State & NH Musher's Association (Late)
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of the United States
- Elaina Enzien – UNH Cooperative Extension
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
- Shelia Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
- Chief Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Tom Seymour – Secretary, General Public
- Steven Sprowl – SPCA Humane Cruelty Investigator
- Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public

Commissioners Absent

- Senator Jeb Bradley – NH State Senator
- Cynthia Collins – General Public
- Marga Coulp – General Public
- Dr. Steve Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
- Thomas DeRosa – General Public
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinarian Technician's Association

Public Present

- None

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- Jozi Best motioned to accept the May 2022 meeting minutes. Heather Faria seconded the motion. The vote was 13 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions (Jeri Zezula, Trish Morris and Representative Comtois). The motion carried.
- **Next:** Dr. Zezula to post meeting minutes on the Commission website.

**Old Business**

Subcommittee Updates

- *Subcommittee 1 (Data/Laws):* No report at this time
- *Subcommittee 2 (New Legislation):* Please refer to "Legislative Update" under New Business, below...
- *Subcommittee 3 (ACO Reporting):* No report at this time.

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- *Subcommittee 4 (Training)*: No report at this time.
- *Subcommittee 5 (Legislation Tracking)*: Please refer to "Legislative Update" under New Business, below...

Follow-Up Divorce Bill: HB 1103 – Passed (J Eber)

- Jennifer Eber reported that Christine Falbe informed her that the bill has passed the House and Senate and the Governor plans to sign the bill into law. The bill would take effect in January 2023. Christine emailed Jennifer expressing her thanks for the Commission's support saying that she is grateful for all the help, advice, and guidance. Christine said the Commission made her realize she was not alone in this effort.

Law Enforcement Training Discussion (Sheriff Wright, S Sprowl, K Ehrenberg, Dr. Zezula)

- At the Commission's last meeting, the Commission agreed that prosecutors, attorneys, police, and ACOs would benefit from training. Kurt Ehrenburg and Chief Rondeau said they could begin to pull together training materials. Steve Sprowl felt prosecutors needed this training as most do not understand laws and cases are slipping through the system.
- Chief Rondeau suggests the Commission enlist the Director of The Police Standards and Training Council, John Scippa. Dr. Zezula noted that she already conducts training at the Recruit Academy. Issues remain with the training schedule of 2 days. Dr. Zezula has also been talking with Capt. Hawkins and Robert Collman about online courses (ZOOM, or At-Will).
- Jennifer Eber relayed a story where she ran into David Rotman, who is in charge of prosecutor training and works at the NH DOJ. They discussed training in animal cruelty and David reached out to Jennifer last week to seek the Commission's help in putting together a 1 ½ to 2 hour zoom training in the late summer/fall. Chief Rondeau suggested that the training should cover all prosecutors (attorney & police) and could be done at the Police Standards and Training. Chief Rondeau does not think online courses would provide benefit. He said when he took the required courses they were intense. Sheriff Wright agreed that the courses required considerable effort. Jennifer Eber explained that we need to work with Attorney Rotman for the program that he is offering and then we can work on expanding it to include police prosecutors. Trish Morris also added that it was two different needs in presenting to lawyers and police prosecutors.
- Dr. Zezula hoped that such training could eventually be an in-service mandatory course for certification of police officers & police prosecutors. Chief Rondeau said continued training, education will help improve the overall situation. Kurt Ehrenburg suggested we take a holistic outlook where pieces are not connected. He said the training should take into account the entire process and develop guidance documents that would detail specific instances and circumstances and how each entity should respond. Jennifer Eber would like to move forward with Trish Morris to create a one and one-half (1 ½) hour presentation for attorney prosecutors. We can then work to expand the program to be offered to police prosecutors or other groups.

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- Chief Rondeau revealed that he is taking a new approach within his own police department in Wolfeboro and is combining ACO and part-time officer positions. This would meld conducting investigations and ACO activity. The position is very broad and includes training in addressing wildlife situations. This position would require task-specific training.
- Sheriff Wright said police "academy" Director Scippa was interested in restarting animal cruelty training programs. This training was once given, but it is likely that the program may now need tweaking due to its age. Sheriff Wright would like to see expanded ACO authority. Sheila Johansson noted that reporting is very important for smooth case investigations and prosecutions. George Cook asked what training would be most appropriate for ACOs. Sheriff Wright indicated the transfer of probable cause would be at the core of expanded ACO responsibility. Sheriff Wright said current ACO offerings are all over the map with varied training and tasks. He felt it would be best to develop ACO experts to handle everything the same way (investigation, evidence collection, interviews, etc.) and that a regional concept would be ideal.
- **NEXT**: Jennifer Eber, Jeri Zezula & Trish Morris to begin building a presentation for review.

Law Enforcement Survey Analysis (Jeri Zezula, J Eber)

- At this time, the Commission is not going to take any further action on the survey. It clearly identified training of police and attorney prosecutors and the Commission is addressing that need. In the future we can revisit whether the survey and the contact information could be used to identify Commission business.

Follow-Up Governor's Office on Appointments and AG (J Eber)

- Jennifer Eber advised that Gary Lambert's replacement representing the NH Sportsmen has been identified and the Governor's Office is working to confirm the individual for the 2022-2023 session.

Office on Community Outreach Coordinator (J Eber)

- Jennifer Eber said Geoff Ward (NH DOJ) is still looking to hire a person for this position. The position would include animal cruelty duties in addition to other responsibilities.

**New Business**

14-day Hearing Update:

- Steve Sprowl advised that a judge was not addressing animal ownership at the status conference that is held within the 14-day window. Trish Morris, Jennifer Eber, & Dr. Zezula said the hearing was meant as a status conference to determine status only and it was up to prosecutors and defense attorney to be prepared to address issues necessary for the care of any animals. Dr. Zezula said this was indicative of the need for additional training for prosecutors. Heather Faria suggested a guidance document might be helpful. Jennifer Eber and Trish Morris explained that right now the law does not have specifics as to what needs to be addressed at the status hearing and that to have specifics could detract from addressing all issues specific to each case.

Legislative Update (All)

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- Kurt Ehrenburg reminded everyone that this legislative session has closed. Representative Comtois said we should check first to see if bills are enrolled in order to determine effectivity.

Kurt Ehrenburg (via email) provided updates as follows:

- **SB 368 relative to animal vending licenses [LINK](#)**
  - This bill was passed by both House and Senate as amended and is currently awaiting the Governor's signature and is designed to allow the Department of Agriculture to enforce and fund the enforcement of license violations.
- **HB 1107 establishing a committee to study the rental or lease of housing to a person who has pets [LINK](#)**
  - This bill to form a study committee has been voted **Inexpedient to Legislate** by the House Judiciary committee and was killed by the full house.
- **HB 1066 requiring the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Services to prepare a plan relative to cyanobacterial blooms in New Hampshire.**
  - Passed by both chambers and awaiting Governor Sununu's signature.
- **HB 1340 relative to the definition of domestic violence**
  - This bill was voted **Inexpedient to Legislate** in House Criminal Justice committee.
- **HB 1226 prohibiting the declawing of cats [LINK](#)**
  - This bill was voted **Inexpedient to Legislate** by the House Environment and Agriculture Committee.
- **HB 1186 relative to companion animals during a declared state of emergency [LINK](#)**
  - This bill is **awaiting the Governor's signature**. It now allows pet owners to bring their companion animals to emergency shelters. This also covers all shelter workers as emergency workers.
  - As a side note, George Cook said he will provide an index of AKC trailers. George estimates nation-wide there are sixty (60) AKC trailers. He is not sure how many are in NH. He said that the trailers eventually become property of disaster relief organizations. AKC supplies and outfits each trailer. Each trailer then can provide full care for 60 animals for a period of 10 days.
- **HB 1433 relative to penalties for poisoning dogs [LINK](#)**
  - This bill was voted **Inexpedient to Legislate** by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee and was defeated by the full house. The bill would have included poisoning as a type of cruelty to animals and make it a felony to purposely poison an animal.
- **HB 1103 relative to certain assets in a divorce proceeding**
  - This bill was passed as amended and is on the Governor's desk.

Reports on any Cruelty Cases (All)

- None reported.

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Commission Meetings Going Forward (J Eber)

- There will be no July or August meetings. Future meetings will be held on second Thursdays at 10am – 12pm. The day and time were based upon Commission member feedback. It is hoped this will improve attendance. Jozi Best might have a possible conflict with the state-wide NH Farm Bureau meetings.

Summer Homework

- Consider how the survey data might be best used.
- Consider if the subcommittees need restructuring. If so, how?
- While there won't be meetings in July or August, Commissioners are still available by email.

**Comments from Members/Guests**

- None.

**Adjournment**

- With no further business to conduct, Chief Rondeau motioned to adjourn. Sheila Johannson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Co-Chairs Dr. Zezula and Jennifer Eber adjourned the meeting at 2:16pm.

**Next Meeting**

- Date/Time: September 8, 2022, 10:00am to 12:00pm
- Location: State Department of Safety (33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH) in the Second Floor Conference Room

Respectfully submitted,

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