

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals
Monthly Meeting Minutes
NH Department of Safety
January 12, 2023

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 10:08 am by Co-Chairs Jeri Zezula and Jennifer Eber

Roll Call

Commissioners Present

- George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State & NH Musher's Association (L)
- Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations (L)
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinarian Technician's Association
- Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association (L)
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public
- Mary Davis – UNH Cooperative Extension

Commissioners Absent

- Jeb Bradley – NH State Senator
- Cynthia Collins – General Public
- Dr. Steve Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
- Thomas DeRosa – General Public
- Marga Coulp – General Public
- Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
- Tom Seymour – Secretary, General Public
- Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
- Sheila Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
- Chief Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association

Public Present

- Trevor McAden – Governor's Office

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Heather Faria motioned to approve the December 2022 meeting minutes. George Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Next Steps:** Jeri Zezula to post meeting minutes on the Commission website.

Old Business

Commission Open Positions

- 1 open seat remains. The cruelty investigator associated with a licensed humane society seat has not yet been filled. Heather Faria will raise it at the Federation meeting next week and get back to Jennifer Eber.

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Monthly Meeting Minutes
NH Department of Safety
January 12, 2023

- **Next Steps:** Heather Faria will notify Jennifer Eber of a possible candidate and Jennifer will notify the Governor's office.

Open Discussion Regarding Animal Control Officers (ACOs)

- George Cook asked questions about the spreadsheet provided regarding ACOs by County and questioned what the "*" meant. Jeri Zezula informed him that the chart stated that it meant "not listed on NHMA and not contacted". There was discussion regarding whether this was accurate because Conway had a "*" by it.

HB 485 (Regarding animal cruelty cases by county Sheriff's department)

- Sheriff Wright has been discussing HB 485 with Rep. Comtois. Rep. Comtois has not been happy with local towns providing ACO services as she thinks they are ill equipped. She introduced HB 485 because she thinks the county Sheriffs would have the ability to handle these cases. The Sheriff has duties set forth in RSA 104:5 and they include serving writs, court security, except in Supreme Court, and crier of court. Under HB 485 it would require funding by a vote from the delegation in each county to have an officer who does animal cruelty duties. Sheriff Wright stated that it is unclear in the law whether there is any duty by a town to notify a sheriff of cruelty cases in jurisdiction.
- Heather Faria questioned what cruelty is covered in law and thus handled by Sheriff's Office as it is unclear from the bill.
- Jennifer Eber raised jurisdictional issues, can a person call the local police for animal cruelty or does it have to go through Sheriff's Office. Unclear from the language in the bill.
- Sheriff Wright admitted that Sheriff 's Office would need training and/or assistance as they do not have veterinarian expertise, such as to determine what is a sick cow. He also stated that some Sheriffs are not in favor of the bill.
- Jeri Zezula questioned whether a town would need to register with the Sheriff if it wants services and whether that should be language in the bill.
- Kurt Ehrenburg stressed that the county delegation is going to decide whether there is funding and thus whether the Sheriff's Office will handle. It is an unfunded and not mandated duty. Sheriff Wright agreed and said that it was like the deputy sheriff position, it needs delegation funding. He stated that if there was a separate position for animal cruelty officer, he would need 100k to hire somebody. Hillsborough and Rockingham probably will not want to have cruelty investigation, but other counties have more of a need and may want it.
- Heather Faria commented that it may not pass the first time.
- There was discussion on whether there should be a bill to have a study committee and craft a better law.
- It was agreed, without a vote, that the Commission would monitor the bill.

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals
Monthly Meeting Minutes
NH Department of Safety
January 12, 2023

Animal Cruelty Workshop – January 13, 2023 and January 20, 2023

- Jennifer Eber sent commissioners information on the workshop on animal cruelty that is being put on the NH DOJ. Jeri Zezula, Trish Morris and Tony Estee will present. It is 2 hours on January 13th and 2 hours on January 20th. Jozi Best, Steve Crawford, and Sheila Johannsen have all signed up.
- Jennifer Eber indicated there was some confusion on whether ACOs were invited, but they ultimately were invited to attend.
- George Cook requested that the sign up information be sent again and Jennifer Eber agreed to do so.
- There is also discussion on whether the commission should put on future trainings for other groups, including ACOs.

Survey of Organizations Questions

- Jeri Zezula said that Tyler has questions regarding whether people are frustrated with the process for animal cruelty cases.
- George Cook added that there should be a question on how are we doing.
- It was decided that the survey would be sent to the full Commission and then we could review the results to see if it needed to be revised.
- **Next steps:** Jeri will build the survey and send to Commission members.

Cost of Care

- Jennifer Eber reported that she had made a request of the Department of Agriculture for up-to-date information on cost of care applications and payments. She heard that there have been 4 applications. Two have been processed and two are pending. She requested more information on these applications.

Report to Governor

- Heather Faria handed out the draft report. Table E is not completed yet. Tom Seymour did a great job with the table and Steve Crawford helped with the trends.
- Trevor McAden said that it looked good and that he would let us know of any further input from the Governor's office.
- Heather questioned what the "other" meant from the Court dispositions.

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals
Monthly Meeting Minutes
NH Department of Safety
January 12, 2023

- Everybody agreed that the draft looked good and thanked the group for the work put into to it to date.

New Business

Legislative Preview

- George Cook and Kurt Ehrenberg went over the list of proposed legislation. It was decided that the Commission would monitor the legislation for now.
- George Cook indicated that you can still submit written testimony over the internet, but not oral testimony via video.
- All bills will be monitored at this point, although the senate bills appear to be more housekeeping.

Reports On Any Cruelty Cases

- Heather Faria did not have any updates on the Labrador case in Winchester and issues regarding who is entitled to cost of care reimbursement.

Adjournment

- With no further business to conduct, Heather Faria motioned to adjourn. George Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Co-Chair Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

Next Meeting

- Date/Time: **Thursday, February 9, 2023 / 10:00am-12:00am**
- Location: **NH Department of Safety
Second Floor Conference Room
33 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH**

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Eber, Co-Chair

Dr. Jeri Zezula, Co-Chair