

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals
Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 9, 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 10:03 am by Co-Chair Dr. Jeri Zezula.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present

- Marga Coulp – General Public (L)
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of the United States (L)
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
- Sheila Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinarian Technician's Association
- Chief Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association (L)
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Tom Seymour – Secretary, General Public
- Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association (L)
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public

Commissioners Absent

- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
- Cynthia Collins – General Public
- Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
- George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State & NH Musher's Association
- Dr. Steve Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
- Mary Davis, UNH Cooperative Extension
- Thomas DeRosa – General Public
- Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
- Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
- David Watters – NH State Senator

Public Present

- None

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Heather Faria offered an amendment for Page 2 under New Business. She asked that the third sentence be deleted. Receiving no objections, Co-Chair Dr. Jeri Zezula accepted the amendment.
- Heather Faria motioned to approve the February 2023 meeting minutes as amended. Kurt Ehrenberg seconded the motion. The motion passed with 10 voting in favor, 0 votes against, and 1 abstention (due to absence).
- **Next Steps:**
 - Dr. Jeri Zezula to post the amended meeting minutes on the Commission website.

Old Business

Open Seats on The Commission

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- Jennifer Eber reported that the Commission's seat for a Humane Cruelty Investigator has a candidate (Tona McCarthy) that will be submitted to the Governor for appointment. There are no other empty seats.

Governor's Report

- Jeri Zezula commended Heather Faria for her excellent work on the Governor's Report.
- Jennifer Eber advised that Trevor McAden, of the Governor's Office, told her that the Governor would like to see data included from the state's Cost-of-Care Program. It was said that more information is better. Jennifer has requested information from Steve Crawford. Jeri Zezula said she and Jennifer would develop chair report and Cost-of-Care data and the Governor's Report.
- There were questions regarding the date range of reporting, especially with the Cost-of-Care Program. While everyone agreed the report date range is to cover 2020 through 2021, some also thought the date range should be expanded in order to provide substantial data on the Cost-of-Care Program. In general, the Commission agreed that we should be including more data than we have previously.
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy suggested that there should be reporting on ACO status discussions. She thought the Commission had expended significant hours and effort regarding ACO regulation, legislation, and activities that the report should reflect those efforts.
- Kurt Ehrenberg suggested the Commission also include information discovered related to gaps found in animal cruelty reporting.
- Jennifer Eber asked Kurt Ehrenberg if he would assist George Cook with the legislation reporting piece for the Governor's Report. Kurt said he would contact George and see what he could do to help. Heather Faria told Kurt he might also wish to review the meeting minutes from 2020 to 2021 to gather information.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Commission members to submit additional ideas for the Governor's Report to Jeri Zezula and / or Jennifer Eber.

Survey on Animal Cruelty

- Conversation brought the Commission back to basics trying to determine next steps. Heather Faria suggested the questions should be on a higher level appealing to as many as possible. Then, she said, the data will drive the direction of actionable items. Ultimately, the Commission agreed and decided to re-define survey questions so that they would be meaningful no matter the group responding. It was further determined that the surveys should carry an identifier so as to permit the segregation of responses by group.
- Jane Barlow-Roy asked if an "Other" category could be added to the survey question responses. Dr. Jeri Zezula said this could be done and would look to add when developing the next survey.

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- **Next Steps:**
 - Commission members to forward any further suggestions to Jeri Zezula.
 - Jeri Zezula to develop survey draft and send to Commission members for personal completion (not meant for distribution).

NH DOJ Workshop

- No updates at this time as contact at DOJ has family medical issues.

New Business

Cost of Care

- Refer to "Old Business / Governor's Report" on Page 2.

Legislative Preview

- Kurt Ehrenberg provided updates regarding legislation the Commission planned to follow and / or monitor.
 - HB 37 has been retained.
 - HB 249 was amended to align the state with the pet insurance industry making the pet insurance portable.
 - HB 485 was identified as ITL by a vote of 11 to 9. This is the bill sponsored by Rep Comtois. Kurt said that there was little interest in moving this bill forward. Sheriff Wright said that the bill had too many "shall"s requiring too many mandates and not enough options.
 - HB 138 was identified as OTP by a vote of 20 to 0 and was referred to the Senate. Kurt feels that this should pass.
 - HB 230 was referred to Finance in order to flesh out the unidentified funding requirements.
 - HB 258 passed Committee. Kurt thinks this will pass through the House. The bill removes veterinary referrals for animal chiropractic care, though chiropractors will need to obtain certification.
 - Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy informed the Commission that neither veterinary nor chiropractic oversight boards want this to pass due to lack of formal jurisdiction.
 - HB 260 was identified as ITL in the House by a vote of 194 to 172.
 - HB 231 moved without recommendation.
 - HB 141 does not look promising to pass. Kurt said it looks "bleak".
 - HB 549 was identified as ITL by a vote of 16 to 0.
 - SB 164 was identified as OTP with amendment specifically related to LCHIP (Land & Community Heritage Investment Program).
 - SB 97 was referred to Committee. Kurt said there were objections caused by the possible expenses involved.

Reports. Jeri Zezula said there two cases in Manchester which she has posted online.

- Chief Rondeau reported on two cases in Wolfeboro but could not delve into details as the cases are ongoing. He summarized each case as follows.
 - 26 cats were rescued from a hoarding situation. The owner has been charged with animal cruelty.

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- Roosters were rescued from local woodlands. The owner no longer had a need for them and was turning them loose in the woods. The owner has been charged with animal cruelty.
- Chief Rondeau spoke of the effectiveness of his Municipal Conservation Officer. The position entails a great deal of ACO activities. He intends to send the individual to the NH Police Standards & Training Council Police Academy and move towards a paid part-time position within the police department. Currently the officer has been through the ACO training and is paid a stipend as an employee.

Comments from Members/Guests

- Jeri Zezula advised that the ACO Association has asked that we put a link to their website on the Commission's website. Jeri said that if we do it for one, we should allow it with others. Jennifer Eber indicated that we may need to seek permission from the Governor's Office. The Commission did not vote, but expressed some concern with adding links to other websites.

Adjournment

- With no further business to conduct, Jennifer Eber motioned to adjourn. Sheila Johannsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Co-Chair Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 11:26 am.

Next Meeting

- Date/Time: **Thursday, April 13, 2023 / 10:00 am-12:00 pm**
- Location: **NH Department of Safety
Second Floor Conference Room
33 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH**

Respectfully submitted,

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