

NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals
Monthly Meeting Minutes
April 13, 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 10:02 am by Co-Chair Dr. Jeri Zezula.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present

- Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
- Mary Davis, UNH Cooperative Extension
- Jennifer Eber – Co-Chair, General Public
- Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
- Sheila Johannsen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH
- Wendy Munroe – NH Veterinarian Technician's Association
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Veterinary Medical Association
- Tom Seymour – Secretary, General Public
- Dr. Jeri Zezula – Co-Chair, General Public

Commissioners Absent

- Cynthia Collins – General Public
- Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
- George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State & NH Musher's Association
- Marga Coulp – General Public
- Dr. Steve Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
- Thomas DeRosa – General Public
- Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States
- Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
- Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
- Chief Dean Rondeau – NH Police Chief's Association
- David Watters – NH State Senator
- Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association

Public Present

- None

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Dr. Jeri Zezula asked if any amendments to the meeting minutes were needed. With no amendments offered, Heather Faria motioned to approve the March 2023 meeting minutes. Sheila Johannsen seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 2 abstentions (due to absence).
- **Next Steps:**
 - Dr. Jeri Zezula to post the approved meeting minutes on the Commission website.

Old Business

Open Seats on The Commission

- Jennifer Eber reported that a candidate for the Commission's seat for a Humane Cruelty Investigator, Tona McCarthy, has been submitted for the Governor's appointment. Jennifer said it was supposed to have been discussed earlier this week, but she has yet to hear of the outcome.

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Governor's Report

- Dr. Jeri Zezula reported that George Cook, with assistance from Kurt Ehrenberg, is working to compile the information needed to complete the legislative segment. She also said Heather Faria's segment is complete.
- **Next Steps:**
 - George Cook to complete the data gathering for the legislative segment of the report.

Survey on Animal Cruelty

- Dr. Jeri Zezula added an introduction to the survey and asked the Commission for their feedback. All agreed the introduction was fine. She also commented how several survey responses had no input.
- Heather Faria commented on question 7 noting that some indicated that other states did a better job of protecting animals and that question 8 indicated more should be done in New Hampshire. Heather asked if the survey could be revised to include a follow-up for both questions asking for details or examples. There was discussion on which questions needed a general comment section. Jeri said she could provide such a field.
- Jennifer Eber had an email from Tyson Morrill asking about questions 1, 3, 5, and 6. Specifically, he noted that questions 1 and 6 did not match. It was agreed that they did not need to match in order to collect the data needed. He also mentioned that questions 3 and 5 had a number of unanswered responses. A debate ensued about why people chose to not answer rather than choosing the "Don't Know" response. Ultimately, it was decided to revise the language to read "Unsure" instead of "Don't Know".
- Mary Davis suggested revising language used in question 1 so it does not read "hunting dogs" as she thought it suggested dogs were being hunted. Dr. Jeri Zezula offered to change the wording to read "sporting dogs" to which all agreed.
- Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy asked if an optional "Other" category could be added to all survey questions. Dr. Jeri Zezula said this could be done and would look to add when developing the next survey.
- Jennifer Eber asked the Commission where this survey should be distributed. She suggested we could share the collected data with the general public. The Commission agreed the survey should be sent to as many outlets as possible to maximize feedback. It was also agreed that the survey should only be submitted by those that work or reside in the state of New Hampshire and a question addressing this issue should be added..
- Dr. Jeri Zezula said she would revise the survey accordingly (see above for details) and send to Mary Davis, Heather Faria, Jane Barlow-Roy, and Jennifer Eber for final edit review before sending to Commission members.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Commission members to forward any further suggestions to Dr. Jeri Zezula.

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- Jeri to revise the survey and send to Mary Davis, Heather Faria, Jane Barlow-Roy, and Jennifer Eber for final review.
- Jennifer would send email to entire Commission stating that survey is to be distributed to their networks and try to obtain as many responses during the period of May 1 to May 30.

Cost-of-Care Discussion / Governor's Report

- Governor's Report
 - Dr. Jeri Zezula emailed an outline of proposed executive report sections to Commission members in advance of this meeting. No changes were offered. A question did arise regarding the timeframe of the report section detailing Commission activities. Jeri and Jennifer advised that Commission action items would be reported covering the time from the last report to current time so that it would be a greater period than the actual report. Of note were the upcoming survey and the ongoing ACO review and discussion.
- Cost-of-Care
 - The request for the Cost-of-Care program data from NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food (NHDAMF) created misunderstandings. The Commission had originally made an informal request for the information. However, guidance and recommendations from NHDAMF recommended formalizing the request under NH RSA 91-A (Right to Know). Eemails exchanged with Commissioner Jasper and Jennifer Eber on March 20th and April 6th found the formal request was not well received and was considered to be adversarial. Commissioner Jasper expressed the desire to take an informal approach. After long and extensive debate, Tom Seymour made motion to withdraw the formal request under NH RSA 91-A and engage Commissioner Jasper in an informal request for the information. Sheila Johannsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Next Steps**
 - Jennifer Eber to inform Commissioner Jasper of the Commission's request to withdraw the 91-A information request and to express the Commission's desire to work with Commissioner Jasper informally to gather the information requested.

New Business

Legislative Preview

- Dr. Jeri Zezula emailed a legislative update to Commission members in advance of this meeting. The summary is as follows:
 - HB 37 (Relative to Animal Groomers) has been retained.
 - HB 249 (Relative to Pet Insurance) was amended to align the state with the pet insurance industry making the pet insurance portable.
 - HB 138 (Relative to Dept of Ag Oversight) was referred to the Senate.
 - HB 230 (Relative to Data Processing Systems) was referred to Finance.
 - HB 258 (Relative to Animal Chiropractic) passed Committee and is in Work Session.
 - HB 231 (Relative to Declawing of Cats) moved without recommendation.
 - Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy expressed concern that legislating potential medically necessary procedures would be a very slippery slope. She said

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that the AVA opposes the procedure but also opposes efforts to legislate medical procedures.

- HB 141 (Relative to Dogs on Hiking Trails) was identified as ITL.
- SB 164 (Relative to Biodiverse Environments) was identified as OTP with amendment.
- SB 97 (Relative to Animals Used in Product Testing) was referred to Committee.

Reports On Any Cruelty Cases

- Alexandria: 32 undernourished goats and sheep were removed from the owner's premises.
- Barnstead: Approximately 14 rats were released into the public. The animals were raised by someone but were not socialized. All are being treated for a variety of sickness.

Comments from Members/Guests

- Heather Faria asked that Commission attendance be placed onto May's meeting agenda. She noted that attendance has dropped significantly and wondered if we met less often if it would be a better fit for members. Heather suggested meeting every other month or even quarterly. Jozi Best and Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy said they were seeing the same problem with their organizations. Jane further said she is finding people are trying to strike a work-life balance and monthly meeting schedules did not fit for many. Jennifer Eber suggested we look into conducting meetings remotely via the internet. Wendy Munroe asked if there were any attendance requirements established in the Governor's Executive Order. We need to have at least 8 meetings per year. Sheila Johannsen suggested another change in the meeting day and/or time might improve attendance.
- Dr. Jeri Zezula offered to that members should provide any agenda items to Jeri and Jennifer and offered to circulate a draft agenda to members. If anyone has items they wish to have on the agenda, they should send the info to Jeri or Jennifer.

Next Steps

- Dr. Jeri Zezula and/or Jennifer Eber to include Meeting Attendance as an agenda topic for May's meeting.

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 11:51 am.

Next Meeting

- Date/Time: **Thursday, May 11, 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

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Dr. Jeri Zezula, Co-Chair
Jennifer Eber, Co-Chair

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