



NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals  
Monthly Meeting Minutes

**December 14, 2023**

**Call To Order**

Having achieved a quorum, Dr. Jeri Zezula called the meeting to order at 10:00 am at the office of Volunteer NH

**Roll Call**

Commissioners Present (12)

Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Vet Med Association  
Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau (L)  
George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State / NH Musers  
Jennifer Eber – General Public  
Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of the United States  
Chief David Goldstein – NH Police Chief's Association  
Sheila Johannesen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH  
Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen (L)  
Tom Seymour – General Public  
David Watters – NH State Senator  
Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association  
Dr. Jeri Zezula – General Public

Commissioners Absent (9)

Cynthia Collins – General Public  
Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative  
Marga Culp – General Public  
Dr. Stephen Crawford – NH State Veterinarian  
Thomas DeRosa – General Public  
Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations  
Tona McCarthy – Humane Cruelty Investigator  
Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association  
Wendy Munroe – NH Vet Tech Association

Public Present

None

Membership

Mary Davis, of the UNH Cooperative Extension, has retired. A replacement will be appointed to fill the empty seat on the Commission.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Zezula asked for amendments to the October 2023 meeting minutes. Not hearing any, Dr. Barlow-Roy motioned to accept the meeting minutes. Sheila Johannesen seconded the motion. The motion passed with 8 Aye, 0 Nay, and 4 Abstentions (due to absence).

## **Old Business**

### Cost of Care Update

Dr. Zezula reported that there were three applications waiting for review. One of them is for a case involving 26 dogs and is seeking \$15,000 in reimbursements.

Senator Watters suggested crafting a bill that would permit public donations to the Cost-of-Care fund similar to one used by NH Fish & Game. He helped with that bill and would be willing to assist with this as well.

### Goals for Commission

It was mentioned that the next Governor could choose to either keep the Executive Order that created this Commission, revise the Executive Order, or cancel the Executive Order and eliminate the Commission.

Senator Watters suggested legislation to make the Commission a permanent group not subject to changes with each election cycle. This would give the Commission the ability to control fund expenditures, make budgeting requests, directly recommend legislation, and testify at legislative hearings. It would free the Commission from having to seek permission to act.

George Cook thought making the Commission permanent would increase the Commission's standing and influence where manuals and reports lack feedback or use. Dr. Zezula also mentioned public relation efforts would improve with the ability to control a funded budget. Jennifer Eber commented that future legislative efforts would become easier to implement.

Jennifer Eber said the Commission should begin its efforts to become a statutory Commission beginning in 2024. Dr. Zezula will email Sheila Johannesen, Kurt Ehrenburg, Chief Goldstein and Cc Jennifer Eber and Senator Watters to begin exploring this.

There was general discussion on the goals of the Commission. The first was legislative, starting with seeking to have the Commission established by RSA. The other component was education, of the public and law enforcement and prosecutors and court staff/judges.

Jennifer Eber thought the Commission could develop its focus into broad specific categories like Legislative and Education. George Cook suggested including Effective Law Enforcement. The three categories will overlap in areas and would be in support of one another. Senator Watters said we should consider working on each category in separate meetings with subject matter experts in attendance. Kurt Ehrenburg said there is very likely similar training efforts in the field that would be helpful. Tyson Morrill thought new educational information could be added to existing curriculum rather than creating new sessions or modules. Kurt reminded that we had done prosecutor training through the NH DOJ. Dr. Barlow-Roy suggested Commission members could look into what educational information or programs their constituency might have that would be helpful.

**Action Item:** Next meeting will focus on Education with each member bringing in what they or their constituency already has available regarding animal welfare and animal cruelty educational opportunities.

### Public Survey on Animal Cruelty: Breakout Stats and Plan

Dr. Zezula had previously agreed to publish the survey results and has prepared an introduction. She thought the repeated survey comments and prominent topics could be used in the report body with associated charts and graphs included in the appendix. She also wants to share the draft report for review prior to publishing. Dr. Barlow-Roy, Jennifer Eber, and Jozi Best volunteered to perform the review. Heather Faria, while absent, was suggested to help review.

**Action Item:** Dr. Zezula to produce draft and share with member volunteers for editing.

## **New Business**

### Consumer's Guide to Choosing an Animal Groomer

Dr. Zezula received a letter asking if the Commission would post the guide on the Commission's website. Upon review, the Commission found areas that could be enhanced. Kurt Ehrenburg suggested editing the document and sending back. Others thought the Commission should reply saying there are concerns and would like to provide input. Sheriff Wright pointed out this is not part of the committee's Executive Order. Others voiced concern that we not offend the group and should offer to assist in some manner. Perhaps a link to the document if posted elsewhere. Jozi Best supported providing input. Jennifer Eber wanted to offer input and offer a referring link. Motion to offer input and posting a link was made by Jennifer Eber. George Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Meeting Requirements/Governor's Office

Jennifer Eber said she was asked, via phone call, about the inquiry regarding the Commission's meeting frequency. She explained what the Commission was thinking but has yet to hear back from the Governor's Office.

### Legislative Review / Preview / Schedule

A number of LSRs have been submitted and a list was distributed to the Commission. As noted below, the generic topic is listed, but definitive language has yet to be published. As of this date, only one has been placed on the calendar. The balance is expected anytime.

#### *House LSRs:*

LSR 2092/HB1117 (Stringham): Relative to protections from fraudulent untrained service animals.

LSR 2098/HB1173 (Rochefort): Relative to disposition of vicious dogs.

LSR 2126/HB1182 (Read): Relative to equine practices & animal cruelty.

LSR 2362/HB1316 (Mackenzie): Relative to dog co-ownership.

LSR 2208/HB1351 (Cannon): Relative to sale & use of rodent glue traps

\*This was identified as not falling under the Executive Order guideline.

LSR 2244/HB1255 (Horrigan): Relative to historic horse racing moratorium.

LSR 2362/HB1316 (Mackenzie): Relative to co-ownership of dogs.

LSR 2431/HB?? (Ammon): Relative to exemptions from rabies vaccine.

LSR 2432/HB1325 (Mannion): Relative to allowing private ownership of small-tailed monkeys, raccoons, foxes, skunks, otters, & kangaroos.

\*Kurt Ehrenburg would like to oppose this; Tyson Morrill would like to ask NH Fish & Game when they meet next Tuesday 1pm

LSR 2552/HB?? (Aron): Relative to conditional licensing of vets educated in other countries.

LSR 2708/HB?? (Kelley): Relative to prohibiting retail sale of dogs, cats, & rabbits  
\*Kurt Ehrenburg said this prohibits sale of dogs only in retail stores. A similar bill will also be presented in Senate. Rescues are exempt.

LSR 2719/HB1102 (Read): Relative to definition of animal cruelty.  
\*This bill bans selling dogs with “punched in faces” like French Bulldogs, which are an AKC breed. George Cook thought “genetic defects” is too broad a term.

LSR 2731/HB?? (Hoell): Relative to repealing annual dog registrations.

LSR 2756/HB?? (Prudhomme-O'Brien): Relative to establishing an animal abuse registry.

LSR 3136/HB?? (McGuire): Relative to repeal of certain designated funds & relative to the apportionment of dog license fees.

#### *Senate LSRs:*

LSR 2921/SB?? (Pearl): Relative to animals brought into this state.  
\*This bill seeks to impact dogs coming from other states and overseas. George Cook referred to “Torture Breeding” in Europe.

LSR 2941/SB?? (Pearl): Relative to the cost of care fund.  
\*This bill would permit shelters to get money directly from the Cost-of-Care Fund. This bill was also selected to serve as a test case so that the Commission may readily gage the speed with which the Governor’s Office will provide permission for the Commission to take a formal position on pending bills. Jennifer Eber motioned to request permission to take a formal position on this bill, as drafted, with Sheriff Wright seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

LSR??/SB363 (Innis): Relative to wagering on simulcast dog racing.

#### Reports on Cruelty Cases

Postponed until the January meeting.

#### Commission Correspondence

Dr. Zezula reported she was contacted regarding care of animals on a farm. The individual was also concerned about keeping their job and did not want to formally complain.

There was also correspondence regarding a boarding kennel where the animals were not properly cared for.

#### **Comments from Members/Guests**

Jennifer Eber notified the Commission that given the sensitive nature of some discussions, anybody who wanted to review minutes before they were distributed to the full Commission could do so and they should notify her if they wanted to review. It was not necessary to do so as revisions could be made at regular meetings, but it was something that Commission

members could do if they had concerns. Please contact Jennifer directly to be placed on the distribution list.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, Sheila Johannesen motioned to adjourn. Tyson Morrill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.

**Next Meeting**

January 11, 2024, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Location to Be Determined

Respectfully submitted,

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