



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

March 14, 2024

Call To Order

Having achieved a quorum, Jeri Zezula called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present (13)

Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Vet Med Association (L)
Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
Marga Culp – General Public
Jennifer Eber – General Public
Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States
Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
Tona McCarthy – Humane Cruelty Investigator
Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
David Watters – NH State Senator
Dr. Jeri Zezula – General Public

Commissioners Absent (8)

Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
Cynthia Collins – General Public
George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State / NH Musers
Dr. Stephen Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
Thomas DeRosa – General Public
Chief David Goldstein – NH Police Chief's Association
Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
Wendy Munroe – NH Vet Tech Association
Tom Seymour – General Public
Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association

Public Present

Trevor McAden from the Governor's Office attended the full meeting.

Membership

Sheila Johannesen – Animal Control Officers Association of NH is no longer a member of the Commission as she was not reelected as ACO of her town. Bjarna O'Brien of Salem Police Department has been nominated by ACOANH and Trevor will put the information before the Governor for approval.

Hannah Majewski, of the UNH Cooperative Extension, is still in process of being approved by Governor and Executive Council.

The meeting started with introductions given the fact that Trevor was attending the meeting.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Jeri Zezula asked for amendments to the February 2024 meeting minutes. Hearing none, Heather Faria motioned to accept the meeting minutes. Jozi Best seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 Aye, 0 Nay, and 2 Abstentions due to absence. (Jeri Zezula and Senator Watters).

Old Business

Cost of Care Update

Jeri Zezula is still communicating with Commissioner Jasper at the Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Jasper still has not provided us with any updates.

Meeting Requirements & Governor's Office

Jennifer Eber advised that the Governor has approved the request to reduce the number of mandatory meetings from eight (8) to four (4). Trevor said that the Executive Order is still being drafted. Heather Faria let us know that we have had 6 meetings this year.

Focus Point: Goals for This Year

We talked about the first goal that the Commission approved at the February meeting – ask the Governor to add a member from the NH DOJ to the Commission. Trevor reported that he talked to the Governor but not in depth and will follow-up.

Senator Watters discussed with Trevor what he thought the Governor's position would be with respect to having the Commission be legislated into statute. Trevor made a note of it and will discuss it with the Governor. There was discussion that it would be a bill for next year and that if we want to move forward, we should start working on it this summer, including articulated duties and membership.

Jeri Zezula reported that she spoke to Dr. Crawford after last meeting and discussed the importance of having a Department of Agriculture representative at our meetings. It was a good discussion, but ultimately the Department of Agriculture does not have the capacity to send somebody. It was discussed that if we have a statutory commission, should revisit membership. Trevor pointed out that NHDAMF is moving to Granite Place Property so they are very occupied with the move.

Jennifer Eber mentioned that the Governor gave us approval to support SB 385 (cost of care amendments).

The other goal discussed was having the Governor's office attend our meetings, which is now happening.

There was then discussion of the manual update. Jeri Zezula would like to see it as an addendum rather than having the entire manual have to go through a review process. There was discussion on how to distribute the manual more widely. This discussion led to training of the judiciary and prosecutors on cost of care and status conferences. Kurt Ehrenburg offered to host a training for both groups. There was discussion of a second presentation through David Rotman at the NH DOJ and Jennifer Eber agreed to reach out to him. Jennifer Eber also agreed to reach out to Judicial Council to see if they could offer more information on how we could facilitate a training to judiciary.

Heather Faria pointed out that prosecutors training as well as training to towns of cost of care issues needs to be done when town or prosecutor has a case. There is high turn over and thus

training is not always relevant when case is actually faced by town. Heather partners with 30 municipalities and sends them letters to highlight changes in law with cost of care and cruelty cases. There was discussion of doing training on 2 year cycle.

Kurt Ehrenburg will present proposal for training at next meeting. Who, what where, when, training going forward. There was discussion on a previous training with the Strafford County prosecutors' office. Kurt Ehrenburg has resources and understands that speakers need to understand NH law.

There was discussion of a small group of people working on manual update and then distributing to full Commission for review. We could try to get update by June 2024 and then have training in the fall.

There was detailed discussion on SB 385 that amends the cost of care. Basically, the revisions allow DOA to pay a third party and then takes the State Veterinarian out of the process as State Veterinarian was specifically referenced in prior RSA. It will expedite the process – that is the point of the bill.

Heather Faria and Jeri Zezula had a discussion on how cost of care bills are processed. All seized animals are going to a licensed facility.

Discussion on a PR campaign to general public on reporting cruelty which has been an issue important to Dr. Crawford. Jeri Zezula handed out three possible options for a poster on how to report cruelty to law enforcement. Trevor said that all press releases need to be approved by Governor. Often Governor will give a quote. Trevor will double check on how PSA is approved and goes out.

Jozi Best suggested that the poster could be handed out in April and early May for clinics for rabies shots. We should go where the animals are – Humane societies, rabies clinics, CVS, Facebook postings. Margo Coulp suggested a public announcement when cost of care bill passes. Tyson Morrill suggested county fair and 4H group.

Dr. Barlow-Roy arrives.

Senator Watters raised the popularity of stickers that kids did for voting. Perhaps 4H could take this on. Jozi explained the fence talk at fairs – they set aside one pen with tables. Each exhibitor does one hour of fence talk. Trevor McAden mentioned that the stickers were national news.

There was talk about having the kid Governor, whose platform is animal rights, attend our meetings and work with us. Trevor McAden will discuss it with the Governor. Senator Watters suggested having meeting in Executive Council Chambers.

Dr. Barlow-Roy explained that she just taped a segment on animal cruelty for WMUR. It will air on Sunday at 6:40 and 8:40 am. Fred at WMUR said that he was open to other animal cruelty pieces and Dr. Barlow-Roy thought the Commission might take advantage of the offer.

Jeri Zezula raised the issue that there is a misconception of cruelty laws – lesson on things that have been cropping up. She handed out the RSA on cruelty and the definition of torture from Kentucky. Dr. Zezula explained that county attorneys only take the cases if felony or jury. Law enforcement or local prosecutor handle most negligent and misdemeanor cases. County prosecutors reluctant to take on cases because they don't know definition of torture required for felony conviction. Lots of difference in penalties. Kentucky trying to put in a bill for definition of torture. Senator Watters will ask his aide to do national legislative search on torture. Kentucky

uses intention. NH uses purposeful. Not sure that need whole laundry list as in Kentucky. Exclusionary language – do we want to include exclusionary language. Sen. Watters will get more information. Something definitional is useful.

New Business

Legislative Updates

House Bills:

HB 1117 (Stringham): Relative to protections from fraudulent untrained service animals. Exec session schedule 3/20.

HB 1173 (Rocheffort): Relative to disposition of vicious dogs. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1182 (Read): Relative to equine practices & animal cruelty. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1316 (Mackenzie): Relative to dog co-ownership. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1255 (Horrigan): Relative to historic horse racing moratorium. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1316 (Mackenzie): Relative to co-ownership of dogs. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1556 (Ammon): Relative to exemptions from rabies vaccine. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1325 (Mannion): Relative to allowing private ownership of small-tailed monkeys, raccoons, foxes, skunks, otters, & kangaroos. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1526 (Aron): Relative to conditional licensing of vets educated in other countries. House committee vote: OTP

HB 1680 (Kelley): Relative to prohibiting retail sale of dogs, cats, & rabbits. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1102 (Read): Relative to definition of animal cruelty. House committee vote: ITL.

HB 1501 (Hoell): Relative to repealing annual dog registrations. House committee vote: ITL.

HB1505 (Prudhomme-O'Brien): Relative to establishing an animal abuse registry. ITL.

HB1626 (McGuire): Relative to repeal of certain designated funds & relative to the apportionment of dog license fees. House committee vote: OTP

Senate Bills:

SB 587 (Pearl): Relative to animals brought into this state. Senate Passed.

SB 385 (Pearl): Relative to the cost of care fund. Senate: OTP, on consent calendar.

SB 363 (Innis): Relative to wagering on simulcast dog racing. Passed Senate.

SB346 (Watters): Relative to the prohibition of dogs for hunting coyotes. ITL

SB541 (Innis): Relative to the prohibition of cat and dog sales by retail pet stores. Referred to Interim Study

SB 548 (Lang): Relative to removing gray squirrels from the definition of game animals.
Referred to Interim Study

SB97 (Watters): Relative to product testing on animals. Passed Senate.

New Cruelty Cases

Tyson Morrill brought up issue of puppy that was being left in care during work day in Concord.

There was a discussion of ACO and how we still need to address issues. The ACO association is interested in working with us. There remains the jurisdictional issues of an ACO and police training.

Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, Heather Faria motioned to adjourn. Margo Coulp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 11:52 am.

Next Meeting

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

Respectfully submitted,

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