



NH Governor's Commission on The Humane Treatment of Animals

April 11, 2024

Call To Order

A meeting quorum was never achieved. Eight members are required to attend for a quorum and only six members attended the meeting.

However, Jennifer Eber had invited Jay Buckley, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Judicial Council, to speak with the Commission and a general discussion ensued at 10:08 am.

It is important to note that no voting occurred and no decisions were made during this discussion due to the lack of a meeting quorum.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present (6)

Jennifer Eber – General Public / Co-Chair
Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States
Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
Wendy Munroe – NH Vet Tech Association
Tom Seymour – General Public / Secretary
Jeri Zezula – General Public / Co-Chair

Commissioners Absent (14)

Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Vet Med Association
Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
Cynthia Collins – General Public
Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State / NH Musers
Marga Coulp – General Public
Dr. Stephen Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
Thomas DeRosa – General Public
Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
Chief David Goldstein – NH Police Chief's Association
Tona McCarthy – Humane Cruelty Investigator
Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
David Watters – NH State Senator
Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association

Public Present

Jay Buckley, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Judicial Council
Bjarna O'Brien, Salem, NH Police ACO

Membership

Bjarna O'Brien, Salem Police Department ACO, and Hannah Majewski, of the UNH Cooperative Extension, are still in the process of being approved as Commissioners by the Governor and Executive Council.

Comments from Members/Guests

Jay Buckley, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Judicial Council

Jennifer Eber asked Jay Buckley to address the issues observed by this Commission regarding the failure to have meaningful status conferences within 14 days for cases in which at least one animal was seized and being held. She said that the information gathered by the Commission was that these hearings were important, but the Court and parties were either continuing them or not fully exploring the best interests of the animals. There was a circuit court and superior court administrative order calling for these status conferences but the Commission wanted to explore whether there was more that we could do to educate the judiciary on this issue.

Jay Buckley advised that the Judicial Council does not take formal positions on proposals or write bills or establish law but can make judicial recommendations. The Council is powerful in that it has members that can listen and take action. The Council's goals are to recommend augmentation of existing law in order to close gaps and make laws more concise to benefit both sides of any litigation.

Jay repeatedly emphasized that the best way to appeal to the Judicial Council is to prepare a package and present in-person. Drafting and delivering a paper does not carry nearly the weight of an in-person presentation. He said that, if the Commission wished to present to the Judicial Council, we should contact him directly as he develops the Judicial Council's agenda. The next Judicial Council meeting is in October 2024 and he encouraged the Commission to make a presentation. There may be a meeting held sooner and he will let us know if there is an opportunity to present sooner.

Torture Definition

Prospective Commissioner Bjarna O'Brien offered several suggested changes to the example definition of torture provided by Jeri Zezula. Jeri clarified that this definition was one being used by the state of Kentucky and was just an example that we might avail ourselves of. That said, no action could take place on the matter where the Commission failed to achieve a meeting quorum.

Commission Attendance

Commissioners in attendance discussed the continued issue of member attendance. Frustration was demonstrated by all with many traveling for some distance for a meeting that failed to be able to take any official action.

Conclusion

The general discussion concluded at 11:00 am.

Next Meeting

May 9, 2024, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Location to Be Determined

Respectfully submitted,

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