



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

May 9, 2023

Call To Order

Achieving a quorum (8), Co-Chair Dr. Jeri Zezula called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present (10)

Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau
Cynthia Collins – General Public
Jennifer Eber – General Public / Co-Chair
Heather Faria – NH Federation of Humane Organizations
Tona McCarthy – Humane Cruelty Investigator
Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen
Wendy Munroe – NH Vet Tech Association
Tom Seymour – General Public / Secretary
David Watters – NH State Senator (second half of meeting)
Jeri Zezula – General Public / Co-Chair (first half of meeting)

Commissioners Absent (10)

Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Vet Med Association
Barbara Comtois – NH State Representative
George Cook – Dog Owners of The Granite State / NH Musers
Marga Culp – General Public
Dr. Stephen Crawford – NH State Veterinarian
Thomas DeRosa – General Public
Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States
Chief David Goldstein – NH Police Chief's Association
Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association
Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association

Public Present

Eleanor "Ellie" Lively, 2024 New Hampshire's Kid Governor
Jo Ann Robichaud, New Hampshire's Kid Governor State Coordinator
Christopher Lively, Ellie's Father
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.

Introduction of Members & Public Attendees

Attending Commissioners introduced themselves to Ellie Lively, 2024 NH Kid Governor, detailing why they were appointed, who they represented, and their general background.

Jo Ann Robichaud provided an overview of the Kid Governor program and how candidates were selected. Jo Ann said that Ellie ran on a platform where she wanted to raise awareness of and decrease animal abuse. Her three-point platform includes conducting food and supply drives in NH

schools, creating an awareness campaign using flyers and a video, and working with animal shelters to create volunteer programs for fifth graders. Ellie describes her efforts in a YouTube video created for her candidacy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13AMVSQ6CZw>). Ellie had already conducted an animal food and supply drive for the Humane Society of Greater Nashua (her hometown). Jo Ann also advised that Ellie was also writing a blog on how to properly care for animals (mainly dogs and cats) which may be found at nh.kidgovernor.org.

Dr. Zezula gave a historical overview of the Commission, its work, and accomplishments. Jennifer Eber described the Commission's work evaluating pending legislation and how the Commission plays an advisory role for NH Governor Sununu. Jozi Best explained the workings and importance of the NH Cost-of-Care Fund.

Ellie was asked what she wanted people to take away from her blog. Ellie replied that she hoped people would use the list of shelters where they could obtain help for the care of their animals.

Review and Approval of March Minutes

Wendy Munroe motioned to accept the March Minutes. Tona McCarthy seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 aye, 0 nay, and 3 abstentions (due to absence).

Review and Revisions to April Notes

April's meeting failed to achieve a quorum and no vote was taken to formally approve the notes. No suggested revisions to the notes were made.

Old Business

Correspondence with Governor's Office

Jennifer reports that the Governor has re-issued the Executive Order in order to reduce the number of mandatory meetings from eight to four.

Appointment of Cooperative Extension and ACOANH Members

The appointments of the UNH Cooperative Extension and ACOANH Members are still pending approval by the Governor and Executive Council.

Possible DOJ member

The possibility of having a new Commission member from the NH Department of Justice has been taken under advisement by the Governor's Office and we are waiting to hear back from his Office on his position.

Statutory Commission

The possibility of having the Commission shift from existing by Executive Order to exist under NH RSA has been taken under advisement by the Governor's Office and we are waiting to hear back from his Office on his position.

Jay Buckey Discussion (Cost of Care and Pre-Trial Hearing Education to Prosecutors and Judiciary)

Jennifer described briefly the discussion by Jay at the April meeting and advised the Judicial Council's next meeting is in the fall, possibly October. Jennifer thought we might make a presentation detailing and supporting educational opportunities for judges and needs for education on cost of care and status conference issues in animal cruelty cases.

“Report Animal Cruelty” PR

It was felt the poster could be better designed with a more professional polish. Heather Faria informed the Commission about nhpetsafe.org. She said they had branding and campaign materials that would prove beneficial to our cause. While this group has since shut down, Heather thought it might be worthwhile to revitalize. It was felt a singular website with such as simple and easy to remember URL could act as a source for all things pet safety related – a central repository, as it were. Questions arose about the possibility of NH funding the effort. Heather has old PSAs, flyers, and the like. She also has kept ownership of the URL.

Tyson Morrill thought a non-profit could be established making it easier to manage and could work outside the confines and restrictions of the Executive Order.

Heather agreed to pull together information and samples from nhpetsafe.org to present to Commission.

The poster proposal decision is tabled.

Ad Hoc Committee for Making Commission Statutory

Jozi asked what was original mission / purpose when the Commission was first created? She thought it might help in determining objectives of the proposed statute. No one present could pinpoint which Governor initiated the Commission.

Jozi made motion to explore the possible statutory creation. Tyson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeri will chair the work group. Those interested in participating over the summer should send Jeri a message. Tyson was interested and all thought that Senator Watters should serve, although he was not present at the meeting at the time.

Thoughts on RSA 644:8 III-a “torture”

It was unknown if the draft law had been enacted yet. Senator Watters will ask Legislative Research to pull information regarding the Kentucky bill and other states. This could take a couple of weeks, at most. Jennifer will ask Kurt Ehrenburg for any information he might have regarding torture legislation from other states.

New Business

Legislative Bills Update

It was noted that the bill pertaining to the Cost-of-Care passed. A brief review of other pending legislation was estimated as follows:

HB1556 (Ammon): Relative to exemptions from rabies vaccine – ITL.

HB1526 (Aron): Relative to conditional licensing of vets educated in other countries - Moving forward.

HB1102 (Read): Relative to definition of animal cruelty – ITL.

SB385 (Pearl): Relative to the cost of care fund – Passed.

SB587 (Pearl): Relative to animals brought into this state – Passed.

New cruelty cases/issues

Tona McCarthy said there was significant increase with farm animals. He mentioned a farm that has / had 100 goats which is under open investigation right now. Jozi and Tona agreed that the quality of feed has deteriorated over the last 18 months leading to farm owners being able to feed the animals properly.

Bjarna raised the issue that they are finding many cases in which people are shipping up dogs/puppies from the south without health certificates and keeping these animals in their homes. The conditions in the homes are not great for the animals. The people then “sell” them as rescue dogs without health certificates. The Department of AG does not have jurisdiction and it is hard for local police to regulate. Often the violation is simply not having a license, which results in a small monetary fine. There was discussion on how to solve the problem and discussion on whether there could be education of the public on the fact that it is illegal to transfer (sell) an animal in NH without a health certificate.

Additional Input/Comments - Members and public attendees

None offered.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Heather Faria and seconded by Tona McCarthy passed unanimously. Jennifer Eber adjourned the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Next Meeting

June 13, 2024, 10 am - 12 pm
(Last meeting before Summer Break)
Location TBA

Respectfully submitted,

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