



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

**June 13, 2024**

**Call To Order**

Achieving a quorum (8), Co-Chair Dr. Jeri Zezula called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Roll Call**

Commissioners Present (11)

Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy – NH Vet Med Association  
Jozi Best – NH Farm Bureau (L)  
Cynthia Collins – General Public  
Jennifer Eber – General Public / Co-Chair  
Kurt Ehrenburg – Humane Society of The United States  
Tona McCarthy – Humane Cruelty Investigator  
Tyson Morrill – NH Sportsmen  
Wendy Munroe – NH Vet Tech Association  
Tom Seymour – General Public / Secretary  
Sheriff William Wright – NH Sheriff's Association (L)  
Dr. Jeri Zezula – General Public / Co-Chair

Commissioners Absent (9)

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  
Patricia Morris – NH Equine Association  
David Watters – NH State Senator

Public Present

Bjarna O'Brien, Salem, NH Police ACO  
John Porter, University of New Hampshire  
Joan O'Brien, NH Animal Rights League  
Chuck Cox, Tuckaway Farm, Lee, NH

**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.

Heather Faria will be stepping away from the Commission and Doug Barry is in the process of being approved to represent the NH Federation of Humane Organizations.

**Introduction of Members & Public Attendees**

Four members of the public were in attendance, one arriving in the middle of the meeting. As has been custom, each member of the Commission introduced themselves and the role they held. The public attendees introduced themselves as well.

## **Review and Approval of May Minutes**

Dr. Jeri Zezula asked for amendments to the May meeting minutes. With no amendments offered Kurt Ehrenburg motioned to accept the May Minutes. Tyson Morrill seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 aye, 0 nay, and 4 abstentions (due to absence).

## **Old Business**

Correspondence with Governor's Office – Jennifer Eber

### *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 Governor does not wish to re-write the Executive Order to now include a member of the NH Department of Justice (DOJ) on the Commission. He suggested we seek a volunteer from the DOJ to participate. Jennifer Eber plans to ask the Governor if he could “suggest” to the DOJ that a volunteer from the DOJ attend our meetings thinking he might have greater influence.

### *Statutory Commission*

The Governor is not opposed to the Commission attempting to become established by law rather than Executive Order. Please see further discussion on Page 3 in these minutes.

### Judicial Council – Jennifer Eber

Jennifer Eber reminded the Commission of Jay Buckley's visit in April. Jay had strongly suggested the Commission prepare a presentation for the Council regarding judicial training regarding the processing of animal neglect and animal abuse cases. Where the Commission felt this is an opportunity that should not be missed and agreed that Jennifer should proceed and request the opportunity to present at the Judicial Council's next meeting in October 2024.

### NH PetSafe – Jennifer Eber and Dr. Jeri Zezula

Heather Faria suggested in our last meeting that we should launch a campaign on animal cruelty reporting. NH PetSafe was formerly organized to provide this type of information. However, NH PetSafe has been inactive. The Commission felt this could be the first source for information regarding animal cruelty including links to the Commission's webpage and other resources. Operations could be handled by sub-committee so that the Commission could keep its interests at the forefront.

Dr. Jeri Zezula reminded the Commission that the NH Federation of Humane Organizations owns the URL which originally launched in 2015. The website was well liked, but no leadership was in place to run the program. Dr. Barlow-Roy felt this was needed as much today as it was in 2015, but right now plates are full and Jane cannot assure extensive participation.

It was agreed that NH PetSafe should relaunch, and we can then see what the reception is. Maybe farm livestock and wildlife could be included in the future by creating specific sections.

Jennifer Eber motioned to develop an exploratory group consisting of members of this Commission, the NH Federation of Humane Organizations, the NH Vet Med Association, the Animal Control Officers Association of NH, and the NH Federation of Humane Societies to consider launching a public campaign using NH PetSafe. Kurt Ehrenburg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Ad Hoc Committee for Making Commission Statutory – Dr. Jeri Zezula

Dr. Jeri Zezula advised Tom Seymour, Tyson Morrill, Kurt Ehrenburg, and Senator Watters have volunteered to work with her on this project. Jeri also advised that most other Commissions are attached to administrative units. Almost all Commissions have different categories of volunteers depending on the area of focus. Many also have police chiefs on their rosters. Others are typically nominated by the organizations represented on the Commissions and other volunteers are typically appointed by the Governor and the Executive Council. Many Commissions include such topics like term limits and attendance requirements.

The work will take place over the summer with a plan to present a draft in the September 2024 meeting.

#### Thoughts on RSA 644:8 III-a “torture” – Dr. Jeri Zezula

Dr. Jeri Zezula brought this forward because of being contacted by law enforcement who need to know the specific requirements to prove torture. It was found some prosecutors are reluctant to take on this case as torture. Many states have a definition listed while NH does not.

Senator Watters is asking Legislative Research to pull information regarding the Kentucky bill and other states. This could take a couple of weeks, at most. Kurt Ehrenburg will check for any information he might have along these lines. Kurt also suggested we gain feedback from Senator Watters on his willingness to pursue such legislation. This Commission would be happy to assist with the language.

#### NH Kid Governor – Jennifer Eber

The Commission agreed to post the group photograph with the NH Kid Governor on the Commission’s website. Perhaps the Kid Governor would consider endorsing NH PetSafe. There may be a chance to tie in with WMUR to promote the NH Kid Governor, this Commission, and our shared goals and objectives.

### **New Business**

#### Legislative Bills Update – Kurt Ehrenburg

HB 1526: Relative to a Conditional Veterinary License for Graduates of Non-AVMA Accredited Colleges of Veterinary Medicine – PASSED with Amendment.

SB 363: Relative to Wagering on Simulcast Dog Racing – PASSED.

SB385: Relative to The Cost of Care Fund – PASSED allowing funds to transfer direct to shelters.

SB 97: Relative to Animal Use in Product Testing – PASSED with Amendment.

HB1351: Relative to The Sale & Use of Rodent Glue Traps relegated to Interim Study.

SB 541: Relative to Prohibition of Retails Sales of Dogs & Cats relegated to Interim Study.

#### Wild Neighbors On-Line Class – Kurt Ehrenburg

Kurt Ehrenburg explained the intent behind Wild Neighbors is to provide guidance with respect to human and wildlife interactions. The objective is to have organizations sign on with a pledge to only use humane methods and discard euthanasia methods of controlling wildlife interactions. Training would be provided for the handling of wildlife calls. Kurt said they are hoping for more involvement from NH Fish & Game.

Tyson Morrill stated that USDA Wildlife works with NH Fish & Game who already handles such cases.

## Schedule Of Meetings and Priorities for Fall and Onward – Dr. Jeri Zezula & Jennifer Eber

Dr. Jeri Zezula said that our legislative representatives hope we can avoid their busy days during the upcoming session. Jeri reminded everyone that the last poll taken found Thursday was best, but attendance has been lacking since then.

Sheriff Wright asked if attendance suffered due too many meetings. He expanded by saying the new Executive Order, with its reduction in the number of mandatory meetings, might alleviate that issue. Dr. Jeri Zezula felt others do not put it on their calendars. Jennifer Eber wondered if guest speakers or special topics for each meeting might draw more attendees. Dr. Jane Barlow-Roy said it can hard to get time off to attend so many meetings and that others may have similar difficulties. Jozi Best suggested those with attendance difficulties should be contacted to identify their specific issues.

The Commission agreed that we should first contact our Legislative Representatives for their best days and then email a poll for the Commission's preference while keeping the same morning times. It was also agreed that our Legislative Representatives should send any comments to co-chairs in case they cannot make a meeting. With the new Executive Order now requiring no less than four meetings each session, the Commission is currently looking at 5 meetings (every other month beginning in September 2024).

### **New cruelty cases/issues - All**

Dr. Jeri Zezula spoke at sentencing hearing for the Wolfeboro cat torture and dismemberment case. The individual was sentenced to 6-12 years plus there were several suspended sentences (contingent on good behavior).

Jozi Best spoke of an ACO case where 29 dogs were in bad shape. Jozi said the judge allowed the accused to get two dogs back. However, the individual failed twice to appear to take the dogs. The ACO involved said it is common to have animals returned to the accused. It is also common to see offenders continue to obtain another animal at a later point.

### **Additional Input/Comments - Members and public attendees**

John Porter spoke to a case involving the confiscation of dairy goats. He felt strongly that the right questions were not asked of the commercial business where the goats were kept resulting in a major misunderstanding. He suspects that the buildup of manure as part of the bedded pack systems may have caused the complaints. Jennifer Eber did not think it was appropriate for the Commission to be speaking to an active case. Jozi Best wanted to be sure the information was recorded in the Commission's meeting minutes. Dr. Jeri Zezula said that often friends will come in and help those in need of assistance when things don't go right for whatever reason. In any case, the animal's welfare must come to the forefront. Jozi Best felt most folks do not understand the benefits of pack bedding. As long as the bedding is dry and the animal's feet are kept dry, the animal is fine. Most folks do not have a working understanding of large animal care.

Chuck Cox, from Tuckaway Farm in Lee, NH, spoke in support of the goat owner discussed above. He also suggested that most folks do not have a working knowledge of large animal care. He said that the negative publicity has taken its toll resulting in the inability of the goats' owner to continue offering her wares at local farmer markets. He hopes this Commission can take steps to prevent future "mistakes".

Joan O'Brien, from NH Animal Rights League, said they support the PetSafe efforts and feels it would be very helpful.

Another individual spoke to the Commission's Meeting Minutes from May. They felt the draft meeting minutes posting in error. The draft minutes state, "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.” They felt this suggests that farmers are not properly caring for their livestock. Jozi Best clarified the statement by saying that the animals are not being as well fed due to the quality of available feed and that farmers are doing the very best they can given the quality of available feed.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, a motion to adjourn was made by Jennifer Eber and seconded by Tona McCarthy. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Jeri Zezula adjourned the meeting at 11:54 am.

### **Next Meeting**

September 2024

Date, Time, and Location TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Seymour, Secretary

Jeri Zezula, Co-Chair

Jennifer Eber, Co-Chair