



## Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

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### Minutes of May 29, 2008 Meeting

This meeting was held in the Attorney General's Conference Room #302 because Senate Room 100 was not available.

Present: Sheila Presby, Jean Slepian for Representative Skinder, Joanne Bourbeau, Mark Ellingwood, George Cook, Maureen Prendergast, Carol Nadeau (disability commission), Dick Wentzell, Trish Morris, Susan Morrell, Roni McCall, James Kennedy, Andy Shagoury, Steve Sprowl, Nancy Johnson and Jan Gardner for Elin Phinizy

Also present are Carol Nadeau and Joyce Arivella

#### **Welcome new members**

Trish Morris was appointed to the commission and is replacing Peter Marsh as a public member and member of the NH Bar Association. Also appointed is James Hardy who will now be representing the Sheriff's Association. Dr. Jerilee Zezula has changed appointments from UNH Cooperative Extension Member to a Public Member.

#### **Update on meeting with Kathy Goode**

New and replacement representation letters from the Governor have gone out for appointments to this Commission. The Executive Order will not be changed at this point to add any new representatives. It may be revisited after the elections in the Fall.

Kathy Goode pointed out that only those members listed on the executive order with an "or designee" status can send a designee should they not be able to attend a meeting. Only these designee's can vote should the chair call for a vote under Roberts Rules. In other words, if any other members

send a designee they cannot vote for the person they are representing should a vote be called.

The members who can send a voting designee are The State Veterinarian, The Attorney General's office and the UNH Cooperative Extension.

### **Approval of last meetings minutes**

The minutes were approved with amendments.

### **Progress on obtaining fact finding information for cruelty case costs**

The subcommittee of Steve Sprowl, Maureen Prendergast, Stephanie Frommer, Susan Morrell, Trish Morris and Roni McCall originally compiled a list of some 202 cases from 2003 to present, however we were able to obtain cost information for only 61 cases. We therefore believe that we should use only those 61 cases to supply the statistics for the Cost Analysis report to the Governor.

Roni McCall stated that we don't think we will get any further information as it already has been 6 months of gathering the information and requests. If we ask the ACO's etc to give us the details and it will take them away for what they need to do for the animals.

Trish Morris stated 61 cases totaling \$559,676.21 is about a quarter of the 202 cases, targeted.

Joanne Bourbeau stated that getting this much information was pretty good given each agency requested has a different way of tracking the information if at all.

Trish Morris also went onto say that a random collection of cases does not mean that animal abuse is on the decline (for example 2007 only shows 4 cases where 2003 shows more).

Jim Kennedy asked if we can find out if restitution has been made. Steve Sprowl answered that in most cases it hasn't - usually only the court fees are paid immediately and if a conviction goes to probation dept they can have 20 years to pay it back.

Jan Gardner asked who pays the cost. Again Steve Sprowl answered that the town picks up the cost of the prosecution, the shelter picks up the cost of the animals. If the prosecutor office plea bargains the case to get the animals turned over, the shelter sends the animals owner a letter to claim the animal at cost - if the owner doesn't claim them the animals are considered abandoned property - the shelter then can put them up for adoption with a fee charged to the adopter. This doesn't come near to actual cost of caring for these animals for the time this all is determined.

Susan Morrell added that the various prosecutors do not keep track of prosecution costs because the agencies pay a salary rather than track hours.

Steve Sprowl provided the following additional information:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
<b><u># Complaints</u></b>	<b><u>458</u></b>	<b><u>471</u></b>	<b><u>509</u></b>	<b><u>513</u></b>	<b><u>564</u></b>	<b><u>823</u></b>	<b><u>3338</u></b>
Dogs	480	452	458	409	278	525	2602
Cats	180	431	254	201	264	301	1631
Horses	128	153	254	254	216	244	1249
Cows							0
Rabbits							0
Birds							0
Pigs							0
Chickens							0
Tigers							0
Elephants							0
Ponies							0
Other	204	114	74	154	133		495
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>1018</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>6161</b>
<b><u>Animals Seized</u></b>							
All Animals	52	77	26	75	76	80	<b><u>386</u></b>
<b><u>Animals Surrendered</u></b>							
Dogs	21	100	69	18	16	16	240
Cats	6	103	56	30	70	104	369

<b>Horses</b>	1	5	5	3	0	5	<b>19</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	85	8	60	24	12	<b>191</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>819</b>

Steve also stated that NHSPCA average 70-80 calls a week in regards to animal cruelty.

Susan Morrell suggested the possibility of forming an official position in the Attorney General's Office of an Animal Cruelty Prosecutor who would only deal with animal cruelty cases. Further if such an office were to be formed this might be a way for the State of NH to accurately track the number of animal cruelty cases.

After looking over the compiled cost/data Trish Morris asked

1. is the "costs" data all inclusive or just the legal/police enforcement side? Does it include the care, custody and control for the shelters and/or foster homes?

(we have to be careful as the stats averages will be very skewed by the one \$320k and the other \$86k)

2. statistically, one-third of the animal cruelty cases were prosecuted and resulted in convictions, good. Another 15 (25%) resulted in misdemeanor charges or civil charges. 40 out of the 60 moved forward, legally.

3. the stats show that it costs \$964 per case that does not get "charged". Here the ACRS and training will be of assistance, especially whereas we expect more complaints to continue (referring to Steve Sprowl stating NHSPCA average 70-80 animal cruelty cases a week). In contrast, prosecuting the misdemeanor is only \$1300 per case.. and usually civil fines are recovered (or they should be) which helps to offset the costs (I think its \$500/complaint?) Thus that is less than a case that is not followed through...which we don't know if no charges were filed due to lack of evidence, poor investigation, bad complaint etc.

4. This requires a lot of time from the PDs. Breakdown: 9 cases by the ACO costing \$427.00 each, 26 by PDs costing \$1311 each, 20 by shelters (includes the two high numbers )at \$22,888 - I am sure the shelters included the care custody and control of the seized animals, I do not know if

the ACO and PD numbers include that. This shows that almost half of the cases come through the PD, untrained to handle this.. look at the ACO low costs.... thus expertise and education plays a role...

George Cook stated we should take out the two high ones,

Trish Morris then said that if we do that shelters move down to \$2800 per case. It would be helpful to know what costs went into ACO and PD and Shelter numbers but that information is not available.

What the stats do show is a decline in the reported cases, I do not know why. The high of 21 was in 2004, then 19 in 2003, dropping to 7 in 2007. Ouch. That may lead one to believe the cruelty instances are decreasing, I would argue it's the lack of prosecution, training and how to handle it. We know the calls are coming into the NHSPCA but perhaps it is the lack of buy in from PDs, lack of ACO's etc!

Annual town reports are inconsistent: some track animal complaints other animal cruelty but perhaps they can give us the statistics on the number of calls these towns receive yearly.

It was noted that Jerilee Zezula stated last month that she felt the information was not helpful as the number of calls do not accurately reflect the number of actual cases.

Trish Morris felt the report to the governor should include a disclaimer

Such disclaimer information might be:

- Not all inclusive count of animal complaints: , survey represents 61 out of 200 complaints identified. Approximately 30% response.
- Does not include prosecution costs. (or the costs of failure to prosecute)
- Does not include opportunity costs (police departments must pull their man hours from other complaints to handle animal complaints)
- Not all inclusive with care, custody and control - does not include an average daily care costs for cats, dogs, horses etc.
- Who Pays the cost - town? Shelter? Donations?
  - 20-25% results in arrest - from either lack of investigation/enforcement or prosecution.

- Restitution is not tracked in a single database, information resides in the issuing court's files.

Jan Gardner read an email from Elin Phinizy regarding the cases targeted for the cost analysis report:

The Ruffs of Warner are listed as convicted. I was under the impression that they were never actually charged with or convicted of animal cruelty rather they were convicted of child endangerment. That doesn't mitigate the costs involved in the seizure of their animals, but we have a responsibility to be accurate.

Elin also questioned the case of "confidence men bilk woman in attempt to get neighbors cat back" - Elin did not feel that was a cruelty issue. Nor is the case of an "emu at large".

Steve Sprowl answered Elin's concerns as follows:

The Ruffs were convicted of child endangerment not cruelty to animals. But we took the animals because the conditions they were living in under the State Vets orders. Some of the animals were freely living in the house and having the run of the house that made it uninhabitable to the children. The conviction stands and the animal's costs should also be included in this case as that's what the agencies had to deal with in this case. To be accurate I would make sure they are listed as convicted of child abuse(same as endangerment) and leave the costs of the care of the animals on there as well.

The EMU at large, should be listed as trespassing stock, no arrest as the owner paid full restitution for the return and capture of the animal and the PD didn't file formal charges. So to be accurate, list the charge as trespassing livestock, then the costs, and under outcome...list it as paid restitution, no formal charges brought forward.

### **Upcoming Legislation/Pending hearings**

Joanne Bourbeau provided the following information:

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Action</b>
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**Number**

HB666	O'Connell	Wildlife, Fish & Game	an act establishing a license fee for the sale of animal vaccines	Passed House and Senate Signed by the Governor 5/21
HB1142	LaLiberte	Fish and Game	relative to licensure for bird breeders	ITL
HB1143	Skinder	Public & Municipal Affairs	relative to penalties for failure to provide outdoor dogs with necessary shelter	Passed House and Senate
HB1430	Vaillancourt	Wildlife, Fish & Game	relative to the care of dogs used in dog racing	Passed House and Senate
HB1522	Vaillancourt	E&A	relative to care standards for farm animals	ITL
HB1609	Parkhurst	Criminal Justice	relative to misrepresentation of service animals	Interim Study
HB1293	Phinizy	Wildlife, Fish & Game	animal population control program	ITL
HB1545	Wendelboe	Ways and Means	establishing a waiver option for live-racing tracks	ITL
HB1569	Skinder	Wildlife, Fish & Game	regulating the use of drugs on wildlife	Passed House and Senate Signed by the Governor 5/21
HB1232	Bulis	Wildlife, Fish & Game	relative to regulation by fish and game department of baiting for game birds	Passed House and Senate Signed by the Governor 5/21
HB1301	Tilton	Health & Human Services	relative to the definition of "service dogs"	Passed House and Senate
HB1266	Lawrence	Fish and Game	allowing 50 caliber pistols to take game animals in the state	Passed House and Senate and Signed by the Governor 5/5
HB1314	Webb	E&A	relative to animal	ITL

SB375	Roberge	Municipal and County Government	cruelty allowing veterinarians to inform town clerks about dogs that have been euthanized	Passed House and Senate and signed by the Governor 5/12
SB504	Roberge	Public & Municipal Affairs	restricting the number of puppies to be sold by commercial kennels	ITL
SB513	Kenney	Criminal Justice	relative to fighting animals	Passed House and Senate
HB581	Parkhurst	Judiciary	relative to the penalty for purposely mistreating service animals	Passed House and Senate Committee of Conference

HB 1430 - passed with amendment of inspection of the animal cannot be done without someone from the pari-mutuel commission

Nancy Johnson added The Governor signed three additional bills: HB666, an act establishing a license fee for the sale of animal vaccines; HB1569, regulating the use of drugs on wildlife; and HB1232, relative to regulation by fish and game of baiting or game birds.

And this week HB581, relative to the penalty for purposely mistreating service animals, was in a committee of conference and did not get signed off. The small change that the House wanted, did not sit well with the Senate.

Federally the following legislation was enacted:

HR 137 & SB261 - Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act was signed into law.

The Bill Sponsor(s): Reps. Elton Gallegly (R-CA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), John Ensign (R-NV), Arlen Specter (R-PA), and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

To upgrade current penalties by authorizing felony-level jail time (up to three years) for violations of the federal animal fighting law, and to prohibit interstate and foreign commerce of cockfighting weapons.

## Congress Enacted Key Animal Protection Measures in the Farm Bill

### Puppy Imports, Increase Penalties for Animal Welfare Violations

By Overriding President' Bush's Veto, Lawmakers Crack Down on Animal Fighting and Puppy Imports, Increase Penalties for Animal Welfare Violations

By a vote of 316 to 108, the House voted to override the veto last night, and the Senate followed suit today, with a vote of 82 to 13. The final bill — which is now considered law, except for the trade title due to a technical glitch — includes important measures to stop the import of puppies for commercial sale from foreign puppy mills and strengthen the federal law against animal fighting, as well as to increase penalties for those who violate the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

**Puppy Imports** - The Farm Bill includes provisions — championed by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) with key support by Reps. Sam Farr (D-CA), Jim Gerlach (R-PA), and Terry Everett (R-AL) — to curb the import of puppies for commercial sale from foreign puppy mills. A growing number of breeders in Eastern European countries, Mexico, China, and other foreign countries see the U.S. as a potential market, even though there is a strong domestic dog and cat breeding industry here and there are millions of pets available from U.S. breeders and animal shelters. The provisions require that any dog imported into the U.S. for commercial sale be at least 6-months old, to ensure that young, unweaned and unvaccinated puppies are not forced to suffer from harsh, long-distance transport. They also ensure that any dog entering the U.S. be deemed healthy prior to entry. Exceptions are provided so as not to interfere with shelter and rescue work, veterinary treatment, or research purposes.

**Animal Fighting** - The Farm Bill contains provisions — sought by Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Reps. Betty Sutton (D-Ohio), Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.), and Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) — to strengthen federal animal fighting law by making it a crime to knowingly possess or train animals for fighting,

enhancing the penalty for animal fighting offenses from a potential three-year prison sentence to a maximum five-year prison sentence, and making any animal fighting affecting interstate or foreign commerce a federal crime.

**AWA Penalties** - The Farm Bill includes a provision — included in the House Farm Bill at the request of Reps. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) and Mike Doyle (D-Pa.) — authorizing an increase in potential fines for violations of the Animal Welfare Act, as recommended in a 2005 audit by USDA's Inspector General. The audit found that the law's maximum penalty - which has not been upgraded for more than 20 years — is considered by violators as a cost of doing business rather than a deterrent. The Farm Bill allows maximum penalties of \$10,000, to establish a more effective deterrent against abuses.

Susan Morrell also stated that the Attorney General's office was contacted by the National Humane Society to support a pending bill to list animal cruelty cases in the FBI criminal database. Susan stated that the AG's office is in support of this bill.

The bill would make animal cruelty a separate category in the FBI's crime data reporting system.

The bill was introduced by Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) Sen. Menendez was joined in introducing the bill by co-sponsors Sen. Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) and in the House of Representatives, Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-MI) and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) have been leading the effort to add animal cruelty to the FBI's crime data reporting system.

The Tracking Animal Cruelty Crimes Act of 2007 directs the U.S. Attorney General to modify the FBI's crime data reporting systems, which include the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, the National Incident-Based Reporting System, and the yet-to-be released Law Enforcement National Data Exchange (N-DEx), to list cruelty to animals as a separate offense category.

*Note the detailed information for these federal bills was provided by the [hsus.org](http://hsus.org) website.*

Roni McCall stated that one of the reasons that her non profit "the animal abuse registry" was started was not only to help the animals by giving the shelters a resource to potential adopters but would also provide tools to

prevent violent offenders from escalating their behavior. While the registry does not have the capability of tracking all animal cruelty cases across the country it does provide information geographically which can help identify trends in animal cruelty.

Jerilee Zezula stated in an email to the commission "It was a great week for legislation last week! I presented the Cruelty class at the Police Academy and was able to give them a head's up as far as changes to the cruelty law".

### **Update on <http://www.nh.gov/humane> website**

Sheila Presby asked that short bio's of the commission members be put onto the website. Trish Morris introduced a draft of the form for us to fill out. Roni McCall has been asked to include the form with the minutes so that the members can fill it out and return it to the commission secretary.

Chief Andy Shagoury stated that recently he had to go into the nh.gov website to find the commission page and had some difficulty getting it as it is not listed. The only way to find it is to search for it under such topics as inhumane or animal cruelty. Andy asked if this might be made more accessible by listing it in the directory.

### **New Business**

#### **ACRS Recommendation to the Governor**

NH Fed board and cruelty investigators have a meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the CSR program - so Commission will wait on this recommendation until after the Fed meeting.

In an email from Jerilee Zezula she stated that it was a great idea but felt it was very premature. She also asked if it should be done as a resolution rather than a proclamation.

In an email from Elin Phinizy and read by Jan Gardiner Elin wrote:  
I object to the proposed proclamation. New Hampshire has the equivalent of a cruelty response system in place now - our state veterinarian. We should follow through with our recommendation from last year's report and urge the hiring of a second state veterinarian. To bring in a non-governmental

agency to take over for enforcement powers for cruelty investigations is bad policy.

Before any recommendation is made to the Governor about an outside ACRS, the issue should be thoroughly investigated by the commission. Creating a New Hampshire ACRS has not been discussed in depth in either of the last two meetings that I attended nor has the need for an ACRS been established.

A simple examination of the Vermont CRS web site leads to several issues that concern me as the commission representative of the dog breeders. A few examples are:

- There is a privacy issue. A database is created that will contain information about people's home addresses, numbers of animals, etc. According to the web site, there are "no specific legal confidentiality issues because humane agencies are not law enforcement agencies."
- An animal owner has no way of knowing what information is in the database. If a complaint is unjustified, is the record expunged? There are no guarantees that this information won't be made public opening up animal owners to harassment.
- What training is provided to the "investigators?" What standards will be used during the investigation?

The Vermont web site links to a manual that is obviously written by people who are unfamiliar with dogs. For example, in the dog care standards section of the manual it stated "thin haired dogs (Afghan Hounds, Borzois, etc.) should not be left outside for extended periods in cold weather because they were not bred to withstand the cold. They should only be let outside for a short time to relieve themselves." Borzois originated in Russia, while Afghans originated in Afghanistan. Both countries have extreme weather conditions including cold.

This same care standards section mentions that a dog should be spayed or neutered. Whether or not a dog is intact is hardly a cruelty issue.

The investigator training issue is particularly important to me as I became involved in a horse seizure in Acworth after the fact. A representative of an unlicensed humane society disapproved of the manner in which four horses were being kept and filed a complaint with the state police who

seized the horses. In the end, the horses were returned to the owners and no charges were filed. The horses never should have been taken. Although, the facilities were not pretty, the horses were loved, fed, cared for and not being abused. The owners were emotionally traumatized by the seizure and, thanks to the Internet, they will be stigmatized as "animal abusers" for a long time. I have serious questions about whether the horses would have been returned if an ACRS had been in place.

We, as a commission, have not been presented with any evidence of an "alarming increase" in animal abuse in New Hampshire. Although complaints may have increased, what evidence do we have that actual abuse has increased? Many times a complaint is unjustified or a result of neighbors quarrels. The number of estimated cases cited in the proclamation comes out to an average of 12.4 cases a year for the last five years or less than .001% of New Hampshire's estimated population of 1,314,895.

Also, the financial burden of prosecutions to the tax payers is a questionable reason to call for an ACRS. There is no reason to presume that an ACRS will reduce the costs of prosecutions. Each year in New Hampshire, through dog licensing, dog owners contribute between \$300,000 to \$550,000 to town budgets (more than enough to cover the estimated costs of prosecutions) as well as supporting the state's low cost pet sterilization fund and the veterinary diagnostic laboratory.

Finally, public education about proper animal husbandry is essential, but that public education should be presented in a factual manner with input from all animal owners, not just humane societies and animal shelters. As illustrated in the example I cited above, humane societies are not always the best source for public education about animal husbandry. The ACRS called for in the proclamation excludes animal breeders and owners as well as the farming community. There is no reason that we, as a commission, can't accomplish the same thing as is called for in the proclamation. In fact, that is what the goal of the commission used to be.

I hope this commission will delay any decision about establishing an ACRS until such time as the need for it has been well established and all the ramifications of doing so have been addressed.

Sheila Presby was the first to address Elin's email by stating she disagreed with Elin's email. For one thing Sheila has spoken at each and every meeting about the ACRS program and its merits since Jill Tucker gave the presentation to the commission. Also Sheila stated there is definitely an animal cruelty problem in NH and it is escalating.

Steve Sprowl was the next to address Elin's email with the following response:

Elin's statement was not accurate and bearing on downright lies. As the NHSPCA cruelty investigator I saw the photos of the horses in question and there definitely was justification to remove them from the owners and it was definitely a chargeable offense. The Vet was accurate in ordering them removed. The only problem was the Sullivan Humane Society was ordered to return the animals back to the owners because they were not a licensed Humane Society. They had applied for a non-profit status and got approved and they thought they were then licensed and they failed to get the NH License from the Department of Agriculture, not realizing that they needed that as well as the non-profit status.

The situation became political because the Prosecutor stated the horses had to be returned because they were not a licensed Humane Society. The NH State Police actually did the search warrant, and went to the property with the vet and removed the animals with the assistance of the Humane Society...but it could have still been legal if the NH State Police would take responsibility for the animals which they decided not to do. As a Law enforcement, the NHSP could still have proceeded legally with the case and choose not to. They don't like handling animal complaints.

It's a shame for the horses because they are the ones suffering. I hope that this at least woke up the owners that they need to feed their horses better.

Joanne Bourbeau was the next to respond to Elin's email with the following:

The CRS is NOT designed to take over the enforcement of animal cruelty complaints, nor does it act as an investigative body itself. In Vermont, private humane societies have enforcement authority as humane investigators, and as such the lead agencies act as "dispatchers" in their respective counties. Complaints are forwarded by the lead agency (usually a

shelter, but sometimes a police department) to the appropriate local enforcement authority. The lead agency simply acts as a conduit for that information, and also follows up to see if the local authority needs any additional resources to handle the case. Creating a CRS in NH would not change who does investigations or how they are done . . . it would simply create public/private partnerships to improve response capabilities. The CRS consultant is scheduled to meet with the board of the NH Federation of Humane Organizations on June 25th to discuss how the CRS project might "fit" in NH.

The privacy/confidentiality issue was also raised in Vermont. The CRS consultant spoke with the director of NCIC, the national criminal database, and described the project and database in detail. He thought it was a wonderful idea, and didn't see any confidentiality issues with the way the system was set up or the data that is being collected. He said there are many private agencies (like LL Bean) that collect data from private citizens for a variety of reasons. We are not asking for any confidential information, such as social security numbers. It is password protected and there are several levels of protection to prevent unauthorized access. That said, the data WOULD be subject to discovery, so we do have to be very careful about how and what data is inputted. Every lead agency would receive training on how to operate the system.

Regarding the reference that was made specifically to borzois in the "animal care standards" section, the author of the manual (which was fashioned after a manual developed by the New York State Humane Association) was contacted from someone with borzoi rescue shortly after the manual came out, who said the very same thing about their ability to withstand cold temperatures. The reference was removed in the 2nd edition, which is still being uploaded to the <http://www.vactf.org> website. The entire animal care standards section was reviewed and authorized by the VT Agency of Agriculture's former state vet, Todd Johnson, before going to print.

In essence, the CRS is designed with these main goals in mind: streamline the process for responding to animal cruelty complaints, improve collaboration between law enforcement agencies, state's attorneys, private shelters & rescues and animal control authorities, and provide vital information about the # and types of cruelty complaints that humane

investigators and law enforcement officers are receiving throughout the state.

Joanne ended by offering to speak with Ellen in greater detail about the CRS and the database if she has further questions or concerns.

Chief Andy Shagoury next addressed the discussion with the following: "My response is directed to Elin's statement that non-governmental entities are not involved in investigations and enforcement of laws.

Chief Shagoury pointed out it does already happen in NH with Child Advocacy Centers (CAC). Most are separate non-profit corporations (some are part of the county attorney office but Carroll County is not) which have trained forensic interviewers who are specially trained in interviewing children who are victims. They do not enforce the laws per se but they work with law enforcement and many times are the interviewer of the child.

Chief Shagoury also went into background that animal abuse laws predated child abuse laws as a connection historically. One such issue with child abuse cases that led to CACs was inconsistent handling of the cases. The CACs make sure trained interviewers conduct the interviews. Part of the problem we are hearing in NH is the inconsistent way cruelty/neglect investigations are handled.

He also pointed out that no matter what the outcome of the case, an increase in calls to Steve Sprowl means an increase in Steve's time handling/screening them.

In child abuse/neglect cases, calls can get screened out to eliminate the neighbor disputes which he thought was an example of Elin's concerns about the types of cases the ACRS might get called about and launch an investigation.

For background-The CACs coordinate the case and referrals to law enforcement, mental health and/or medical professionals and other service providers as part of a team approach to these investigations. Chief Shagoury doesn't see it as a model that directly carries over to animal cruelty investigations but there might be parts some of which might have some

merit. Some CAC interviewers are police officers, many are not. Inconsistent handling of child abuse cases was one part of their creation- probably a bigger part was families and children not getting directed to services they need and cases not being coordinated. Studies showed the CAC concept led to higher conviction rates.

Also as Chief Shagoury represents the group, I will be mentioning it at the next NHaCOP meeting June 17 to see if they have a position on the ACRS concept and proclamation.

Upon consensus of the members present the proclamation has been tabled until after the NH Federation Board meets on June 25<sup>th</sup> to get their input as to how and if they wish to proceed with a proposed ACRS program. Trish Morris at the invitation of Steve Sprowl will attend the NH Fed meeting to help us determine how next to proceed.

### **Announcements**

None

### **SWOT Homework Assignment**

Deb Simson was not able to attend today's meeting because of knee surgery. However via an email sent to the commission secretary she would still like us to continue to send our thoughts on the Opportunities, threats and weaknesses in the SWOT analysis to determine future goals. The goals should fulfill the mission of the commission, which was stated in my original strategic plan outline (straight from the Governor's Executive Order). Normally, the goals should help achieve the vision of the group and we seemed to have difficulty reaching a decision of a vision, so Deb proposed that the group just feel as the vision should be:

An example of a goal from Deb's analysis is:

To review and discuss current legislative bills at every meeting (this fulfills the vision as it would be reliable and consistent) and to subsequently report the discussions to the Governor within 2 weeks of the meeting (this would fulfill the mission).

Deb suggested this as a goal because currently the group really has no discussion of the bills, we generally just hear what the status of the bills

are but we really do not discuss what we think about the bills, what we think about changes that may have been made to it in committees etc and we haven't really given much feedback to the Governor, which is a large part of our mission as an advisory committee.

As requested in a previous commission meeting - commission members please send your input to the commission secretary at least 2 weeks before our next meeting so that Deb can compile it for our next discussion.

**Next Meeting Date**

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup> at 1pm in Senate Room 100.

Submitted by Roni McCall on June 9, 2008