

# The Governors' Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes  
15 December, 2011

- 1) The regular meeting of the Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals was called to order at 1:09 PM in the Attorney General's Conference Room by Chairperson Patricia Morris.
- 2) **Members Present:** Bob Haefner, State Representative; Joyce Arivella, Dog Breeders Association; Barry Hilton, ACO representative; Jerilee Zezula, Public Member; Roni McCall, Public Member; George Cook, Sled Dog Owners Association; Patricia Morris, Chairperson, public member, Member NH Bar Association; Susan Morrell, Attorney General's Office; Christopher Conely, NH Sherriff's Association; Michael Hughes, public; Debra Simson, NH Cat Fanciers; Wendy Munroe, Animal Health Technicians Association;
- 3) **Members Absent:** Dr. Steve Crawford, State Veterinarian; Richard Wentzell, public; Joanne Bourbeau, National Humane Organizations; Mark Ellingwood, NH Fish and Game; Steve Sprowl, NH Federation of Humane Organizations; Chief Andrew Shagoury, Police Chiefs Association
- 4) **Guest:** Mr. James Richardson, Legislative advisor to the Governor.
- 5) **Review of November Minutes:** Motion was made and carried to accept minutes as amended.
- 6) **Legislative Update:** The Commission reviewed a list of "animal related" bills that are before the legislature; not all necessarily cruelty oriented.
  - a) For this meeting it was impossible to get the wording of all these bills to read, but this will be available next month. Then we will be able to determine which are cruelty related.
  - b) We reviewed the meat inspection bill, HB 1446, last time as to how it has created uproar among horse enthusiasts in that horses were not exempted from slaughter in NH. The Feds require that horse slaughter inspectors be State employees. Budget constraints have not allowed for this so far. Apparently the current administration is somehow allowing money to be spent for the hiring of more government inspectors...more later.
  - c) The Animal Legal Defense Fund annually ranks the States on how they are with respect to their animal protection laws. This year NH ranked 48<sup>th</sup>. Although these rankings are somewhat opinionated, the reasoning behind them may serve as part of our checklist for reviewing pending bills.
- 7) **Recent Cruelty Case:** It involved someone shooting neighbor's cats and guinea hens.
  - a) The Chief of Police had no idea how to proceed.
  - b) Attorney. Morris went there and talked with the Chief and the local county attorney and walked them through the process. The local authorities had a chance to look at our 2009 report, and were told about our "Protocol" - a copy of which they want ASAP.
  - c) Cruelty charges were filed at a felony level-first offense since firearms were involved and also criminal trespass.
  - d) This case highlights the obvious need for our protocol manual.

- 8) Sherriff Conely mentioned that he was thinking about swearing in Steve Sprowl as a Special Deputy which would give him State wide jurisdiction as a cruelty inspector. Sherriff Conely asked for feedback on whether this proposal. He really needs law enforcement to support him on this.
- a) Patricia offered that it would be great to have someone with Steve's experience to oversee cases so that everything from the investigation to the prosecution runs smoothly.
  - b) Sherriff Conely mentioned that a lot of times law enforcement is not sure what to do and become quickly overwhelmed. This would be where a specialist like Steve would step in.

9) **James Richardson: Review and comments about our 2009 Report** (our work so far.)

- a) This Report looked at specific cases to identify common problems.
- b) Mr. Richardson said that the emphasis on educating the public, law enforcement and prosecution really "jumped out" at him. Cutting down on the confusion surrounding cruelty cases is very good.
- c) The dynamic resource web site set-up as a source for the 2010 protocol manual is a "great idea".
- d) The discussions of cost in the 2009 report were an eye opener. Wish there was a way now to relieve this. Agrees that it is a difficult problem particularly when it adds to the reluctance of towns to take on large scale rescues.
- e) Questions: Would our feedback on pending cruelty bills be helpful to the Governor's office? He suggested that it would, particularly considering the sheer number of bills that go through his office. Suggestions, bullet points and otherwise flagging of specific bills would better help them understand their possible affects and outcomes.

10) **Education Pamphlets:** Review of Drafts, etc.

- a) What format is most comfortable for the people in the field?
  - i) All agreed the tri-fold brochure format works the best.
- b) We all agreed that it is a good idea to retain the section concerned with common concerns that may indicate animal cruelty. These are included in the Vermont Humane rendition, which we are modeling ours after.
- c) It is anticipated that these brochures, once on the internet will be downloaded and printed by other organizations.
  - i) May be a concern what pictures to use in case some organizations can print only in black and white. We may allow for either option.
- d) Jeri believes the brochures should include general references to quality web sites for more info on the particular animal being spoken of. We agreed.
- e) Joyce mentioned that it would be a good idea to put an area on the back of the brochure for officials/organizations to put their contact info. We all agreed.
- f) Dr. Lunak's help will be requested for the livestock brochures.
- g) Jeri would like to link these brochures with the Governor's website for easier access to the public.
- h) Motion was made and carried that the drafts of the brochures completed so far will be proof read by us before the January meeting so the group editing will go more smoothly.
- i) Jeri emphasized the need for recommendations for quality web sites as references to put in brochures.

11) Motion to Adjourn was carried at 2:08 PM.

12) Next meeting 19 January, 1 PM, in Adjutant General's Conference Room.

Minutes submitted by: Michael Hughes, Secretary