

Vermont Animal Cruelty Task Force Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2016, 10-12pm
 Central Vermont Humane Society (for public attendees)
 1589 VT Route 14 S
 East Montpelier, VT 05651

Attendance

Member	Representing
Joanne Bourbeau	Vermont Humane Federation
Pam Dalley	Dept. for Children and Families
NA	VT Dept. of Public Safety
NA	VT Federation of Dog Clubs
Chris Bradley	VT Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Trevor Whipple	VT Police Chiefs Association
Deb Loring	Large Animal Humane Society
Paula Russell	VT Animal Control Association
NA	Governor's Office
Erika Holm	Domestic Animal Humane Society
Bill Brady	VT Veterinary Medical Association
Kristin Haas	VT Agency of Ag, Food, and Markets
NA	VT Constables Association
Patti Lewis	Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurers' Assoc.
Bill Bohnyak	Orange County Sheriff's Department
Barry Londeree	Public
T.J. Anderson	Public, VCJTC

- J. Bourbeau called the meeting to order at 10:10am. She asked for approval of the previous meeting's minutes. B. Brady approved and P. Lewis seconded. Approved by unanimous vote.
- J. Bourbeau asked what members thought of the overall tone of the report. B. Brady and other spoke in general approval.
- J. Bourbeau brought up an issue conveyed to her by Elise Eaton via email regarding the inclusion of the oath required by veterinarians in the state. She said this caused her to realize that the Task Force (TF) might want to include a section on veterinarians. K. Haas said she was in favor of including. J. Bourbeau proposed including it in section four, and overview of the current animal response system in Vermont.
- K. Haas asked if that section was a statutory requirement of the TF and if the length of the section might distract from the section on recommendations, suggested it could be included as an appendix instead. D. Loring agreed that this would be a good idea to provide clarity to the document. P. Dalley suggested including a brief overview in the report that points to more information in the appendix. B. Brady then suggested moving the list of the TF members to later in the report as well. There was general agreement to these changes, and J. Bourbeau agreed to make those changes and send to D. Loring for final formatting.

- J. Bourbeau brought up a comment she received from a member of the public, Elise Eaton, that requested a reference to local political considerations altering the course of animal cruelty investigations on page 4 of the report. After a brief discussion, the TF members did not accept this change.
- J. Bourbeau brought up another suggestion received from Elise Eaton, to use Burlington Police's use of community service officers as an example of type of arrangement for the enforcement of animal laws. TF members agreed to include this example in the section on law enforcement.
- K. Haas suggested changing the title of Section 4 to "strengths and challenges" instead of strengths and weaknesses." General agreement by members of the TF.
- B. Brady suggested reformatting charts to make them more legible.
- J. Bourbeau asked D. Loring and P. Russell if animal cruelty statistics from Animal Tracks for 2015 would be available to include in the report. They thought they should be and agreed to work together to compile the information.
- T.J. Anderson suggested listing the names of the lead agencies on page 8 and a few grammatical changes, all agreed to by the TF members.
- K. Haas asked that the section on the VAAF be altered to clearly state that the Agency does not have the statutory authority to investigate or enforce animal cruelty against livestock. She also asked that the reference to VAAF employees not being trained investigators be changed to instead state that they are not considered humane agents under the law. The TF members agreed.
- C. Bradley asked that a link be added to a reference to the VT statute on page 16. TF members agreed.
- D. Loring made a comment that some untrained veterinarians on crime scenes do not know what their role is in those investigations. J. Bourbeau agreed and would like to include that in the section on veterinarians. K. Haas also stated that veterinarians who are not experts in certain species but evaluate those species during investigations. She noted that the VVMA encourages all veterinarians to attend animal cruelty training classes. D. Loring said that some vets are hesitant to investigate species they specialize in because of a perceived conflict of interest.
- A comment was made about the phrasing used in the report to describe Vermont's lack of a law against animal sex crimes. TF members agreed to keep the current language.
- J. Bourbeau confirmed that Animal Tracks data cannot be simply included in NIBRS reporting.
- J. Bourbeau read through the recommendations section. C Bradley confirmed the Sportsmen's Club would like to be a part of the Animal Welfare Advisory Board.
- T.J. Anderson corrected the named used to designate Level III certification training on page 23.

- J. Bourbeau informed the group that she had confirmed with D. Cahill about having prosecutor Sherry Ramsey speak about animal cruelty crimes at this year conference of state prosecutors.
- K. Haas had to leave the call (11:14 a.m.), and stated that she had read through the report and had no further comments or edits if she wasn't able to join back.
- Suggestion to change the wording to "state tax forms" on page 24. D. Loring pointed out the redundant word "sales" on page 24. A few other minor grammatical changes were also made to this section.
- T. Whipple said that link to the VHF website should be spelled out in the appendix.
- J. Bourbeau asked what documents should be included in the report or as link in the appendix. Agreement that the current cruelty statute should be included. TF members also said that a reference to public participation should be included as well.
- T.J. suggested changing the participating member of the Animal Welfare Advisory Board from the Game Warden's Association to the Fish and Wildlife Dept. Law Enforcement Division.
- J. Bourbeau stated that she would proceed by submitting the report to House and Senate Judiciary Committee chairs once it is finalized to determine if they want to hold hearings or develop legislation.
- J. Bourbeau reviewed the suggested changes to the makeup of the AWAB. TF members agreed with the list.
- J. Bourbeau said she will revise the report as instructed and send to members for a final electronic vote ASAP. She reminded the TF that it expires on January 15th.
- P. Lewis made a motion to adjourn and B. Brady seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote, and meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.