

Animal Cruelty Investigations Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, August 23, 2023

**Board Attendees:**

Brown, Pam  
Firpo, Jennifer  
Haas, Kristin  
Holm, Erika  
McFaun, Mary  
Nolan, Aimee  
Whipple, Trevor

**Public Attendees:**

Kaitlyn Levine  
Joann Nichols  
Wilda L. White

**I. Welcome to New Board Member Trevor Whipple**

Governor Phil Scott appointed Trevor Whipple to the ACIAB. Trevor represents the interests of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Trevor introduced himself to the ACIAB. Trevor spent 38 years as a Vermont law enforcement officer. He's a former Chief of Police in Barre, VT and retired from South Burlington Police Department. He's currently employed by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. He also teaches at the Vermont Police Academy and teaches animal control officers around the country.

**II. Reports**

Chair Erika Holm reported that she's scheduled to meet with Commissioner Jennifer Morrison next week about the ACIAB. Chair Holm said it would be the Board's first contact with anyone from the Department of Public Safety.

Chair Holm reported that there is a Vermont Humane Federation Working Group that is working diligently on S.147, specifically focusing on regulation of shelters and rescues and importation of animals into Vermont.

Chair Holm also reported that Senator Anne Watson has asked for a meeting with the Working Group, which is scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

### **III. ACIAB-Animal Cruelty Response Training**

Board members discussed their interpretation of the law that requires Humane Officers to complete by December 31, 2023 an animal cruelty response training developed and approved by the ACIAB and approved and administered by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council. At least one board member believes that without completing the course, animal control officers will not be able to do “enforcement work” involving, for example, barking dogs or dogs running at large. Other board members believe that this work is not implicated by the mandate to complete an animal cruelty response training.

The Board discussed whether they should approve the four-day training that currently exists to meet the requirement of the 20 VSA §2365b. Board members did not believe that that training was sufficient to qualify an animal control officer to conduct animal cruelty investigations that might lead to criminal charges and a criminal trial.

Jennifer Firpo made a motion to notify the legislature that the training required by 20 VSA §2365b is not going to be ready to be rolled out and delivered to everybody by December 31, 2023. The motion was seconded, followed by discussion. A vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0-0 (Holm, Firpo, Whipple, Haas, Nolan, and McFaun).

### **IV. ACIAB 2022 Annual Report**

Mary McFaun raised the issue of the ACIAB’s 2022 Annual Report which has yet to be submitted to the legislature. Chair Holm reported that at the February 16, 2023 meeting the Board decided not to submit a report but to consider the Act 147 report as the report of the ACIAB.

### **V. Draft Bill Relating to Animal Welfare Proposed by Senator Watson**

The Board began to discuss generally the draft bill relating to animal welfare that Senator Watson is planning to introduce. No actions were taken.

### **VI. Next Steps**

DPS will create a web page for the ACIAB for posting minutes, agendas, reports and other documents.

Chair Holm will forward the draft bill relating to animal welfare to DPS for uploading on SharePoint to allow board members to add their comments to a single document.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 31, 2023, at 9 AM, via Zoom. The meeting will be devoted to reviewing comments to the draft bill relating to animal welfare.

Chair Holm said she will try to catch up on creating meeting minutes for posting, particularly for those meetings for which a vote was taken.

