

Ollie's Law Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes August 19th, 2025 | 9 AM – 10:30 AM
Approved by AC on 9/17/25

Advisory Committee Attendance

Mike Cahill
Louis Pacheco
Jeni Mather
Carmen Rustenbeck
Dr. Erin Doyle
Noelle Wilson
Francine Coughlin
Debra Cameron- present until 10:01AM
Kara Holmquist
Kevin Sullivan
Amy Baxter
Kathy MacKenzie

Advisory Committee Absence

Mark Hogan-absent for meeting

MDAR Attendees

Katherine Foote
Sheri Gustafson

Public Attendees

13 additional ZOOM attendees

This open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM webinar platform. 838 3960 2566
Meeting ID: Passcode: animal

I. AC Attendance Roll Call

Mathers started meeting at 9:02 AM by roll call.
Pacheco-present, Doyle-present, Rustenbeck-present, Coughlin-present, Holmquist- present,
Wilson-present, Sullivan-present, MacKenzie-present, Baxter-present, Cahill-present

II. Minutes Review for 7/30/2025- vote required

Pacheco motioned to accept the minutes from the AC meeting on 7/30/2025. Sullivan-second. All
accepted.
Minutes for July 30, 2025, Ollie's Law AC Meeting accepted.

Cameron joined meeting

III. Staffing Number Guidelines/ Proposed Ratios

A. Framework and benchmarks for appropriate staffing levels/ Ratios

Mather opened the discussion about staffing ratios by commenting that the declaration she proposed last week helps illustrate that appropriate staffing is more than just the numbers; it needs to address quality as well.

MacKenzie commented that she feels that no one under the age of 18 should be in a dog playgroup without additional supervision. Mather Agreed.

Cahill asked the group for their opinion on if there are scenarios when only one staff member may be appropriate at a boarding/daycare kennel.

Mather commented that she had included a scenario in her document. If there are 4 or less dogs a single staff member may be okay if a written emergency plan is placed. She stated that she decided on the number 4 because it mirrors how many personal dogs someone can have before they need a kennel license.

Sullivan stated that he felt the number 4 was reasonable and said that even with only 4 dogs they should have enough crates or rooms available to be able to separate the dogs.

Cameron shared a document she created on the topic called " Staffing _Supervision Regulations draft". She commented that the document's purpose was to outline categories of care and then help set general requirements. Some of the things she highlighted in the document to the group were: comingled dogs should never be left unsupervised, each dogs needs to have an appropriate sized crate available, and there should be a ratio of one person to 4 dogs for trainings.

Cameron asked Cahill if it would be possible for the AC to create standard documents for kennels?

Cahill stated that they could and should look at some of the documents already created such as the kennel injury reporting form for guidance.

Cameron stated that it would be ideal to have a document to be able to give to ACOs for inspections and possibly for staff training.

Mather stated that she supports a general kennel ratio of one staff for 15 dogs. She feels that there should not be less than 2 individuals at a brick-and-mortar facility during the day. She also stated that the AC should consider setting a max of 9 hours of unsupervised time for overnights, etc. She felt the 9 hours should be reasonable for home-based boarding as well. As far as square footage is concerned, she stated that 70-100 square feet per dog is fairly standard in the industry.

Rustenbeck agreed a 1 staff to 15 dogs ratio, minimum 70-100 square feet per dog (except for ultra large dogs-who may need more) are both appropriate. She also stated that a facility could set limits on the size of dogs they admit. As far as overnight care she agreed that ideally two people should always be in the building since they had an incident reported at a kennel where a dog escaped its enclosure overnight and killed the single staff member there.

Doyle mentioned that appropriate cage size should mirror what is listed in the pet shop regulations.

Mather clarified that the 70-100 square feet proposal refers to playgroup space.

Coughlin stepped off the call for a few minutes at 9:30 am.

Pacheco asked if enforcement would be an issue for ACOs.

MacKenzie said that she is concerned about the square foot minimum in home scenarios and how that would be enforced and regulated. She also stated that in municipal kennels ACOs often have to leave animals unattended for longer than the 9-hour timeframe.

Cahill clarified that municipal kennels do not need a kennel license and would not fall under the kennel regulations. However, if a municipality does not have its own kennel and contracts with a private boarding or training facility to house animals the business would be regulated.

Mather expressed her concern about staffing minimums and the ability to enforce.

MacKenzie asked if she inspected a home-based kennel and found only one person present would they be in violation? Mather responded that they would only be in violation if there were more than 4 dogs present.

Baxter asked if it would make sense to divide the issue into home-based versus brick-and-mortar? She said she firmly believed that 2 staff always need to be present at a brick-and-mortar facility. She also asked the question that if it's something that can be done at one kind is able to be regulated at the other?

Coughlin asked why they would create two different standards?

Mather responded that she feels both home-based and brick-and-mortar facilities should follow the same rule: anything over 4 dogs would need more than 1 person. Cameron agreed with this clarification. Sullivan asked if the group could take a vote on this proposal.

Doyle asked if the thought was that 2 people are needed if more than 4 dogs on a premises, and if 15 dogs are in a playgroup than at least 1 person has to be directly with them?

Mather commented that 1 person supervising 15 dogs in a playgroup would be sufficient if they were well balanced dogs, but if they were freshman or junior dogs than additional staffing might be necessary.

Cahill asked, if there are 15 dogs in a playgroup, how many staff need to be in the building?

Mather responded that she feels the answer would be 2, but that staff education would play a bit part determining if it was safe.

Coughlin stated that she did not agree with the numbers. Explaining that if she was a one person staff and was working with one dog at a time training, she would feel safe. She felt intermingling was the keyword to require additional staff.

Cameron referred to the document she created and explained that her recommendation was 1-15 if they are not comingled. Additional staffing required when comingled.

Mather disagreed and stated that she strongly feels there should be 2 on premises for that amount.

Holmquist asked about emergency situations and if that would differ.

Doyle stated that there are plenty of facilities that currently often only have 1 person present, such as ACO facilities and veterinary clinics.

Pacheco asked if breed or type is factored in?

Mather stated that in school staffing requirements may be different based on kids and supervision and safety is needed.

Sullivan gave his interpretation on the discussion. He felt that the group was saying if there were more than 4 comingled dogs at least 2 staff needed. If they weren't comingled, then 1 staff to 15 dogs. Given that interpretation, then a 30-dog playgroup would need 3 staff and so on, no matter what size or breed. He felt 1 staff to 15 works okay for building, and any comingled group 5-15 would need a minimum of 2 people.

Cameron asked if playgroup size is covered by square foot recommendations?

Mather stated that she felt that it would be very dangerous to only restrict playgroups by square footage. Suggesting possibly 2 staff for every 5 dogs after maintaining the 1-15 ratio in building.

Mather conducted an informal vote to confirm group agreement on the following key decisions: a staffing ratio of 1 staff per 15 dogs, and a requirement for two staff members if more than 4 dogs are present.

Gustafson commented that for a formal vote on a matter it should be on the agenda, it also will need to be clearly stated what the vote is for.

Doyle commented that she felt that the numbers were hard to define.

Baxter commented that this topic was extremely personal to her given what happened with Ollie and said that she feels strongly that two people need to be onsite.

Sullivan stated that he feels 2 people in building if over 4 dogs comingled and a ratio of 1 staff to 15 dogs if not comingled is fair.

Coughlin felt that they were trying to address separate scenarios that don't necessarily line up.

Baxter asks for someone to define what a facility that never comingles would be.

Coughlin responded that an example would be a facility that is contact free is one. In those scenarios the dogs are not handled, tools are used such as guillotine doors. Another example would be facilities that don't allow playgroups. She further stated that she feels the group is mainly looking at the issue through a daycare lens and that while accidents can always happen, they are trying their best to establish standards to prevent them.

Mather asked about requiring 2 staff even if 2-4 dogs are comingled? Would that be an overreach?

Pacheco commented that he has over a dozen indoor/outdoor kennels, and that dogs are only ever comingled with owner permission. He said for him to go to two staff over 4 it would double his cost. He does agree that if dogs are comingled 1 to 5 may be a safe level of supervision, but unnecessary if dogs are kept separate.

Sullivan stated everyone seemed comfortable with 1 to 15 ratio if not comingled and 2 people when comingled.

Coughlin commented that 12 is not far off from 15 and if seemed to be okay for Pacheco.

Mather stated that the topic may need to be revisited at the next meeting and a vote may be done.

Baxter asked to have the proposed vote clearly defined.

Mather clarified the key decisions that would be the subject of the planned votes: (1) If any dogs are comingled, 2 staff members are required; (2) If dogs are not comingled, there must be at least 1 staff member for every 15 dogs; (3) Playgroups should never be left unsupervised.

Rustenbeck added they may want to add no playgroups over 60 dogs allowed?

IV. Discussion: Staffing / Operator Education and Training

A. Employee and Owner/ Operator Training and Education Requirements

- 1. Foundational animal behavior knowledge and baselines**
- 2. Baseline competencies in husbandry, medical awareness, and basic first aid**
- 3. Review of Potential Learning Platforms for Kennel Staff**
- 4. Review Potential Testing Platform**

B. Materials for Consideration-AC Developed Staffing Guidance Documents

The IV Agenda Items were not discussed at the meeting due to time, these items were tabled until next AC Meeting.

V. New Business

A. Open forum for additional committee input

B. Topics for future agenda development

Holmquist asked for clarification on the next meeting date.

Mather responded that according to the initial meeting schedule the next dates will be: 9/17/2025, 10/8/2025, and 10/21/2025. For those dates there is no official content assigned yet.

Rustenbeck asked if the group want to get the statistics from CO? the group responded that they do.

Pacheco motioned to adjourn. Mather gave a second. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 10;34 AM.