

Ollie's Law Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes June 3rd | 9 AM – 10:30 AM
Approved 6/25/2025

Advisory Committee Attendance

Mike Cahill
Louis Pacheco
Jeni Mather
Kathy MacKenzie
Carmen Rustenbeck
Dr. Erin Doyle
Noelle Wilson
Francine Coughlin joined at 9:20 AM
Debra Cameron
Kara Holmquist
Amy Baxter

Advisory Committee Absence

Kevin Sullivan-absent for meeting
Mark Hogan-absent for meeting

MDAR Attendees

Jessica Burgess
Katherine Foote
Sheri Gustafson

Public Attendees

12 additional ZOOM attendees

This open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM webinar platform. 879 3542 0966
Meeting ID: Passcode: animal

I. AC Attendance Roll Call

Mathers started meeting at 9:01 AM by roll call.

Cahill-present, Pacheco-present, Doyle-present, MacKenzie-present, Rustenbeck-present,
Coughlin-present, Holmquist- present, Baxter-present, Wilson-present.

Coughlin- missing at roll call joined 9:20 AM

II. Minutes Review for April 13, 2025-vote required

Cahill motioned to accept the minutes from the AC meeting on 5/13/25. Doyle-second. Roll
call: Cahill-yes, Pacheco-yes, Doyle-yes, MacKenzie-yes, Rustenbeck-yes, Coughlin-yes,
Holmquist- yes, Baxter-yes, Mather-yes, Wilson-yes
Minutes for April 13th, 2025 Ollie's Law AC Meeting accepted.

III. Minimum Standards of Care

Mather stated that she wanted to encourage committee feedback and learning about how boarding facilities operate. She also mentioned that some areas may be dangerous territory to regulate such as staff-to-animal ratios.

Pacheco asked for clarification on why certain practices seem to be left out of the kennel definitions such as groomers and if they should be focusing only on the kennels defined as commercial boarding and training kennels.

Cahill responded that the committee should focus only on commercial boarding and training kennels and premises that fit that definition. Groomers do not fit the definition unless they are keeping animals beyond grooming for additional boarding or daycare services.

Pacheco asked about shelters/rescues, pet shops, and ACO Facilities.

Cahill responded that shelters/rescues and pet shops are regulated by their own sets of regulations and that ACO facilities are covered under MGL Chapter 140 laws. Groomers are currently not covered.

Mather mentioned that there was an attempt to cover groomers but the language did not make it into the final version of Ollie's Law.

Pacheco asked about businesses like Rover and how they fit in.

Cahill responded that it depends on the services being provided. If the Rover brings dogs to their property or premises then they should have a commercial boarding kennel license. If the Rover watches the dog at the owner's home they would not. Cahill also explained that he is going on his interpretation of the law and that it may take a legal case ruling to get true clarity.

Mather shared her definition of establishment which included any situation where compensation for the care is being exchanged.

Cahill said that including situations based on whether compensation is given would be equivalent to saying a babysitter who goes to the family home would need to be licensed as a daycare and that he feels that would be an overreach.

McKenzie stated that as an ACO she would not want to be regulating dogsitters that come to an owner's home to take care of the dogs.

Cameron stated that she agrees there is a big difference between someone babysitting a dog in their own home versus bringing someone's dog into theirs.

Rustenbeck said that we can't regulate the activity of a dog sitter going to the dog's home.

Doyle mentioned that she utilizes dog sitters and would like clarification on whether a dog sitter would need a kennel license if they are only watching one dog at a time.

Cahill said that there is no minimum number of dogs listed in the definition for Commercial Boarding or Training kennel, so yes, they would need a kennel license even if they were only taking in one dog at a time. The mention of more than 4 dogs only applies to personal kennels.

McKenzie mentioned that there may be local ordinances that prohibit dog boarding activity in residential and that she can share some examples from her community.

Cameron stated that there is a definition of facility in some previously shared documents and that she would share the examples. Cameron also asked about regulating animal transporters. Mather stated that it was her opinion that transporting should be regulated since there is money collected.

Rustenbeck stated that transport minimum standards should be looked at.

Doyle started the conversation about sanitation and expectations at different types of premises.

Mather stated that if there is an outbreak of illnesses, we need to consider surfaces.

Doyle stated there is no way to sanitize grass but that area can be cleaned. Doyle also said that from an owner's perspective, her previous dog would go to a sitter's home for playdates and that even as a vet she was comfortable with it.

Cahill agreed that you can't disinfect organic material and that we will have discussions on how to regulate outdoor versus indoor facilities.

Pacheco asked who would be enforcing any created regulations, and training the ACOs.

Cahill responded that enforcement would be handled by local ACOs, and MDAR would offer assistance only when necessary. MDAR would be handling the ACO training.

Cameron stated that it would be important to consider reactionary measures such as responding to an outbreak and how to handle various surfaces and what surfaces should not be acceptable such as wall-to-wall carpet.

Mather moved the discussion towards reviewing the chart that Holmquist created and shared at a previous meeting called "Information Related to General Facility and Animal Facility Regulations in Facilities Used for Boarding".

Holmquist stated that the document is organized in a way that she finds helpful when comparing legislation and regulations. Holmquist asked for clarification on the CO regulations and if they were going to sunset.

Rustenbeck replied that the regulation will be changed but will not be removed.

Mather asked the AC to have a formal vote on what is needed for an isolation room.

Doyle suggested that the AC uses the term isolation plan versus room to ensure that all types of facilities have a system to use.

Cameron, Holmquist, and Wilson stated that they supported the plan versus the room.

Doyle mentioned that if they were to call it an isolation room there may be some confusion due to the existing wording in the shelter/ rescue and pet shop regulations. The space needed should just simply be an area where a dog and be separated from others.

Mather stated that she felt it was important to include a definition of an isolation room but that it needs to be fair and reasonable.

Cahill mentioned that none of the current regulations have floor drains in their requirements. Something like that would be considered unreasonable, but the area should be able to be easily cleaned. Cahill said when exploring requirements for facilities and foster homes, the level of risk needs to be considered.

Cahill stated that for the AC to vote on something it has to be listed that it will be voted on in the agenda.

Cameron asked if they should be considering transport vehicles in the regulations. Mather responded that she felt they should be.

IV. Utilities

Holmquist stated that temperatures inside enclosures are addressed in the shelter regulations. Mather stated they should be stating food storage requirements to prevent rodent issues, etc. in large facilities.

Rustenbeck added that it should be stated that animal food should not be stored in the same place as human food.

Mather stated that for utilities she felt that airflow, temperature, and lighting should all be addressed and that it is important to remember that future facility owners will be looking at the regulations to obtain information on minimum standards of care.

V. Emergency Planning Revisit

Mather stated that every facility will need to have an emergency plan and that the plan will need to be in compliance with any local codes.

VI. Questions on any materials submitted

Rustenbeck stated that she just submitted the IBPSA to Sheri today for distribution.

Mather asked Pacheco for the facilities document update.

VII. New Business

Mather asked if there was any additional business to discuss or if they could motion to adjourn. Pacheco motioned to adjourn. Holmquist gave a 2nd. Roll call to adjourn. All responses-yes

10:30 meeting adjourned.