

Ollie's Law Advisory Committee Meeting  
Minutes January 6, 2026 | 9 AM – 10:30 AM  
*Approved 2/10/2026*

**Advisory Committee Attendance**

Mike Cahill  
Louis Pacheco  
Jeni Mather  
Dr. Erin Doyle  
Francine Coughlin  
Debra Cameron  
Kara Holmquist  
Katherine MacKenzie  
Mark Hogan  
Noelle Wilson joined at 9:53 AM

**Advisory Committee Absence**

Amy Baxter-in general audience, could not be promoted to panelist  
Kevin Sullivan-absent for meeting  
Carmen Rustenbeck-absent for meeting

**MDAR Attendees**

Sheri Gustafson

**Public Attendees**

23 additional ZOOM attendees

This open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM webinar platform. 884 7135 8588  
Meeting ID: Passcode: animal

**Agenda with Minutes**

I. Attendance

- Advisory Committee roll call performed by Mather. Cahill-present, Hogan-present, MacKenzie-present, Pacheco-present, Doyle-present, Coughlin-present, Cameron-present, Holmquist-present.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Review and approval of 12.17.25 meeting minutes (vote required)

Mather asked for a motion to accept the 12.17.25 meeting minutes. Pacheco gave a motion to accept. Mather a second. Doyle-accepted, Hogan-accepted, Cahill-accepted, Holmquist-accepted, MacKenzie-accepted, Cameron-accepted, Coughlin-accepted. Minutes accepted.

III. Advisory Committee Recommendations: Health Requirements

- Review and discussion of proposed Advisory Committee recommendations related to health requirements, including vaccination standards

Doyle asked if she could share the Medical Care document that she had created a while back with its new edits.

Mather asked Doyle whether the requirement for timely reporting needs to be more clearly defined.

Doyle said that she would welcome feedback from the ACOs and the department since she felt that, in a timely manner, it would depend on the situation.

Mather stated that anything that is life-threatening should have a defined time frame. Cameron said that using terms such as minor or major might help determine whether immediate action is needed.

Doyle said that she believes the language in the document is the same as in the shelter/rescue regulations.

Cahill stated that the pet shop and shelter/rescue regulations clarify emergencies and non-emergencies. He also said it's been easy to enforce, even though it's not completely defined. Cahill said he feels the language should remain consistent. The kennel regulation structure will look similar to the other regulations. Emergency care should be sought before notifying the owner, given the urgency of the situation. 48 hours is in the regs to allow for incidents that occur on weekends that are not emergencies.

Cameron asked whether owners could make care decisions in non-emergency situations. Mather stated that she felt that 6 hours may be an appropriate amount of time to contact an owner about a situation.

Pacheco said that he felt that owner communication was important. He also said he agreed with Cahill's idea of keeping the language consistent across the regulations.

Coughlin said that she agrees with the language in the regulations and that owner-directed care is important and preferred.

Cahill stated that it is not up to the kennel to diagnose an issue, but if there is something that needs veterinary care, the professionals at the kennel may need to speak with a veterinarian to determine the urgency, even if an owner does not consent.

Pacheco asked the other kennel owners how they handle veterinary offices that require payment up front. Does the kennel accept credit cards?

Coughlin said that while it's not a perfect protocol, she has yet to get a complaint from an owner for giving their animal too much care. She also said she submits a credit card to secure care when needed, since owners may not always understand the urgency of a situation. She felt that if an animal was in her care, she could be held liable if it was not cared for.

Mather moved the conversation to vaccine protocols. Stating that she felt strongly that vaccines for respiratory illnesses, such as kennel cough, should be required, along with the standard core vaccines.

Pacheco said that if an animal is not up to date on vaccines, he does not admit them into the kennel.

Doyle said she feels that what the group is saying is best practice, but not a requirement. She stated that she felt that requiring kennel cough is beyond what other states require. Doyle further explained that respiratory illness is related to population density; for example, it's unlikely that a dog would contract respiratory illness by attending a small home daycare.

Mather asked what is required in the shelter/rescue regulations currently.

Cahill responded that it is just the core vaccinations.

Mather asked about protocols at the ARL and MSPCA.

Doyle commented that they adhere to best practices

Wilson joined the meeting at 9:53AM.

Cahill said that the regulations represent minimum standards of care, not best practices. It may be appropriate to include recommendations that exceed what the regulations require.

Mather said that she sees the sickest dogs with upper respiratory illnesses.

Coughlin said that vaccines don't protect 100%, but she feels individual kennels could require more than just the core if they want to. She also stressed that education is very important.

Mather asked for the AC's opinions on the matter.

Coughlin said she feels they should defer to Dr. Doyle and that if a vaccine isn't considered a core vaccine, it can't be required across the board.

Pacheco said he felt that dogs should be vaccinated against respiratory disease and that he should have the right to refuse dogs into his facility that are not.

Cameron felt that it would be important to implement stricter policies on cleaning and disinfection, and that these policies would be more effective than requiring additional vaccines.

Mather said that if the group feels they should only require the core vaccines, then she is fine with that. She asked Cahill for clarification on the pet shop regulations.

Cahill stated that there is no Bordetella vaccine requirement in the pet shop regulations and that dogs in pet shops are subject to USDA standards.

Wilson stated that she was the owner of a dog that died from a respiratory illness it caught in a kennel environment. She understands the core requirement but also emphasizes that cleaning and disinfecting protocols are very important. In addition, she feels that vaccine protocols should be listed on the owner disclosure form.

Mather said that if there were any more comments on vaccines, she would move the conversation to staffing ratios.

#### IV. Supervision Ratios, Including Overnight Care

- Revisit supervision and staffing ratios, with specific attention to facilities that maintain overnight staffing
- Discussion focused on ensuring ratios are realistic, appropriate, and mindful of the responsibilities placed on overnight team members

Mather said that in the previous meeting, they seemed to reach a comfortable spot on ratios, but they did not discuss overnight staffing.

Cameron said she felt the language could specify that no one could enter kennels unless 2 staff were present.

Mather said that at her facility, no one is allowed in the building alone. She also said she is more conservative with the numbers and didn't feel they needed to maintain the 1 to 15 ratio overnight, since dogs should be sleeping and separated in cages. Do we need to revise the language for an exemption from the ratio overnight?

Cameron asked whether they needed to discuss hours for an exemption.

Coughlin said they do not have staff overnight at their kennel and feels that regulating overnight staffing gets too complicated.

Cameron said that the way they discussed the ratio previously makes it sound like the 1-to-15 ratio applies to overnight as well.

Mather said that, instead of a 1-to-15 ratio, she feels they should require that 2 staff be on overnight duty if any staff are in the building.

Doyle asked what facilities are doing now that the board is overnight.

Mather said sometimes staff are there just for janitorial services. She further stated that her recommendation would be to add hours to the regulations for clarification and to require 2 staff, but dogs can't be comingled.

Coughlin stated that she knows of many organizations that just have one person overnight. She stated she doesn't want to change business models.

Cameron said they didn't previously make the distinction between day and night staffing. Mather said that previously, they did say that anytime someone needed to leave the building unattended, dogs needed to be in separate enclosures. She also said that she could not sustain her business if it were held to a 15-to-1 overnight ratio.

Cahill said he feels they cannot regulate overnight care, and if there is no overnight care, it should be clearly stated in the owner's disclosure form.

Coughlin said she feels the regulations don't need to police the facilities 24/7, and that by trying to regulate overnight staffing, they are overreaching.

Cahill said he feels clear on the topic.

MacKenzie said she is also clear on the topic at the enforcement level.

#### V. Advisory Committee Input

- Open discussion for Advisory Committee members to identify any topics that may still need attention
- Invitation for members to share any evolved or updated perspectives based on ongoing discussions

Holmquist mentioned that there is a hearing coming up for the kennel update bill.

#### VI. New Business

- Open floor for any new items Advisory Committee members wish to raise

Pacheco motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 AM. Cahill gave a second. Meeting adjourned.