

State of Alaska
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners
October 8, 2021
Quarterly Board Meeting

These minutes were approved by the board at their June 8, 2023, meeting.

By Authority of AS 08.01.070(2) and in compliance with the provisions of AS 44.62, a regularly scheduled meeting of the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners was held October 8, 2021 via Zoom.

October 8, 2021

Agenda item #1 Call to order/Ethics Reporting/Agenda

This meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dr. Rachel Bergartt at 9:02AM.

Board Members present, constituting a quorum:

Dr. Rachel Bergartt, Licensed Veterinarian
Dr. Denise Albert, Licensed Veterinarian
Dr. Hal Geiger, Public Member

Division Staff present were:

Sara Chambers, Director
Lacey Derr, Records & Licensing Supervisor
Dawn Bundick, Investigator
Lisa Sherrell, PDMP Program Coordinator

A motion duly made by Dr. Hal Geiger, seconded by Dr. Denise Albert, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the agenda as presented.

A motion duly made by Dr. Hal Geiger, seconded by Dr. Denise Albert, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the June 2021 minutes as presented.

Agenda Item #2 Public Comment

The board Chair opened Public Comment at 9:15am. Present to speak was Ms. Caroline Landry. Ms. Landry spoke of being a foreign trained veterinarian and acceptable licensure pathways for the State of Alaska. The PAVE Program through AAVSB is accepted in 45 other states/Canadian territories and would allow for Ms. Landry to work in Alaska alongside her spouse, also a veterinarian. Ms. Landry respectfully requested the board to potentially seek out joining the PAVE Program as a way to increase veterinary availability in the State of Alaska.

Agenda item #9a **Board Business - Correspondence**

To make the best use of their time by addressing agenda items while waiting for additional public comment, the board moved up Ms. Landry's Correspondence to address while she was still available. The topic of "additionally approved educational pathways" is currently being addressed by the board, but it is not something the board can change through regulation. Alaska Statute 08.89.165 regarding qualification for licensure would require the change of legislation. Director Chambers added there was originally an attempt to support an overall legislative bill for professional licensing which included this change. However, previous session did not gain legislative support so the board will be taking the next steps to meet with legislators in the Spring 2022 session for support in changing the statute. There was discussion on Alaska Statute 08.89.125 and if a foreign trained applicant's "specialized" training could be considered under the exemption but it was agreed there was no temporary fix to the issue. The board will continue to gain information and work to move forward with legislative partners this upcoming session in hopes of alleviating this barrier to licensure. The board had to return to the agenda and tabled this topic back to 2:30pm for further discussion.

A motion was duly made by Dr. Hal Geiger, seconded by Dr. Denise Albert, to define what consultation means.

After some discussion, Dr. Geiger tabled his motion for discussion later in the meeting when discussion Ms. Landry's correspondence at 2:30pm

Agenda Item #3 **Licensing Report**

Director Chambers updated the board on current challenges faced within our division and nationally with staffing shortages. These challenges have amounted to delays in application processing and temporary changes to administrative functions to assist current staff in decreasing application processing times. Division Supervisors are actively interviewing for open examiner positions and are hopeful to have additional staffing resources before the end of the year. Segueing into the next subtopic of the licensing report - the 2022 sled dog racing season - it was requested board members and state associations reach out to potential veterinarians assisting with the race to apply as soon as possible. It was discussed how to best organize, process, and present for board review with the current limited resources to make the most effective use of everyone's strained resources. Board members agreed to reach out to race coordinator contacts to assist in early applications and moving the approval process through as quickly and smoothly as possible.

For Agenda Section 3.C:

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hal Geiger, seconded by Dr. Denise Albert and approved unanimously, it was resolved to enter into Executive Session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c), and Alaska constitutional right to privacy provisions for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and charter of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion.

Executive Session: 10:29am

Out:

In a roll call vote announced by Director Sara Chambers, to approve the application for Licensure as a Veterinarian by Credentials for Rex Rammell, license number 179503: With unanimous consent, it was resolved to deny the application for Licensure as a Veterinarian by Credentials for Rex Rammell, license number 179503, for failure to meet the standards in Alaska Statute 08.98.184(4) & 12 AAC 68.048(a)(8),

(a)(9), and (b) requiring the applicant be “in good standing, as defined in regulation.” and “of good moral character.”

	Accept	Deny	Table	Abstain	Absent
Dr. Rachel Bergartt		XX			
Dr. Denise Albert		XX			
Dr. Hal Geiger		XX			
Dr. Chris Michetti					XX

Off Record: 11:27am

Back: 11:35am

Agenda item #4 Current Topics

Director Chambers presented the board with a statement drafted by the Board of Pharmacy in regard to conflicts surrounding the prescriptions of non-FDA approved treatments for COVID-19 (like ivermectin) to patients and a Pharmacist exercising the right to not fill it. The statement had additionally been signed by the Board of Nursing but other boards had not come to a consensus and chose not to sign. The board agreed there was need to reinforce that animal medicines should not be used for human consumption. After some discussion, the board agreed to sign the statement drafted by the Board of Pharmacy.

A motion duly made by Dr. Hal Geiger, seconded by Denise Albert, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Move to support the COVID-19 Support Statement as presented in the board packet.

The board moved to discussing telehealth and VCPR regulations. Dr. Albert asked to discuss the status of the regulations and how telemedicine companies providing services to Alaskan consumers and prescribe medications. There’s concern these large telemedicine companies and Alaska’s ‘open’ telemedicine diagnosing/requirements, is this allowable since the VCPR regulations have not yet been approved? Especially for veterinarians who have never been to Alaska and are unfamiliar with our extreme remote population’s needs. It was discussed these services are used for emergency situations and there should be increased monitoring of the system as it’s developing. Telemedicine Regulations would also likely be something the board would want to address in the near future.

Discussion moved on to continuing education for Veterinary Technicians who will be renewing. Last year for veterinarians and under severe pandemic restrictions, the board of Veterinary Examiners waived the CE requirements for the most recent renewal. It was asked of the board if they felt CE’s should also be waived for veterinary technicians. The board discussed the increase of online continuing education resources and the low hours needed to obtain by these licensees and they should be completing the required CE’s for their upcoming license renewal.

Break for Lunch: 12:30p.m.

On Record: 1:00p.m.

Agenda item #6 Division Update

Director Chambers updated the board on the current status of their regulations changes proposed at the July 2021 meeting and that they were moving forward with the Regulations Specialist. Apologies were made for the delays as staffing constraints have been challenging but again, hopeful to have improvements in the near future with increases in staffing. Director Chambers updated the board on legislative changes to Military licensure and what those changes mean to professional licensing. The board reviewed SB 21 and some of the most important highlights to take into consideration when drafting regulatory language for military licensure. The board discussed current regulatory language for temporary licensure which is already in use. It was agreed there are resources available to draft military licensure language but there would need to be some equivalency items addressed regarding the national exam completion. It was suggested to form a committee or volunteer to take a lead drafting potential language for the board to consider and Dr. Hal Geiger volunteered to lead.

Agenda item #7 **Investigative Report**

Investigator Dawn Bundick joined to present the investigative report for the time period of May 17, 2021 through September 29, 2021. Per the report, there were 12 open matters and of the oldest was something that was still being worked on. Chair Bergartt asked if there was anticipation of additional PDMP related cases to prepare for, and Senior Investigator Sonia Lipker stated it was possible but emphasized the investigative team was looking for the high priority cases which were matters of public safety concern and would keep the board apprised of any major changes to PDMP cases.

Off Record: 1:53 p.m.

On Record: 2:00 p.m.

Agenda item #8 **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)**

PDMP Program Coordinator Lisa Sherrell joined to present the most recent updates to the PDMP and items which could/would impact veterinary license holders. These items were provided in the written PDMP update to the Board of Veterinary Examiners, which is posted on the PDMP web page. Ms. Sherrell advised the board of changes to the electronic reporting systems for the PDMP and some of the more user-friendly benefits of that update. There would also be improves to ways license integration/communication would function and increased clarity for required prescriptive reporters. There was discussion on how the system reports compliance and how veterinary prescriptions could be reported inaccurately or accidentally, creating inaccurate reports. Additionally, cleanup of incorrect delegates or those individuals not prescribing would improve.

Agenda item #9 **Board Business**

Chair Bergartt presented the Legislative Update and where the current status of the process is with legislators. Chair Bergartt stated there was testimony given during the 2021 Session and talks are starting back up in preparation for the upcoming 2022 Session. With the interest in the addition of the PAVE as an educationally pathway and the needs for addressing Military Licensure, it was agreed that Dr. Bergartt should continue working with legislators and include the additional topics discussed for the upcoming session.

The board returned to the correspondence received by Ms. Laundry. After a discussion on what options the board has to address this issue currently and/or others like Ms. Laundry, it was recommended they work to adopt regulation to further clarify what is currently written in statute. Dr. Geiger tabled the motion previously on the floor, and the board requested the division reach out to the assistant attorney general for assistance in answering

questions and helping to accelerate the process since there is active support and opportunities available to address the concern.

The board set their next meeting for January 11, 2022, to be able to recap items before the start of the 2022 Legislative Session and potentially meet in person in Juneau.

A motion was presented to adjourn at 3:24pm, and approved by unanimous consent.

Adjourned at 3:24 PM