



Board of Veterinary Examiners Regular Meeting

Minutes

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
October 10th , 2025, at 9:00 AM AKDT via Zoom

These minutes were approved at the November 14th,2025 meeting of the board.

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Staff Present: Rachel Billiet, Program Coordinator 1; Keri Mell, Licensing Examiner 3; Melissa Dumas, Administrative Operations Manager 1; Kim Lilly, Paralegal 2; Greg Gober, Investigator 3.

Call to Order

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro DVM.

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by Chair Dr. Gerlach and a quorum was established; he then read the board's mission statement onto the record. When asked if any board members had any conflicts of interest to declare, none were heard.

Review and Approve Agenda

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the agenda as written.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson.

The motion passed unanimously.

Investigations

Investigative Report

Investigator Greg Gober presented the investigative report for the period July 9, 2025 to October 8, 2025. He explained that there are 39 open cases and 6 closed cases with a few more waiting for board member recommendations. A lot of the cases that are still open are the older inherited cases. The board had no questions about the report.

Voluntary Surrender of License

Investigator Greg Gober presented a voluntary surrender of license for L.B.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners 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 character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 9:16 am and returned on the record at 9:25 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Voluntary Surrender of License – Leanne Bell

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the voluntary surrender of license for case number 2025-000401.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agreements

Paralegal Kim Lilly presented the following consent agreements to the board.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners 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 character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 9:28 am and returned on record at 9:33 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Consent Agreement – Douglas Rohn

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000734.

Motion moved by Dr. Johnson and motion seconded by Dr. Vollaro. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agreement – Jessica Ladd

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000684.

Motion moved by Dr. Vollaro and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Division Update

Licensing Report- Examiner Update

Licensing Examiner Keri Mell provided her licensing report. Ms. Mell informed the board there were 11 veterinarians and 1 veterinary technician licensed this fiscal year to date along with 7 courtesy licenses, 1 student permit, and 6 temporary permits. The board asked to have the total number of licensed veterinarians and veterinary technicians currently licensed in the state of Alaska, which Program Coordinator Rachel Billiet provided stating there are 441 active veterinarian licenses and 250 active veterinarian technician licenses. Ms. Mell will include this data in future reports.

Ms. Mell let the board know she has been in contact with the Iditarod head veterinarian, and the division is hoping to have Courtesy License applications available online for the Iditarod sometime around the beginning to middle of November, through the beginning to middle of January. The board asked staff if the Iditarod head

veterinarian Erika Freidrich has applied for her license yet and whether the race providers had decided on the description of purpose. Ms. Mell explained staff is waiting on her application but have been in contact with her numerous times and the description of purpose given from Dr. Friedrich is “Providing veterinary care for the Iditarod Trail between March 1st, 2026 and March 30th, 2026.” The board decided to have Dr. Albert refine the description and contact Dr. Friedrich to remind her that her application needs to be received by staff as soon as possible.

Regulations

Before starting Ms. Billiet provided the board with updated guidance on subcommittees and when they need to be publicly noticed. The division recently informed staff that subcommittees with at least 2 board members must be publicly noticed at least 5 days in advance anytime members of the committee plan to meet to work on their respective projects. She added that the meetings must be hosted by staff and recorded, but don’t require minutes. Board members stated that their understanding was that 1 member can work on a project and consult with an additional member, to which Ms. Billiet said anything that is perceived as ex parte communication can lead to a lawsuit of the board and individuals do sue boards and it can become costly, so she urged the board to err on the side of caution with their interpretation of the requirements. The board had a past motion on the record which established Dr. Albert and Dr. Vollaro as a subcommittee for the medical records regulation rewrite, so the board decided to pass a new motion assigning one person to the project with the ability to consult with one person.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE Dr. Vollaro as contact person in charge of the regulations project 12 AAC 68.910, 12 AAC 68.080, 12 AAC 68.140.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

12 AAC 68.910, 12 AAC 68.080, 12 AAC 68.140

Dr. Albert presented new suggested edits to regulations 12 AAC 68.910, 12AAC 68.080, and 12 ACC 68.140. These suggestions came from a white paper from AAVSB regarding regulatory considerations associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Unlike human medicine, AI has zero regulations regarding veterinary medicine. She believes the board should be looking at all the board’s regulations for AI involvement as there is concern in the veterinarian community with the liability of using AI since any veterinarian using AI is liable for any outcome provided by AI legally. As a result, consent is needed by the client. Because of liability with AI the board updated a

sentence in 12 AAC 68.910(a) to read “The identity of the author of all medical records shall be clearly noted by veterinary staff, including if AI (Artificial Intelligence) assistance is used”, and updated 12 AAC 68.910(b)(ix) to read “all signed informed consent forms, including use of AI, anesthesia, surgery, euthanasia, necropsy and waivers of recommended medical plan or AI.”

The board knows there needs to be an opportunity for the client to say they do or do not want AI used in practice. If the client says they do not want any AI used, the veterinarian is bound not to use AI and perform all the functions on their own without it. The veterinarian needs to have a signed consent form in their records saying they want AI or not, just like a consent for going under anesthesia.

Next, the board discussed AI related updates to change 12 AAC 68.080. The board agreed to update subsection (B) to read “Before providing a veterinary medical service, a veterinarian shall ensure that the patient’s owner or documented authorized representative is provided with an estimate of the cost for the veterinary medical service (except in the case of livestock) and the opportunity to opt in or out of AI use through informed consent”.

The board agreed that going through all the regulations that AI needs to be addressed in would be too much work for one board member, so the board decided the practice of medicine was the most important part to get done and to have everyone look at the practice act model and compare it to AAVSB’s model before the next meeting. They are to note places where possible AI would be applicable. After the board identifies the areas needed to be edited, they will send their information to Ms. Mell, and she will compile the suggestions and send them out to all board members. The board stated that due to Administrative Order 358 (AO 358) which bans most work on regulations, there does not seem to be any urgency to work on these, but they will at least get started.

Ms. Billiet explained to the board that though they are under a regulatory ban due to AO 358, AO 360, which the board received a memo on last week, aims to improve the quality, transparency, and efficiency of the state’s regulatory environment, and require the board to make changes to their regulations to comply. Once the board can move on regulations again there is a requirement in place for the board to look at regulations and make substantial changes in 2026. Though staff are not currently permitted to work on regulations and the board cannot proceed with regulatory changes, there is going to be a challenge to identify necessary changes at some point due to AO 360, so she recommends the board begin on the AI project, so it is not a rush when the order lifts.

The board was baffled by the percentage of regulations to be discarded. They asked if this percentage was the result of some analysis of regulations that were not meeting intended purposes or were causing unintended consequences, or was this a

percentage simply picked out of the air by people not familiar with veterinary regulation? Division staff believe there could be benefits to regulatory review now because in that process the board may identify items that could be condensed or changed that may affect the percentage reductions needed to regulations in the upcoming year.

The board doubted that a representative set of busy veterinarians could be attracted to meeting called for the very bureaucratic sounding purpose of discussing AO360. The board agreed that professional organizations, like the Alaska Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association, are the best places to solicit the collective opinion of the veterinary profession. Staff explained that the intent of stakeholder meetings is to allow anyone with vested interest in the regulations to attend and suggest changes to the division which will then be presented to the board for consideration. A stakeholder is any veterinary professional or any public member that has stake in the regulations. The board believes there is still more information needed about these meetings and AO 360. Staff explained the links in the email the board received and how to attend these meetings.

The board stated that regulations are put into place for a reason and repeated their mission statement to protect the health, safety, and welfare of animals. They are concerned that if they decrease the veterinary regulations then they are putting the health, safety and welfare of animals and Alaskans at risk, doing the exact opposite of what they are supposed to be doing. The board is supportive of removing regulations that are unnecessary or burdensome and the board has removed them over the years, but stressed that removing 15-25 % of their regulations when they are already aware of regulations that need to be added is going to be hard to do without allowing harm to Alaskans and animals of the state.

12 AAC 68.310(b)(4)(A)

At the July 9th meeting the board discussed adding language to 12 AAC 68.310(b)(4)(A) that might allow students, specifically the students of the current University of Alaska Anchorage veterinarian technician program cohort, to qualify for a license in the event their program does not receive accreditation. The board agrees on the wording of “or another certification process approved by the board” but Ms. Billiet reminded the board that at their previous meeting, Program Coordinator 2, Reid Bowman, stated that he believes this is too generic because it does not give anybody applying direction as to what that process looks like, how to apply that way, or what the board would want to see. The board needs to define what the process is. The board suggested putting “equivalent” into the wording so it says “or another equivalent certification process approved by the board”. The board believes Mr. Bowman was favorable to adding equivalent and so there is nothing else needed about the added language, but staff

was unsure and Mr. Bowman was not available for discussion. Ms. Mell and Ms. Billet let the board know they will meet with Mr. Bowman and discuss if this additon will be sufficient.

Euthanasia

Ms. Billiet explained at the last meeting the board reviewed the answers from the euthanasia permit holders based on questions that Ms. Bowman sent out earlier in the year. After the review of the responses Ms. Billiet created a compilation document of the boards discussion so far on this subject that the board could review and determine if the board would like to give guidance to the division regarding the Euthanasia Technician Program statutes and needed regulations.

The board was impressed by the programs that were used for euthanasia. As subject matter experts, the board agrees there should not be specific drugs in the euthanasia regulations to allow flexibility over the years when new drugs become available. Regulations made now take awhile and are in effect 20 years from now. The statute should not change but maybe giving guidance in suggesting regulations for the Euthanasia Program would be helpful to the division.

The board decided to have Dr. Johnson write an advisory letter to the division to lend guidance with the regulations that are not in place for the Euthanasia Program. She will prepare the letter and send it to staff for review.

Break

The board went off the record at 11:03 am and returned at 11:14 am.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Correspondence

Canine/Equine Rehab

Ms. Mell presented an email from a licensed physical therapist asking if she takes a specialty course could she work on horses, have her own business, and be an

independent contractor. The board stated that they have made it very clear in the past how an allied health professional can practice on animals. The only way this physical therapist would be able to practice legally, despite her certification in her profession, is if a veterinarian requests her consultation and the veterinarian pays her directly. She needs to be overseen by an Alaska licensed veterinarian in order to work on animals and she cannot be paid directly from the client or work independently as an independent contractor because that would be practicing without a license. She can not put out a sign nor can she she advertise for her services. Ms. Mell will provide her with the boards reponse.

EMS/Veterinary Advisory Panel

The board received an email from Brian Webb regarding creation of an advisory panel as outlined in the Alaska Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) guidance document he provided. He sent a link for a paper released by the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care's Veterinary Committee on Trauma (VetCOT), National Association of Veterinary Emergency Medical Services (NAVEMS), and the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) in his email, but board members informed staff that was not accessible as it was behind a pay wall. Dr. Gerlach summarized the abstract he was able to see to the board stating these associations think care should be given to operation canines and can be given through emergency medical services only if there is a collaboration with the veterinary community. They state that these are an obvious need to protect these working dogs, but if you are going to protect them through an EMS standpoint, you have to work with the veterinary community and do so correctly. There may be a little bit of misinterpretation by Mr. Webb, because the article states that there does need to be collaraboration and supervision by the veterinarian community if they are going to give more then standard first aid. The board asked if staff can get access to the article by sending an email to Mr. Webb asking for a copy of it. Ms. Mell will email Mr. Webb asking for the full paper and send it to the board.

It is on the record previously that the board had motioned to have Dr. Gerlach on the advisory panel before the bill got vetoed; staff would like to know if he would still like to do this. Dr. Gerlach would would like to hold off responding to Mr. Webb until he has an opportunity to consult with the Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association (AKVMA) executive board and some other private veterinarians at the AKVMA annual conference this weekend. He will get back to staff on how to respond to Dr. Webb afterwards.

Board Administrative Business

FY2025 QTR 3

Melissa Dumas, Administrative Operations Manager 1, presented the 2025 fiscal year quarter 3 financial report to the board. The board had questions about the travel expenses and reimbursements on the report. Ms. Billiet explained the travel expense and the travel reimbursement numbers don't match because the AAVSB reimburses more than the state does, and the instate travel was for Dr. Berngartt speaking at the AKVMA conference last year.

The board decided to continue discussion and take a later lunch due to the public comment period coming up soon.

AAVSB Annual Conference

Dr. Geiger and Dr. Albert went to the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) Annual Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio for nonboard business, while Dr. Gerlach and Ms. Mell attended virtually representing the Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners. Dr. Geiger believed there was a huge amount of time wasted and because he did not go as a delegate he could not address it. Last year there was a member from leadership that was removed suddenly and this year there was a member, who had been a controversial member in the past, showed up with a bunch of resolutions. During the business meeting one state kept putting forward these controversial motions. This caused delegates to get up and present emotional/ heroic speeches and used a huge amount of time. In the future if the Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners has delegates attend they need to move to table this stuff to end debate and not waste huge amounts of time on things that have enormous emotional appeal to a few members but doesn't have anything to do with AAVSB business.

Dr. Geiger encouraged members to watch Dr. Venit's talk on Artificial Intelligence (AI) online if they have time, as it was the most interesting talk at the conference in his opinion.

Dr. Albert also stated it was a very controversial meeting and AAVSB had anticipated it would be and tried to prepare for it. The AAVSB has to observe parliamentary procedure so they had a parliamentarian and a legal advisor on site to follow the procedures during the business meeting.

There was a plan to expand AAVSB to include international participation. At the conference there were delegates that felt they needed to do more for the United States and Canadian members and should not expand to global participation. Other motions passed were to require an in-person exam and to have a veterinary technician representative on boards, and Dr. Albert stated there is a white paper about this topic. The board was reminded that anything the AAVSB passes is simply guidance for boards; it is not a law.

Dr. Albert asked staff about participation in the VIVA program and program involvement as she was approached by AAVSB staff saying they can help in any way needed if there is still interest. Ms. Billiet explained that she and Deputy Director Glenn Saviers met with them in August of this year and learned it is going to be a big IT project. With Ms. Saviers on maternity leave there has not been any headway on this, but Ms. Billiet will give an update at the next board meeting.

Dr. Gerlach agreed with Dr. Geiger about the disruptions at the AAVSB meeting but understood it is part of a democratic process. He found it difficult attending virtually and only being able to go to the business meetings and not the educational talks. He has not had time to go back and watch the videos of the educational talks but will do so when time allows.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Friday, January 23, 2026 via zoom.

Public Comment

Public comment period opened without any members of the public present to speak. The board kept their discussion regarding board administration business going and stated they would stop and listen to public comment if someone joined. No public members were in attendance.

Lunch Break

The board went off the record at 12:30 pm and returned at 1:03 pm.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Dr. Gerlach's Presentation for AKVMA

Dr. Gerlach presented his power point presentation for the AKVMA conference to the board. He appreciated the board members sending in comments and concerns to staff before hand so he could get the presentation together. They received it well with a few minor spelling, grammar, and date changes.

VCPR Regulation Exemption Letter

Dr. Gerlach presented the letter he drafted to request an exemption from AO 358 to work on the VCPR regulations. The board suggested adding the language “unnecessary and burdensome to the public” to the letter. The board also stated the current regulation causes a financial burden to the public for having to bring their animal in for another visit to stay legal for a covering veterinarian to work on their animal, which also is a concern for a livestock operations.

The board decided to add an extra sentence to the letter so one section now reads “The present regulation as published prohibits colleagues in a practice to care for each others patients without establishing a separate VCPR. This is an unnecessary and costly burden on the public.”

The board asked if this letter will allow them to work with law or just the regulations specialist. Ms. Billiet explained if approved this will allow the board to work through all the steps to move forward with a regulation project.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the VCPR regulation exemption letter.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Geiger. The motion passed unanimously.

Review Sponsorship Request Letter

Dr. Albert presented her responses from legislators about the letter that was approved in a past board meeting for legislative sponsorship. This sponsorship request included a representation for Veterinary Technicians on the Board of Veterinary Examiners, Student Externship Requirements, Temporary License Requirements, Administration of Examination, and Reexamination Eligibility. In August the letter was used to contact all members of the senate and house by email. Many legislators offered support but cannot sponsor because they are too busy. Representative Prax said he was also too busy but said he could help move a bill and recommended another Representative. Representative Story's aide contacted the board and said Representative Story may be interested in sponsoring. Representative Ruffridge's aide said they can determine if they can sponsor the Board of Veterinary Examiners by the end of October or early November and Representative Schwanke's aide said they would review it and speak to

Representative Schwanke. The board only got one negative response and it was a misunderstanding about HB 70. The board thanked Dr. Albert for all the work she put into this task.

Safe Haven/Physician Health Committee Communications

Dr. Albert contacted Pat Anderson with AKVMA about the discussion the board had with Pam Ventgen and the Physician Health Committee. Ms. Anderson said they are discussing it with their board and are already in the process of examining the Safe Haven project from AAVSB. The board will wait for a response from Ms. Anderson because there is not much the board can do without the support of the AKVMA.

The board was wondering who they could talk to about AO 360 and who and how they came up with the percentage of regulations that need to be removed. Staff said they will make sure someone with more knowledge will be at the next board meeting to answer questions, if the meetings for the board by the division regarding AO 360 does not answer their questions and concerns.

Staff said next week they will send the board an email with everyone's tasks from today's meeting.

Adjourn

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE adjourning the October 10, 2025, meeting of the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

The board went off record at 2:24 pm.