



Board of Veterinary Examiners Special Meeting

Minutes

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
November 14th, 2025, at 10:00 AM AKST via Zoom

These minutes were approved by the Board of Veterinary Examiners at the December 22nd, 2025 meeting of the board.

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 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. Vollaro.
The motion passed unanimously.

Application Review

Ms. Mell presented the application for Timothy James for review.

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. Vollaro. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 10:08 am and returned on the record at 10:09 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Application Review - Timothy James

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the application for Timothy James #243663.

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

The board was running early so Dr. Gerlach agreed to allow Dr. Albert to give an update on the Sponsorship Request Letter and communications from it.

Update on Sponsorship Request Letter

Dr. Albert presented her update on responses from legislators for the board's legislative sponsorship request letter. Yesterday she spoke with the aide for Representative Ruffridge, Mr. Sexton, who said Rep. Ruffridge is definitely interested in pursuing things though Mr. Sexton mentioned that Rep. Ruffridge, as a republican, is a minority in the House of Representatives so there is always a possibility this could present a problem, but the changes the board is asking for in the statutes shouldn't present a challenge to either political party. Representative Prax has already sent the letter to legal to have a bill drafted so Mr. Sexton will contact Rep. Prax to get more information if the bill was drafted or where in the process it is.

Dr. Johnson joined the meeting at 10:13 am and a quorum was maintained.

AO360 Introduction

The Department of Law and the Governor's Office, the implementing agencies of Administrative Order 360 (AO 360), has designated an Agency Regulatory Liaison (ARL) in every department and Sara Chambers is the ARL for the Department of Commerce. She works directly with Law and the Governor's Office on implementing AO 360 and conveys their guidance and requirements to divisions, corporate agencies, and the boards, and was present to provide the board with information on AO 360. AO 360 was issued August 4, 2025, by Governor Dunleavy with the goal to improve the quality, transparency, and efficiency of the State's regulatory environment. Ms. Chambers stated that since 2019, when she introduced the concept of right touch regulation to professional licensing boards, the Board of Veterinarian Examiners (BOVE) has embraced right touch regulation, and she commended them for their ongoing efforts throughout the years to improve their regulations already. She added the reminder that right touch regulation aims to find the space that doesn't swing too far to the right or the left, where it is too hard to become licensed or too easy to become licensed and create a risk to public safety with no restrictions.

Ms. Chambers explained the events that need to happen in order to be compliant with AO 360, which are engagement of stakeholders, streamlining the permitting process, publication and review of existing and future guidance documents, development of a plan and timeline to reduce regulatory requirements of 15% by December 2026 and 25% by December 2027, and approval of a State Unified Regulatory Plan. Some of these events have been completed by the Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing (CBPL) staff already. Director Sylvan Robb held meetings for stakeholders and public engagement in Fall 2025 and any comments given during those meetings, oral or written, on veterinary regulations were recorded and given to Ms. Mell to disperse to board members. On October 31, 2025, the division established a baseline of current regulatory requirements which the Board of Veterinary Examiners has 227 discretionary requirements. Board staff are still working on documents to present these findings to the board and should have that ready for the board next week.

Ms. Chambers stated that as the prep work has been done by division staff, it is now the board's responsibility to develop a plan and timeline to reduce

regulatory requirements. This plan is due February 13, 2026, and will need to detail how the board plans to achieve 15% reduction by the end of 2026, and an additional 10% reduction, which is an accumulative 25% reduction, by the end of 2027. The board will make this proposal with the tools provided for the board and ultimately plans from all boards will be compiled into the Divisions proposal, then the Departments proposal, and then a Statewide Unified Regulatory Plan will be created. In Spring 2026, the regulatory plan will be approved by the Department of Law and the Governor's Office and then will be posted on the online public notice system. The Department of Law will be engaged in assisting boards getting those regulations implemented and effective by the dates of December 2026 and December 2027.

Ms. Chambers provided the board with ideas on how to develop their plan and achieve compliance with the AO, such as eliminating unnecessary requirements, lowering the barrier for licensing, looking for streamlining opportunities, not duplicating the work being done in other areas, etc. Ms. Mell will provide the board with a plan written out by Department of Law on how the board can accomplish these goals and Director Robb and Ms. Chambers will be able to assist the board when needed as well.

Ms. Chambers stated that compliance with the order extends to everyone, and staff are offering a lot of support. She understands it is a big ask and a big timeline and she wants to make sure the board has the tools needed. Ms. Chambers encourages the board to ask questions, request clarification, send emails to her directly, or ask Ms. Mell and she can correspond with Ms. Chambers as needed. She emphasized there is an open line of communication for assistance.

The board asked Ms. Chambers how do the qualitative changes work. She explained that the board is working on a regulation change that increases a requirement, then they are going to have to make up for it and decrease more requirements in another area. The board will be responsible for doing the math and staff will be assisting to the best of their ability. Once the plan is together the Governor's Office and Department of Law will be looking at the suggested changes to see if they agree with the proposals. Because this is a statewide effort, they are asking that the board make a good faith effort and do their best with the math.

The board asked how does the Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) regulation project waiver work with AO 360 and whether it has gone through. Program Coordinator Rachel Billiet explained the chair decided to move forward with the waiver request, even though Dr. Albert had received guidance in a meeting that it may be best to hold the waiver and put it into the reform plan, because the changes being proposed have minimal effect on the overall regulation count, adding 3-4 requirements by Ms. Billiet's unofficial count. The waiver request has already gone through Director Robb, Deputy Commissioner Latham, and it is now with Ms. Chambers, and she is getting the information together to present to the Governor's Office. The Governor's Office will then review it and give an answer. If the waiver is granted, the board can resume the VCPR project outside of the AO360 reform plan, but if the Governor's Office does not think it meets the criteria of a public safety standpoint and denies the waiver, they will ask the board to include it in their reform plan as the plan can include regulation changes that result in an increase as long as reductions are made elsewhere to offset the increase. Ms. Chambers explained if the board believes they have cut everything they can without harming public safety, or are in line with national standards, or because the requirements are in the statutes, there will be an opportunity to explain that the board has cut everything they can cut from regulations and anything further is going to hinder the safety of the practice of veterinary medicine in the state. The board will be able to make this pitch to the implementing agencies in the reform plan and see what they say as they understand professional licensing boards have a huge public protection responsibility, but the agencies have made it very clear of the goals they want reached.

The board wanted to know if the statute changes that the board is seeking count as reductions. Ms. Chambers explained statutory changes are outside of AO 360 because those rest with the legislature and not within the power of the board or the Governor's Office to implement. However, that could be a compelling reason why the board cannot make the 25% reduction if changes in regulatory reductions require updates in statute. It is a powerful message to put into your reform plan that they would like to cut x amount of regulatory requirements, but because of barriers in statute the board can't change these regulations until the statutes change.

Discussion on AO360

Ms. Chambers explained different ways the board can approach working on their reform plan. Since the board is a small board, the whole board can work on all regulations and have extra board meetings, assign sections to individuals and then come back together to discuss, form a committee, or participate in a work group approach. The board discussed and agreed to have every board member look at all regulations and then email Ms. Mell their recommendations and she will compile them and get them on the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Mell asked to have those a week before the meeting so they will be available in the board book for board members to review before the meeting.

Ideas were given to the board on how to look at the regulations to see if they can be reduced. The board was advised to look at some key factors:

- Does a requirement exist because it has been done a certain way before, and is it still reasonable to do it now?
- Does the board have requirements that are not actionable?
- Is the board maintaining arbitrary standards that are not based on national standards or research?

It was noted that boards sometimes see a “may” in statute as a “shall” and just because the board has the authority to adopt regulation doesn’t mean they have to. Ms. Chambers explained that this is the time to dig into changes the board always wanted to make or address changes that stakeholders have requested in the past. The board can also look for alternative pathways to accomplish similar goals, including attestations instead of submitting documents and identifying steps that can be eliminated because other agencies have already checked the information.

The board asked about the document that they received regarding two comments made by the public. Ms. Mell explained these were comments the division received from the stakeholder meetings or were submitted in writing. The board does not need to respond to those today and will add them to the agenda for the next board meeting as there is not time for review at this meeting. The board requested Ms. Mell to put a list together of stakeholders and groups who apply for licenses and to send out an email letting them know when our next board meetings are scheduled regarding AO 360 so that they may attend and provide public comment that way the board can gather additional

comments and suggestions about regulations and ensure the public feels adequately included in the process.

The board stated their next meeting date will be December 22, 2025. This meeting and the already scheduled meeting for January 23, 2026, will focus on AO 360.

Review and Approve Board Minutes

October 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion

RESOLVED to APPROVE the October 10th, 2025, meeting minutes.

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

Adjourn

Motion

RESOLVED TO APPROVE adjourning the November 14th, 2025, meeting of the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

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

The board went off the record at 11:48 am.