



Board of Veterinary Examiners Regular Meeting

Minutes

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
Monday, January 26, 2026, 9AM AKST via Zoom

These minutes have not been approved by 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; Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator 2; Melissa Dumas, Administrative Operations Manager 1; 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 9:04 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. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Albert.

The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Board Minutes

The board had three corrections to the meeting minutes from Dec. 22, 2025. The 90 day courtesy addition needs more than just for emergencies, Dr. Geiger needed to recuse himself, not Dr. Gerlach, and regulation 12 AAC 68.047(c)(2) is only changing by removing applicable fees language, not on a department form language.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the December 22, 2025, meeting minutes with the corrections.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Investigations

Presentation of 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. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Vollaro.
The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 9:15 am and returned on the record at 9:28 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 - Margaret Butterworth

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000699.

Motion moved by Dr. Vollaro and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson.
The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Dr. Johnson yes. Dr. Geiger yes.
Dr. Gerlach yes. Dr. Albert yes. Dr. Vollaro yes.

Consent Agreement – Jennifer Pironis

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000507.

Motion moved by Dr. Vollaro and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson.
The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Dr. Johnson yes. Dr. Geiger yes.
Dr. Gerlach yes. Dr. Albert yes. Dr. Vollaro yes.

Investigative Report

Investigator Greg Gober presented the investigative report for the period of October 9, 2025, to January 20, 2026. He explained there are 30 open cases, 14 closed cases, and a few more of the pending cases will be closed soon. He thanked the board for being responsive and working through some of the older, more complicated cases.

The board asked Mr. Gober what an incomplete complaint is, and he stated it is where a person will submit a complaint but never follow through with a complaint packet with a signed affidavit.

Dr. Geiger asked about a certain case and Mr. Gober explained the case was recently discussed with a reviewing board member and if he would like more information they could go into executive session. Dr. Geiger declined and received his answer that the case was being worked on.

The board asked Mr. Gober if the rate of investigations has changed. Mr. Gober was able to say 2025 did not seem like there was an uptick in activity and they are closing more cases than they are receiving.

Dr. Albert asked about CE cases and Mr. Gober stated deficient CE cases go to paralegal, and he only sees serious CE cases, such as fabrication of certificates. Ms. Lilly is not present, so Ms. Mell said she will get numbers from her and report back to board via email.

Division Update

FY2025 QTR 4

Administrative Operations Manager Melissa Dumas presented the fiscal year 2025 quarter 4 report and the fiscal year 2026 quarter 2 report (previously on the agenda as quarter 1, but a newer report has come out since then). The board asked about the increase in expenditure on personnel services and Ms. Dumas explained the division reclassified 40 positions, including the licensing examiner 3 position which went from a range 14 to a range 17 to more adequately compensate staff that are working with the boards.

Next, Ms. Dumas presented to the board FY 2025 CBPL cost allocations and the indirect expenses to the Veterinary program. There were no questions from the board regarding this.

Ms. Dumas also presented the veterinary fee analysis that the board had access to work on the tool and see how they can generate more revenue. The board had a discussion about the exam fee and how it will be deleted when the state exam is given by AAVSB. Ms. Dumas showed the board different places to increase fees, and they agreed they do not want to increase the student permits, they wish to decrease it. The board would also like to keep Veterinary Technicians' licenses fees the same as they are now and to increase the courtesy license, delayed payment fee, initial veterinarian fee, and renewal fees. Ms. Dumas let the board know she will write a memo and get it

over to the Office of Management Budget so the veterinary program can move forward with the fee increase and hopefully get it into place before then next renewal period.

The board had a question as to why the department would like to see a \$290,000 surplus in the budget after Ms. Dumas left the meeting. This was answered later in the meeting.

Licensing Report- Examiner Update

Licensing Examiner Keri Mell provided her licensing report to the board. Ms. Mell informed the board there were 15 new licensed veterinarians, 6 new Veterinary Technicians, 10 courtesy permits, 1 student permit, and 8 temporary permits issued so far in fiscal year 2026 (July 1st, 2025 – January 22nd, 2026). There are currently 451 active veterinarian licenses and 256 active veterinary technician licenses.

Tabled CE Request

The Ranch for Dr. Evans

Dr. Alina Evans requested 45 CE's for an animal behavioral training course called The Ranch. The board tabled a CE request in OnBoard to discuss at this board meeting. The board agreed this CE is not acceptable continuing education at a doctorate level, the instructor did not have a specialized DVM credential, and they could not put it in the medical or non-medical category.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the CE Request for The Ranch for Dr. Evans.

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

The motion failed unanimously by roll call vote. Dr. Johnson no. Dr. Geiger no. Dr. Gerlach no. Dr. Albert no. Dr. Vollaro no.

Board Administrative Business

Next Meeting

The next special meeting for AO 360 will be Wednesday February 11th, 2026, 9am-11am via zoom.

The next regular meeting will be April 8th, 2026, 9am-3pm via zoom.

Legislative Request Letter Update

Dr. Albert presented to the board the recent communications regarding sponsorship for the board's proposed statute changes. It was recommended to Dr. Albert to add an

amendment to another bill with one of the four statute changes the board has. This is because a session is two years and they are in the second year of it so adding a completely new bill would have to happen by this May, which is unreasonable. Bud Sexton (Representative Ruffridge's aide) was trying to request an amendment to SB98 which has to do with an extension of boards and Dr. Albert was referred to Senator Bjorkman's office and spoke to Conrad (Senator Bjorkman's aide) and found out SB98 is a done deal. It was recommended to contact House Labor & Commerce Committee members about HB158/SB145 which is associated with an administrative request from the governor regarding professional temporary military licenses for all professions. Dr. Albert contacted Representative Zack Fields and Representative Carolyn Hall regarding the potential to adding an amendment on to HB158. Dr. Albert copied Representative Story's office to update them that the board is potentially looking for an amendment on a current bill and not the creation of a new bill. Mr. Sexton helped Dr. Albert find a point person on HB158 since she did not hear back from Rep. Hall and Rep. Fields, which is Lizzie Kubitz (staff to Senator Matt Claman). Dr. Albert was able to speak to Ms. Kubitz on the phone on January 23rd, 2026. Dr. Albert sent her both the requests for the four statute changes, stressing that the most important statute change the board is pursuing is adding a Veterinary Technician board seat.

Dr. Albert wanted to make sure the board supports her decision to go forth with an amendment to the bill and decisions moving forward because things change fast during legislative session. Staff wanted to be sure they had the rules of legislative session right, so during break they will ask if Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator 2, is available to join the meeting and answer questions.

Lunch Break

The board went off the record for lunch at 11:05 am and returned on the record at 11:31 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

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

Public Comment

Public comment period opened without any members of the public present to speak. The board decided to continue their discussion regarding legislative updates, and they would stop and listen to public comment if someone joined.

Legislative Request Letter Update -Continued

Mr. Bowman joined the discussion and Dr. Albert, as the legislative liaison, asked him how much she needs to check back with the board since meetings are months apart and she is working with statute changes and a lot of things evolve between meetings. Mr. Bowman states he thinks if it is something small that doesn't change much, Dr. Albert can make the decision. If it is a larger decision, then she can email Ms. Mell and she can get the information out to the board. Changing the statutes project from 4 statutes to only trying to push through the primary one would be something the board needs to discuss.

At this time Mr. Bowman answered another question the board had regarding why the board needs a \$290,000 surplus. He stated there are no funds outside of licensing fees that are paying for investigations. If one case goes to the Supreme Court the \$290,000 would be gone. The division has asked for investigations to be put into the business and corporate licensing funds, which are carrying a surplus right now, because it is a public safety feature. It would be an interdepartmental transfer but it wouldn't come directly off the backs of the licensees.

The board agrees that Dr. Albert has leeway to make decisions for the board. Mr. Bowman reiterated to make sure she doesn't state personal opinions as board opinions.

The board agreed upon if something changes in her legislative work, she will email Ms. Mell so Ms. Mell can email the board any updates. They also agreed that amending a bill by getting a veterinary technician board seat is the way to move forward with their statute changes.

AO 360

The board picked up where they left off from their December 22nd, 2025, AO 360 special meeting and made the below changes to regulations.

In 12 AAC 68.160 the board wants to take out "believed to be" and replace it with "are", to remove the question of intent with respect to violations of the law.

In 12 AAC 68.240(a) the board wants to remove on a form from the department.

In 12 AAC 68.310 (b)(1) the board wants to remove on a form provided by the department.

Break

The board went off the record at 1:23 pm and returned at 1:33pm.

AO 360 -Continued

In 12 AAC 68.310 (b)(4)(A) the board wants to add "or another equivalent certification process as approved by the board".

In 12 AAC 68.500(b)(1) the board wants to remove on a form provided by the department.

In 12 AAC 68.500(b)(3) the board wants to change the wording to “Letter of good standing from the dean and approved for clinical externship” instead of “their 4th year”.

In 12 AAC 68.900(b)(1) the board would like to change it to name of owner and patient;

The board agreed to combine 12 AAC 68.010 and 12 AAC 68.035 but want to be sure verification of active practice of veterinary medicine for at least five of the seven years before the date of application is in there for applicants who have not taken the North American Veterinary License Examination in the last 60 months. Rachel Billiet, Program Coordinator 1, was not sure whether combining the two pathways for licensure in regulation is doable legally, but she will conduct further research.

In 12 AAC 68.041(d) the board wants to leave it as it is as statutes don’t cover as much as this regulation does.

Ms. Billiet will pull the medical records regulations project, AI regulation project, and VCPR regulations project and add them to the final spreadsheet that the board will review at the February 11th, 2026, meeting that will finalize the changes for the AO 360 reform plan. The division will forward the finalized plan once approved by the board. Legal language does not need to be included at this stage, as the plan is a request to work on regulations that are approved by the plan, and only those regulations.

Adjourn

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE adjourning the January 26, 2026, meeting of the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

The board went off the record at 3:10pm.