



## April 8, 2026 Board of Veterinary Examiners Regular Meeting

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

### **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 9AM AKST via Zoom**

These minutes have not been reviewed or 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; Greg Gober, Investigator 3; Billy Homestead, Senior Investigator 4; Kim Lilly, 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 9:03 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 Dr. Albert declared she was a reviewing board member for Case No. 2025-000500 and Dr. Gerlach, Chair, declared he was a reviewing board member for Case No 2025-000511. Dr. Gerlach confirmed that Dr. Albert is recused from discussion and voting on Case No. 2025-000500.

#### **Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE Dr. Gerlach's recusal from discussion for Case No. 2025-000511 as the reviewing board member.

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

#### **Review and Approve Agenda**

Dr. Gerlach explained to the board that agenda item 10B was removed at the last minute because the doctor who submitted the correspondence would like to be present when the board discusses it and she cannot make today's meeting.

#### **Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE the agenda with 10B removed.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

## **Investigations**

### **Investigative Report**

Investigator Greg Gober presented to the board the Investigative Report for the period of January 21, 2026, to April 2, 2026. He explained there are 33 open cases and 4 closed cases during this period. Dr. Geiger asked a question about a veterinarian case and was told that it is part of the ongoing cases. The board had no further questions for Mr. Gober.

### **Investigative Training**

Investigator Greg Gober and Senior Investigator Billy Homestead presented the Annual Investigative Training to the board. Mr. Gober stated the Investigations Unit is part of the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing which is part of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development in the State of Alaska. Mr. Gober summarized the three license types and who needs professional licenses. He explained the difference between Alaska Statutes (law passed by legislatures) and Alaska Administrative Code/ Regulations which are rules adopted by boards that govern how the laws will be reinforced. Investigations will investigate alleged violations of Statutes and Regulations. The Investigation Unit gathers information and presents it to the board members. Board members then verify whether a violation occurred when reviewing a case from the investigator.

A complaint can be filed by a phone call, form on our website, or email. A complaint needs to be made within the board's jurisdiction to be considered valid, if it is not the Division may close the complaint. Criminal complaints (law enforcement), money or civil matters, "bedside manner" issues, quality of work complaints (for contractors, different than malpractice), unfair or deceptive business practices (under Alaska Consumer Protection), and Landlord Tenant Laws are typically not jurisdictional to the Board of Veterinary Examiners (BOVE).

If the complaint is jurisdictional to BOVE the complainant needs to fill out a complaint packet that provides a summary of the incident, include any supporting documentation they have, a signed release of information, and a signed affidavit. Consumers need to be accountable for their allegations, so the Division does not except anonymous complaints, except in unusual instances. This is to avoid manipulation of the process by parties seeking to eliminate competition or pursue personal or professional vendettas.

Mr. Gober explained to the board the Investigative process. First an individual or agency will contact the division with a complaint. This initiates an intake. The

investigator then sends the complaint packet/release forms and if the complaint packet is not returned within 30 days of being sent, the case is then closed.

When a completed complaint packet is received by investigations the status goes from intake to complaint status. If the investigator cannot see what statute or regulation is specifically being violated, then the investigator will have a board member perform a jurisdictional review. If it is not jurisdictional then the complaint is closed. If the complaint is jurisdictional then it goes into the information collection phase where the investigator will collect information such as background reports, police reports, medical records, court records, financial records, interview witnesses and will issue subpoenas.

Once the investigator has enough evidence to prove or disprove that a violation was present, it is then presented to a board member for a full case review to determine if a violation has occurred. If the board member determines there is no violation, then the complaint is closed. If the board member determines there is a violation of statute or regulation the complaint is upgraded to an investigation. When it gets upgraded to an investigation a non-disciplinary letter of advisement is given or a license action will be taken by the board and, if agreed upon by the respondent, will close out the investigation. If the respondent disagrees and refuses the license action, the Division moves forward with the litigation process and files an accusation. The Division then prepares the case for Administrative Hearing, and the case is presented to an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). The ALJ decision is presented to the board for final consideration.

The board asked if the complaint goes to the ALJ and the board stands firm on their recommendation can the respondent continue the case in court. Senior Investigator Billy Homestead responded if the respondent does not agree with the board and the ALJ the respondent can fight that to the next level and appeal it in Superior Court and then Supreme Court.

There are three types of Investigative case types: application matters, consumer complaints, and inspections. These cases while under investigation are required by statute to be kept confidential. This prevents the complainant, licensee, and the board from obtaining progress reports or information that may disclose the current status of an open investigation and protects the reputation of licensees who may be accused of wrongdoing but the allegations against them are unproven, and to make sure the case is not compromised.

There were no more questions from the board regarding the public part of the investigative training.

The second part of Investigative Training was in Executive Session.

**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, and matters required by law, municipal charter, or ordinance to be confidential. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

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

The board entered into executive session at 9:32 am and returned on the record at 10:31 am. Dr. Geiger dropped the call for a couple minutes during executive session, but a quorum was maintained.

### **Attendance**

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

The board thanked Mr. Gober and Mr. Homestead for their time and for the training.

The board discussed reviewing board members (RBM) not being able to go into executive session and whether they can begin allowing them in for listening purpose only. Rachel Billiet, Program Coordinator 1, stated that she believed RBM's are not allowed in executive session due to the inability to verify that they did not participate since session is off the record. The board disagreed with this, stating that other members present could verify the RBM did not participate if questioned, and asked for more information. Ms. Billiet will gather more information and present to the chair at a later date. For today's meeting the board will proceed as usual, with RBM's excluded from executive session.

### **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. Albert.  
The motion passed unanimously.

As the reviewing board member for Consent Agreement J.P-B. Case No. 2025-000511, Dr. Gerlach was recused from entering executive session.

The board entered into executive session at 10:41 am and returned to record at 11:01 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 – J.P-B.****Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000511.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Vollaro.  
The motion failed by roll call vote. Dr. Albert no. Dr. Geiger no. Dr. Johnson no.  
Dr. Vollaro no. Dr. Gerlach abstain.

**Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE an amended consent agreement for case number 2025-000511 to include the full \$3500.00 fine.

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

**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.

As the reviewing board member for consent agreement Michael Haberman Case No 2025-000500, Dr. Albert was recused from entering into executive session.

The board entered into executive session at 11:06 am and returned to record at 11:18 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 for Michael Haberman**

### **Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for Case No 2025-000500.

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

The motion passed by roll call vote. Dr. Gerlach yes. Dr. Geiger yes. Dr. Johnson yes. Dr. Vollaro yes. Dr. Albert abstain.

## **Application Review**

Keri Mell Occupational Licensing Examiner 3, presented a CE Exemption request that was tabled in OnBoard on 3/20/2026.

### **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 Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Vollaro.

The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 11:21 am and returned on the record at 11:37 am. A quorum was maintained.

### **Attendance**

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

The board decided to break for lunch and come back during public comment. The board will continue the discussion on the application review when time allows.

### **Lunch Break**

The board went off the record for lunch at 11:38 am and returned on the record at 12:02 pm.

### **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 wanting to speak. The board decided to continue their discussion regarding the request for CE exemption, and they would stop and listen to public comments if someone joined.

### **Application Review- Continued**

The board asked to go into executive session to finish the discussion about K.W's CE exemption request and Ms. Billiet explained that during break she researched if CE exemption discussions meet the qualification for executive session and they do not. CE exemption discussions can be held on record. The board finished their discussion on record.

The board had a discussion about being consistent with the continuing education disciplinary matrix. Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator II joined the discussion and explained to the board that the way a lot of boards are now looking at it is if they have a reinstatement but the licensee did not meet the time frame for completing the continuing education, if they have completed the CE (after the time frame) and are otherwise qualified to go back to work, the boards are not holding that time frame against them as long as the licensee did not lie about it on their application. This is the Right Touch way that boards are implementing now. The board explained that sending the licensee to investigations/ paralegal will not produce a hardship as they do not need to be licensed to work as a veterinarian technician in the state of Alaska. Mr. Bowman explained that the cost of going to investigations could cause a hardship to the licensee.

The board asked if it is known when the licensee was and wasn't working and staff does not know that information, they only know when her license had lapsed. Ms. Billiet asked the board if the board does not believe the applicant is being honest in their request for CE exemption and if the board thinks there was possibly a violation because of this. The board said no and explained they are going off of 12AAC 68.047(f)(1-4) that excusable negligent includes chronic illness, retirement, personal or family hardship, or other similar circumstances as determined by the board. The board had a discussion if work burnout would be a personal hardship.

### **Veterinarian Technician Renewal – K.W - Failure to Complete Continuing Education**

#### **Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE the continuing education exemption request for K.W.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Vollaro.  
The motion failed by roll call vote. Dr. Albert no. Dr. Gerlach yes. Dr. Geiger yes. Dr. Johnson no. Dr. Vollaro no.

K.W. CE exemption did not pass and her renewal application will be forwarded to investigations.

## **Division Update**

### **Licensing Report**

Keri Mell Licensing Examiner 3 provided her licensing report to the board. Ms. Mell informed the board there were 20 new licensed veterinarians, 9 new veterinary technicians, 48 courtesy permits, 3 student permits, and 9 temporary permits issued so far in fiscal year 2026 (July 1st, 2025 – March 25th, 2026). There are currently 457 active veterinarian licenses and 261 active veterinary technician licenses.

The board asked Ms. Mell if student permits were down and when do they usually apply for those. Ms. Mell stated they are down and looking at years past applications for student permits come in throughout the year and not just in the fall.

The board asked how popular temporary licenses are. Ms. Mell stated for the past year she had only one applicant ask for information regarding one, and none have been issued. The board wondered when the last temporary license expired and if the board should address temporary licenses in regulations. Ms. Mell stated the last temporary license expired 5/31/2024 and there were three issued that year.

Ms. Mell explained to the board that staff got an email from AVMA Committee on Veterinary Technician (CVTEA) stating they will be conducting a site visit to the Matanuska Susitna College in Palmer AK Veterinary Technology program on September 2-3, 2026. The board was happy to hear the news.

### **Euthanasia letter to Division Director**

Sara Johnson DVM, presented the letter to board that will be presented to the Division Director regarding the advisory guidance on humane euthanasia practices. Dr. Johnson used mostly AVMA guidelines for humane euthanasia as reference. The board thanked Dr. Johnson for writing it and thought it was very educational. The board suggested changing the statute number to the correct statute which is 08.02.050 and not 080.02.050 and change disposing to disposal.

#### **Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE the Advisory Guidance on Humane Euthanasia Practices in Alaska letter, with the discussed edits.

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

The board moved to Agenda item 11A (Score Reporting) before discussing 10A due to running behind and the presenters were present and ready to speak.

## **Board Administrative Business**

## **Discussion on Accepting Score Reports**

Ms. Billiet introduced Katie Koch, VAULT Mobility Program Manager with American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) and Janine Hawley, Chief Operating Officer with International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA) to the board. Ms. Billiet explained to the board that there were a lot of discrepancies and conflicting information of what scores of the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) and Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE) the board should be accepting. Ms. Koch had a presentation for the board to help clear up any confusion and answer any questions on what scores to accept and from where.

Ms. Koch shared a graphic to indicate the life cycle of a NAVLE score. When an applicant registers to take the NAVLE they are given two options. One, they can indicate a board they want to automatically receive their NAVLE score and this option is for students who know where they want to practice. This does not cost anything more than the cost of taking the NAVLE and the individual does not need to request anything else. New, as of last year, is the second way. The applicant can opt out of choosing a board, this is called the No Board Option. With this option scores don't automatically get reported to any specific board and goes to the AAVSB only. Once the exam is taken, the ICVA scores them and compiles all the scores. ICVA does not have a secure system to send the scores out so they have partnered with National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). The NBME functions as the ICVA score portal.

In the NBME portal, that Ms. Mell can access, are the scores of applicants who requested their scores sent to Alaska's Board of Veterinary Examiners. Staff can either download them in a bulk report, which is an excel spread sheet that has the raw data or individual PDF reports that can be downloaded and put in a license application file.

When the AAVSB gets the score report from ICVA, it is put into individuals professional records. If someone wants that score to be transferred to a board they need to request a transfer and pay an additional fee. This is the VAULT. VAULT is a service that puts together score reports and sends them through a secure portal to various jurisdictions. Individuals who use VAULT services are applicants who didn't know where they wanted to practice, chose a different state to practice after taking the exam, or individuals who have been previously licensed in another state.

The board asked why do the reports have "for candidates only" on the official copy of the VTNE reports. Ms. Koch explained that the candidate copy and the official copy look the same when downloaded from their system. AAVSB is aware of that issue and are working on reformatting. If the staff is downloading the reports from the AAVSB portal, they are the official score reports. Ms. Koch offered in the interim of them getting the official template updated that she can reformat the score reports so it looks like official

ones so the board has a piece of mind. The board agreed that would be helpful. AAVSB said they will work with their technology team to have it fixed on their end. If there are previous ones that need to be updated staff can send them directly to Ms. Koch and she will fix them.

Ms. Billiet asked Ms. Koch if staff gets an email from ICVA saying go to NBME to pull a report is that considered a VIVA report. Ms. Koch answered yes.

Ms. Hawley reiterated what Ms. Koch explained and said anything that comes from NBME portal are official scores. ICVA does put language on candidate reports so they don't try to submit their copy directly to governing bodies with a possibility of fraud. The board is only suppose to rely on verification received either directly throught the NBME or AAVSB.

## **Correspondence**

### **AKVMA CE Hours**

Ms. Mell presented to the board an email from Executive Director of the Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association (AKVMA) Pat Anderson. Ms. Anderson is preparing for the next AKVMA annual conference and would like to know if 75 minutes would be 1.5 CE hours. The board agrees that 75 minutes would equal 1.5 CE credit hours as long as there are no breaks. Ms. Mell will let Ms. Anderson know the board's response.

## **Board Administrative Business (Continued)**

### **Board Annual Report**

The board discussed who will work on the Annual Report that gets submitted to the department in accordance with AS 08.01.070(10) by the end of the fiscal year. Last year Dr. Johnson completed it for the board. Dr. Geiger volunteered and will work on the Annual Report in the State Office Building with the help of Ms. Mell on April 22, 2026. Ms. Mell will send the completed report out via email to the board for edits. If a board member has edits they will email them to Ms. Mell, she will edit it and put the final report in OnBoard for a final vote.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next regular meeting will be August 7, 2026, 9am-3pm via zoom.

### **Legislative Communications Guidance for Professional Licensing Boards/ Sponsorship Request**

The board received an email from the Director of Governor's Legislative Office (GLO) and Boards & Commissions Jordan Shilling that stated Professional Licensing Boards and

Commissions under AS 08 are components of the executive branch and do not independently initiate, pursue, or advocate statutory changes. Boards are expected to remain neutral on pending legislation unless expressly authorized through department leadership and GLO. Boards do not adopt or communicate support/oppose positions on pending legislation.

With this new guidance the board agreed that Dr. Albert will cease all communication with legislatures and her role as legislative liaison is dissolved. The board can still recognize changes in statute, it is now a different process asking for them. The board does not advocate for them through the legislature anymore, instead they submit a proposal to division staff to be forwarding along to the GLO. Dr. Albert will send staff the letter she has been using to request sponsorship of statutory changes and staff will learn where to submit the board's most recent approved statutory changes as a proposal. Ms. Billiet will also find out if it is ok to share the letter with AKVMA.

The board realizes they can not talk about statutes and legislation as board members to legislatures or testify on the boards behalf but are allowed to as an individual with their personal opinion.

#### **Future Agenda Items/Strategic Planning**

Dr. Gerlach presented to the board about possibly having the board start a strategic plan. The board does a good job recognizing future projects they want to work on, but having a plan that is brought out every meeting will allow the board to keep track of what they want to work on and to prioritize projects. The board agrees this is a good idea and will bring ideas for the next meeting to put on the strategic plan.

The board did agree they would like to work on a Disciplinary Matrix since they only have one for continuing education violations. They would like to have consistency and to use old cases as references. The board would like the investigators to attach the continuing education (CE) matrix in the packet they are reviewing and Ms. Billiet explained that the CE matrix is in the resources folder in OnBoard. Ms. Billiet will research how to implement a more detailed disciplinary matrix and contact Mr. Gober about possibly helping the board at the next meeting.

The board asked about an update on AO360 and there was not one. The board asked for Ms. Mell to pull out all the #1 priority regulation changes and email the board with them. Ms. Mell will do that as a post meeting task.

The board had a discussion on Veterinary Technicians and what is the advantage of being licensed in the state of Alaska. Dr. Gerlach is going to do some research on what other states Veterinarians Technician's scope of practice is. The board agreed to put this on the future agenda and is on the AO360 plan to update the scope of practice of Veterinary Technicians.

The board asked if they could go into OnBoard and look at old packets. Ms. Mell explained they are deleted shortly after the application closes for storage purposes. The board can go to a license search on the public website and look when a license was issued, if that is the information they are looking for.

### **Adjourn**

**Motion:**

RESOLVED to APPROVE adjourning the April 8, 2026, meeting of the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

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

The board went off the record at 2:49 pm.

DRAFT