

**American Kennel Club, Inc.**  
**MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**AKC Offices at 101 Park Avenue, New York, NY**  
**May 9-10, 2024**

The Board convened on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

All Directors were present in the New York office. The Executive Secretary was also present.

Copies of the April 8-9, 2024, Board Meeting minutes had previously been provided to all Directors for review. Upon a motion by Ms. Biddle, seconded by Mr. Sweetwood, the Board voted to approve the April 2024 Board Meeting minutes.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Registration**

Litter, individual, and foreign registrations are running at about 2018 levels, indicating that dog demand continues to be down following the pandemic surge. The rates of decline over the last year in several registration metrics appear to have flattened and we expect to see some improvements in Year-over-year trends by Q3. Our emphasis continues to be on registration marketing and operational cost control.

#### **Sports & Events**

Outstanding results thru first quarter:

- Events plus 698 up 14% led by Conformation, the new fetch sport and NOHS.
- Entries plus 39,624 or 5% led by increases in Scent Work 12k+, Conformation 7,936, Agility/Rally/Fetch each over 4k.

#### **Media**

Season 4 of the AKC podcast *Down and Back*: "Stories from the American Kennel Club Archives" premieres May 9, 2024.

The podcast launched in June 2020 and is available on all major podcasting platforms.

<https://www.akc.org/about/down-and-back-akc-podcast/>.

The show delves into the stories of breeds, dogs, and personalities that have shaped America's Dog Sports over generations, connecting the history of dog sports with the modern day, and highlighting how the AKC has impacted the lives of dogs over the past 140 years.

Each eight-part season brings the stories to life using historical records, archival material, oral histories, interviews, and more.

The podcast format was chosen because it's aligned with a younger audience, including Millennials and Gen Z.

Episodes cover a range of topics, including “Dogs: Stars of Myth, Legend, and Folklore” and “How Does a Dog Breed Become Recognized by AKC?”

The podcast’s content is researched in part by the AKC Library and Archives, which is the only national repository dedicated to the sport and enjoyment of the purebred dog.

- To date: 49,366 IAB-verified downloads / 89,009 unique downloads.
- Most popular episodes:
  - “Morris & Essex: The Quintessential Dog Show” (Season 2)
  - “The Emergence of Dog Obedience in America” (Season 1; debut episode)
  - “Poodles: A Marvel of Intelligence and Versatility” (Season 3)

### **AKC Board Committee Charters**

The AKC Board has six (6) Committees: 1) Audit; 2) Finance; 3) Retirement Plans; 4) Investment; 5) Compensation; and 6) Appeal. The Board reviewed the recommended Committee Charters for each Board Committee, including an updated Audit Committee Charter.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

### **AKC Reunite Update**

Tom Sharp, AKC Reunite CEO presented an update. Reunite has enhanced product offerings, including new scanners for shelters with a pole antenna, a new mini chip that is good for cats and small dogs with smooth coats, and an upgrade to the collar tag sold with a QR code to take you directly to Reunite. A collar is also sold that can be used instead of a collar tag, and a new scanner will be offered that is much lower in cost that scans only ISO chips.

### **Giving**

Since 2002, over \$14 million has been donated to the US Pet Community, and over \$2.4 million in pet-related disaster preparedness/relief grants. 4681 microchip scanners have been donated to shelters.

AKC Reunite has donated 110 Pet Disaster Relief Trailers, and 11 new trailers are in the pipeline. A total of \$2,597,151 has been donated to the trailer program.

### **Adopt a Canine Cop**

200 grants are being given this year. To date, 622 grants have been provided with \$4 million in donations.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this session.

### **Legal Update**

The Board reviewed the Legal Department update as of April 2024.

**FINANCE**

Ted Phillips, Chief Financial Officer, presented unaudited financial results as of March 31, 2024.

Net Operating Income is \$2.2 million.

**Non-Financial Statistics for the three months ended March 31, 2024**

Registrations: 2024 YTD Litter Registration is 3% lower than budget and 17% lower than 2023 YTD. 2024 YTD Dog Registration is trailing the budget by 10% and is 15% lower than 2023 YTD.

**Events & Entries**

Events were 14% ahead, and Entries were 5% higher compared to the same period in 2023.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Gina DiNardo, Executive Secretary; Brandi Hunter Munden, Vice President of Communications and Public Relations; Seth Fera-Schanes, Director of Strategic Planning; and Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President of Sport Services, participated in this portion of the meeting. Sheila Goffe, Vice President of Government Relations, Penny Leigh, Director of Registration Development, and Cassandra Pickle, Business Intelligence, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

**AKC Agility League New Skill Level**

The Board reviewed a Staff recommendation to add a new skill level, Elementary, to the Agility League program, which will be geared towards pre-competition dogs.

There were also requests to add Puerto Rico to the list of participating regions, grouped with the Southeastern Region, and change the scoring to allow all dogs to drop their two lowest scores of each season.

If approved, these changes will be effective with the launch of the Fall 2024 season.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

**Breed Standard Guidelines Revisions**

The AKC Board requested that Staff propose a revision to the *Guidelines for Writing Breed Standard Procedures* to include a minimum timeframe for revisions of a similar or same topic to be submitted if a revision failed to be approved by the membership.

Staff's initial recommend is to make the minimum time frame for making a similar proposed revision a minimum of one year if the same or similar topic fails a vote of the membership.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

**2024 Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee for the March 2025 election must be appointed by August 15, 2024, and its report must be received no later than October 15, 2024. For the last four years, the appointment was made in July; the previous year, the Committee was appointed in August.

### **New Breed for Foundation Stock Service® - Blue Picardy Spaniel**

The Foundation Stock Service (FSS) Committee recently approved a petition for the Blue Picardy Spaniel to be accepted into the FSS Program.

The Blue Picardy Spaniel is a versatile sporting dog used for locating and retrieving game under the most adverse conditions. It is a direct descendant of the French Spaniels. There are approximately 15 dogs in the United States that are eligible for recording with FSS.

### **AKC Communications Q1 Report**

#### **Totals:**

**Clips Evaluated in Q1: 11,263 (+23% from 9,162 in 2023)**

#### **Q1 Totals Comparison**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Clips Evaluated</b>
2021	<b>8,937</b>
2022	<b>8,919</b>
2023	<b>9,162</b>
2024	<b>11,263</b>

#### Media Coverage Highlights Resulting from Proactive Pitches:

- Ongoing media pitching executed to key audiences with stories that speak to positive qualities of AKC purebreds and breeders. Distributed 16 press releases to appropriate media outlets.
- Continued raising the visibility of the Chief Veterinary Officer as an expert in an increasing number of media requests.
- Planned and executed the PR campaign for the Most Popular Dogs announcement which included a broadcast exclusive on *Good Morning America*, an online exclusive with the *Associated Press* and a special episode of AKC.tv's *Good Dog TV* which took place in AKC's NYC headquarters. Drafted and distributed press releases for major markets across the country. In addition, we secured a segment on *Good Day NY* for New York City's most popular breeds. The campaign garnered more than 6,000 clips.
- Estimated reach for each outlet:
  - *Good Morning America* broadcast: 2,846,014
  - *Associated Press*: 42,286,388 (total readership)
  - *Good Day NY*: 73,173
- Continued the PR campaign for the 2024 AKC Meet the Breeds® tour, including aggressive media outreach for pre-coverage and attendance, advertising, and on-site media wrangling for the New York event. Coverage included *WPIX-11*, *Time Out NY*, *New York Post*, *Yahoo!*, *Fast Company*, and more.
- Conducted media outreach for AKC's 201<sup>st</sup> breed, the Lancashire Heeler, including an exclusive with the *Associated Press*.

### **Government Relations (GR) Update First Quarter 2024**

Sheila Goffe highlighted numerous active priority legislation and administrative regulations in Congress and State Legislation. She noted that additional information is available on the AKC

legislative action center microsite: <https://www.akcgr.org>.

The AKC GR team is currently monitoring approximately 1,600 legislative bills that could impact responsible dog ownership, the health and wellbeing of dogs, the rights of dog owners, and/or the interests of the sport and the American Kennel Club.

To date, we have published more than 100 legislative alerts delivered via geo-targeted emails to impacted constituents, the AKC GR legislative action center, and social media.

AKC GR is also monitoring approximately 400 actively pending proposed regulations (administrative or implementing changes to dog laws) at the state and federal levels.

AKC GR communicates to dog owners, club members, lawmakers and the public via geo-targeted and online legislative alerts as well as Facebook, Twitter and other social media; The *Taking Command* (monthly advocacy) and *In Session* (policy) newsletters. (<https://www.akc.org/clubs-delegates/government-relations/newsletters/>).

### **Legislation**

In the first quarter of 2024, GR monitored approximately 1,350 bills that could impact responsible dog ownership, the health and wellbeing of dogs, the rights of dog owners, and/or the interests of the sport and the American Kennel Club. This number includes newly introduced bills as well as those carried over from the 2023-2024 legislative sessions.

GR prepared and published over 90 geo-targeted legislative alerts and provided direct advocacy to lawmakers or written and/or oral testimony for more than 80 measures. This volume of advocacy is in line with 2023 (GR published approximately 100 alerts in Q1 2023).

As in 2023, the largest proportion of state legislation monitored in Q1 of 2024 was related to “cruelty” (15%). In many cases, measures that expand requirements, restrictions or licensing for dog breeders fall into this category, as “breeder cruelty” are cited by proponents of breeding restrictions. Similarly, many cruelty bills include references to or restrictions on breeding. The most common topics of legislation covered in the first quarter were: working dogs (11%), Land use/hunting (11%), animal control (10%), veterinary (9%), Dogs in public (8%), Breed specific laws and dangerous dogs (6%). A wide variety of other topics were also considered.

Several trends or areas of particular interest included: New breeder licensing and regulation (including measures related to possible inclusion in the federal farm bill); Legislative attacks on breed characteristics as “unhealthy”; expansion or weaponization of administrative authority/oversight related to dogs; due process/forfeiture, and new licensing requirements for rescues.

### **Administrative/Implementing Regulations**

AKC GR also tracks administrative (implementing) regulations and rule changes impacting dogs. Through April 22, 2024, AKC GR is monitoring 403 active regulatory proposals: 55 from the federal government and 348 from the state level. Unlike legislation, which is subject to change through advocacy to elected office holders, administrative regulations guide the implementation of rules for

which an agency already has statutory authority. Citizen impact on administrative rules is accomplished primarily through a public comment period, after which agency administrators determine how to administer rules most effectively in keeping with statutory requirements.

It was noted that AKC had received notice from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the previous day about the imminent publication of a final rule for which AKC had provided alerts and comment during the public comment period in 2023. The new rule pertains to the import of cats and dogs into the United States and seeks to address serious health threats from the importation of dogs potentially carrying DMRVV (canine rabies) and health threats. It also seeks to address widespread fraud related to the import of puppies into the U.S. Advance notice of the final rule indicates that after August 1, 2024, no dog may be imported into the U.S. unless it is at least 6 months of age. It also provides new requirements for importing dogs – defined as any entrance of a dog into the U.S. regardless of origin or previous/current domicile including the U.S. – based on whether they have been in a country in the previous 6 months that harbors a risk for DMRVV (canine rabies).

Numerous other major projects were carried out in the first quarter including: the launching of a new GR microsite, the AKC Legislative Action Center at [www.akcgr.org](http://www.akcgr.org); numerous advocacy trips and meetings at state capitols and the US Capitol; presentations to clubs and federations; and recognition of more than 70 state and local lawmakers as honorary chairs for the AKC Meet the Breeds® event.

### **AKC Detection Dog Task Force Update**

Sheila Goffe presented an update, which highlighted the following:

The purpose of the AKC Detection Dog Task Force (AKC DDTF) Purpose is to study specific areas in which the AKC could help address the crisis of a shortage of high-quality explosives detection dogs for U.S. national and public security while also advancing recognition of AKC as a preeminent authority on canines.

The three areas of focus are Public Policy, GR Raising Awareness, and Breeder Education. In Public Policy, active advocacy is used to impact government policy, expand preferences for U.S.-bred dogs, improve funding and streamline government purchasing practices. A current focus is the Legislation to assure the health and welfare of military working dogs and funding for the National Detector Dog Training Center run by the USDA in Georgia.

To raise public and industry awareness, AKC DDTF has:

- Held over 20 Detection Dog Task Force webinars with over 1500 participants. These webinars bring together government, industry, breeders/raisers, other stakeholders and the public.
- Created the AKC Confident Puppy e-learning course, leverages content from subject matter experts and the Patriotic puppy program to help anyone raise a confident puppy that can go on to be a working dog, a competition dog or a great pet. More than 3500 people have participated in the program to date.
- Established The Detection Dog Bulletin, a quarterly newsletter just completed its first year of

publication.

- The fifth AKC National Detection Dog Conference, July 23-25, 2024 in Wilmington, Ohio. The conference has its own website for information and registration:  
<https://www.akcdetectiondogconference.org/>

The Patriotic Puppy Program, which started as a pilot program to provide hands on assistance to detection dog breeders and raisers, is now in phase 3. In phase 2, the program has demonstrated that AKC breeders can breed and raise high quality detection dogs to assist the crucial national security need for these dogs. Emphasis is now on helping participants scale up their operations for greater reliability and consistency to improve opportunities and benefits to participants so their activities can be sustainable over the long term.

Mentoring programs with industry leaders have brought breeders and vendors together for mutually beneficial cooperation. New regional, in-person workshops for training and evaluation teach participants new skills and offer the opportunity for buyers to assess potential dogs for purchase.

Currently, there are more than 160 participants in 40 states, and 89 Patriotic Puppy dogs are in final agency training or have deployed as working dogs. Patriotic Puppy graduates are serving on a wide range of security deployments, including with the Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Capitol Police, and numerous state and local law enforcement agencies.

On May 1, National Purebred Dog Day, Sheila Goffe and Christopher Sweetwood, co-chair, AKC DDTF presented the AKC Canine Officer Program appreciation award to the U.S. Capitol Police K-9 Unit at the U.S. Capitol. Approximately two-thirds of the elite K-9 Unit (40 officers) attended the ceremony, along with U.S. Capitol Police Chief Manger, Deputy Chief Erikson, and Lt. Stori, plus three of five Patriotic Puppy Program graduates who are now working for the U.S. Capitol Police K-9 Unit.

## **MARKETING**

Kirsten Bahlke, Vice President of Marketing participated in this portion of the meeting.

Staff presented a memo summarizing the Board's request for the cost associated with a brand campaign launch in 2024 and additional Staff needs in email and social to support an enhanced brand awareness campaign.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

## **COMPANION and PERFORMANCE**

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President of Sports and Events, participated in this portion of the meeting. Caroline Murphy, Director of Performance Events; Carrie DeYoung, Director of Agility; and Dr. Mary Burch, Director of the AKC Family Dog Program, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

**Agility International Sweepstakes Class Awards**

Staff presented a change to the Agility Regulations to allow for the colors of ribbons and rosettes, if awarded in International Sweepstakes Classes, to be at the trial giving clubs discretion.

This will be discussed further at the July Board meeting.

**Regulation Clarifications for Course D - Herding**

Staff presented a recommendation to provide additional clarifications to Chapter 8, which covers Course D of the *AKC Herding Regulations*. These clarifications will provide more specific information about the herding work required for this course, which will benefit our judges when scoring each performance. They will also allow exhibitors to gain more technical information about what will be required to earn a qualifying score. The recommendation also includes permitting cattle as livestock.

The following highlights those areas to be amended:

- Expands livestock for Course D to include cattle and provides a detailed description of the type of cattle used
- Encourages clubs to mix up obstacles/elements to keep experiences new and unpredictable.
- Provides greater clarification on scoring.
- There has been a slight adjustment to the maximum points earned so that all elements count equally and are easier to tabulate across all levels.
- Provides greater clarity to judges when making point deductions by providing specific point ranges for each element. It also clarifies that a course may only be used once per event number and may not be used by the same club or clubs trialing at the same location for three months.
- Clarification on the size of obstacles and pens to accommodate cattle as well as height minimum.
- Clarification for judges and exhibitors when off-course occurs.
- Provides more specific differentiation of levels for some required and optional elements.
- Makes it clear that where not specified, the Course Director determines differentiation.

This will be discussed further at the July Board meeting.

**AKC FIT DOG Program Update**

The FIT DOG program continues to interest many dog owners who have not previously participated in AKC sports. AKC FIT DOG is a positive program that demonstrates AKC's interest in promoting healthy, happy dogs and the health benefits dogs bring to their owners. AKC launched its FIT DOG program as an activity in the Family Dog Department in September 2018.

AKC FIT DOG clubs were started in February 2019. This is the AKC version of a "meet-up group." Each club receives an AKC FIT DOG banner with its club name. Currently, there are 1,441 AKC FIT DOG clubs that meet regularly for group walks.

The FIT DOG titling program was launched in January 2023. The three levels of AKC FIT DOG titles (Bronze, Silver, Gold) are systematically sequenced with each level requiring greater



frequency and distances. In 2023, 9,206 AKC FIT DOG titles were earned. (5,534 Bronze, 2,428 Silver, and 1,244 Gold titles).

In early 2024, a survey was conducted in order to better understand FIT DOG title holders. Key findings were:

1. 85% of the participants earned an AKC title after earning the first (Bronze) AKC FIT DOG title.
2. The Board has previously discussed the importance of reaching out to empty nesters to get them involved in AKC activities. 55% of AKC FIT DOG title holders are in the age range of empty nesters.

### **CONFORMATION**

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events and Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President of Sports Services participated in this portion of the meeting. Tim Thomas, Vice President of Conformation; Glenn Lycan, Director of Event Operations Support; Alan Slay, Director of Event Programs, and Mark Desrosiers, Director of Event Programs, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

### **Entry Limit Appeal - Dubuque and Wisconsin Kennel Clubs**

The Board reviewed the Dubuque Kennel Club and Wisconsin Kennel Club appeals to Event Operations' entry limits and requirements for club future shows. The appeal is to the AKC Board of Directors in accordance with **Article X, Section 4** of the *AKC Charter and Bylaws*.

The Events Operations Department notified the Dubuque and Wisconsin Kennel Clubs on March 6, 2024, that an entry limit of 1900 dogs and a maximum of no more than 15 concurrent or evening specialties per day had been imposed on their events held on week eight (8) of AKC's corresponding date calendar at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The limits imposed on the Dubuque and Wisconsin Kennel Club are consistent with AKC policy, which assigns the Event Operations Department the authority to impose entry limits if a site has limited space or upon the recommendation of an AKC Executive Field Representative (AKC Show Manual), and to determine the maximum number of independent specialties that may be held (Concurrent Specialty Shows Policy).

Following a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Dr. Garvin, the Board VOTED (Affirmative: Battaglia, Biddle, Carota, Davies, Fineburg, Garvin, Hamblin, Knight, Powers Sweetwood, Tatro, Wallin, Abstention: Smyth) to deny the appeals of the Dubuque Kennel Club and Wisconsin Kennel Club.

### **Championships - Rules Applying to Dog Shows, Chapter 16, Section 2**

The Board reviewed a recommendation by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee (DSRC) to revise **Chapter 16, Section 2** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* to award championship points to a class dog awarded Reserve Best in Show, calculated as the highest number of points awarded in any breed from all groups excluding that from which Best in Show advanced.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

### **NOHS Regulation Updates**

The Board reviewed a recommendation to update the NOHS Regulations to adjust the regulations regarding who may judge and to allow clubs the option to offer three-time win prizes.

Current Regulations do not allow a judge to judge a NOHS group on the same day they are judging the identical regular group. This creates a hardship for clubs holding two shows in one day with a limited number of judges to complete the assignments. Staff recommends changing regulations to restrict a judge to a show:

NOHS Regulations, Section 4: Judges Eligibility

- A judge cannot be assigned the NOHS Group ~~on the same day~~ at the same show they are assigned that same group for the all-breed/limited-breed show.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

### **Memphis Kennel Club**

The Memphis Kennel Club (MKC) is requesting the AKC Board grant them an extension on the exception to the 125-mile distance a club may travel to hold a show policy granted by the Board in 2022. Memphis is requesting to continue holding events in Lebanon, TN, 221 miles from Memphis, TN.

In 2022, the Board approved Memphis to hold all-breed events beyond the 125-mile travel distance in 2023 and 2024.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

### **Event Conflict Distance Policy**

An action item emanating from the Board's April 2024 meeting directed Staff to provide the Board at its May 2024 meeting with an explanation of the 200-mile conflict policy for events, how a club may appeal events that conflict due to distance, who reviews such an appeal, and how the distance between events is stored and calculated.

In July 2021, the Board approved a policy that provides clubs with the option to appeal to Staff event date/site conflicts when the driving mileage is at least approximately 25% greater than the straight-line distance conflict for that sport. Driving distance will be calculated via Google Maps using shortest distance (not quickest), accepting toll roads, and avoiding ferries as parameters.

There was a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Ms. Biddle, and the Board VOTED to create a policy regarding Event Conflict Distance Appeals (Affirmative: Battaglia, Biddle, Carota, Davies, Fineburg, Garvin, Hamblin, Knight, Powers Sweetwood, Tatro, Wallin, Abstention: Smyth)

### **Appeal Process for Event Distance Conflicts**

Clubs have the option to appeal event date/site conflicts when the driving mileage is approximately 25% greater than the straight-line distance conflict for that sport. Driving distance is to be calculated via Google Maps using shortest distance (not quickest), accepting toll roads, and avoiding ferries as

parameters. Appeals with a driving distance of 25% or more above the straight-line distance conflict will be reviewed by Staff, who shall approve the appeal once the mileage is confirmed. Appeals with a driving distance of less than 25% above the straight-line distance conflict will be considered by the Board Appeals Committee, which shall approve or deny the appeal.

### **Impact of Awarding Championship Points for Group 2-3-4 Placements**

The opportunity to earn Championship points for placing 2-3-4 in the Group was implemented in January 2023. This change was meant to encourage all exhibitors, but it was believed that it would assist and retain low-entry breeds (LEBs) that have a challenge earning points due to a lack of competition.

In 2023, 88 LEBs earned points from Group 2-3-4 placements. The Bracco Italiano and Wire Fox Terrier had the most dogs benefiting from this change. In 2023, the absentee rate for LEBs decreased by 1.4%, resulting in approximately 3,000 additional entries. By placing Group 2-3-4, LEBs earned an additional 1,016 points and 251 majors.

The Board recessed at 5:22 p.m.

The Board Meeting reconvened on Friday, May 10, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. All Directors and the Executive Secretary were present in the New York office.

### **Fines and Reprimands**

Following a motion by Dr. Battaglia, seconded by Dr. Davies the Board Voted to reduce the fine imposed on the German Shepherd Dog Club of Austin from \$600 to \$300 for canceling entries for three (3) Conformation shows after the entry was closed as per the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, Chapter 11, Section 6.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. It was reported out of this Session that:

The Board approved the *AKC Personal Conduct Policy* and created a new offense category and penalties to be added to the *AKC Discipline Guidelines* effective immediately.

IV. Misconduct Against an Individual (suspension of all AKC privileges)

c. Violation of AKC Personal Conduct Policy

Mitigated: 5 yr/\$1,000

Standard: 10 yr/\$2,000

Up to life/up to \$10,000

\*\*Violations of this offense may result in AKC administratively removing the individual from AKC registrations as a co-owner.

## **AKC Personal Conduct Policy**

It is a privilege to be part of the American Kennel Club. Everyone who participates in the sport must refrain from conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in the sport of dogs and the AKC. This includes everyone who participates in any way in AKC events from exhibitors, judges, superintendents, show secretaries, club members, stewards, vendors, handlers, or anyone that uses AKC services.

Conduct by anyone in the sport that is irresponsible, dangerous, violent, or illegal puts others at risk, damages the reputation of others in the sport, and undercuts public respect and support for the AKC. We must endeavor at all times to be people of high character, show respect for others inside and outside our sport, and conduct ourselves in ways that favorably reflect on ourselves, our dogs, and the AKC.

This zero-tolerance policy is issued pursuant to the *Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club, Inc.*, as it relates to conduct prejudicial to the best interest of purebred dogs, purebred dog events, or the AKC.

### **Expectations and Standards of Conduct:**

As participants in our sport, we must hold ourselves to a higher standard and conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible, promotes the values of the AKC, and is lawful.

Those convicted of a crime or subject to a disposition of a criminal proceeding (“Disposition” as defined in this Policy) are subject to discipline. Even if the conduct does not result in a criminal conviction, those found to have engaged in any of the following conduct will be subject to discipline. Prohibited Conduct includes but is not limited to the following\*:

- Assault and/or battery, including sexual assault or other sex offenses;
- Violent or threatening behavior toward another individual;
- Stalking or similar forms of intimidation;
- Inappropriate comments, conduct and/or contact regarding but not limited to race, color, religion, disability, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or are sexual in nature (“Harassment”);
- Inappropriate treatment of animals (would be subject to the *Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment of Animals* Policy);
- Illegal possession of a gun or other weapon (such as explosives, toxic substances, and the like);
- Illegal possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or drugs;
- Crimes of dishonesty such as blackmail, extortion, fraud, money laundering, embezzlement, or racketeering (could be subject to the AKC’s *Unauthorized Use of Club Funds* Policy);
- Theft-related crimes such as burglary, robbery, or larceny;
- Crimes against law enforcement, such as obstruction, resisting arrest, or harming a police officer or other law enforcement officer;
- Conduct that poses a genuine danger to the safety and well-being of another person; and
- Conduct that undermines or puts at risk the integrity of the AKC, AKC clubs, club officials, AKC approved judges, AKC personnel, or anyone that participates in any way in AKC events. Judges conduct would also be subject to the *Integrity of Judges and Judges Misconduct* Policies.

\*Penalties for specific offenses as outlined in the *AKC Discipline Guidelines* shall be applicable.

When AKC becomes aware of a possible violation of this Policy and pursuant to the *Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club, Inc.*, AKC may undertake an investigation, the timing and scope of which will be based upon the circumstances of the matter. Any such investigation may be conducted by AKC

personnel, independent parties, or a combination of the two. In cases that are also being investigated by law enforcement officials, the AKC may continue its separate investigation, and will work to cooperate with law enforcement to avoid any conflict or interference with the law enforcement proceedings. A failure to cooperate with an investigation or to be truthful in responding to inquiries will be separate grounds for disciplinary action. An accused's refusal to speak to an AKC investigator under such circumstances will not preclude an investigation from proceeding or discipline from being imposed.

Upon receipt of information that a person has been charged or accused with misconduct pursuant to this policy, the AKC will notify the person that the privileges of the AKC may be withheld ("temporary referral") in accordance with the, *Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club, Inc*, Article XII, Section 4. Further, AKC may consider the restrictions and terms placed on an individual pursuant to pretrial release conditions by the Court ("Pretrial Release" as defined herein) in evaluating information that a person has been accused of Prohibited Conduct under this policy (e.g. no contact with minors or no possession of animals, etc.).

Accordingly, AKC will notify the person that they have been placed on temporary referral. Temporary referral affects all dogs registered with the AKC as owned or co-owned by that person. The temporary referral means that the person should not breed, sell, or transfer dogs with the expectation AKC paperwork will be provided. If AKC determines that no violation has occurred and no action will be taken to cause a suspension of privileges, the temporary referral will be removed, and all pending applications processed. Additionally, awards will not be recorded for any dogs owned or co-owned by the individual that participates in any AKC events.

If the Prohibited Conduct is substantiated, AKC will follow the disciplinary process as set forth in the *Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club, Inc*. In matters involving the violations of this policy, AKC may remove the individual from AKC registrations as a co-owner. This is not removal of legal title of a dog, rather it is removal of the individual from AKC recorded registration. In addition, an accused, in certain circumstances, may be prohibited from being on the grounds of AKC approved events.

\*\* Definition of "Disposition" – includes conviction, admission, finding of guilt, plea to a lesser included offense, plea of no contest, *nolo contendere*, best interest plea or similar type plea, the acceptance of or into a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision or similar arrangement.

\*\* Definition of "Pretrial Release" – includes, but is not limited to, bond, conditional release, recognizance, etc.

This policy may be updated at any time and is effective immediately.

## **COMPLIANCE**

Bri Tesarz, Director of Compliance and Jessica Lopez, Compliance Manager participated in this meeting portion via video conference.

## **Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment Policy**

Following a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Mr. Powers, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to consider this matter at the meeting, waiving the normal notice procedures.

Following a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Sweetwood the Board VOTED (unanimously) to approve the proposed changes to the *Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment Policy* which provides consistency between this policy and the *Personal Conduct Policy* by allowing the AKC to administratively remove an individual from AKC registrations as a co-owner

for a violation of the Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment Policy. This is effective immediately.

**Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment (September 1990 Board meeting; amended in December 1993, November 2004, and May 2011, amended May 2024)**

The inappropriate treatment of dogs is recognized to be conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the American Kennel Club and to the best interest of the sport of purebred dogs, pursuant to the Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club. "Inappropriate Treatment" means any offense involving a dog that alleges cruelty, abuse, neglect, or improper treatment of a dog as defined by AKC.

Anyone charged or accused of inappropriate treatment of a dog whose charges or accusations are subsequently disposed of in any of the following ways: conviction, admission, finding of inhumane treatment, plea to a lesser included offense, plea of no contest, *nolo contendere*, best interest plea or similar type plea; the acceptance of or into a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision or similar arrangement; or the releasing or transferring of legal ownership of one or more dogs to federal, state, or local authorities, humane organizations, or rescue groups after having their dogs seized by said federal, state or local authorities ("Disposition") shall have their AKC privileges suspended for the term as set forth in the most current AKC Discipline Guidelines. Court or administrative records evidencing such Disposition shall be deemed conclusive proof of conduct prejudicial to the sport of purebred dogs and to the best interests of the American Kennel Club.

Upon receipt of information that a person has been charged or accused with Inappropriate Treatment of a dog or that a person has had their dogs seized, the AKC will notify the person that they have been placed on temporary referral in accordance with the AKC's *Registration Referral and Cancellation* policy, affecting all dogs owned or co-owned by that person. The temporary referral means that the person should not breed, sell, or transfer dogs with the expectation AKC paperwork will be provided. If AKC determines that no violation has occurred and no action will be taken to cause a suspension of privileges, the temporary referral will be removed, and all pending applications processed.

Upon proof that a violation of this policy has occurred, the person shall be notified, in writing, of the AKC's intent to suspend their privileges. The person shall be notified and afforded the opportunity to submit proof that he or she has not violated the policy, or that the disposition of the charges or the conviction has been reversed, dismissed, or vacated. Additionally, if the Disposition is reversed, dismissed, or vacated, unless such action occurs pursuant to the Disposition, and there is no further prosecution of the charges and the American Kennel Club is presented with proof of same, the person's privileges with the American Kennel Club shall be reinstated.

Additionally, the person shall be notified and afforded the opportunity to submit a written appeal to the Management Disciplinary Committee on the grounds that the conduct was not prejudicial to the sport of purebred dogs. The appeal must be accompanied by a \$500 fee, which shall be returned if the appeal is sustained. If the Management Disciplinary Committee denies the appeal, the accused

may submit a written appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Board of Directors, whose decision is final.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Personal Conduct Policy and any potential conflicts are to be resolved in a manner consistent with the intent of the policies as solely determined by the AKC Board of Directors.

### **Unauthorized Use of Club Funds Policy**

Following a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Mrs. Wallin, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to consider this matter at the meeting, waiving the normal notice procedures.

Following a motion by Dr. Garvin, seconded by Mr. Powers the Board VOTED (unanimously) to approve the proposed changes to the *Unauthorized Use of Club Funds Policy* which will broaden the scope of the policy by bringing consistency between this and other policies and close the gaps within the policy by updating the disposition language. This is effective immediately.

### **Unauthorized Use of Club Funds (April 2009 Board meeting; amended in May 2024)**

The following policy which provides that the unauthorized use of a licensed, member, or sanctioned AKC club's funds, or assets is hereby recognized to be conduct prejudicial to the best interests of The American Kennel Club, purebred dogs or the sport of purebred dogs.

Anyone charged or accused of unauthorized use of club funds or club assets or a finding of financial liability whose charges or accusations are subsequently disposed of in any of the following ways: A-conviction, or admission in a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction, or a finding by a federal or state administrative agency of unauthorized use of club funds or club assets or a finding of financial liability, plea to a lesser offense, plea of no contest, *nolo contendere*, best interest plea or similar type plea; acceptance of or into a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision or similar arrangement, or a signed admission of unauthorized use of club funds or club assets ("Disposition") shall have their AKC privileges suspended for the term as set forth in the most current AKC Discipline Guidelines. Court or administrative records evidencing such Disposition shall be deemed conclusive proof of conduct prejudicial to the sport of purebred dogs and to the best interests of the American Kennel Club.

~~shall be deemed conclusive proof of conduct prejudicial to the sport of purebred dogs and to the best interests of The American Kennel Club and, accordingly, shall be grounds for suspension of all American Kennel Club privileges as the Board of Directors shall determine, upon proof being presented to The American Kennel Club by a member or officer of a licensed, member, or sanctioned AKC Club, or any other person. Any club or person(s) interested in purebred dogs could submit a complaint alleging that a violation of the proposed policy has occurred.~~

Staff foresees that a majority of complaints would be submitted by a club, but in accordance with **Article XII, Section 1** of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, it would not be required. Once the complaint is submitted, if staff determines that further inquiry into the matter is warranted, it would contact the club involved to obtain additional information.

As with any alleged violation, if the inquiry into the allegation determines that there is sufficient evidence to prefer charges, the accused would be notified of the AKC's intent to impose disciplinary action.

After being notified of the AKC's intent to impose discipline for a violation of the policy and the penalty that is intended to be imposed, the person shall be afforded the opportunity to appeal to the Management Disciplinary Committee on the grounds that the conduct was not prejudicial to The American Kennel Club, purebred dogs, and the sport of purebred dogs. The appeal must be accompanied by a \$~~200~~250 fee, which shall be returned if the appeal is sustained. If the Management Disciplinary Committee denies the appeal, the accused may submit a written appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Board of Directors, whose decision is final. Additionally, the person shall be notified and afforded the opportunity to request reversal of the suspension by submitting proof that he or she was not convicted for such conduct or that the conviction was reversed or vacated upon appeal. If such a conviction is reversed or vacated on appeal, and there is no further prosecution of the charges, and the American Kennel Club is presented with proof of same, the person's privileges with the American Kennel Club shall be reinstated.

If the complaint alleges that the violation was committed by an AKC approved judge, staff would follow the Board of Directors' policies that pertain to conducting inquiries into matters where the accused is an approved judge. Specifically, the Director or head of the department that is responsible for approving the judge would be notified of the complaint. If an inquiry into the matter was warranted, the President would allocate the necessary staff resources to conduct the inquiry.

Additionally, during the inquiry, when applicable, any new application for the judge accused of misconduct would be placed on hold, pending the results of the inquiry. Staff would also take into consideration the fact that the accused is an AKC approved judge when setting the penalty for any alleged violation of the policy.

***(Final Board Disciplinary actions are reported on the Secretary's Page.)***

#### **Compliance Status Report – First Quarter 2024**

Article XII Complaints Received - 0

Event Committee Hearing Reports Received - 10

Management Disciplinary Committee Charges Preferred - 17

Code of Sportsmanship Complaints Received - 15

Other Inquiries Received - 5

#### **Inspection Status Report – First Quarter 2024**

Staff presented a summary of quarterly inspections.

#### **JUDGING OPERATIONS**

Tim Thomas, Vice President of Conformation and Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President of Sports & Events, participated in this portion of the meeting.



**Publishing of Handlers and Agents in Dog Show Catalogs**

Staff presented a recommendation to adopt a policy requiring professional handlers and agents listed in dog show catalogs to successfully complete the *Stewards of Children*® training from the non-profit organization Darkness to Light once every three years.

This will be discussed further at the July meeting.

**Implementation Plan - AKC Educational Requirements Policy**

The Board reviewed a memorandum of the measures taken by Staff to implement the *AKC Educational Requirements Policy and Recommendations* adopted by the Board at its April 2024 meeting.

**CLUBS**

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events, Glenn Lycan, Director, Event Operations Support, and Lisa Cecin, Director of Club Relations participated in this portion of the meeting.

**REPORT ON MEMBER CLUB BYLAWS APPROVED IN MARCH AND APRIL**

Salina Kennel Club, Saline County, KS (1972)

South Windsor Kennel Club, Inc., South Windsor, CT (1993)

Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK (1935)

**REPORT ON NEWLY LICENSED CLUBS APPROVED IN MARCH AND APRIL**

Hound Association of Central Florida, greater Ocala, FL (including all communities north to Gainesville, south to Tampa, to east and west coasts), 31 total households, 19 local.

Mid-South Basset Hound Club, greater Columbia, TN area (including communities north to Bowling Green, KY, southwest to Olive Branch, MS, east to Route 231/Murfreesboro, south to Vina/Somerville, AL), 48 total households, 12 local.

Ocean State Agility Club, Providence, RI, 45 total households, 25 local.

**BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**

Mark Dunn, EVP Registration, Seth Fera-Schanes, Director of Strategic Planning, and Erin Myers, Project Analyst, participated in this portion of the meeting.

**AKC Dog Grooming Institute**

Erin Myers presented an overview of AKC's Grooming programs. The American Kennel Club has positioned itself to become the preeminent governing body for grooming education in the United States.

AKC launched our flagship S.A.F.E. (Safety, Assurance, Fundamentals, Education) courses in 2018. The grooming program has grown to include multiple achievement levels of technical skill certification and now administers the only nationwide grooming industry credential. Additionally, the American Kennel Club powers the National Dog Groomers Association of America (NDGAA), one of the biggest industry membership organizations for professional dog groomers in the world.

The entirety of this program exists under the AKC Dog Grooming Institute umbrella and continues to grow upon the foundation of S.A.F.E and the AKC mission to protect the health and well-being of all dogs.

The AKC Dog Grooming Institute expanded the program in mid-2022 to include a certification in coat types. This level of certification assesses a groomer's proficiency in curly, wire, jacket and drop coats. Candidates are evaluated on their technique and craftsmanship required for everyday grooming. Certification can be completed at live events or virtually on Canine College.

The grooming program continued its expansion in early 2023 with the acquisition of assets from the National Dog Groomers Association of America (NDGAA) including their National Certified Master Groomer (NCMG) certification and membership list. The NCMG test assesses the participant's ability to groom a specific breed to standard. Completing the AKC Groomer Certification Pathway in its entirety is thoughtfully rigorous and results in the "AKC Master Groomer" title; 17 candidates have completed this achievement to date.

We expanded the program this year by acquiring the Professional Grooming Credential (PGC) from the World Pet Association (WPA). The WPA applied great industry leadership and diligence in creating the PGC and will continue to collaborate with AKC on professional grooming education and advocacy. The PGC exam determines a candidate's minimum competency to conduct business as a dog groomer. This credential offers the industry the opportunity to self-regulate, organize, and advocate for more opportunities like becoming a recognized trade. The credential has already been adopted into 4 community college curriculums across the country and an industry group we are working with anticipates over 40 colleges by spring of 2025.

### **REGISTRATION DEVELOPMENT**

Mark Dunn, EVP of Registration, Jacqueline Taylor, Director of Marketing, and Dr. Claire Wiley, Executive Director of the AKC DNA Program, participated in this portion of the meeting via videoconference.

### **Club/Fancy Communications for DNA Enhancements**

Based on a Board request, Staff presented a memo on the communications to clubs and the fancy regarding the new DNA enhancements, AKC DNA + Health. The Board was provided with an overview of product updates and the marketing campaign, as well as early sales results.

The AKC DNA + Health test combines the original AKC DNA profile with genetic health and traits testing. This new test aims to satisfy all breeders' needs with just one kit.

- Now 2 kits are available for purchase on the AKC Shop or through Breeder Relations.
  - AKC DNA Kit: \$50
  - AKC DNA + Health Kit: \$135.99

Every dog submitted receives results for all health and trait markers, regardless of breed. However, results are filtered based on breed with tests most relevant for a breed at the top of the report.

For a list of included tests, visit <https://www.akc.org/breeder-programs/dna/dna-resource-center/akc-dna-health/akc-dna-health-kit-included-tests/>.

The test helps to meet Breeder of Merit/Bred with H.E.A.R.T. certification requirements for DNA tests for most breeds.

- Every purchase helps to fund the work of AKC's non-profit affiliates such as the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF)
- Comes with lifetime access to canine genetic counselors (staffed by veterinary professionals) to help make smart breeding decisions
- Verifiable results – using world class technology to internally validate results to match each specific dog (if AKC DNA for sire and dam are on file)
- Results delivered by our trusted service provider (Neogen) with the highest industry standards.
  - Emailed within 4-5 weeks from receipt at the lab.
  - Customers receive 2 PDF reports.
- Kits for sale at the AKC Booth for \$45 with instructions that customers can upgrade for \$85.99.
- Breeder Development is also selling both AKC DNA Kits and AKC DNA + Health Kits in the field with portable card readers.
- Parent Clubs can request kits to sell at National Specialties or events for \$45, and customers can upgrade for \$85.99.

In summary, AKC DNA + Health is designed as a tool to help breed healthier dogs and maintain the integrity of the registry. The AKC is pleased to be offering this new service to breeders, and we strive to add more tests that are important to breeders as time goes on.

### **CONSENT**

There was a motion by Dr. Battaglia, seconded by Ms. Biddle, and it was VOTED (unanimously) to approve the following Consent items:

#### **Fast CAT® – Event Committee of an AKC Hosted Major Event**

The Board VOTED to add language clarifying that an event committee for an AKC-hosted major event has the authority to make decisions on matters not already addressed in the regulations and use its discretion to interpret existing regulations.

#### **Chapter 4. Standard Procedures for Fast CAT**

**SECTION 10. MAJOR EVENT.** Any major event(s) hosted by the AKC will have announcements, qualifications, event info, result coverage, etc. published online, which can be found by visiting the Fast CAT homepage: <https://www.akc.org/sports/coursing/fast-cat/>.

The event committee of an AKC hosted major event shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising which is not already specifically addressed in these Regulations. This includes matters related to the event that may occur before, during, or after the event. Should a situation arise where the application of a Regulation is open for interpretation, the event committee shall

decide how it will be handled. The event committee for an AKC-hosted major event is also subject to the Regulations governing the role of the event committee as found in *Chapter 2, Section 3. Event Committee.*

### **Conformation Judging Approval Process**

The Board approved proposed modifications to the Conformation Judging Approval Process to require judges approved for two or more complete groups to submit a Request to Advance preceding any application for additional breeds if a request had not been approved in the previous 12-month period.

The effective date is June 1, 2024.

### **Show Veterinarians - Rules Applying to Dog Shows, Chapter 10, Sections 2 and 5**

The Board VOTED to approve recommendations by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee to modify **Chapter 10, Section 2 and Section 5** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, which removes the club's obligation for expenses incurred for dogs it refers for veterinary examination and assigns any expenses that may result to the dog's owner or agent.

The proposal will be read at the June 2024 Delegate Meeting and voted on as a single vote at the September 2023 Delegate Meeting.

The effective date, if approved by the Delegate Body, will be September 18, 2024.

Proposed  
(Line In/Line Out)

## **CHAPTER 10**

**SECTION 2.** The Show Veterinarian must be available during show hours to examine any dog that becomes ill or injured at the dog show during show hours or referred by the Event Committee for examination. It will be the responsibility of the owner or owner's agent to transport the dog to the veterinarian and for any cost associated with the dog's examination, illness, or injury. "On call" veterinarians are not required to be present at the event.

## **CHAPTER 10**

**SECTION 5.** The duties of the ~~veterinarians~~ Show Veterinarian shall be to:

- (a) Render treatment to dogs in the cases of sickness or injury occurring at the event. The associated expense shall be the responsibility of the owner or owner's agent.
- (b) Examine dogs at the request of the Event Committee and require removal from competition and the show premises of any dog deemed to endanger the health of said dog or the health of other dogs at the event. If any expenses are incurred in the examination of the dog, it shall be the responsibility of the ~~Event giving club~~ owner or owner's agent of the dog.
- (c) Provide written reports of such decisions to the Event Committee and superintendent.
- (d) Provide written advisory opinions to an Event Committee when requested.

Show Veterinarians are not to be called to treat dogs with non-emergency conditions or with no

apparent contagious symptoms. Show Veterinarians may request payment from the dog's owner or agent for services rendered.

**Beagle Proposed Breed Standard Revision**

The Board approved the proposed revision to the Beagle Standard with an effective date of July 30, 2024.

**Color: Any allowed hound color. Merle and brindle color patterns are not acceptable and shall be disqualified.**

**Delegates Approved**

Michelle Brislin

To represent Chihuahua Club of America

Published March 2024, April 2024

Brenda Dorman

To represent Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA)

Published April 2024, May 2024

Sue Goldberg

To represent Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club

Published March 2024, April 2024

Christine M. Gonsalves

To represent Wampanoag Kennel Club

Published March 2024, April 2024

Marlene Groves

To represent Plum Creek Kennel Club of Colorado

Published March 2024, April 2024

Joao Machado

To represent Oakland Dog Training Club

Published March 2024, April 2024

Sandra McCue

To represent Del Valle Dog Club of Livermore

Published March 2024, April 2024

D. Scott Pfeil

To represent International Kennel Club of Chicago

Published March 2024, April 2024

Sue Ratz  
To represent Huntingdon Valley Kennel Club  
Published March 2024, April 2024

Marty Smith  
To represent Trenton Kennel Club  
Published March 2024, April 2024

Robin Stansell  
To represent French Bull Dog Club of America  
Published April 2024, May 2024

Cledith Wakefield  
To represent Jefferson County Kennel Club of Missouri  
Published March 2024, April 2024

Dorinne Waterman  
To represent San Gabriel Valley Kennel Club  
Published March 2024, April 2024

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this Session.

It was VOTED to adjourn on Friday, May 10, 2024, at 12:23 p.m. Eastern Time.

Adjourned

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gina M. DiNardo, Executive Secretary