

**American Kennel Club, Inc.**  
**MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**AKC Offices at 101 Park Avenue, New York, NY**  
**February 4-5, 2026**

The Board convened on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 12:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Present at the Meeting: Dr. Michael Knight (Vice Chairman), Ms. Gina DiNardo (President & CEO), Ms. Sally Fineburg, Mr. Eduardo Fugiwara, Dr. Charles Garvin, Mr. Steven Hamblin, Mr. Daniel Smyth, Mr. Robin Stansell, Mr. Christopher Sweetwood, Mr. Harold Tatro, and Ms. Ann Wallin. Dr. Thomas Davies (Chairman), Dr. Carmen Battaglia, and Ms. Sylvia Thomas joined via video conference.

The Chief Operating Officer (Mr. Gordon Comfort), Chief Financial Officer (Mr. Ted Phillips) and Executive Secretary (Ms. Sheila Goffe) were also present.

Copies of the January 12-13, 2026, Board Meeting minutes had previously been provided to all Directors for review. Upon a motion by Mr. Hamblin, seconded by Mr. Sweetwood, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to approve the minutes of January 2026 AKC Board Meeting.

**PRESIDENT**

Ms. DiNardo provided the Board with a positive update on efforts to identify and retain new consultants to help guide the modernization of AKC technology and processes, strengthening the organization's ability to grow and thrive for generations to come.

She shared that in the three weeks since the last Board meeting, a number of productive meetings have been held with international kennel clubs interested in expanding their alliances with AKC. These discussions are progressing well and continue to move forward.

Preparations for the AKC Meet the Breeds® event, taking place February 7-8, 2026 at the Javits Center in New York City, are well underway. The event is shaping up to be larger than in previous years, with 149 Parent Clubs expected to participate with breed booths, and ticket pre-sales running 35% ahead of last year.

The year ended December 31, 2025, saw a strong operational recovery in the second half, driven by cost containment measures and new sponsorship revenue.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**Legal Status Report**

Heather McManus, VP & General Counsel, and Patricia Hines, Corporate Counsel – Litigation, participated in this portion of the meeting.

The Board reviewed the Legal Status update as of January 2026.

**Updated Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures**

Staff presented recommendations to update Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures, last amended July 9, 2012, to ensure accuracy and provide clarification and consistency with current Trial Board administration.

Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures (“Procedures”) are issued pursuant to AKC’s Charter and Bylaws and intended to assist Trial Board members and participants in AKC’s disciplinary process with respect to the functions and processes of AKC Trial Boards. The Procedures offer background on Trial Boards and their functions, address the preliminary, hearing, and decision processes of Trial Board proceedings, including the Appeal Trial Board, and provide guidance regarding Event Committee Appeals to the Trial Board.

Staff identified the need to update the current Procedures with respect to:

- (1) outdated information,
- (2) in response to questions raised by participants and Trial Board members which could be clarified with updates to the Procedures,
- (3) an opportunity for more cost and time-efficient proceedings, and
- (4) the recognized need to address participant conduct within the Procedures.

Staff recommended the Board update the Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures, as presented, effective immediately.

Upon a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Ms. Thomas, the Board VOTED (In favor: Dr. Davies, Dr. Knight, Ms. Fineburg, Dr. Garvin, Mr. Hamblin, Mr. Sweetwood, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Stansell, Mr. Tatro, Ms. Thomas, Ms. Wallin, and Mr. Fugiwara. Abstain: Dr. Battaglia) to approve the Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures, as presented, effective immediately.

**Trial Board Member Requirements and Guidelines**

At its November 2025 meeting, the Board requested that staff prepare guidelines surrounding the review, appointment, actions, term and removal of Trial Board members.

Pursuant to the AKC Charter and Bylaws, staff prepared the Trial Board Member Requirements and Guidelines to address the Board’s request and establish further written requirements and expectations for Trial Board members.

The proposed Trial Board Member Requirements and Guidelines presented by staff:

- (1) provide guidance regarding application, qualifications and requirements for Trial Board members,
- (2) establish term limits for members and reiterate the Board's power for at-will removal of Trial Board members under the AKC Charter and Bylaws,
- (3) offer best practices for Trial Board members to follow in their handling of AKC disciplinary matters, and
- (4) highlight actions and behaviors which AKC prohibits and would warrant the removal of a Trial Board member.

The Trial Board Member Requirements and Guidelines will assist the Board in their review and appointment of Trial Board members and provide education and instruction to Trial Board members on the expectations of the role.

The Board discussed the recommendations and offered an amendment to the language of the guidelines.

Upon a motion by Mr. Tatro, and seconded by Ms. Fineburg, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to adopt the Trial Board Member Requirements and Guidelines and accompanying Trial Board applications presented by staff with minor amendments, effective immediately. (See Appendix A.)

**Communications, Social Media & Digital Content Q4 & Year End Report**

Brandi Hunter Munden, VP, Public Relations & Communications, participated in this portion of the meeting. She briefed the Board on media coverage metrics and key activity highlights from the AKC Communications Department, as well as social media and digital content performance for the fourth quarter of 2025.

The quarterly report highlights the collective achievements of the Communications, Social Media, and Digital Content teams in advancing AKC's mission.

**Unique Clips Evaluated in Q4: 13,777 (+28% from 10,756 in 2024)**

**Q4 Totals Comparison**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Clips Evaluated</b>
2022	<b>5,733</b>
2023	<b>7,233</b>
2024	<b>10,756</b>
2025	<b>13,777</b>

\*Numbers and values provided by media monitoring platform Notified.

**Social Media Followers by Platform:****2025 Through Q4:**

Facebook: 4,434,452 followers

Instagram: 703,711 followers

X: 97,712 followers

TikTok: 542,284 followers

Pinterest: 74,626 followers

Threads: 79,187 followers

Bluesky: 1,016 followers

**Total: 5,932,988 followers (not de-duplicated across platforms)****9.1% total follower increase vs. 2024****SOCIAL MEDIA AGGREGATE PERFORMANCE:****2025 Q4:**

Impressions: 203,217,338 (+114.7% YoY)

Engagements: 7,664,322 (+74.4% YoY)

Link clicks: 350,820 (-49.3% YoY)

Net audience growth: 161,777 (+117.7% YoY)

Audience: 5,932,988 (+9.1% YoY)

**2025 FULL YEAR:**

Impressions: 529,520,205 (+86.1% YoY)

Engagements: 22,205,594 (+38.4% YoY)

Link clicks: 1,229,363 (-27.1% YoY)

Net audience growth: 430,996 (+65.4% YoY)

Audience: 5,932,988 (+9.1% YoY)

**Marketing Social Media Activity Highlights for AKC National Championship**

Mrs. Munden provided a high-level overview of the AKC Digital Communications Department's social media strategy and execution for the 2025 AKC National Championship, highlighting key initiatives designed to drive audience engagement, expand reach and support viewership of the event.

Key social media objectives for the 2025 AKC National Championship included 25th Anniversary pre-promotion of the ABC broadcast, a comprehensive tune-in campaign supporting both the livestream and televised broadcast, robust onsite real-time coverage throughout Championship Week events, and live social media engagement during the ABC broadcast debut.

Key metrics increased by double and triple digits year-over-year.

### **AKC Education 2025 Review**

Ashley Jacot, VP of Education, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference. Ms. Jacot provided an overview of the activities and accomplishments by the Education Department in 2025.

#### *AKC Canine College*

The AKC Canine College (AKC CC) now has over 79,000 learner accounts, including more than 13,650 new learners added in 2025, a 64% increase from 2024. Jason Miller, the LMS Administrator, reports a total of 503 courses and exams comprising 1,505 modules, accessible to breeders, judges, stewards, competitors, and the general public. In 2025 alone, there have been over 22,100 course and exam enrollments, with up to 35 LMS reports distributed monthly to internal stakeholders.

#### *Breed Course and Exam Totals*

In 2025, over 3,100 breed courses were ordered. Over the last 12 months, AKC CC has worked on creating breed-specific marketing materials for each course for breeders and judges. Over 3,600 breed exams were ordered, an increase of 20% from 2024.

#### *Public Education*

2025 was an exciting year for Public Education, with the release of several major new resources, the launch of AKC Pen Paws, and significant progress on the upcoming children's book *Bailey's Tales: A Dog Show to Save*.

Updates were also provided on:

- New Marketing Strategies
- AKC Public Education Logo Update
- Beginner's Guide to Dog Shows Brochure
- AKC Patch Program Revamp
- AKC Dog Adventures Kids Camp: Summer Camp Curriculum

#### *AKC Library and Archives*

Throughout 2025, the Library and Archives (L&A) maintained full operational functions, including reference services, acquisitions and processing, collection management, technical services, vendor management, digitization, and support for museum exhibitions. Key accomplishments included upgrading and stabilizing the Digital Library, securing and migrating digital assets, consolidating offsite holdings to a permanent storage facility, and strengthening workflows while continuing to provide reliable service to a broad research community.

#### *AKC Education Webinars*

In 2025, AKC Education hosted 31 webinars for 6,040 participants. Webinars are edited and added to the AKC Canine College and/or AKC.org for future reference.

### *AKC Groomer Program*

In Q3, the Education Department assumed responsibility for the AKC Dog Grooming program. Since this transition, the department has focused on streamlining digital grooming course delivery, enhancing the already popular AKC SAFE program, and providing an improved product for partners. With the support of AKC Canine College staff, the dog grooming program

has implemented strategic changes to enhance customer experience across all channels and introduce a more cohesive and elevated brand image.

### **FINANCE**

Ted Phillips, Chief Financial Officer, participated in this portion of the meeting. The year ending December 31, 2025, was marked by a significant operational recovery during the second half of the year due to cost containment and new sponsorship revenue. While mid-year projections suggested a severe downturn, the organization concluded the year with a narrowed NOI (Loss) of \$(1,350) million. This represents a \$5,086 million improvement (79%) over the mid-year forecast of \$(6,436) million principally due to the use of interest and dividends from the investment portfolio and a modest spend rate of 1%.

### **COO**

Gordon Comfort, Chief Operating Officer, participated in this portion of the meeting. Kirsten Bahlke, VP of Marketing; Jill Zapadinsky, Senior Director, Call Center and Customer Registration Support; Keva Allen, Director of DNA Operations; and Seth Fera Schanes, Director of Project Management, also participated in this portion of the meeting. Tim Pursell, Senior Director, IT, and Keith Frazier, EVP, Business Support Services, participated via video conference.

### **DNA Operations**

Ms. Zapadinsky and Ms. Allen presented an update on DNA Operations, including current program history, initiatives and staff, 2025 financial outcomes, projected revenue for 2026, and updates on marketing strategy.

### **Formation of the AKC Project Management Office (PMO)**

Mr. Fera Schanes provided the Board with a presentation on the establishment of a centralized Project Management Office (PMO) in 2025. The PMO is designed to break down departmental silos and strengthen coordination across the organization. Previously, project managers were embedded within individual departments and primarily focused on IT-related initiatives. The new PMO consolidates these individuals into a single, unified function to support project delivery for the entire AKC.

### **Leveraging Artificial Intelligence**

AKC is pursuing a focused and pragmatic artificial intelligence (AI) strategy in three high-impact areas:

- Customer Service (AI voice and chat agents)
- AKC.org Search (AI-powered search)
- Operational Efficiency in Registration and Sports & Events (AI-based document processing)

Management has chosen two enterprise-level AI platforms as AKC's foundational AI tools in these areas. These enable AKC to enhance customer experience, and increase throughput, while sustaining governance, cost discipline, and contractual safeguards.

This initiative represents a deliberate, enterprise-grade approach to AI. It's focused on delivering real operational value, maintaining cost discipline, and improving the experience for AKC's customers and stakeholders.

### **AKC.org Website RFP Status Update**

The AKC.org website redesign initiative continues to move forward through planning and preparation. Staff provided an overview of the project's goals, scope, budget, and current progress in working toward a new, modern, user-friendly, and future-ready AKC.org. The effort remains aligned with the approved budget and continues to focus on strengthening user experience, improving AKC's digital foundation, and supporting long-term organizational needs.

### **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary and VP, Government Relations, participated in this portion of the meeting. Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP, Sport Services, participated via video conference.

### **Bylaws Committee Recommendation to Require a Fee to File a Complaint (amended), AKC Bylaws Article XIV, Section 1**

At its September 2024 Committee meeting, the Delegate Bylaws Committee voted unanimously to ask that the Board consider requiring a fee to be submitted to the event-giving club when a complaint is filed at an AKC Event.

At the February 2025 Board meeting, the Board disapproved the proposed amendment to add verbiage to the AKC Bylaws Article XIV, Section 1 requiring that a fee be submitted to an event-giving club when a complaint is filed at an AKC event.

Pursuant to Article XX, Section 3 of the AKC Bylaws, the Delegate Bylaws Committee demanded that it be brought forward to the Delegates for a vote. The matter was brought forward for consideration at the September 2025 Delegate meeting. At that meeting, Delegates voted to return the proposal to the Bylaws Committee for further discussion.

The Board considered a proposal by the Delegate Bylaws Committee for reconsideration of a revised proposal. The verbiage of the revised proposal is the same as considered by the Board in February 2025, except that it removes the word “annually” from the previously proposed amendment.

Upon a motion by Dr. Davies, and seconded by Dr. Battaglia, the Board VOTED (In favor: Dr. Davies, Dr. Battaglia, Ms. Fineburg, Mr. Fugiwara, Dr. Garvin, Mr. Hamblin, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Stansell, Mr. Sweetwood, Mr. Tatro, and Ms. Wallin. Opposed: Dr. Knight. Absent: Ms. Thomas) to disapprove the recommendation by the AKC Bylaws Committee to amend AKC Bylaws Article XIV, Section 1 to require a fee to file a complaint at an AKC event.

### **Foundation Stock Services Guidelines – Citizen Science Task Force Suggestions**

The Citizen Science Task Force submitted suggested changes to the *Foundation Stock Service Guidelines*. Staff reviewed the recommendations and provided feedback as well as recommended revisions that can be implemented upon approval from the AKC Board.

The recommendation is to modify the *Foundation Stock Services Guidelines* –

1. For FSS breed Parent Clubs, if there is a lapse of three years in communication between the Sports Services Department and the designated Parent Club, the club will no longer be considered representing the breed.
2. One of the criteria for a breed to be considered for full recognition is that there must be minimum of ten Parent Club households owning dogs that have earned AKC titles.
3. The AKC Communications Department will develop a 12-month media and social media plan for clubs of newly recognized breeds. This plan will serve as a practical roadmap to help clubs build visibility, generate interest, and raise public awareness for the breed, with AKC offering guidance and support to assist clubs.

These are modifications to the *Foundation Stock Service Guidelines* and may be made by a vote of the Board. If approved, it would become effective May 1, 2026.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

### **Saluki Club of America Request for Open Registry Revision**

AKC has received a request from the Saluki Club of America (SCOA) to transfer the registration of 1 and 2 generation dogs, with known parents, from the SCOA to the AKC. This memo includes the SCOA proposal as well as the letter from the SCOA President Diane Divine.

Staff Recommends that the Board approve the request submitted by SCOA to approve the amendment to the 2002 agreement to recognize the Society for the Perpetuation of Desert Bred Salukis (SPDBS) registry and now allow 1 and 2 generation dogs to be accepted for AKC registration.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

**Government Relations Q4 2025 and Year-End Highlights**

Ms. Goffe provided an update on current Government Relations activity, staffing, key legislative and regulatory matters impacting dogs, and a general overview and analysis of fourth quarter 2025 activities along with highlights of significant legislative issues and accomplishments in 2025.

AKC GR is currently monitoring more than 1400 bills and more than 650 administrative regulatory matters at the federal, state and local level that could impact dogs, the wellbeing of dogs and the rights of responsible dog owners.

Discussions included legislative outreach and advocacy, issue engagement, policy expertise, policy trends and key issues, seminars and training events, and legislative successes.

**COMPANION and PERFORMANCE**

Doug Ljungren, EVP, Sports & Events, and Douglas Hurley, Director of Agility, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

**Agility – Dual Pointed Obstacle in FAST Classes**

Staff have recommended a change to *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* to allow, as an option, the ability for designers to use a second, dual pointed obstacle in the FAST class.

If approved by the Board, these changes will become effective June 1, 2026

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

**Agility – Two Novice and Open Trials on the Same Day**

Staff have recommended a change to *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* to allow all AKC licensed Agility clubs to hold two Novice and Open Agility trials on the same day at the same trial site.

The change would allow each trial to have a separate event number. Recording fees would be collected for each trial. Only Novice and Open (standard, JWW), T2B and FAST classes or a combination thereof could be offered. A limit of 350 runs per judge per day would be permitted.

This is a change to *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* and may be made by vote of the Board. If approved, these changes will be effective June 1, 2026.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

**Agility – Moving Entries Laterally**

Staff have recommended an amendment to *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* to allow exhibitors to move their entry laterally from Regular to Preferred classes

and vice versa per the club's policy for move-ups. Clubs would still follow the regulations as detailed in Chapter 1, Section 20 of the *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)*.

This is a change to the *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* and may be made by a vote of the Board. If approved, this change will become effective June 1, 2026. This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

### **CONFORMATION**

Doug Ljungren, EVP, Sports & Events; Tim Thomas, VP of Conformation; Mark Desrosiers, Director, Event Programs; and Glenn Lycan, Director, Event Operations Support participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

### **Altered Dogs in Non-Regular Classes – Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Chapter 3, Section 12**

**Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* establishes an event committee's ability to offer non-regular classes at Conformation dog shows. This memo provides a recommendation by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee to codify into the rule, the interpretation/policy that event committees may not offer a competitive non-regular class with castration or spaying as a condition of the class adopted by the Board at its May 2025 meeting.

The staff recommends the Board approve the Dog Show Rules Committee's proposal to amend **Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, which shall codify the clarification to this rule adopted by the Board at its May 2025 meeting that a non-regular class may not be offered for which castration or spaying is a condition of class.

If approved by the Board at its February 2026 meeting, the proposal will be read at the March 2026 Delegate meeting and voted at the June 2026 Delegate meeting. If approved by the Delegate Body, the effective date will be July 1, 2026.

Upon a motion by Mr. Tatro, and seconded by Mr. Stansell, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to adopt the staff recommendation to codify into the rule that a non-regular class may not be offered for which castration or spaying is a condition of class.

### **Bred-By-Exhibitor Class – Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Chapter 3, Section 8**

This is a recommendation by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee to modify **Chapter 3, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, which if adopted, would allow clubs who exercise the option to divide the Bred-by-Exhibitor class by age, to further divide the Bred-by-Exhibitor Puppy Class to divisions of six months of age and under nine months, and nine months of age and under twelve months.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting.

If the Board approves this proposal, it will be read at the June 2026 Delegate meeting and voted at the September 2026 Delegate meeting.

### **Pacemakers – Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Chapter 11, Section 8**

Pursuant to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* a judge is to disqualify a dog which has been changed in appearance by artificial means. Staff offered a recommendation to amend the list of procedures considered a change in appearance by artificial means provided in italics to include the insertion of a pacemaker due to a congenital or hereditary abnormality.

As italicized text in the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* indicates Board policy and/or clarification, approval of this proposal does not require a vote of the Delegate Body and may be approved by the Board.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting. If approved at that time, the effective will be April 29, 2026.

### **International Dog Shows**

The Federación Canófila Mexicana (“FCM”) has inquired about holding licensed specialty shows for several popular breeds in conjunction with its inaugural FCM Universal Championship shows, scheduled for November 12–15, 2026, in Mexico City, Mexico. Because the AKC International Dog Show Regulations currently include no provisions for specialty shows and would require modification to permit them, staff presented a request to the Board to determine whether it is amenable to allow FCM to offer independent, single-breed specialty shows alongside its licensed all-breed events. The Board agreed that staff should provide recommendations at the April Board meeting.

### **Fines & Reprimands**

Staff updated the Board on recent fines and reprimands.

*(Fines and reprimands are reported on the Secretary’s Page.)*

### **Events & Entries**

Staff updated the Board on event and entry numbers.

### **JUDGING OPERATIONS**

Doug Ljungren, EVP, Sports & Events, and Tim Thomas, VP of Conformation, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**Judge's Misconduct Policy**

*The Judge's Misconduct Policy* outlines the procedures for staff to follow when addressing complaints concerning judges or judging at AKC sanctioned events. There was a recommendation to modify the options available to judges who elect to appeal a decision by the Board to impose discipline to affect one's judging privileges.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting. If approved at that time, the effective date will be April 22, 2026.

**Mandatory Ramp Examination – Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier**

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America (SCWTCA) has requested that the Board of Directors mandate the use of a ramp for the examination of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier through all levels of Conformation competition. Currently, Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers may be judged either on the ground or the ramp at the discretion of the judge.

This will be discussed further at the April 2026 Board meeting. If the Board approves SCWTCA's request at that time, the effective date will be August 5, 2026, to ensure sufficient notice to superintendents to ensure inclusion in all premium lists.

**Conformation Dog Show Judges Annual Report**

Staff provided the Board with data related to judges and judging applications as well as an overview of activities of the Judging Operations Department in the 2025 calendar year.

**2026 Low Entry Breed List**

Staff provided the Board with data related to the Low Entry Breed List. This impacts educational requirements for those seeking judging approval of the breeds that appear on it, as well as the requirements for permit status judges to advance to regular status in a breed. A Low Entry Breed is defined as one whose total number of dogs in competition from the previous year were fewer than 3,500. The Low Entry Breed list is produced annually by Judging Operations and published on the AKC website no later than February 1, 2026, with an effective date of March 1, 2026, for reference by current and prospective conformation judges.

In 2025, 106 breeds appeared on the Low Entry Breed List. For 2026, one breed on the 2025 Low Entry List moved off: Belgian Sheepdogs; and nine breeds were added: AKC's three newly recognized breeds as of December 31, 2025 – Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonki, Teddy Roosevelt Terriers; and Bull Terriers, Chow Chows, Fox Terriers (Smooth), Leonbergers, St. Bernards, and Toy Fox Terriers; resulting in 114 breeds on the 2026 Low Entry Breed List.

**CLUBS**

Lisa Cecin, Director of Club Relations, participated in this portion of the meeting. Glenn Lycan, Director, Event Operations Support, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

### **Centennial Clubs**

Staff provided the Board with the list of Centennial Clubs being added in 2026.

1. English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association
2. Irish Wolfhound Club of America
3. United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club

AKC provides a Centennial Banner for display at their upcoming club functions. With the addition of these three clubs, there are 133 AKC Centennial Clubs. The complete list is available on AKC.org: [www.akc.org/clubs-delegates/clubs/centennial-clubs/](http://www.akc.org/clubs-delegates/clubs/centennial-clubs/).

### **Club Development 2025 Activity Report**

Mr. Lycan provided a recap of the Club Development Department's 2025 activity to the Board. Club Development works one-on-one with clubs every day providing answers, options and data to assist in their decision-making process for holding events, finding partnership clubs, scheduling judges, increasing membership, finding and interpreting rules and policies, and many questions unique to their situation.

### **Club Relations 2025 Activity Report**

Ms. Cecin provided a status report on key information and trends regarding AKC clubs. Club Relations is responsible for the accreditation, advancement, and licensing of AKC's 15 types of clubs. Club Relations processes member club status requests, bylaw reviews, territory designations and expansions, sanctioned matches and mentored programs, and offers informal guidance to clubs with respect to internal club dispute resolution. Club Relations receives approximately 300 emails per month. It is the goal of Club Relations to make it as easy as possible for clubs to associate with the AKC within the rules and policies established by the Board.

In summary, there were **231** new clubs and **36** dissolved clubs in the past five years, yielding a gain of **195** total clubs over a 5-year period up to December 2025.

The largest club category is local specialty clubs. Over the past 5 years, there were **104** new clubs and **23** dissolved, yielding a gain of **81** in a 5-year period up to December 2025.

### **Report on Member Club Bylaws Approved in December and January**

Sandia Dog Obedience Club, Albuquerque, NM (1960)

### **Report On Newly Licensed Clubs Approved in December and January**

Basset Fauve de Bretagne Club of America, 32 total households (23 households in 12 states east of the Mississippi River; 9 households in 6 states west of the Mississippi River).

Borzoi Association of New England, Worcester, MA (including communities east to Boston, west to Becket Center, south to Andover, CT, and southeast to Woods Hole, north to Boston), 24 total households, 14 local.

Columbia River Herding Group Club, Portland, OR (including communities north to Kalama, WA; south to Salem, OR in proximity to Interstate 5), 32 total households, 12 local.

Green Ridge Beagle Club, Parkman, ME area (including communities north to Abbot, south to Harmon, west to Route 151, east to Corinth), 28 total households, 13 local.

Treasure Coast Gun Dog Club, Jupiter, FL (including communities north to Hutchinson, south to Palm Beach Gardens, along the east coast), 20 total households, 14 local.

Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonka Club of America, 105 households (50 households in 15 states east of the Mississippi River; 55 households in 13 states west of the Mississippi River).

United Sunshine State Portuguese Water Dog Club, Ocala, FL (including all communities north to the Georgia state line, south to Route 60), 97 total households, 48 local.

### **COMPLIANCE**

Heather McManus, VP & General Counsel, participated in this portion of the meeting. Bri Tesarz, Director of Compliance, and Jessica Lopez, Compliance Manager, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

### **Staff Event Committee Report of Actions Taken**

The Board received a report of actions taken.

### **Summary of Actions by Management Disciplinary Committee – Charges Preferred – Non-Inappropriate Treatment**

The Board received a report of preferred charges.

### **Summary of Actions by Management Disciplinary Committee – Charges Preferred – Inappropriate Treatment**

The Board received a report of preferred charges.

### **Summary of Finalized Disciplinary Actions**

The Board received a report of finalized disciplinary actions as of January 20, 2026.

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

**Compliance Status Report – Fourth Quarter 2025 & Year End Review**

The Board received a report on Compliance Department activity in Q4 of 2025 and a year-end review. The Board received an update on statistics, highlights, Compliance and Inspections policies and procedures, and customer service.

**Inspections Status Report – Fourth Quarter 2025**

The Board received a report on Q4 inspections activity and outcomes.

**MEDIA & SPONSORSHIPS**

Ron Furman, VP Broadcasting, Sponsorship and Media; William Ellis, Senior Director, Broadcasting; and Daphna Straus, VP, Business Development, participated in this portion of the meeting.

**AKC Media and Sales 2025 Yearly Recap**

Staff provided the Board with an update on activities of the AKC Sponsorship, Media and Advertising Sales Department for 2025, with an emphasis on the accomplishments of the department in meeting revenue goals and concurrently advancing the mission of the American Kennel Club. Highlights included the AKC National Championship Broadcast, AKC.tv, AKC Good Dog TV, AKC on ESPN, and AKC Sponsorship and Licensing activities.

**Broadcasting 2025 Year-In-Review**

Staff provided an overview of key performance indicators for 2025. The AKC National Championship Broadcast secured a new time slot in 2025 and broadly expanded its reach and performance, with record viewership and a ranking as the #1 non-NFL broadcast program, despite industry declines.

AKC.tv generated 2.9 million videoplays and 140,000 hours watched.

Good Dog TV developed a 30-minute syndicated television series, expanding AKC's reach to a national broadcast audience of more than 10 million dog lovers annually.

AKC on ESPN achieved its highest rated cable broadcast with AKC Diving Dogs Challenge, averaging 390,000 viewers. Audience delivery increased more than 30% over the previous year.

**AKC Sponsorship Advertising & Licensing 2025 Year in Review**

Staff presented an update on performance highlights, challenges, strategic opportunities, and outlook for sponsorship, advertising and licensing.

**CONSENT**

After a motion by Dr. Garvin, seconded by Mr. Sweetwood, the Board VOTED (unanimously) to approve the consent agenda items listed to follow.

**Dalmatians Request to Participate in Herding**

The Dalmatian Club of America (DCA) submitted a request for Dalmatians to be allowed to participate in AKC Herding events. The purpose of the AKC Herding program is to preserve and develop the herding skills inherent in the Herding breeds and to demonstrate they can perform the useful functions for which they were originally bred.

Over their long history, there is some evidence of them being used as a multi-purpose farm dog, including for herding. The breed has demonstrated its herding skill in other organizations events.

The Board VOTED to approve the request from the DCA to allow Dalmatians to participate in Herding events which will be effective when programming is completed, pertaining to the *AKC Herding Regulations*.

**Biewer Terrier Proposed Breed Standard Revision**

The Biewer Terrier Club of America, Inc. (BTCA) submitted the results of its membership ballot for a proposed revision to the breed standard, based upon questions received from judges since the breed became recognized.

The Board VOTED to approve the proposed breed standard revision with a technical correction. The revision is effective April 30, 2026. (See Appendix B.)

**Cairn Terrier Proposed Breed Standard Revision**

The Board VOTED to approve that the Cairn Terrier Club of America (CTCA) ballot the membership following a proposed revision to the breed standard.

**Frameless Tire**

The Board VOTED to approve the proposed change to the *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)* for the addition of the Frameless Tire as an optional piece of equipment in the International Sweepstakes Class (ISC) standalone events or similar FCI events only as an optional piece of equipment.

These changes are effective March 1, 2026.

**Delegate Approvals**

Debarah Billings

To represent Biewer Terrier Club of America

Published in *AKC Gazette*: December 2025, January 2026

Kate DeSanto

To represent American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association

Published in *AKC Gazette*: December 2025, January 2026

Crystal Messersmith  
To represent Columbia Kennel Club  
Published in *AKC Gazette*: December 2025, January 2026

Isabel Ososki  
To represent Collie Club of America  
Published in *AKC Gazette*: December 2025, January 2026

**Approval of Annual Fees**

The *Charter and Bylaws of the American Kennel Club, Inc.* require that the Board of Directors set deposits annually for the submission of complaints pursuant to Article XII, Section 1; as well as deposits for appeals to an Appeal Trial Board pursuant to Article XIII, Section 7.

The current deposit to file a complaint pursuant to Article XII, Section 1, is \$625. The current deposit to file an appeal to an Appeal Trial Board is \$250.

The Board VOTED to approve the recommendation to change the deposits to \$675 for Article XII, Section 1 complaints and \$275 for an appeal to an Appeal Trial Board, Article XIII, Section 7, effective immediately.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

It was VOTED (unanimously) to adjourn on Thursday, February 5, at 4:07 pm Eastern Time.

Adjourned

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary

## Appendix A

### TRIAL BOARD MEMBER REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES (Adopted February 4, 2026)

#### Generally

The AKC Board of Directors (“Board”) shall have power to appoint and at will remove Trial Boards of not less than three (3) members each, whose duty it shall be to hear such charges in the first instance as may be referred by the Board to such Trial Boards. The powers and duties of Trial Boards are more fully set forth in Article XIII of the Bylaws. Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board members may not have served as a member of the Board in the preceding three years; may not be a past or current employee of AKC and may not simultaneously serve as a member of a Trial Board and an Appeal Trial Board.

A Trial Board conducts hearings, hears appeals from Event Committees, conducts investigations, makes findings of fact, and imposes, or recommends to the Board, penalties where it has been determined that the conduct alleged is prejudicial to purebred dogs, purebred dog events or the AKC.

#### Application, Qualifications and Requirements

These guidelines establish the application process, qualifications and requirements for Trial Board members. Individuals who wish to qualify for appointment to the AKC Trial Board must review the Trial Board Member Requirements & Guidelines, submit the Application Form and be available for an interview upon request.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Review and remain familiar with the AKC Charter and Bylaws, Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures, Discipline Guidelines, Dealing with Misconduct, and other relevant AKC discipline policies or procedures.
- Preserve the confidentiality of all aspects of any matter you are assigned to.
- Maintain a neutral posture toward a matter and the individuals involved.
- Be sensitive to any conflicts of interest, value concerns, or limits. If necessary, recuse yourself from a matter when effectiveness might be compromised for such concerns.
- Be familiar with and utilize video conferencing platforms (i.e. Microsoft Teams and Zoom).
- Write all responses, Orders, and Decisions in a formal, clear, concise and neutral manner, in accordance with AKC rules, policies and procedures.
- Participate in ongoing Trial Board trainings, and review previously recorded trainings if applicable.

#### Qualifications

- Ability to work within established guidelines and take direction.
- Open-minded, objective, good listener, good reading comprehension.
- Recognition and self-awareness of rules, professionalism, and sensitivities, and ability to remain outwardly neutral and respectful to all parties involved in a matter.
- Ability to keep information confidential.
- Skilled in verbal and written communication.
- Excellent interpersonal skills. Ability to respect individuals from various backgrounds and cultures.
- Proficiently use a computer, including email, Zoom/Microsoft Teams, Word processor, etc.

- Ability to commit to 2 years of service.

### **Terms and Termination**

**Appointed Trial Board members will serve two-year terms, unless otherwise removed at will by the Board.** At the conclusion of the members' two-year term, the Board may elect to re-appoint the member for another two-year term or inform the member that their term has concluded and thank them for their service.

The Board has the power to at will remove Trial Board members. Examples of inappropriate behavior that may result in a Trial Board member's removal from the Trial Board include, but are not limited to:

- conduct or statements based upon a legally protected characteristic that are discriminatory, harassing, intimidating or abusive;
- physical violence or threats of physical violence;
- failing to be impartial, both in appearance and in fact;
- being rude to parties, counsel or staff;
- demonstrating perceived inability to follow or grasp the issues in dispute;
- being inflexible, especially with regard to mutual requests from parties;
- causing repeated and routine scheduling problems;
- being unprepared for hearings;
- failure to disclose material conflict;
- being unwilling to abide by the AKC Charter & Bylaws, rules, policies and procedures;
- being unwilling to abide by Trial Board Member Requirements & Guidelines; and
- other conduct that calls one's integrity into question.

**The Board will regularly audit the activity of Trial Board members for compliance with AKC's rules, policies and procedures. Non-compliance may result in removal from the Trial Board.**

### **Best Practices for Trial Board Members**

1. Maintain control over all correspondence, submissions, and hearings from the outset. Set "ground rules" of behavior at the beginning and be consistent about enforcing them.
2. Be familiar with, understand and be able to interpret the AKC Charter and Bylaws, Trial Board and Appeal Trial Board Procedures, Discipline Guidelines, Dealing with Misconduct, and other relevant AKC discipline policies or procedures.
3. Be fully prepared for all meetings and hearings by reading the pertinent documents in advance, including the AKC documents governing discipline.
4. Be punctual in convening all hearings.
5. Discourage abuses of the process, such as – unreasonable and far-reaching requests for discovery, redundant evidence or testimony, or procrastination in scheduling.
6. Remember your authority if and when parties fail to comply with your orders or directives.
7. Do not use or tolerate inappropriate, hostile, demeaning or humiliating words in written or oral communications among lawyers, parties, witnesses, Trial Board members or staff.
8. Make all reasonable efforts to decide promptly all matters presented for decision.
9. Approach all matters in a professional manner, always treating all parties with courtesy and respect.
10. Complete and submit reports for reimbursement of expenses and honorarium.

**Your service as a Trial Board member is highly valued and appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation.**

The AKC prohibits any conduct or written or verbal comments by Trial Board members that disparage, denigrate or demonstrate hostility or aversion toward any person based upon any classification protected by law. Examples of conduct, which are grounds for removal from the Trial Board, include, but are not limited to:

- hate speech of any kind regarding any protected class, including race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability and genetic information (including family medical history);
- sexual harassment; or
- physical violence or threats of physical violence.

## Appendix B

### Official Standard of the Biewer Terrier

**General Appearance:** The Biewer Terrier is an elegant, longhaired, tri-colored toy terrier with a distinctive, breed signature ponytail. The coat parts down the middle, hanging straight and evenly on both sides of the body. The back is level, with the height at the withers equal to the height at the croup. The body length is slightly longer than tall, although square is acceptable. The tail is set high and carried well-arched over the body, covered with a long, flowing plume. The Biewer Terrier is alert and eager.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** The height at the withers is equal to the height at the croup, measuring 8 to 10 inches. The body length, measured from the prosternum to the ischium, is slightly longer than the height, although a square proportion is acceptable. The body is fine to medium-boned with a level topline. Serious fault – Height over 11 inches.

**Head:** The *expression* is engaging, bright and intelligent. The *eyes* are medium sized, dark, and expressive, with the iris as dark as possible, showing no flecks of blue. The *ears* are small, erect, V-shaped, set high and moderately wide, covered with hair except for the tips which are shaved. The *skull* is slightly rounded, and the *muzzle* is one-third the length of the head. The skull and muzzle are on parallel planes and meet at a moderate stop. The eye rims, nose, or lips are all completely black. The ideal *bite* is scissor, although a level bite is also acceptable. Serious fault - Incomplete pigment on the eye rims, nose, or lips; ears not standing erect. Disqualifications - Blue eye(s) or blue flecks in the iris; liver pigmentation of eye rims or nose.

**Neck, Topline and Body:** The *neck* is of moderate length. The backline is level. The *body* is slightly longer than tall, off square, although square is acceptable. The chest reaches the elbows, and the ribs are moderately sprung. The underline is slightly tucked up. The loin is well-developed and strong. The *tail* is set high when in motion, is carried in a well-arched position over the body, covered with a long, flowing plume. Serious faults - High in the front or rear, roach or rounded back.

**Forequarters:** The forelegs should be straight, with elbows neither in nor out, set close to the body. The shoulders are well angulated and laid back, the upper arm should be of equal length as the shoulder laid with good return, allowing for good reach and freedom of movement. The legs are straight and muscular, and the pasterns are upright and straight. Dewclaws may be removed. The feet are round, with toes well arched and covered in hair that is trimmed to neither impede movement nor obscure the shape of the foot. The pads can be black, flesh-colored, or a combination of both, while the nails can be black and/or white.

**Hindquarters:** The hindquarters are well-balanced with the forequarters, and the rear angulation matches the front. The hind legs are straight and muscular when viewed from behind with well-bent stifles. The hocks are short, well let down and straight when viewed from behind, neither turned in nor out. Dewclaws may be removed. The feet are round, with toes well arched and covered with hair that is trimmed to neither impede movement nor obscure the shape of the foot. The pads can be black, flesh-colored, or a combination of both, while the nails can be black and/or white.

**Coat:** The coat is long and flowing with a silky, smooth texture. It is straight, without an undercoat, and hangs close to the ground, if not touching it. The coat may be trimmed to floor length for ease of movement. The fall on the head is tied in a single fall, finished simply and adorned with a single bow. Excessive grooming on the head, such as ratting, teasing, or roll-overs common to other breeds, shall be so severely penalized as to be eliminated from competition. The feet are trimmed for a neat, clean appearance, and the hair around the anus is trimmed. Eliminating faults - Head falls that display ratting, teasing or roll overs common to other breeds.

**Color:** The Biewer Terrier is defined by the placement of tan on the head. The ideal head coloring is black or blue, tan, and white in good symmetry. However, any combination of the following two color patterns – Black or blue with tan, or tan and white – is acceptable. The chin and throat should be white. Disqualification – A head lacking tan. Body Coloring - Body coloring is black or blue and white; a solid dog of either color is undesirable. The chest, legs, and tip of the tail should be white. The white on

the chest must extend up the neck to the chin. The legs must be white from the elbows and stifles to the feet. A small amount of tan hair may be found around the anus, and trace amounts of tan or black may appear at the elbow, stifle, or on the feet. Any deviation from this is undesirable. Disqualification – Any color other than the tri-colored pattern described above.

**Gait:** The Biewer Terrier moves confidently with a high head carriage. The movement should be graceful, smooth and straightforward. When viewed from the side, the backline remains level. The hind legs should track in line with the front legs, moving neither inward nor outward. The tail is carried in a well-arched position over the body while in motion. Serious Fault - Hackneyed gait.

**Temperament:** Intelligent and loyal, they are affectionate and playful, making them excellent companions and family dogs.

The foregoing description represents the ideal Biewer Terrier. Any deviation from the described standard should be penalized in proportion to the extent of the deviation.

**Serious Faults:** Height over 11 inches; High in front or rear; Incomplete pigment on the eye rims, nose or lips; ears not standing erect; Hackneyed gait.

**Eliminating Faults:** Head falls that display ratting, teasing, or roll overs common to other breeds.

**Disqualifications:** *A head without tan; any color other than the tri-colored pattern described above; Blue eye(s) or blue flecks in the iris; liver pigmentation of eye rims or nose.*