

Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Work Group Meeting Minutes

Meeting date and time: 10a-2:30p, 6/14/16

Meeting place: Perimeter Center
9960 Mayland Drive
Henrico, Virginia 23233
Board Room #4

Attendees: Julia Murphy, Virginia Department of Health
Alice Harrington, Virginia Federation of Dog Clubs and Breeders
Debbie Condrey, Virginia Department of Health
Alissa Turchen, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Carolynn Bissett, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Benny David, Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters
Larry Land, Virginia Association of Counties
Terry Taylor, Immediate Past President, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Lindsay Reames, Virginia Farm Bureau
Scott Miller, Hanover County Treasurer, County Treasurer's Association
Kenneth Catron, Hanover County
Patricia Duttry, Three Rivers Health Department, Virginia Department of Health
Heidi Meinzer, Virginia Federation of Humane Societies
Robin Starr, Richmond SPCA
Matthew Gray, The Humane Society of the United States
Debra Griggs, Virginia Federation of Humane Societies
Melissa Velasquez, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
April Roger, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
Rob Leinberger, Richmond Animal Care and Control, Virginia Animal Control Association
Liam Hughes, Main Department of Agriculture

Public Attendees: Les Foldesi

Dr. Murphy started the meeting by mentioning she would be calling in at 11am to Joshua VanDyke, who works for the Fairfield Ohio Treasurer's Office. He would talk about the system they use in Ohio, as the meeting focus is on statewide systems for capturing information. She mentioned that a number of people would be talking about the systems they use, to bring some thoughts to one of the charges in the resolution, which is to assess the feasibility of a statewide system or database to collect licensing info and rabies certificate info. She mentioned a survey distribution update—as of right now, there are about 950 responses from members of the general public. Reminder that the survey will continue until July 1. There have been 71 VVMA members who have responded, and she confirmed with Dr. Bissett on current response numbers for ACOs or treasurers. Dr. Bissett said she could get an update in a moment. Dr. Murphy thanked everyone for their help in getting the surveys distributed, and announced the

meeting would start, and asked if anyone had any comments before beginning. She noted that there were a number of guests in attendance, including Liam Hughes with the Maine Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Murphy stated that the last meeting had focused on legal issues, FOIA, etc., and this time we would be discussing a statewide system, and what that might look like. While Debbie Condrey's presentation was being set up, Debra Griggs asked for confirmation on the survey update. Dr. Murphy confirmed responses so far were 950 members of the general public, 71 veterinarians, and Dr. Bissett confirmed responses from 10 animal control officers and 34 treasurers. Ms. Griggs asked for any trends. Dr. Murphy also stated she had received a few paper surveys, maybe half a dozen, some people said they were glad we were doing the survey, others said they thought their dog got licensed when it was vaccinated. Some people said they knew about rabies and about getting their dogs licensed, and she had received mixed answers on whether the extra step of going to the treasurer's office would be a big deal. Her goal for the next meeting is to have microchip company reps to give talks on their tech, a 5 minute presentation on their tech, a general overview of chip tech, and have a question/answer forum. After lunch, we would talk about what we know about the survey so far, how many people have responded in total, are there any trends, etc.

Roll call took place

Debbie Condrey, Chief Information Officer for VDH started her presentation on databases/registries used by Virginia Department of Health:

- Wanted to talk about options for the group—something as simple as an Excel spreadsheet can be a registry or database. The more it's shared, the less likely it will be to be an Excel/Access spreadsheet
- What is a registry and what is the difference between a registry and a database? What are the business questions you are trying to answer? What questions/problem are we trying to solve, from a business perspective? Then we can apply various technologies to it, rather than jump to the available technology and then look at the business problem. She encouraged Dr. Murphy and the group to look at the specific issues we are trying to solve and have answers to those issues, and then talk about the tech
- Will talk in general about some things the health department does, some concepts about registries and databases, what might be some options, and a couple of examples of registries and systems that VDH offers. They're different from what the group is discussing, they may contain confidential info and there are a variety of laws that pertain to that. Animal licensing may be a bit different, options for security not quite as stringent
- Definition of a registry: a place where records are stored and can be accessed. Can be manual or automated. Bidirectional—can put things in and get things out, or unidirectional—can only get information. Can set up queries and templates, so that setting up a new one is fairly simple. Configured based on business requirements.

Capability to add or remove documents and information. Role-based—depending on your role, you will have different kinds of access to the system.

- Security/confidentiality issues to be aware of, and storage systems. VDH does not store confidential info using cloud technology because don't feel it's secure enough yet. Can use cloud if need less confidentiality.
- Differences between database and registry is organization of info in system: registry is more organized and formatted than a database. Databases not usually accessed directly, registries can. Database might be set of tables or data fields, would not make sense when looking at it, a registry would. Again, think about what the business issue is you're trying to solve and pick a technology that can help you solve it rather than trying to fit business need to what the tech provides. Might need to do some customization, lots of vendors do that.
- Does it need to be "device agnostic"? Various devices might be used to access it.
- Should it be web-based? Will it work offline? How will the information be loaded into the registry? What kind of edits or data checks do you want on it?
- Will you build from scratch or from existing data? Sounds like there may be different methods for tracking in different vet offices—can people use their existing technology, with a system in the middle that does a search? This will take collaboration on how this will work, i.e. an electronic health record for a patient—the owner of the record has to agree to make it available
- Potentially a tracking and a licensing component in the system we would be looking at?
- Registry must have at least one active searchable element—could be animal license number?
- Examples of VDH current registries:
 - Office of Licensing and Certification has a system to license doctor's offices and hospitals
 - Advanced directive registry—individuals can load their advanced directives, tight security
 - Death registry
 - Immunization registry
- VDH registries are housed both in house or third party vendor. There are contracted security controls when contracting with a third party
- VDH registries funded through grants
- Most VDH registries are unidirectional now, but are working to make bi-directional
- Metadata can be as important as data itself—"data about data," when standardized across all fields, makes searching very easy
- An attendee question on cost parameters: will license fees have to be standardized across state? And how would we handle kennel licenses? –Condrey answered that the registry is not dependent on fees or type of licenses, can build anything into registry. Depending on money, the registry can be very simple and less expensive, or more complex and expensive. Attendee question: are there "off the shelf" options? –Condrey answered yes, but systems will always require customization—this can cost more than

building from scratch, depending on vendor. Any type of licensing can be built in, however. As far as cost, in example, the advanced directive registry is free to the public but cost health department \$250,000 to set up, \$60,000 annually to maintain it (storage, security, accounts)

- Condrey stated that was the end of the presentation and asked for any questions
- Attendee question: what state systems currently “capture information” and how much do they cost? Can do a lot with technology, depends on what you want and how much money you have to spend
- Attendee question: the advanced directive system sounds somewhat similar to a licensing system, in terms of uploaded PDFs. How does the search function work? – Condrey answered that registry was set up by legislation, Board of Health very specific in who can have access because of nature of info. Users receive wallet card with pin number to access account. If you want others to be able to access account, can give out pin number. Physicians in ERs can access with their own login so they can search for advanced directives for patients. Patient can also put in physician’s orders, will, but no one can just go in and search the system for security.
- Attendee question: was the \$250,000 price tag because of the security concerns eating into the budget? –Condrey answered that a portion of it was, but a big portion was simply set-up costs, storage. Technology is not inexpensive.
- Attendee question: you don’t charge people to access, but if you did could you offset costs? The only money we will have is what we collect in license fees, none from legislature. —Condrey answered that you could and yes, it would offset some costs associated with upkeep. Attendees wondered whether it might cost less because we would not need quite so much security. A brief discussion about whether data in the VDH databases is FOIAable. An attendee added that you would also have to add in personnel costs to administer the system, and if you’re collecting fees, that requires more staffing. –Condrey answered that it would be difficult to say how much this hypothetical system might cost.
- Attendee question: how many records are in advanced directive registry? –Condrey answered about 10,000 accounts and 50,000 documents. Some discussion about whether that was a “large” registry or not.
- Dr. Murphy asked: with the advanced directive registry being legislated, did increased staffing come with it? –Condrey answered no. In 2010, VDH received an unsolicited proposal from a vendor who saw the registry requirements and offered to do it at no cost: a “public-private partnership.” VDH agreed and put business requirements out to vendors to get cost estimates. They decided on a vendor that agreed to do it at no cost, with the agreement that they would then sell their technology to other agencies in order to get their money back. Over time, the vendor was not able to sell their tech, so in the past year VDH did a tech swap with another vendor and stopped working with the previous vendor, who wanted VDH to pay for the system. Condrey reiterated that no changes were made to the registry, the system was just moved over to a different vendor, and it remained at no cost to the Commonwealth. She recommended looking

into the public-private options. Attendee discussion continued on this incident. One attendee asked whether the vendor sees this as free advertising in order to work with other agencies for money in the future. Condrey confirmed this is a very common way to work with vendors.

- Debra Griggs asked: resolution says we are to review the feasibility of establishing a statewide system which may include a database on licensing and rabies, so is the question whether we think we need one, and not just the feasibility of one? Dr. Murphy pointed out there are different kinds of feasibility: technological, financial, political, etc. We want to come to conclusion on whether it's feasible in different ways. Maybe the feedback from people is that they feel uncomfortable having their info in a statewide database, so we have money and tech feasibility but people are unwilling to participate based on results. Maybe there are ways to make people more comfortable with it if we think a statewide database is a good goal and important function.
- Sharon Adams asked whether the group had established at the last meeting whether licensing records are public record. Dr. Murphy confirmed they are public record, but maybe on a "sliding scale" of accessibility depending on what they are exactly. Condrey added that a statewide system can cause concern from the public, that they don't want their information included. Sometimes you can opt them out, sometimes legally it has to be collected. We can probably expect that to happen.
- Matthew Gray wanted to bring the discussion back to cost and whether the group would have at the end of the day a fiscal impact statement on this? Will we create a number based on our research and go to the legislature with it? Dr. Murphy confirmed it was her goal to create a fiscal impact statement based on the discussions of the group. We want to be able to present options, and the considerations of all options, i.e. advantages and disadvantages that we can present to the General Assembly. Again, what is the feasibility? This will be food for thought for the General Assembly as they continue their deliberations on the topic.
- Debra Griggs asked whether the group had documented their discussion of whether licensing is truly needed? Whether licensing as we know it still serves a purpose? Dr. Murphy confirmed this had been documented, and that there were differences of opinion on the subject. She confirmed she would continue to document it in minutes and in summaries. Dr. Bissett at that point reminded Dr. Murphy that it was almost 11:00 and time to call in to the out-of-state guests.
- Scott Miller added on the topic of money, based on his research, 40% of all dogs are not licensed. Animal control is constantly picking up dogs without collars, and tracking them is difficult. Their vets send them vaccination certificates, and they send owners notices if they're not in compliance, telling them they know they have a dog that needs to be vaccinated and licensed. Only one in four responds to those notices, so it's not really a worthwhile use of time.
- Dr. Murphy went back to the previous topic, and stated that she is assuming licensing will remain in some form in Virginia, and given the assignment the group has received from the General Assembly, we can note that we had the debate (of whether licensing is

necessary). How would we feel about it if licensing changes? Maybe after all our deliberations, the group decides it's not feasible, or feasibility is very conditional. If we had a centralized database that looked at licensing as a form of identification, that might help from a local government response standpoint. We could also try to respond to people's discomfort with the idea of a larger scope database.

- Scott Miller addressed Larry Land, stating that localities would want to look at this proposal from a money point of view—they would want to consider net cost and revenue. They sell 10,000 tags at \$2 a tag currently, but could look at increasing that. At the last meeting, the Russell County supervising veterinarian was excited at the idea of being able to add a fee on when doing vaccinations and giving certificates. This kind of thing might make localities happy on a net level. There are 2 million dogs in Virginia, we could cover the \$250,000 (database startup costs) in a couple years. The discussion continued, with some attendees expressing concern. Larry Land wonders if the conclusion is that we have a system now that isn't working for the localities. How can we bring more money into localities to support their animal control? Unsure whether the fees revenues could cover the costs. Sharon Adams asked whether licensing fees can go up. Mr. Miller replied that they can and they have gone up, and different attendees confirmed different amounts are being collected, and those amounts have increased in some cases. Benny David added that the goal of licensing is to identify the owner and ensure rabies vaccination—originally they were to pay for animal control. It is fiscally irresponsible to talk about such large costs in starting up a registry that would be administered publicly? Do we need the state or even the county involved? Instead we could just require that dogs all be microchipped, perhaps. Then we would not have to worry about the issue of FOIA. We could base it more along the lines of a microchip registry. The discussion continued, but Mr. David believed there should be a general fund funding animal control, instead of putting the cost only on dog owners. Sharon Adams brought the discussion back to the issue of FOIA, and the license being a public document. A brief discussion of FOIA ensued, before Dr. Murphy was able to connect with the guests in Ohio via phone.
- Phone call with Joshua Vandyke, Settlements and Administration Manager (Fairfield, Ohio). Dr. Murphy filled Mr. Vandyke in on the working group's purpose. She referenced the written materials from Mr. Vandyke which were given out to the working group. She requested that he talk about his database system.
 - Also in attendance via telephone: John Slater, Fairfield County Auditor; Todd McCullough, County Dog Warden; Wendy Ailors, Fairfield Computer Services (vendor of dog licensing system)
 - General overview of Ohio's dog laws:
 - 88 counties
 - Dog licenses mandated by state in all counties
 - Maintained by individual counties, responsible for set up of own system
 - County commissioners responsible for dog wardens, budget

- Money generated from sale of dog licenses goes to a kennel fund for shelter operations, etc.; auditor can use not more than 15% of funds as well
 - County auditor's office has 3 employees maintaining system and data; they also offer 1 year, 3 year, permanent dog tags, and dangerous dog and kennel tags, they handle record requests, generate receipts for tags sold, etc.
- The only people with full access to their system are county auditor admins, county dog warden, and the animal shelter/humane society; other individuals have limited access. They can search the system through the Fairfield website and it will display partial information.
- Requirements for their system: just need access to internet and a browser. The software is maintained and housed on vendor's servers. Mr. Vandyke then turned things over to Ms. Ailors to talk about the more technical aspects of the system.
- Ms. Ailors discussed the system's capabilities:
 - Worked with Fairfield County Auditor's office to create the software
 - Software is web-administered, so you do need internet access
 - Different levels of administration: some have full access (for the county), some have limited access (the public animal shelter, i.e.), some have search only (public, other agencies)
 - Mapping software to get dogs back home if found in the field, rather than having to take them in to the shelter
 - Can search any criteria on the both the owner and dog, and make lists based on criteria (year, etc.)
 - Can generate applications, print, mail, create PDFs, barcodes, reports, etc.
 - Can merge accounts, clean up data
 - Can also do online sales, credit card processing, and discounts although this is not generally used in Ohio
 - Can also add additional information i.e. microchip info, if they want to
- The next guest speaker was Fairfield County Dog Warden Todd McCullough:
 - In 2014, in Ohio the average dog license fee was \$15, although that number is higher in urban areas and vice versa
 - About 15% compliance overall—this is the marker of “decent” compliance. This number will also shift based on urban vs. rural areas.
 - Officers enjoy being able to use web-based programs in field, as it enables them to return dogs to their homes instead of taking them to shelters. Only a small percent of dogs picked up are wearing a current license, but they can utilize other information in the system to have a greater success rate in returns, i.e. addresses, etc.
 - In Ohio, rabies quarantine is not influenced by current rabies vaccination status—it is always 10 days. The quarantine can be take place in the owner's residence.
 - Officers are limited in their ability to search dog registration information from other counties. From a statewide perspective, there are definite advantages of

having a database considering the numbers of transfers of ownership and moving to different localities. Some dog owners may purchase a second license rather than wait to transfer their old license. To be able to look up a dog license on a statewide level, the trend seems to be towards inputting and using data and systems. But he hears from the dog warden association that there are different ways that people collect information and that hinders their efficiency. They want to use USPS data or GIS mapping data in order to identify problem areas, etc. A lesson learned from a statewide perspective: having clear and concise data identifiers is of the utmost importance: having more identifiers attached to animals can cause more issues, i.e. misspellings of owner names, etc. At that point Mr. McCullough opened it up for questions.

- Dr. Murphy asked for confirmation that there are currently 54 counties in Ohio using the system. Ms. Ailors confirmed that is the case, and out of that 54, 40 use the system day to day, while 14 have own internal programs. Dr. Murphy then asked, if you search the database, could you find information from any of the counties participating in the system? Ms. Ailors replied no, they are not connected to each other, but they could be given administrative access and rights individually. Dr. Murphy: Could animal control officers search? Ms. Ailors: That varies in different counties depending on their “tech savviness” but the software supports it. Dr. Murphy: So it’s not really a state-wide system? Ms. Ailors: Each county has own public website that is searchable. Debra Griggs: How many counties offer public access associated with the searchable database? Ms. Ailors: Most of them do, only a few have turned it off. Anything you can get out to the public is a useful tool and the search function is widely used. Alice Harrington: What about the counties not using the system? John Slater: They are using other software, which may not have same functions as their system. Dog licensing packages are sometimes included with auditing software. You may or may not find public access availability in different counties. Dr. Murphy: can you tell us how the data gets into the system? Mr. Slater: when they come in to renew their licenses, there is a barcode for quick access to the system, using a reader. Manual entry can be done as well, if someone has purchased tags and has a receipt without a barcode. There are three admin positions in their office that enter that information. The barcode helps a lot with efficiency. Mr. Vandyke added that during the “licensing system,” out of an eight hour day, they spend 7-7.5 hours on entering dog licenses, but it depends on the amount of mail that comes in. Owners can also go to satellite locations to pick up dog licenses, i.e. grocery stores, for a small fee. That information still has to be manually entered by the office admins, because they usually don’t keep the receipts with them. They have considered having terminals at those satellite locations. Dr. Murphy asked for confirmation that owners can go online, the treasurer’s office, or another vendor to do it themselves? Mr. Vandyke confirmed that is correct—the admins collect the

information, batch the receipts, mail the registrations back to the individuals. Dr. Murphy then asked how much the system costs—start-up and continuing maintenance? Ms. Ailors replied that the set-up fee averages \$2000, and the monthly maintenance fee averages \$50-\$350 depending on size. There are no additional fees for functions and services of the system. Dr. Murphy: this same system operates in other states? Ms. Ailors confirmed and discussed briefly how the system is set up in Pennsylvania (Department of Agriculture is involved in tag licensing process, they do lifetime licenses and tattoos, microchips. No statewide database of permanent tags, which can cause issues when dogs move) and Wisconsin (licensing is at municipality level, acting on county's behalf, control of fees at county level), Washington does cat licensing and dog licensing, but they contract with just one city so no details on state-wide level. Dr. Murphy: do you enter microchip information into database? There is not one system out there for that, although the current software is able to collect microchip data. Not all jurisdictions do, because microchips are not required statewide, so they don't see a lot of it, unless the dog has been deemed dangerous—then it's required.

- Dr. Murphy asked for any final thoughts from the Fairfield, OH guests. Mr. Vandyke expressed his thanks, talked about Fairfield's location geographically, and mentioned they have about 150,000 people and sell about 23,000 licenses annually.
- Alice Harrington asked if the treasurers know how many licenses we sell in Virginia (annually). Scott Miller replied the compliance rate varies by locality, but in Hanover there are 100,000 people. They sell 1 and 3 year tags now, but before they switched to that, they used aggressive selling tactics, with vets pushing for it, and got up to about 16,000 tags annually. Three years ago, they were three times smaller than Chesterfield, but outselling Chesterfield. That has changed now. He added that now that the surveys are out and the public is aware of them, there has been some miscommunication. In Hanover, you can buy a 50 dog kennel license for \$50. If all dogs are charged \$10 at the vet, that's too expensive. Rumors are also flying about microchipping, which might be a hurdle. He offered to show a video of Hanover's system during the lunch break. Dr. Murphy announced the agenda after the break, and the group broke for lunch.

(LUNCH BREAK)

- The next speaker was Darren Moore, Planning and Finance Division Director at DGIF
 - Wanted to connect to the first presenter by reminding everyone to establish your business case first. Some things that DGIF uses may not apply, but he should be able to provide good examples from a business solution standpoint.
 - Hunting, boating, and fishing has recently seen a decline in numbers. They wanted to build a solution that would treat their existing customers but also recruit new customers.

- DGIF has been with the same company for 10+ years. As a state agency, three years ago procurement told them they needed to do a competitive bid to find a new contract because that contract had run its course. They selected a new vendor about two years ago. It is very important to be clear what your business needs are and what you're asking for to make sure that your vendor is adept at providing what you need. They awarded a contract to a vendor and had to cancel it after a few months, back in 2014, because they were not providing the services DGIF had asked for. They went out again in 2015 and issued a new contract to Brandt Information Systems
- They asked Brandt to provide an integrated solution: to integrate systems that already existed, to create a "one stop shop" for customers
- Their focus was the "long haul," thought about their scope before issuing the contract. Their four goals: increase license sales (they get no general fund money so wanted to be sure they were self-sufficient), better customer service, recruitment and retention (growing wildlife watching activities), improved customer data (instead of focusing on license itself, focus on customer)
- Went with a "software as service" solution: a customizable, transaction based model, not "off the shelf." It is used by DGIF customer service, retail shops, license agents, customers, and sister agencies. So, they need to be able to control access and create different tiers of access.
- System does not collect personal data because it is hosted in the cloud and that has some security concerns.
- Also wanted to focus on law enforcement tools for conservation officers to be able to do their jobs more efficiently by being able to look up registration status.
- Streamlined business processes and operations, because they were not able to add any staff. Instead they wrote processes into the system so they could repurpose staff and reorganize the department.
- Increased flexibility and reliability is very important, i.e. being able to buy a license from home or store. There will always be noncompliance issue, but we can make it easier for people to buy licenses.
- Improved outreach and customer relationship management as well as increased marketing efforts. How do we get our customers to take advantage of the resources we have for them?
- Used to have multiple systems and needed to integrate them. Can they create a data file that goes from one system to another? Then you don't necessarily need to put everything under one umbrella but can continue using separate systems. For example, customers might have multiple licenses.
- Name spelling can be an issue, so it is better to focus on creating a unique identifier, like a customer number instead of a license number, and using information such as date of birth, social security number, driver's license, etc. They have a partnership with DMV, so that if you've registered to vote, it will "ping" the system to confirm your identity and verify that you are a resident of Virginia. They will be able to do

this in real-time. This is important because a resident license gets more privileges, and different pricing than non-residents.

- The system is mobile friendly: you can use it on phone, tablet, laptop, desktop, or TV.
- Their focus on marketing efforts includes good communication with customers—sending them news and updates, etc. They can also send discounts, e-store information and products in order to encourage signing up and thus encourage compliance. One example of their marketing efforts includes special edition license cards and lifetime licenses. You can keep all your licenses in one place with their system, and keep family members' licenses as well, and pull them up on the mobile app, etc. You could do a similar thing for dog licensing.
- He reiterated that they focus a lot on the business aspect of things, because a lot of people are unaware of where fish and wildlife services money comes from or where it goes, so they try to educate as well. The intent is to communicate with the customer and entice them to do something. Even if you don't use your list of names in the system in a marketing effort, you can get a lot of information from these systems that can tell you a lot about compliance.
- They have an auto-renew option for their licenses. Once you buy a license in the system, it will auto-renew for you a year later using the credit card number on file, or it can remind the customer 30 or 60 days out. They also have an e-store website—when the customer renews, they can also buy products at the same time. Stores want to have their kiosks at the front because it's a good business opportunity. Design is important, because a lot of people print out their licenses. Also, vendors are interested in putting ads on the licenses so that can be good for marketing purposes (there may be some state procurement issues with this).
- Attendee question: how much do agents get? Mr. Moore replied they get \$1 per transaction. If someone buys online, there's an extra \$1 charge added which goes back to payment for the system. DGIF has not paid for system at all, it's all transaction-based—the vendor gets the revenue straight through the system using those \$1 charges. They also get a percentage of the “hard card.” That's why marketing is so important—as revenue goes up, vendor and agency both get paid more, so both have a vested interest in promoting more opportunities.
- Matthew Gray asked: does the state regulate how high hunting license fee can be? Mr. Moore responded that the traditional hunting and fishing license is \$23. Every 5 years they can raise it \$5. Although most fish and wildlife agencies can set their own fees, but you can also price yourself out of business. In Virginia, legislature controls potential price increases.
- Sharon Adams asked: what is the compliance rate currently, and what is the penalty for noncompliance? Mr. Moore answered that he is unsure on the compliance rate, because there is no national or state data on how many people hunt without a license. They make check 10,000 customers and 5,000 would be without a license. They have the discretion to issue warnings rather than citations or summons. Now

officers can help the customer purchase a license right in the field if they discover they are noncompliant. They are down a lot of officers right now, though, and there are people who hide and will never be caught. The penalty for hunting without a license is a \$100 fine—buying the license would be better for the customer and for the department long-term. They are an enforcement agency but also consider themselves an educational agency. Also, they get federal grants based on how many licenses are sold, therefore again it is better to get the customer to buy a license rather than fining them. An attendee asked where those grants come from, and Mr. Moore answered there are two acts: the Dingle-Johnson Act (fishing/boating) and the Pittman-Robinson (archery/firearms/hunting) Act that have both been around for 75 years and are actually excise taxes on retail establishments. The money collected is distributed to states based on how many licenses are sold.

- Used to collect full social security information for boating licenses—they are trying to get away from this in order to protect customer data.
- Decided against transaction fees to fund system—they decided the \$1 fee would be enough to cover costs. Added Discover and e-check payment options as well.
- Have historically only received money from retail stores once a month or once every two months
- Going forward, they will have both an automated and live telephone customer service system—admins who used to manually process registrations have been moved into customer service instead since customers can do everything themselves now, but might still have questions.
- Looking at a customer referral program
- Multi-state system: every state does things differently, because systems are all customizable. How can we be sure we're all collecting the same data? How can we promote a customer who has moved across state lines? Can we share data in order to make things easier for the customer? He encouraged the group to think about not only how you can standardize the system across Virginia, but also how you can standardize across other states.
- Showed the group a timeline—DGIF phased certain items in, although most functions were loaded in at the front end.
- Another consideration: Brandt Information Systems got its start developing the online ordering solution for Papa John's! They were looking for the best way to engage their customers, not the way they've always done things.
- The next speaker was Liam Hughes, Director of the Maine Department of Agriculture Animal Welfare Program
 - One question that the group brought up previously was, is licensing necessary? Mr. Hughes thinks yes, because it's the best defense against rabies, and ACOs can attest that most of the dogs they have issues with are unlicensed.
 - All tags and materials are provided by state. Licensing season starts October 15, due dates is January 31. They send late fees starting February 1. Of the fees collected, part goes to the town, part goes to animal control, and part to the state. Different

fees based on whether the animal is intact or not. \$25 late fees goes entirely to the town.

- In 2003 there was an update to the Maine Animal Welfare Act, that added an Internet licensing project: it is optional for towns to participate. Currently out of 400, about half participate.
- Had to create ways to verify rabies immunization, and ensure fees are distributed properly—this was the biggest issue.
- Attendee question: cities and counties are not as big a thing up there? Mr. Hughes confirmed that Maine is a “home rule” state with counties having more authority than towns. This is why towns are given the option to participate.
- Larry Miller asked: the state provides materials to each town? Mr. Hughes replied yes, his office mails them out, in addition to sorting and separating them. Each town is assigned a block of numbers. They don’t sell to the individual—the point of sale is the municipalities.
- \$1 convenience fee added in order to pay for the online program, much the same as the last presenter. There were not a lot of startup fees because it was meant to pay for itself using the convenience fees. It has been running since 2006, and has its flaws.
- Rabies prevention laws—can we use the system to verify rabies certificates? There was a “to-do” about vets sending us information, they did not want to do this. In compromise, they would send it in, but the state has a staff member that sorts through it all and mails them back to the towns. They are sorted by the dog owner’s town, not the veterinarian’s town. They don’t document or enter into a database any of the information, they are only sorting it. They send it to the town clerks, who enter the info into their own databases and can track their own licensed dogs by passing the info to animal control who can then enforce the laws.
- Once a month towns are required to submit to the state the number of licenses sold and payment due (as a check). If they sell online, a credit is added to their account—this is part of their imperfect system. The system generates monthly reports. It was created by a group called InformME, as part of a public-private partnership. They’ve had some issues with the vendor.
- If they have a current email for the town, the town clerk will get an emailed report of everyone who has purchased a dog license online, including the dog’s description, rabies information, and they can generate their own lists.
- Towns have to mail out the physical tags, and that is a complaint they get because they are not reimbursed for stamp fees.
- Towns can access reports anytime because they have administrator codes, so they can issue refunds too. This means they don’t have to wait until the end of the month to generate reports.
- Online dog licensing is only active for a specific time frame (Oct 15-Jan 31). If you need to license your dog outside of that, you have to physically go to the town clerk’s office.

- Average about \$16,000 annual cost to the vendor, but this is from the \$1 service charge—they want more licenses sold so they get more money and can do more improvements.
- Some of their problems/issues: they have no information for clients or dogs, and nothing saved from year to year. They collect no confidential info, but people still want to feel safe using the system. Their biggest issue is people using the system for rabies certificates and information, because they can enter false info in and unless the town clerk is paying attention to the report, they might not catch it. Another problem is the cost of mailing the tags. One problem that just came to light is that certain towns encourage people to use the online system, but that costs them money because they're not pulling in as much cash. How is the money going to get where it needs to go? Also, it is a very outdated system because it came online in 2006 and was started in 2003, so it is confusing for customers. There are multiple entries for the same dog, the wrong towns get entered, etc. People have registered dogs in the wrong localities if their locality does not use the online system. People have even registered their towns! There is a transient population that moves around and they're not sure where to license their dogs.
- This system does not do kennel licensing, only single dogs.
- They are looking into doing upgrades and improvements to fix their issues, and what other databases might be available, what other agencies are using, what they can afford. A group called "Pega" is working with pesticides bureau's licensing system, and they might look into using them. They might not be able to afford it.
- Attendee question: do you do automatic renewals? Mr. Hughes replied no, but he wants to start doing them in the future. They have also discussed doing three-year or lifetime licenses and microchips, but there are geographic, political, and financial issues.
- Heidi Meinzer asked, in the online system, what link is there between the license and the rabies vaccination status? Mr. Hughes responded that when you do your data entry for your license, it will ask you for the certificate number, vet that issued it, etc. The certificate itself does not get uploaded into the system because not everyone has that technology. He asked who in the group knew about the "Calgary model" for dog licensing—they have an over 90% compliance rate, with a population of one million. They did this by encouraging people to license their dogs by giving them local business rewards and discount cards. Any dog wearing a license gets a "free ride home" from animal control if it's lost. They have several million dollars in the bank from this, and started a voluntary cat licensing project because cat owners wanted the discounts as well. He does not think cat licensing in general is a good idea.
- Sharon Adams asked Mr. Hughes to confirm that all rabies certificates are sent in to the state by veterinarians. He confirmed their process again, and that they don't save any of the information. The only thing retained on the state level is the numbers—every town is listed with the numbers of the tags sent out to them. That

list is sent to animal control officers so they can track the dogs. All other information is held at the town level.

- Heidi Meinzer asked, in a locality that uses the online system, what does an animal control officer do in order to find rabies vaccination status as fast as possible after a dog bites someone? Do they go through the online system? Mr. Hughes reiterated that the online system does not hold that info, so they would need to call the town office or the vet office. One problem is wellness and mobile clinics due to recordkeeping issues. We still have a need for wellness and microchip clinics, though. Microchipping is not that common in the area, as there are not a lot of resources or funds in northern localities for animal control or shelters.
- Ms. Meinzer stated that there are some fairly harsh penalties, and Mr. Hughes agreed, but it depends on resources in the area to go after people. The penalty for an unlicensed dog or cat is up to \$100. We would rather see the animals get licensed and medical care.
- Scott Miller added that the concept of the state tracking the license numbers is a good idea. Mr. Hughes reiterated that the information they collect only allows them to know which block of numbers the dog's license number comes from, so they have a general idea of the area it's from. The ACOs keep a list of what area has what numbers; this helps them reunite the owner and pet. One downside is if you travel through the state and your dog is registered somewhere else it might be harder to reunite them.
- Mr. Miller suggested that if we don't want a state-wide database, he at least wants the license to be effective when the dog leaves the vet. He is willing to scan them in. But all it takes is for the owner to go in to the vet and get his dog vaccinated and he's good. We can scan the certificates at the local or state level, or by a third party vendor. Mr. Hughes explained that in 2013, vets and shelters were given permission to be able to issue dog licenses, but there are problems of technology and how to get money where it needs to go. How do we get the cash to the state level since not everyone is paying using credit cards? If we clear that hurdle, we'll have more avenues for how licenses can be issued.
- Alice Harrington asked, are the license fees the same across state? Mr. Hughes answered yes, the state sets the licensing fees: \$6 for altered dogs, \$11 for unaltered.
- They are not looking at any increase in licensing fees in the foreseeable future--what would they raise them to? They are not the most economically powerful state. An attendee asked for the current compliance rate; Mr. Hughes thought as of 2 years ago the average was 50%, although one town claims 99%. Their ACOs do education and enforcement, free rabies clinics around the time that licensing starts.
- Susan Stewart asked whether there are any states that don't license dogs? As far as he is aware, Mr. Hughes does not think there are any that do not.
- Mr. Hughes ended by talking about how dog licensing has been around for hundreds of years because having a dog used to be a privilege, and a dog without a license

could be destroyed as a “mongrel.” In the 40s and 50s there was a resurgence of animal control agencies to fight rabies in this country. He will always be a proponent of dog licensing because of the rabies component—we are very spoiled here to not really see rabies in this part of the world. The more we can prevent it, the better off we will be in the long run.

- Dr. Murphy mentioned she was aware the meeting was running a bit long, but that there were a few more speakers, from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Motor Vehicles. She asked whether there were any members of the public in attendance who had to leave, who would want to speak at that time. No one spoke so the meeting continued.
- The next speaker to be introduced by Dr. Murphy was Dr. Bissett, Program Manager for the Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response with VDACS.
 - She planned to talk about some of the registries and databases used by state animal health officials: the Dangerous Dog Registry and GlobalVetLink, and a few others
 - Dangerous Dog Registry was created in 2007 and mandated in Code. If a dog is declared dangerous, the owner has to meet certain requirements to keep the dog, including registering the dog and paying a fee. The ACO from the owner’s locality uploads the dog’s information into the Registry and it is viewable to the public. The public can track dangerous dogs near them.
 - There are three views: administrative (admin can see all information and all dogs in every locality), public (Code mandates what they can see), and animal control officer (every locality has a login so ACOs can input information; they can see all information for their own locality)
 - Dr. Bissett walked the group through an example of the public view—very basic information
 - ACO view has a little bit more information—all info for their own locality. They have to collect a large amount of information on each dog. Dr. Bissett walked the group through the ACO view. ACOs are required to put in rabies vaccination information and county dog license information, as well as microchip or permanent tattoo. One drawback is that they can only see their own locality’s dogs currently, they cannot see other locality’s dogs. We would like ACOs to be able to see all information for all dogs. The other limitation is that there is no search function. VDACS does provide dangerous dog tags to all localities so that they all look alike. If an ACO picks up a dog, they cannot search by tag numbers—if the dog is not from their own locality there is no easy way for them to do that. VDACS is currently working on an update to the Registry which will address that search function and view issue.
 - The money aspect—Dr. Bissett does not know the original cost of the Registry, however, estimate for the update was originally at \$19,000 and is now up to \$76,000, just to make minor changes.

- The Registry is funded by fees paid by owners—the registration and annual renewal fees. A portion of the fees collected by localities is sent back to the state, and that money is required to maintain the Registry. There is also general fund money for the Dangerous Dog Registry which funds the Dangerous Dog Coordinator position, which collects about \$60,000 per year.
 - The database is housed at VDACS but a third party vendor is paid for the web interface.
 - Globalvetlink is a web-based, private company. Veterinarians can pay a registration and monthly fee to be able to log in and fill out required forms and certificates i.e. Coggins tests, online instead of on paper. Can use it on mobile as well. They can send photos to labs, do CVIs, passports, upload photos, and can print out certificates. They can input the owner’s information and the kind of testing that they’re doing, as well as vaccine information. The lab results will synch with the website. A mobile app is currently in production.
 - The State Vet’s Office also has a login and can look up an animal’s test results, CVIs, etc. You can search by time period, type of test, location, etc.
 - Animal owners can look at all documents for their own animals
 - Heidi Meinzer asked whether the owner has to pay a subscription fee as well? Dr. Bissett was unsure on the answer.
 - Dr. Bissett also went over the USDA “CoreOne” system as an example of something they’ve worked with. VDACS IT used it as an example of something the group might be looking for.
 - Susan Stewart looked up the initial costs for the Dangerous Dog Registry from the fiscal impact statement in 2007: about \$200,147, \$78,302 each year thereafter for the database. \$30,900 and \$37,000 in 2008 to fund getting the admin position in place, then it was estimated about \$27,000 and \$50,000 would be generated each year thereafter to continue to fund that position. Dr. Bissett confirmed that although it changed some after that, that would be a rough estimate of the cost of the database.
 - Susan Stewart then asked about Vetlink—how many people use it? Dr. Bissett answered more and more vets are using it, currently less than half of equine practitioners use it, but they are seeing more and more even from out of state. Ms. Stewart expressed hope the system would put an end to forged Coggins tests. These tests cost \$35 normally—will it cost more for vets who want to use Vetlink? Dr. Bissett confirmed yes, it could cost more because of that. Because of federal animal disease traceability requirements, there is more emphasis on online systems because it makes things easier to trace from a disease standpoint. Global Vetlink also offers “VFD” [?] online, but she is unsure how this will interface yet. Vetlink is all voluntary for practitioners who want to use it.
- Dr. Murphy moved along to addressing any members of the general public in attendance, and to stating she would later talk about the agenda for the next meeting. A member of the public spoke:

- He is in favor of the database for rabies vaccinations but is concerned about a statewide database for dog licensing. He feels that any more mandates on licensing could adversely impact vaccination.
- What about families with dogs exceeding a locality's pet limit? He was in that situation and got a kennel license, but saw others who were unsuccessful in getting a kennel license. He knows people with multiple dogs who do not go through the process.
- Retired from health department (radiology), where he himself created a database for certain kinds of licenses. They went from a 45% compliance rate to 80% after the database was put in place.
- On the topic of enforcement, on paper he may have the authority to levy fines, but would need legal assistance, and the process can be hard if resources are stretched thin.
- He did not think much about public access to a dog licensing database—could this be misused? If people have access to breed and ages of dogs, maybe it could be used to steal certain breeds of dogs?
- On the topic of transaction fees: if a state agency can do so, they are supposed to pass savings along to the consumer, so that would be something to be aware of with this.
- His final thought was that he believes the state contracts all IT services to a single vendor, which squashed creativity. Think it out ahead of time to determine the cost of development.
- Matthew Gray talked about the things that stood out to him from the various presentations:
 - He was noting best practices for licensing fees, and is a little pessimistic that we can get to a point where people are supportive of a statewide system. He liked the DGIF model of being able to increase fees although there would be a cap, the model of having lots of locations where people can obtain licenses, having the defined licensing period seems easier on local authorities, and the incentives program.
- Heidi Meinzer: it goes back to the question of why are we doing this? We find a way to make it worth the customers' while. It has to tie to rabies, or it won't meet the requirements.
- Susan Stewart: does not think that a state database is a bad idea if we limit accessibility to ACOs, law enforcement, health department, etc. She does not think people will go "dog snooping," but we should maybe not let it be allowed to occur. We definitely need to create a system that helps animal control or the health department do their jobs or there's no point. We need to protect the public health. If we're going to the trouble to invent something state-wide, we should assume that people have honest reasons to use it.
- Larry Land agreed with above: looking at things from the point of view of a member of the general assembly, the things they would be most interested in is cost. He really likes the idea of a one-stop shop, if it can be done at no increased cost and no increase of fees—it will be dead on arrival if that's suggested! One issue is start-up costs, considering the 2007 fiscal impact statement for DDR. Also, vets will balk unless they are compensated for doing

the extra work. Terry Taylor added that they really don't want to do it at all—are we state or county employees?

- Dr. Murphy asked if anyone had any additional comments, then offered some final thoughts and a homework assignment:
 - People seem interested in microchip technology, so she reached out to companies and five reps will be coming. This will be tech and information only, no proposals. They will each give a five minute presentation on who they are and their technology, and the group could discuss that technology and how it might be helpful for their task. Then, there will be an initial assessment of surveys after lunch, because the surveys close July 1. We can present the information we've received thus far, and any trends we see.
 - Homework assignment: now that we're halfway, she wants everyone to list reasonable options to consider and the challenges and good points of each of them, so that we can take those options to the general assembly for them to continue to think about. Everyone should think of an option they think would be reasonable, with its full range of advantages/disadvantages: the cost, technology, viability, public sentiment to it. What do we want to present to the General Assembly? Dr. Murphy has a few options prepared already:
 - Option #1: change nothing! We think it's premature to try to change anything because we haven't gathered enough information, and our results so far are mixed, so we're not sure how to move forward at this point, but here are the questions that need to be asked in order to move forward. Instead of saying, we don't think we can do anything, saying we don't think we can do anything right now, but here are the things we've thought about and questions we think we should ask in order to move forward.
 - Option #2: licensing occurs at the time of vaccination. A vet gives you a tag and works with either local or state government, and we charge for licensing. That means vets would handle public money and would share the money in some way (could be local or state). This could be a locality or state function.
 - Option #3: vets still license but there is no charge, because we see it as a government function to do that, because it's advantageous in the end. Not unlike brucellosis vaccinations—vets vaccinate and there is no charge for the tag. The government gives the vets the tools to do that service because we think it is an important enough function in that it saves the locality time, effort and money. The dogs are licensed, but there's no charge for it—the vets are supplied with the tags and do all the same things they would usually do, i.e. creating certificates and giving out tags, and then shares the info with the state or locality, which has a database in order to get the information into animal control's hands. Every rabies certificate represents a dog that's licensed, so from a management aspect you do not have to sell a license or chase down people who are not licensed. The government is left

with the data management piece. Sharon Adams suggested that the incentive could be that the first year of the license is free for the owner. It then becomes part of government records. Dr. Murphy added she had this idea because a lot of localities express they do not make a lot of money from this, their funding for animal control comes from general funds anyway. We think that increasing licensing saves money on the back end by returning dogs to owners so the burden on the county is less. Larry Land asked whether the group thought veterinarians would want to handle dog licenses or just a tag, or a rabies tag? They are already handing out a tag. Terry Taylor would be worried about duplication from county to county, although the idea is feasible. He is concerned about additional burden being put on vets—if it's provided by the state, they are willing to consider it, but they don't want to collect fees. Larry Land mentioned about 95% of the rabies certificates that come in to his county are typed, which is helpful. Terry Taylor mentioned at their last board of directors meeting, they discussed whether collecting fees would be considered part of their income and they would wind up paying taxes on them. Mr. Land thought it would be considered a licensing tax, and there was some discussion on whether it would be taxed at all.

- Dr. Murphy's final thought: The vets vaccinate, they give out a tag, and not unlike a Coggins test, they enter the information into something like Vetlink, then somehow at the state level or the locality level, a local enforcement authority has access to that information and can search through it. They could see what information the vet has entered in.
- An attendee asked whether Dr. Murphy would write up what she wants the group to consider—she confirmed she would. When the minutes and summary go out, she'll write her thoughts and the options up. The group confirmed members can come up with other options, too, but the examples might be helpful to get them started. We should also think about depending on the survey feedback we receive, how that might change the options we consider.
- A member of the public recommended the group highlight legislative changes that might need to come about as a result of considering the options the group presents.
- Dr. Murphy confirmed the next meeting would be July 18 at the same location and thanked everyone for coming.