

From: NHS Board <nevadahumanesocietyboard@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 2:50 PM
To: nhswhistleblowersgroup@proton.me
Cc: schieveh@reno.gov; Animal - Advisory Board <AdvisoryBoard@washoecounty.gov>
Subject: Response to concerned citizens from Nevada Humane Society 5-10-23

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of Washoe County -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Hello concerned individuals,

In the interest of efficiency and expediency I have attempted to aggregate your questions into one response. I hope to impress upon you that I wish to communicate but must do so in a manner that is legally appropriate. You are correct in that the operations at NHS are the responsibility of the board. We are taking every single allegation and claim seriously at this time.

To this end, please know that as of yesterday afternoon, May 9, 2023, the Nevada Humane Society board officially accepted the resignation of CEO Greg Hall, effective immediately. Further, the board approved the search for a third-party service to help NHS anonymously field staff and volunteer concerns regarding ethics and compliance. Once installed, these reports will be brought to the board's attention at the subsequent board meeting to be addressed. Lastly, an external audit of animal welfare is scheduled to take place at Nevada Humane Society on May 22.

I have provided answers to your questions to the extent I am able to, but hope you will stay close to the Nevada Humane Society as the board continues investigations as we plan to keep our stakeholders updated. We will be speaking with Joe Hart at KRVN Channel 4 regarding these matters tomorrow morning.

Regarding your email: ATTENTION RITA - NHS Bylaws Violations

Our current bylaws stipulate that a board member must drop from the board after serving six years for at least a period of one year. To ensure the organization retained board members with historical understanding as new board members joined, the board elected to split the existing board into multiple classes to term out in a staggered fashion. Had they imposed the six year term in 2015 on all

board members, it would have created a gap in information for the newest 2021 class.

I can assure you: the NHS board takes the organization's bylaws seriously. All bylaw decisions are approved by the board at large after a bylaw committee proposes changes.

Regarding Jack Grellman, 2012 - 2021: Because the term limit began in 2015, he served six years before reaching the conclusion of his six year term and was termed out in 2021.

Regarding Jan Watson, 2012 - 2021: Because the term limit began in 2015, she served six years before reaching the conclusion of her six year term and was termed out in 2021.

Regarding Joan Dees, 2014-2021: Because the term limit began in 2015, she served six years before reaching the conclusion of her six year term and was termed out in 2021.

Regarding Kris Wells, 2014 - 2023: Kris Wells was in a board group that was staggered, meaning her six years did not conclude in 2021. We are seeking board minutes that describe the stagger.

Regarding Mandy Elliot, 2014 - 2018: Because the term limit began in 2015, she served six years before reaching the conclusion of her six year term and was termed out in 2021.

Regarding Rachel Ringenback-Watkins, 2015 - 2021: Because the term limit began in 2015, she served six years before reaching the conclusion of her six year term and was termed out in 2021.

Regarding Tierra Bonaldi, 2012 - 2021: Because the term limit began in 2015, she served six years before reaching the conclusion of her six year term and was termed out in 2021.

As to payments made to former board members, according to the 2015 Nevada Humane Society bylaws, the board may distribute funds with those they have entered into contractual relationships or elect to make lawful payments **in furtherance of the purposes of the organization** (Article II, Section 3). The board is actively reviewing the minutes from the last several years to ascertain what circumstances may have surrounded those payments. Regardless, **last night the board approved and comprised an ad-hoc bylaw review committee that will re-review the existing bylaws**, identifying whether there are insufficiencies and determining whether updates could be made that will strengthen the nonprofit's governing body.

Regarding your email: ATTENTION RITA - NHS Legal Team Compensation Details

Nevada Humane Society has retained law firm Fennemore Craig P.C. to provide legal counsel and support to the organization during this time. Michelin Nadeau Fairbank is the attorney working with NHS. Neither Ms. Fairbank nor her firm are retained to provide legal services to any individual or employee of NHS.

The legal team is in place for the sole purposes of understanding contract and employee law so that Nevada Humane Society board members may make decisions for the future of the organization within proper legal parameters. It is the unanimous opinion of the board that this expenditure, and others we may approve, is critical as we seek to ensure forward steps safeguard the future of the organization and, again, no one person.

It would be unethical for this organization to make decisions that inadvertently open the Nevada Humane Society to future liabilities, so we must endeavor to make every forward step compliant and within the best interest of our staff, volunteers and the animals within our care.

Regarding your email: NHS Executives Salary up 540% while staff suffers

Pursuant to NHS policies, employment information pertaining to current and former employees is confidential and I'm unable to discuss this information. That said, last night the board approved a comprehensive review of board compensation.

The board has also approved the following activities:

- A third-party investigation into management practices at Nevada Humane Society to understand what breakdowns might exist and how to correct them.
- A bylaw review committee to evaluate the current bylaws for potential improvements.
- A search to identify a third-party service to enable staff and volunteers to make anonymous reports regarding ethics or compliance concerns directly to the board, to be reviewed at the board meeting directly following the reports.

Another change you should be apprised of:

As of WEDNESDAY, May 9, 2023, the board installed the following executive officers:

Ray Gonzalez, President

Stephen Festa, Treasurer

Secretary, Nancy Wenzel, Esq.

Rita Eissmann will revert to her original post as Vice President.

The board has approved a communication to be publicly posted today on the NHS website as we seek to be exceedingly transparent.

Concerned friend, it is beyond clear you care about the outcomes of the Nevada Humane Society; both its staff and the animals entrusted to our collective care. I thank you for that.

I assure you, as a board, we are taking all allegations with the appropriate level of gravity and care to ensure next steps protect the future of the organization and its ability to positively impact animal welfare in Northern Nevada - no one person.

We endeavor to be an organization you will be proud of.

Rita Eissmann

NHS Board of Directors