



**Rabies Control Board Meeting Minutes Filing
“Special Meeting”
Division of Agriculture Conference Room
Room 370 – 235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908**

Meeting Date: February 2, 2012

Board Member Attendees: Scott Marshall, DVM (DEM, Chairman) C.H. Hannafin, DVM, Charles Brown (DEM Fish & Wildlife), Kevin Breene (Farmer), Dr Utpala Bandy (DOH)

Absent Member : Dave Holden (Humane Association)

Non-Board Attendees: Steve Hall (DEM, Enforcement), Steve Criscione (DEM, Enforcement), Chi Chan (WRARI), Jennifer Brooks (WRARI), Larry Mouradjian (DEM-Natural Resources), Henry Leibovitz (RIDOH)

Meeting called to order: at 10:35 AM by Dr. Marshall followed by roll call of all in attendance.

Acceptance of meeting minutes: Dr Marshall asked for a motion to suspend the acceptance of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting since this was a special meeting. Meeting minutes would then be accepted for this special meeting and the previous regular meeting at the next scheduled regular meeting in April, 2012.

Motion by Charles Brown, second by Mr Breene, motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Discussions: The sole topic of this meeting was related to protocols specific to bats

- **Protocol for Rabies Specimen Submission:** The Rabies Control Board and non-member attendees reviewed a draft Protocol for Rabies Specimen Submission. Discussion followed the review and several minor language amendments were made to this draft document. Dr Marshall asked for a motion to accept the amendments as agreed upon and to post the accepted version of the Protocol for Rabies Specimen Submission on-line as an amendment to the ***State of Rhode Island Manual for Rabies Management and Protocols.***

Motion by Dr Bandy, Second by Mr Breene, Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- **Protocols for Triage of Reports of Bats in Living Spaces:** Chief Hall from the Division of Law Enforcement stated that if the bat was reported to be in a living space DEM would dispatch an enforcement officer and if they could not capture the bat they would suggest to the homeowner to call a pest control company. He also stated that DEM Division of Law Enforcement has enacted a new protocol of notification of HEALTH, via fax, of all incoming bat reports, whether the DEM dispatcher had confirmed an exposure or not and whether an officer was dispatched to the home or not. Chief Hall raised concerns that even though DEM reports such exposures to HEALTH promptly, there may be a delay in HEALTH

following up over week-ends or holidays. Dr Bandy from the Department of Health stated that a few days delay in assessment is not critical and that rabies response is an urgency not an emergency.

Discussion then turned to the definition of “common living area” (in general) as DEM’s current protocol is to release the bat if not in a living area. An agreement on this issue has to be discussed between Health and DEM Enforcement.

A suggestion was made was to put information on web sites, create hot lines and list pest control companies and animal control. Pest Control companies have the training and equipment and we should work with pest control to create a voluntary referral list. This list would be provided to homeowners. The advantage of having licensed pest control companies respond is that they have protocols in place and have training in proper handling of rabies vector species. It was determined that this would be the safest way to ensure the bat was removed, properly handled, and submitted for testing.

Dr Marshall asked for a motion whereby Charles Brown would contact licensed nuisance wildlife control companies to ask whether they wished to be on a call list for emergency response to bat calls. Once the list is generated, it will be given to DEM dispatch so that companies on the list can be provided to homeowners calling in to report bats in their house.

Motion by Dr Hannafin, second by Dr Bandy, motion passed unanimous vote

- **Consideration of Request by Dr Fine:** Dr Bandy requested that the Rabies Control Board entertain discussion at the request of the Director of the Department of Health, Dr Fine, regarding creation of a statute that would require any owner of an animal that is required to be vaccinated against rabies by law, but who fails to maintain that animal as currently vaccinated, be liable for all costs to the state for management of exposures should their unvaccinated animal develop rabies. The Board discussed this at length and came to the conclusion that existing laws provided sufficient penalties for failure to vaccinate, however, existing laws are poorly enforced. Motion made by Dr Marshall to draft a letter of reply to Dr Fine. The letter will be reviewed by the Board, and if approved, sent to Dr Fine.

Motion by Dr Marshall, Second by Dr Hannafin, motion passed unanimous vote.

NEXT MEETING is set for April 4, 2012 @ 9:30 AM – Conference Room 370A

Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn by Dr. Marshall DVM and seconded by Kevin Breene at 12:10 PM