American Kennel Club, Inc.
MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AKC Offices at 101 Park Avenue, New York, NY
January 8-9, 2024

The Board convened on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

All Directors were present in the New York office except for Dr. Davies. The Executive Secretary was also present.

Copies of the November 13-14, 2023, Board Meeting minutes had been previously provided to all Directors for review.

Upon a motion by Dr. Battaglia, seconded by Mr. Powers, the November 2023 Board Meeting minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Mr. Sprung updated the Board on several business matters and on past action items.

AKC Staff put on the most successful AKC National Championship to date. Mr. Sprung thanked the Board members who judged and thanked the entire Board for its support.

End of year stats: Litters ended the year 2% below budget and individual dogs were 11% below budget. There is a lot of work being done to improve these percentages in 2024. Events and Entries remain up. As of 12/18/2023, we have recorded 3,471,380 entries across 24,267 events. Projected total entries for 2023 to be 3,675,000 vs. 3,471,389 in 2022.

The Sports and Events Department launched our newest AKC Family Dog sport called “Fetch”. This brings the total number of AKC Sports offered up to twenty-eight (28).

AKC Meet the Breeds® will be held again at the Javits Center on January 27-28, 2024 with over 130 breeds represented.

Legal Update
The Board reviewed the Legal Department update as of December 2023.

AKC Canine Health Foundation(CHF) Chief Executive Officer Report
Stephanie Montgomery, AKC CHF Chief Executive Officer, presented the Board with a Q4 2023 update from AKC CHF.

CHF 2024 Organizational Goals:
1. Advance canine health: Fund and support the best scientific research that meaningfully impacts the health of dogs.
2. Enhance philanthropy to support canine health initiatives: Invest in relationships and
focus on impact to foster fundraising and grow resources to drive canine health initiatives.

3. Increase impactful outreach of the Foundation: Develop and implement effective resources to strategically reach an expanded target audience.

In January 2024, a steering committee will be formed to begin work on a 3-year strategic plan for CHF.

CHF held an oncology grant review panel to fund canine cancer research in November 2023. Based on recommendations from this review panel, CHF funded 5 new canine cancer projects at a total of $458,189.

CHF awarded thirty-six new grants totaling $2.6M in 2023. Funding included educational support to train future canine health researchers, with 4 new Clinician-Scientist Fellowships and 2 new Theriogenology residents in 2023.

To close out 2023, CHF opened an Early Career Investigator award as part of a new strategy for CHF to invest in the careers of young outstanding faculty who have the potential to be tomorrow’s leading canine health researchers. This response feels particularly critical as veterinary schools face the challenge of increased faculty attrition.

Deans and Sports Medicine Program Directors at Veterinary Schools with training programs accredited by the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation were contacted about the new AKC/AKC CHF canine sports medicine and rehabilitation residency funding opportunity. Upon learning of the opportunity, four Vet schools (the Ohio State University, Colorado State, UPenn, and Cornell) expressed interest in our inaugural application cycle.

AKC CHF expressed its gratitude for AKC’s continued dedication to canine health and commitment of $1,000,000 of support to CHF in 2024.

**AKC Museum of the Dog Update**

Christopher Bromson, Executive Director, and CEO of the AKC Museum of the Dog presented a Q4 2023 update.

Recent Programs and Exhibitions: The Museum partnered with Royal Canin on our latest exhibition, *Unique Instinct*, a photographic journey depicting the distinct nature of dogs – and cats! The impact this exhibit has made on our web presence is notable, with our social media channels gaining a 12.4% follower increase since its opening. We close our successful *Fashionable Dogs* and bring in the much-anticipated *Outfoxed: Fox Terriers and Friends* at the end of January. *Outfoxed* explores the development of the Fox Terrier, both Smooth and Wire, chronicling many champions in the collection and showcasing the variety of jobs these special canines have played over the past 150 years. We are delighted and grateful to have the support of the American Fox Terrier Club as our sponsors for this exhibition.

Museum programming has become extremely strong, and attendance is consistently at a maximum.
Community focused programming often ties to current exhibitions and allows guests of the Museum to experience a deeper connection with the art in our impressive collection. Our consistent programming includes twice monthly Furry Fridays, which welcome members and guests into the Museum with their canine companions in the evening for specialized programming; weekly Paws to Read, which features dog-focused book reading to elementary school-aged youth; and monthly Breed Spotlight, typically a two-hour program on a Sunday afternoon presented in partnership with a breed club, to teach guests of the Museum about the qualities and uniqueness of a designated breed.

Opportunities for increased revenue exist both by increasing memberships and visits to the Museum, as well as by increasing public and private philanthropic support. The Museum is greatly appreciative to AKC for its significant financial support of the Museum.

**FINANCE**

Ted Phillips, Chief Financial Officer, presented preliminary financial statements (unaudited) as of November 30, 2023.

Unaudited Financial Results for the eleven months ended November 30, 2023.

Net Operating Income is $9.7 million.

**REVENUES:**

Total Revenues of $92 million are lower than forecast by 1%, excluding Interest & Dividends.

Registration Fees, excluding Registration-Related revenues, total $35.1 million and trail forecast by by 3%.

Registration-related Revenues total 12.5 million, trailing forecast by 2%.

Recording & Event Service fees, Title Recognition, and Event Application fees total $16.1 million, ahead of forecast by 4%.

Product & Service Sales total $10.6 million, trailing forecast by 3%.

Advertising, Sponsorship, and Royalties total $17.7 million, trailing forecast by 2%.

**EXPENSES:**

Controllable Expenses total $74 million, trailing forecast by <1%.  
Non-controllable expenses total $10.4 million, ahead of forecast by 6%.

Non-Financial Statistics for the 11 months ended November 30, 2023

Registrations: 2023 YTD Litter Reg. 2% lower than forecast, 9% lower than 2022 YTD.  
2023 YTD Dog Reg. 1% lower than forecast, 15% lower than 2022 YTD.
Events & Entries
Compared to the same period in 2022, Events & Entries were ahead by 6% & 4% respectively. Entries were 3% better than 2023 Forecast.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Gina DiNardo, Executive Secretary participated in this portion of the meeting. Mari-Beth O’Neill, Vice President of Sports Services; Sheila Goffe, Vice President of Government Relations; and Ashley Jacot, Director of Education, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Beagle Proposed Breed Standard Revision
Following a motion from Dr. Garvin, seconded by Mrs. Wallin the Board VOTED (unanimously) to approve the proposed revision to the Color section of the Beagle Standard to be to be published in the Secretary’s Pages of the AKC Gazette.

Parent Club Designation for Presa Canario
The Board reviewed a request from the Presa Canario Club of America asking to be designated as the Parent Club for the Breed thereby allowing them to hold FSS Open Shows. This will be discussed further at the February Board meeting.

Czechoslovakian Vlcak Name Change
The Board reviewed a request from the Czechoslovakian Vlcak Club of America to change the breed’s name from Czechoslovakian Vlciak to Czechoslovakian Vlcak, to be consistent with the name in the country of origin. The Czechoslovakian Vlcak Club of America has voted to change the club’s name as well if approved by AKC. The Board had no objection.

AKC Education 2023 Review
AKC Canine College:
The AKC Canine College (AKCCC) now boasts over 65,000 learner accounts, including more than 9,500 new learners added in 2023. It offers 432 courses and exams comprising 956 modules, accessible to breeders, judges, stewards, competitors, and the public. In 2023, there have been over 21,500 course and exam enrollments, with learners dedicating over 81,000 hours to AKCCC activities.

Breed Courses:
Seventy (70) breed-specific courses are now available for judges, breeders, and the fancy. In 2023, 13 breed courses were launched or revised* for the following breeds:
- Golden Retriever
- Lhasa Apso
- Shih Tzu
- Beagle
- Alaskan Malamute
- Bracco Italiano
- Beauceron
- Manchester Terrier
A total of 201 breed exams are available on AKCCC. The following seven breed exams were updated: Spanish Water Dog, Brussels Griffon, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Entlebucher Mountain Dog, English Cocker Spaniel, English Springer Spaniel, and Sussex Spaniel.

AKC Puppy Program:
AKCCC has launched the first four interactive eLearning courses that focus on evaluating a new puppy buyer’s readiness, choosing the right breed, breeder screening, meeting the litter, and detailed lessons to prepare new puppy owners for picking their new family member.

The next course series will focus on the first 8-16 weeks following the puppy’s journey home. All remaining courses are scheduled to be launched in Q1 2024.

AKC Fetch Judge’s Education:
In coordination with AKC Family Dog, AKCCC filmed, produced, and launched a series of five videos for the AKC Fetch Judge’s Education program to use as educational and promotional materials for this exciting new program.

AKC Education Webinars:
In 2023, AKC Education hosted 21 webinars for 7,811 participants. Webinars are edited and added to the AKC Canine College and/or AKC.org for future reference.

Public Education:
The Read with Bailey video series on AKC’s YouTube channel has seen growing popularity, with 11 new videos produced and released this year. Collectively, these videos have over 10,000 views. In 2023, Bailey’s Book Club received 470 new and over 100 gently used books, alongside a $500 contribution from Star City Canine Training Club and $273.50 from the Columbus Meet the Breeds event.

Teacher and Parent Resources:
23 new resources, many of them bundles, have been added to AKC.org and Teachers Pay Teachers. 93 resources are available and have been downloaded over 4,000 times throughout the year. Canine Corner and Kids News newsletters have continued to be released throughout the year, with 12 new issues of Canine Corner and four new issues of Kids News.

Legislation Monthly Update
Sheila Goffe highlighted numerous active priority legislation and administrative regulations in Congress and State Legislation. She noted that additional information is available on the AKC
legislative action center microsite: https://www.akcgr.org.

AKC Government Relations is currently tracking more than 1,500 local, state, and federal bills and more than 948 federal and state administrative regulations impacting AKC and dog owners.

Mrs. Goffe gave a presentation on AKC GR Highlights in 2023. Top regulatory issues include:
- Sporting/ Land Use
- Veterinary
- Dogs in Public
- Breeder Regs

COMPANION and PERFORMANCE
Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events and Carrie DeYoung, Director of Agility participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Agility Updates January 2024
The Board reviewed several recommended changes to the Agility Regulations that are meant to expand opportunities for exhibitors, make an event run more efficiently, and update technical equipment requirements for safety and to reflect current course designs.
- The recommendations cover the following topics:
  - Allow For Exhibition Only (FEO) in all classes.
  - Reduce wheeling of Open courses to one time.
  - Increase the course yardage allowed for 8- & 12-inch heights (and corresponding Preferred heights) for the Excellent and Master levels.
  - No longer require the Pause Table in the Excellent and Master Standard classes.
  - No longer require a “Bar” jump in any courses.
  - Only allow one time use of the tire obstacle in a course.
  - Allow the use of a Wall Jump in Excellent and Master classes to add obstacle variety.
  - Increase course yardage allowed in Jumpers with Weaves at the Excellent and Master levels for all heights (and corresponding Preferred heights).

This will be discussed further at the April meeting.

CONFORMATION
Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events; Tim Thomas, Vice President of Conformation; Glenn Lycan, Director, Event Operations Support; and Alan Slay, Director, Event Programs, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Regional NOHS Only Events
The Board reviewed a recommendation for a pilot program to allow up to eight Regional NOHS Only events to be held by All-Breed Clubs. The events would be structured like the NOHS
Championship event in Orlando, except it would not be an invitational. All owner-handlers can participate.

All-Breed Clubs will be advised of the opportunity and asked to submit a proposal to hold a Regional NOHS Only event. The events will be located around the country.

Clubs will be selected based on the quality of the proposal, the club’s history of holding NOHS events, and the date they are proposing to hold the event. Regional NOHS Only events will be staggered throughout the pilot period with no two occurring close to one another.

This will be discussed further at the February meeting.

**Exhibition Only Four-to-Six Month Beginner Puppy Competition**
The Board reviewed a proposal to amend the Sanctioned Four-to-Six Month Beginner Puppy Competition Regulations to allow professional handlers, members of their household and current assistants to personally exhibit dogs they own For Exhibition Only in the Four-to-Six Month Beginner Puppy Competition. If approved, the effective date would be July 31, 2024.

This will be discussed further at the February meeting.

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

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

**Conformation Judging Approval Process**
The Board reviewed recommendations brought forth by the Chairman’s Committee on Judging Approval to modify aspects of the Judging Approval Process specific to prerequisite requirements for first-time applicants and applications for additional breeds.

Following a motion by Ms. Biddle, seconded by Mrs. Wallin the Board VOTED (Unanimously, absent Dr. Davies) to the following proposals to modify the Conformation Judging Approval Process as follows:

1. Modify the pre-requisite requirements for first applicants, reducing the number of required judging assignments at AKC sanctioned non-point events from six (6) to three (3) and add the requirement to complete at least two ringside observations with Executive Field Representatives in the year preceding application.

2. Modify Virtual Tutoring experiences so that a Virtual Tutoring completed with a parent club approved mentor or recognized breed expert may only be accepted for low entry breeds where the department determines that insufficient educational opportunities are available.

3. Modify the CEU value assigned to breed specific sweepstakes or futurity assignments such that a
sweepstakes or futurity held with a supported entry would be weighted at one (1) CEU, the same as those held with specialty show (non-National).

The effective date of the amendments approved by the Board is January 17, 2024.

**Junior Showmanship Judge Application Requirements**
The Board reviewed a recommendation to modify the criteria to judge Junior Showmanship by augmenting the experiences that may be accepted to meet the requirements to apply.

Following a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Dr. Battaglia the Board VOTED (Unanimously, absent Dr. Davies) to approve the addition of “Two ringside junior showmanship procedural observations with different members of the Executive Field Staff within two years preceding application” as an experience criteria option for Junior Showmanship applicants.

The effective date is February 1, 2024.

**Sweepstakes and Futurity Judges**
The Board reviewed a proposal to modify the exhibiting restriction for Sweepstake and Futurity Judges to prohibit them from exhibiting the same breed on the day they judge that breed. A multi-day specialty is considered one event, and the restriction will apply for the duration of the event.

This will be discussed further at the February meeting. If approved this will become effective, March 6, 2024.

**Mandatory Ramp Examination – Lagotto Romagnolo**
The Board reviewed a request from the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of America for the Lagotto Romagnolo to be added to the list of breeds required to be judged on the ramp through all levels of Conformation competition.

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

Following a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Dr. Battaglia, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Dr. Davies absent) for the Lagotto Romagnolo to be added to the list of breeds required to be judged on the ramp through all levels of Conformation competition.

**Conformation Judges Recertification Requirement**
Action Items from the Board’s August 2023 meeting included the direction to “Institute the format provided to the Board for Conformation Judges recertification test. The test should contain information on best practices for taking a test and links to the booklets or forms where answers may be found. When finalized, distribute as an FYI to the Board.”

This Board was provided with an update on the measures instituted to enhance the learner experience for those completing the recertification requirement.
Learner Tools:
To assist learners in becoming more comfortable and familiar with completing the recertification exam, a practice quiz is being generated. This practice quiz can be completed an unlimited number of times, will show correct answers, and will provide feedback for selected answers that will point the learner to where in the resources they should have looked for the correct answer. This quiz will give learners the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the exam interface, the questioning style/phrasing, and the effort required to find correct answers. This quiz will clearly state that it is optional but encouraged and mimics what the learner will see in the full exam.

In addition, a tutorial video is being produced to help learners navigate the exam, answer questions, pause vs cancel, open resources, and complete the exam. This video will include voice over and video/screeshots of actual exam questions.

Conformation Judging Statistics

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### FINAL REVIEW ACTION SUMMARY

#### 2023 ADDITIONAL BREED JUDGING APPLICANTS

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

**Enhancing AKC’s Clubs Resources Webpage**

Clubs are facing challenges that may be difficult to handle, depending upon the club’s experience and knowledge with complex business or legal issues. To assist clubs AKC Staff will develop a resource document that offers helpful guidelines to clubs facing difficult situations. Included in this document will be suggestions to help clubs find resources to approach these situations.

### MEMBER CLUB BYLAWS APPROVED ADDING JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

- United States Lakeland Terrier Club (1968)

### REPORT ON MEMBER CLUB BYLAWS APPROVED IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

- Abilene Kennel Club, Abilene, Texas (1986)
- Doberman Pinscher Club of America (1921)
- English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (1926)
- Giant Schnauzer Club of America (1979)
Mastiff Club of America (1941)
Mountain State Dog Training Club, Denver, Colorado (1956)

REPORT ON NEWLY LICENSED CLUBS APPROVED IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER
Arizona Papillon Club, Maricopa County (including communities north to Sun City, south to Gilbert, west to Goodyear, east to Queen Creek), 26 total households, 19 local.

Brushy Creek Beagle Club of Mississippi, Lucedale, MS, 19 total households, 10 local.
Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club of New England, greater Westhampton, MA (including communities northeast to Haverhill, MA, south to Wyoming, RI, west to Goshen, CT and north to Huntington, MA), 21 total households, 14 local.

Rio Salgado Portuguese Water Dog Club of Arizona, greater Phoenix, AZ (including communities north to Prescott, south to Tucson), 37 total households, 22 local.

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

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

REGISTRATION DEVELOPMENT
Mark Dunn, Executive Vice President of Registration; and Dr. Claire Wiley, Executive Director, AKC DNA Program participated in this portion of the meeting. Mari-Beth O’Neill, Vice President of Sport Services participated via video conference.

AKC DNA Program Updates
Genetic Identity & Parentage Verification
A technology update in effect since December 2022 provides a panel of 201 SNP genetic markers.

The AKC DNA Program has launched a new product, AKC DNA + Health, which is one test for breeders needs. The test includes the 201 markers of the original AKC DNA Profile for genetic identity and parentage verification purposes, plus 328 markers for health and traits. The included DNA tests meet AKC requirements for Breeder of Merit and Bred with Heart certifications (some exclusions apply).

We will filter breed-specific tests focused on Parent Club health statements. This offer combined with parentage will be a unique AKC offering. Breeders can easily upgrade their kits if a breeder has already purchased AKC DNA kits (identification/parentage only).

The AKC DNA program is also launching the AKC Canine Genetic Counseling Center, staffed by veterinary professionals, to provide clear information to help breeders make smart breeding decisions.
AKC DNA Program’s Genetic Diversity Project:
AKC will collect sample and sequence 2000-4000 dogs of all breeds.

**Procedures for Recording Colors During Registration**
Based on a request from the Board, Staff provided a memo outlining the process for the recording of colors during the dog registration process. The memo notes that several breeds have colors that are acknowledged by the Parent Club as existing within the breed, but, at the same time, are NOT approved by the Parent Club for listing in Online Dog Registration or on AKC.org, forcing customers and Staff to undertake additional steps to register these otherwise AKC registrable dogs.

**BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**
Mark Dunn, Executive Vice President of Registration and Seth Fera Schanes, Director of Planning; participated in this portion of the meeting. Kassandra McCombe, Business Intelligence Manager, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

**Demographic Analysis of Current AKC Dog Owners**
Staff presented a Demographic Analysis of Current AKC Dog Owners. Key insights on AKC dog owners were provided. This analysis broke out dog-owning customers by the type of dog they registered: AKC, Canine Partner (CP), or FSS/MISC. This analysis offers the first insight into the current state of existing and current dog owners by including all owners who have registered a dog in the past 12 years (2010-2022). This is also the first analysis to stratify demographic profiles of dog owners by the type of dog they have registered or listed with the American Kennel Club.

This analysis and the findings herein will be shared with departments throughout the AKC to incite conversation and provide quantitative direction to support advertising, marketing, and help to form business decisions across the company.

**MARKETING**
Kirsten Bahlke, Vice President of Marketing; Jake Sisskind, Group Product Manager; Somya Udeh, Product Manager; and Meghan Prince, Brand Marketing Manager participated in this portion of the meeting.

**AKC Marketplace Platform Design**
Staff presented new and improve design for functionality and look and feel. This includes the creation of New AKC Marketplace Logo and Tagline, and a Homepage Redesign scheduled to launch in May 2024.

Additional developments will be shared with the Board at the April meeting.

**CONSENT**
There was a motion by Mr. Sweetwood, seconded by Mr. Powers, and it was VOTED (unanimously; absent Dr. Davies) to approve the following Consent items:
Delegates Approved
Robin Barkhaus
To represent Kettle Moraine Kennel Club
Published November 2023, December 2023

Angela Boeske
To represent Kalamazoo Kennel Club
Published November 2023, December 2023

Cindy Grodkiewicz
To represent American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association
Published November 2023, December 2023

Mike Kriegel
To represent Bell Vernon Kennel Association
Published November 2023, December 2023

Margaret “Maggie” Kudirka
To represent Dog Owners’ Training Club of Maryland
Published November 2023, December 2023

Karen Park
To represent Mount Ogden Kennel Club
Published November 2023, December 2023

Julie Poulin Siefert
To represent Newfoundland Club of America
Published October 2023, November 2023

Displaceable High Jump – Obedience and Rally
The Board VOTED to modify the Obedience Regulations Chapter 1, Section 34 and the Rally Regulations Chapter 1, Section 36 to change the design and construction of the high jump to allow displaceable panels. In order to not cause an undue burden on event giving clubs, this transition must be completed by July 1 2025.

Jindo Name Change
The Board VOTED to change the breed’s name from Jindo to Korean Jindo Dog to be consistent with the country of origin and foreign kennel clubs worldwide. Superintendents will be notified to phase in this change by March 1, 2024.

Parent Club Designation for Eurasier
The Board VOTED to designate the United States Eurasier Club as the Parent Club for the Eurasier breed; thereby allowing them to hold FSS Open Shows.
Keeshond Breed Standard Revision
The Board VOTED to approve the request from the Keeshond Club of America, (KCA) for KCA to ballot its membership in accordance with the clubs Constitution and Bylaws on the proposed breed standard revisions.

The Board adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

The Board Meeting reconvened on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 8:34 a.m. All Directors were present in the New York office, except for Dr. Davies. The Executive Secretary was also present.

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

It was VOTED to adjourn on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 12:08 p.m. Eastern Time.

Adjourned
Attest: ________________________________
Gina M. DiNardo, Executive Secretary