

Members:

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman
Robert Billingsley
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.
Marshall R. Davis
William R. Erickson, Jr.
Lieut. David Howells
R. Scott Schlechter
Keith B. Snyder
Hon. William F. Ward



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November 21, 2000

A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers' Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on November 21, 2000 at the Days Inn, State College, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman	Ron Copenhaver, Administrative Advisor
Robert Billingsley	Gary Scicchitano (PBPP)
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.	Erik Christensen (Guest, Erie County)
William R. Erickson Jr.	Robert Repard (Guest, Tioga County)
R. Scott Schlechter	Rusty Duncan (Guest, Westmoreland County)
Keith B. Snyder	Bernadette L. Doner (Commission Secretary)
Chester A. Kope, Executive Director	

I. Chairman Straitiff called the meeting to order. He requested that a motion be made to accept the minutes from the September 19, 2000 meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Snyder to accept the minutes of September 19, 2000. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a letter he received from Somerset County requesting an extension for medical reasons to conduct the range requalifications for Officer Robert E. Bittner by October 31, 2001. Mr. Kope recommended that the Commissioners grant the extension. After a brief discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter to grant the request for an extension for Officer Robert E. Bittner, which must be completed by October 31, 2001. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a letter he received from the Dauphin County Juvenile Probation Department requesting a medical extension to conduct the range qualification for two officers. Both officers were on maternity leave. They were requesting an extension for Officer Christine Malone until December 29, 2000 and for Officer Lisa Dubniczki until January 31, 2001. Mr. Kope recommended that the Commissioners grant the extensions. After a brief discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Bill Erickson to approve the Extension for Officer Christine Malone until December 29, 2000 and for Officer Lisa Dubniczki until January 31, 2001. Mr. Billingsley seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners. Commissioner Clark abstained.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of the letter that he received from Ms. Adeline Beighley, Director of the Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation Department. Director Beighley is requesting that the Commission grant an extension to have Officer Melissa Sullenberger shoot the range qualification course of fire, because they missed the mandated 45-day time limit. Mr. Kope explained that Officer Sullenberger had failed to achieve a passing score when she shot the qualification course of fire on September 29, 2000 at the 17th Basic Firearms Training Academy.

Mr. Kope stated that on October 2, 2000 he sent Director Beighley a certified letter regarding Officer Sullenberger's failure to achieve a passing score when she shot the qualification course of fire and enclosed a copy of the policy and procedures regarding the Commission's course requirements. Mr. Kope's letter stated that Director Beighley had until November 13, 2000 to prepare and send the required documentation to him. However, Mr. Kope did not receive the request for an extension until November 14, 2000. Mr. Kope recommended that the Commissioners disapprove the request for Officer Sullenberger's extension. After a lengthy discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to waive the 45-day time frame. However, Officer Sullenberger has to complete all course requirements by December 29, 2000. Commissioner Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of the application he received from Probation Officer Jeff Polinsky of Schuylkill County requesting to become a Certified Firearms Instructor for the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to certify Probation Officer Jeff Polinsky as a Commission certified firearms instructor. Commissioner Billingsley seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope said that he was in the process of scheduling the 2001 Basic Firearms Training Academies. However, he was having trouble getting the Allegheny Police Academy Range and that he may need to schedule all firearms training at Fort Indiantown Gap. The Commissioners held a lengthy discussion regarding the following:

- Offer to pay for the expansion or improvement of current ranges. (Scotia Game Commission, Ft. Indiantown Gap).
- Give money to the counties to build ranges or build regional county ranges.
- Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (ICA).
- Development of a long-range plan to pay for the creation of regional ranges.

Commissioner Clark stated that the ICA would allow the Commission to give funds to other government agencies to build county firearms ranges and the Commission could enter into a partnership with the county or be a co-owner of said range(s).

At this point Chairman Straitiff recommended that the Commission form a new committee, to be known as the "Range Acquisition and Development Committee". Mr. Straitiff volunteered to act as Chairman. Commissioners Larry Clark, Bill Erickson and Scott Schlechter volunteered to be members of the Committee. Mr. Gary Scicchitano volunteered Mr. Harry Wigner to sit on the Committee. Mr. Scicchitano cautioned that the legal and fiscal offices stated the Commission could not give funds to counties to improve or build ranges. Commissioner Clark wanted to know why the ICA did not apply in this instance. Mr. Scicchitano stated that he was not totally familiar with the ICA, however he would check it out and present his findings at the next meeting.

Mr. Kope stated that Mr. Jon Clark from Temple University contacted him regarding making a training video called "Making Weapons Safe". Mr. Kope said that Mr. Clark stated that he would make the video and send it to us for review and if we wanted we could purchase it from Temple University.

The Commissioners approved the following Commission meeting schedule for calendar 2001:

January 30	Tuesday	Harrisburg, PA
March 20	Tuesday	State College, PA
May 25	Friday	Harrisburg, PA
July 13	Friday	State College, PA
September 18	Tuesday	Harrisburg, PA
November 13	Tuesday	State College, PA

Mr. Kope asked the Commissioners if they had comments regarding the copy of the draft combined annual report that he sent to them. Commissioner Clark said that he did not receive a copy of the report. Mr. Kope said that he would send him a copy and that the Commission could discuss the report at the Commission meeting scheduled on January 30, 2001.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners the financial status report that showed an available balance of \$656,001. He also gave the Commissioners financial reports that he prepared summarizing the expenses that were incurred to hold both the Commission meetings and Curriculum Committee meetings. The Commissioners held a brief discussion regarding revenues and expenditures.

Mr. Kope finished his presentation and Chairman Straitiff called for the Committee reports.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. CURRICULUM

Commissioner Schlechter said that the Curriculum Committee made changes to the Qualification Course of Fire, Penalty Points, Range Safety Rules, and the Range Drills.

Qualification Course of Fire

Commissioner Schlechter said that four counties shot the new proposed Qualification Course of Fire, as the Commissioners requested. He gave the Commissioners a summary of the results showing that the average score went from 272 to 278. In addition, he proposed that the current verbal command at the 25-yard line be changed from “Probation Officer, drop the weapon, do it now” to “Probation. Don’t move!”. Commissioner Clark stated that the verbal command should include the word Officer. After a lengthy discussion regarding changing the verbal command, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the revised Qualification Course of Fire as presented with the addition of changing the verbal command to “Probation Officer. Don’t Move! ”. Commissioner Billingsley seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Penalty Points

Commissioner Schlechter proposed that the Penalty Points be changed:

- Eliminate the Five-point penalty imposed when officers load their magazine on the wrong side of the barricade. Since officers will not be shooting the weak side of the barricade this penalty no longer applies.
- Add a five-point penalty for officers that reload their magazine in the standing position at the 25-yard line and the 15-yard line.
- Change the wording of the five-point penalty stating that officers must have their non-shooting hand across their chest to officers must have their non-shooting hand across their torso. This means that officers can place their non-shooting hand from anywhere between the belt and the neck..
- Eliminate the penalty for officers that bend over to pick up their magazine and permit the officers to bend over and pick up the magazine.

The Commissioners held a lengthy discussion regarding permitting officers to pick up magazines. Commissioner Schlechter stated that it is an issue of safety versus tactics and officers would not be permitted to move their feet when they bend over to pick up. Commissioner Clark did not like the idea of permitting any officer to bend over to pick up. However, he stated that it could be resolved by permitting them to carry an extra magazine. Commissioner Schlechter stated that he would include a drill for both the Basic Training and for requalifications, which would show the officers how they would be permitted to pick up the dropped magazine. The Commissioners agreed that officers would be permitted to bend over to pick up magazines as long as training was provided. Officers would also be permitted to use more than two magazines, as long as it is the same number of magazines that they are authorized to carry on duty.

Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Schlechter made a motion to accept the penalty point changes shown above. In addition, officers would be permitted to bend over to pick up dropped magazines and can carry more than two magazines, as long as it is the same number of magazines that they are authorized to carry on duty. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Chairman Straitiff stated that for the record he wanted the Curriculum Committee to develop a drill that demonstrates to the shooters how they would be permitted to bend over and pick up dropped magazines and included as a requirement during basic training and requalifications.

Range Safety Rules

Commissioner Schlechter stated that number 13 in the Range Safety Rules should be changed. After a brief discussion it was decided to keep the rule and add a comma at the end of the statement after the word master and add, "Unless they are under the command to fire and can safely pick up the dropped article."

Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the change to the Range Safety Rules number 13 as shown above. Commissioner Straitiff seconded the motion.

Range Drills

Commissioner Schlechter gave the Commissioners a copy of the proposed new range drills. After a brief discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to adopt the proposed range drills as submitted, with the exception of adding the new range drill regarding dropped magazines, and if after reading them anyone finds there is a need for change they can present them at the next meeting scheduled for January 30, 2001. Commissioner Straitiff seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Schlechter recommended that the Commission conduct a Train the Trainer conference for all firearms instructors that are currently certified by the Commission. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Commission would conduct two mandatory two-day training sessions for all instructors that are currently certified by the Commission. The first day of the training would be the classroom instruction and the second day the instructors would shoot the Qualification Course of Fire. The Commission would contract with a hotel to pay for one night's lodging and provide their meals while they attend the training.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to conduct a mandatory Train The Trainer conference as proposed and to contract with a hotel to pay for one night's lodging and provide their meals. Commissioner Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope asked if the Curriculum Committee would develop an Emergency Plan that could be used when we conduct the Basic Training Academies and we could also present to the instructors attending the Train the Trainer conference. Commissioner Schlechter said that he has a plan and would give Mr. Kope a copy.

Mr. Kope stated that he would like to make the Basic Training Manuals more useful to the students by including pictures and comments regarding the various firearms stances and also include a target that shows the student if their shots are going in an area of the target that they are healing, flinching etc. Commissioner Schlechter stated that the Curriculum Committee could provide the material for inclusion in the manual.

B. POLICY

There was nothing to discuss regarding policy.

C. FINANCE

There was nothing to discuss regarding finance.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

V. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business

VI. LEGAL ISSUES

There were no legal issues.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS

There was no public comment.

VIII. ADJOURN MEETING

Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Billingsley seconded the motion.