

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
Hon. William F. Ward
Gregory A. Young



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September 18, 2001

A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers' Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on September 18th, 2001 at the Four Points Sheraton in Harrisburg, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman
Robert Billingsley
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark Jr.
Marshall Davis
William R. Erickson Jr.
Lt. David M. Howells
Conway Bushey
R. Scott Schlechter
Jon Clark, (Guest) Temple University
Gary Scicchitano

Hon. William F. Ward
Gregory A. Young
Chester A. Kope, Executive Director
Linda Laub, Legal Advisor
Rusty Duncan (Westmoreland Co.)
Paul Foltz
Erik Christensen
Dan Klarsch
Holly Spotts

- I. The Commission pledged allegiance to the United States flag and followed with a moment of silence. The meeting was then called to order by Commissioner Straitiff.

MOTION: Commissioner Straitiff motioned to accept the July 13th, 2001 Meeting Minutes. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Kope began by presenting The Commission with an application submitted by Jan Walker from Somerset County. He recommended Ms. Walker be approved as a certified firearms instructor for The Commission.

MOTION: Chairman Straitiff made a motion to accept the recommendation. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope then presented The Commission with an outline for The Department of Corrections Handgun and Shotgun Instructor's Course. He suggested this particular course be added to our approved list of training programs.

MOTION: The Chairman made a motion to add the DOC Handgun and Shotgun Instructor's Course to The Commission's approved list of training programs. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope presented an updated list of Commission Members, requesting that any additions or corrections be forwarded to him as soon as possible.

Mr. Kope then presented the group with a letter to Mr. Paul Strizzi regarding office space. At that time, the Commission's Chairman requested to speak off record.

MOTION: Chairman Straitiff motioned to adjourn the meeting and go into an Executive Session at 9:25AM . Guests were temporarily excused.

The public portion of the meeting reconvened at 10:02AM.

MOTION: Judge Clark motioned for a statement of interest to be presented to the Governor's office in regard to a state-wide training and education facility. Commissioner Straitiff called for a vote, and there was one abstention.

Mr. Kope presented a draft of the Commission's quarterly Newsletter. He asked for suggestions or additions to be submitted to him by the following Friday. Judge Clark suggested that the Newsletters, Meeting Minutes and Agendas be mailed to Commission Members two weeks prior to the next meeting. A lengthy discussion then took place regarding the Newsletter, its content, and its layout.

Mr. Klarsch then presented the Commission with his analysis of Ammunition Reimbursement costs and savings. A lengthy discussion opened regarding The Board's budget and financial documentation.

The Chairman called a break at 10:30, and the meeting reconvened at 10:42.

Continuing the discussion of The Board's budget, Mr. Kope announced that he met with the purchasing unit and ordered the Power Point projector and digital camera. While meeting with the Bureau of Information Technology, it was suggested to Mr. Kope that his computer be upgraded, as well as his Administrative Officer's and his Secretary's. Mr. Kope then requested The Commission's approval for the purchase of upgraded desktops.

MOTION: Commissioner Straitiff made a motion to approve the expenditure for the new computers. A unanimous approval was granted.

Mr. Kope presented The Commission's financial report. As of 9/14/01, The Commission has \$831,000.00 available.

Commissioner Straitiff suggested Mr. Kope begin to prepare summaries of the expenditure reports, breaking down all charges and explaining each.

Mr. Kope announced that his office is in the midst of preparing the annual report for the period of July 1st, 2000 to June 30th, 2001. He advised members of the Curriculum Committee, as well as the Commission members to forward their input to him directly for inclusion in the final report. A reminder letter will be sent out shortly.

Mr. Kope mentioned that Cambria County is interested in meeting with the Range Acquisition Committee in regards to building a firing range in their county. When further information regarding the plans is received, Mr. Kope will forward it.

A list of students who attended the training in State College and Schuylkill County was presented for The Commission members to review at their leisure. The students' scores were also included on the list.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

CURRICULUM

The Curriculum Committee met on 9/17/01 and discussed the supplement to the instructor's guide for the firearms training. There were several changes made, and The Committee hopes to have those changes approved and available for the next Commission meeting.

There was a discussion concerning holsters and a possible policy change. The Committee suggests obtaining new holsters with a primary retention device, making it less likely for the weapon to be inadvertently removed. The Chairman suggested having an article relating to the new holsters added into the newsletter. The article should contain the new holster standards, as well as pictures.

POLICY

Commissioner Straitiff proposed an amendment to The Commission's policy regarding petitions for extensions of time. In the case of pregnancy, the amendment would grant the Executive Director the sole discretion to approve such requests, without Commission consideration. Judge Clark, determining that maternity is a temporary disability and applies specifically to females, suggested the policy's terminology be changed. This began a lengthy discussion regarding disability, language, and the law. The Chairman announced that he will discuss the matter further with council before any changes are made. In the meantime, petitions for extensions of time will continue to be brought before The Commission for consideration.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

John Clark from Temple University updated The Commission on the in-service training. Currently, there are 400+ people registered for upcoming classes. As of 9/18/01, four training classes (held in State College, Schuylkill County and Allegheny County) have already been conducted. During those classes, 93 people were trained. There were 8 failures on the pistol range, but no failures on the written portion of the exam. The majority of those who failed were female students, causing concern among The Commission. Mr. Clark announced that he will discuss the failure rates with the instructors, and will update The Commission afterwards

A website containing in-service training information has been established. The address is <http://www.temple.edu/cjtp>, and will be updated every 15 days.

Registration materials and confirmation letters have been sent out to all the counties requiring it. Student evaluations for the training classes have been generally positive, giving valuable feedback to the instructors.

An extended discussion took place regarding the class curriculum. Upcoming changes expect to lessen the failure rate of female students.

Commissioner Straitiff asked Mr. Kope if the letters discussed at the last Commission Meeting (regarding the in-service training) had been sent to Somerset County. The letters were sent, but Mr. Kope is still awaiting a response.

Ms. Laub reopened a discussion regarding county liability and worker's compensation. Her findings show that a county would be responsible for their own defense in a lawsuit, however, there are still several questions left unanswered. It was suggested by someone that Ms. Laub prepare a proposal for a contract to eliminate the county's liability. Ms. Laub's response indicated that the law supercedes any contract provision, and limiting a county's liability is extremely difficult.

V. NEW BUSINESS

It was suggested that the documents offered by John Clark become part of The Commission's records. He also suggested the evaluations be reviewed for differing opinions between the male and female students.

On October 31st and November 2nd, 2001, the Juvenile Court Section of the State Trial judges and the JCJC will be holding their annual training session at the Harrisburg Hilton. They will be having an Information Sharing Session on Friday morning, and it was recommended that The Commission reserve a table for their own exhibit. Documentation and applications could be displayed.

MOTION: A motion was made by so-and-so to have The Firearms Commission display an exhibit at the presentation.

A vote was taken with no oppositions.

MOTION: Judge Clark motioned to have The Commission purchase a set of flags – American and State – with folding, collapsible stands and carrying cases to have displayed at all meetings and events.

The motion was unanimously accepted.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

There were no public comments or questions.

VIII. LEGAL ISSUES

There were no additional legal issues.

IX. ADJOURN MEETING

Chairman Straitiff adjourned the meeting.