

**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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A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers' Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on November 20, 2001 at The Days Inn in State College, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman	Linda Laub, Legal Advisor
Robert Billingsley	Gary Scicchitano (PBPP)
William R. Erickson Jr.	Rusty Duncan (Guest) Westmoreland Co.
R. Scott Schlechter	Paul Foltz (Guest) Erie Co.
Marshall Davis	Erik Christensen (Guest) Erie Co.
Gregory A. Young	Rob Repard (Guest) Tioga Co.
Chester A. Kope, Executive Director	Don Zettlemoyer (Guest) Temple University
Dan Klarsch, Administrative Officer	Holly Spotts, Commission Secretary
Conway Bushey (PBPP)	

**I.** Chairman Straitiff called the meeting to order. He suggested that a motion be made to accept the September 18, 2001 Commission Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Erickson made a motion to approve the September 18, 2001 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Mr. Kope began by suggesting dates for the 2002 Commission Meetings. The Commission agreed on the following:

January 8, 2002 – Harrisburg, PA  
March 12, 2002 – State College, PA  
May 21, 2002 – Pocono Manor, PA (PAPPC Conference)  
July 16, 2002 – State College, PA  
September 17, 2002 – Harrisburg, PA  
November 19, 2002 – State College, PA

Mr. Davis suggested Commission meetings be held monthly. The Commission decided the meetings would remain bi-monthly.

An open discussion took place regarding the purchase of mock-guns for use in the classroom portion of firearms training. These are needed because many students are not familiar with how to properly handle firearms upon admission to the training. Chairman Straitiff suggested students be offered a pre-basic familiarization course. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the possible training, and the shortage of full-time firearms instructors. Chairman Straitiff asked how long a certified firearms instructor could

remain a certified instructor without completing a specific amount of training within a specified time period. Mr. Kope replied that certified instructors must complete their training requirements, and are reviewed, every three years.

Mr. Kope stated that three certified firearms instructors lost their Commission certification because they did not attend the mandatory Train the Trainer Conference held in March 2001. Chairman Straitiff then asked if their chiefs were notified in writing that the firearms instructors had lost their certification. Mr. Kope explained that a letter was sent out beforehand, explaining that the officers would lose their certification if they did not attend the training. Letters were not sent out, however, to later confirm that the certification was lost. Chairman Straitiff recommended that a letter be sent to each officer, and their chief, informing them that the officers who did not attend training have lost their certification.

The Commissioners discussed the possibility of a more hands-on training session in future classes. Commissioner Schlechter suggested bringing in several types of firearms in order to familiarize the students with a wider variety.

Chairman Straitiff requested that a motion be made to allow the purchase of an array of deactivated handguns (to be used for training purposes), upon recommendation of the Curriculum Committee.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to purchase deactivated and/or used handguns for training purposes. Commissioner Billingsley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope presented a copy of the letter he received from the Chief Probation Officer in Allegheny County petitioning the Commission for Extension of Time. The petition was from Officer Melissa Gally who was unable to qualify due to an extended illness. Mr. Kope recommended that the Commissioners approve the petition.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to give Officer Gally a 90-day extension. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope mentioned that eight officers did not requalify between April 1, 2001 and October 31, 2001. Four of the officers decided that they did not want to carry a firearm and four officers failed to qualify during the time specified. Mr. Kope said that he sent certified letters to the officers and their chiefs stating that their Commission certification to carry a firearm will be revoked on January 1, 2002, and that in order to regain their certification they must attend a Basic Firearms Training Academy. Mr. Kope said that he called the chiefs of the four officers that failed to qualify between April and October and asked them to send him a letter petitioning the Commission for an extension. The Commissioners held a discussion regarding the annual requalifications.

Mr. Kope presented the Commissioners with an application he received from Officer Jeremy Olson, a juvenile probation officer in Westmoreland County, to become a Commission certified firearms instructor. Chairman Straitiff requested a motion to accept and approve the application.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Erickson made a motion to approve Officer Olson's application to become a Commission certified firearms instructor. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

Mr. Kope distributed copies of the lists of officers that went through the In-Service Firearms Training classes in calendar year 2001. The Commissioners held a brief discussion regarding the counties and the number of officers that did not attend the training this year.

Mr. Kope presented a letter from the Chief Probation Officer in Somerset County. He explained that the chief wants to have her county train, by itself, at a range of her choice with 18 positions. Mr. Kope explained to the chief that the Commission would not hold a training session for her county alone. In addition, he would have to inspect the range and if the range was approved, Mr. Jon Clark from Temple University would need to agree to hold an In-Service Firearms Training class at the range she is recommending. Commissioner Schlechter wanted to know where the closest range is to Somerset County. Mr. Kope stated that Allegheny County and Penn State are the closest ranges to Somerset County where the training is being offered at this point. Though Commissioner Schlechter and Commissioner Erickson agreed that using this range was an unreasonable request due to the location, the expense to conduct a class in Somerset County would actually come from Mr. Clark's budget. The Executive Director will inspect the range and contact Mr. Clark.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to approve or deny the range. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope requested that the Chairman, the Curriculum Committee, and the Policy Committee prepare comments that he can include in the Annual Report for the period of July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001. These comments need to be submitted to Mr. Kope before the next Commission meeting so he can have a draft prepared for their approval.

Mr. Klarsch distributed copies of the Commission's sample newsletter. Mr. Klarsch is currently working with the Department of General Services (DGS), which is willing to print the newsletter and mail it to the recipients for us. Mr. Klarsch went over the newsletter with the Commission, offering them several layout and design options to choose from. Mr. Kope then asked the Commissioners if they had any ideas for additional material to add to the newsletter. The Commissioners made several suggestions of ways to change the look of the newsletter. Mr. Klarsch will be contacting DGS regarding those changes. Mr. Kope suggested an approval committee be appointed to approve the newsletter. Commissioner Davis, however, wanted Mr. Kope to be responsible for approving the final draft of the newsletter.

Mr. Kope announced that he would be sending out Ammunition Reimbursement forms to all the officers that attended the In-Service Firearms Training. All pertinent information will be included on the forms, such as the date and location of the training, as well as the number of rounds shot by each officer.

Mr. Kope handed out a form showing the total revenue collection of each county since 1995-1996. It began at \$95,000.00 and has steadily increased, increasing to \$410,000.00. The total collected in revenue is currently \$1,654,000.00.

The Commission currently has an available budget of \$836,000 with expenditures of \$141,000.

Mr. Kope discussed the list of minor-object codes that was sent to the Commissioners, as they requested at the last meeting.

Mr. Scicchitano discussed a new Commonwealth project called Imagine PA. This project will completely reconstruct the administration system of state government. Phase I of this project will begin in January 2002, and is expected to be completed in phases by July 2003.

Mr. Kope announced that the Power Point equipment ordered for the Commission has arrived. He informed the group that training information and materials would be converted to Power Point presentations for future use.

Commissioner Schlechter questioned the possibility of the Commission hiring two full-time Firearms Instructors. Ms. Laub suggested the conversation be saved for the Executive Session.

Don Zettlemoyer distributed an In-Service Firearms Training activity report showing pass/fail scores by county. He informed the Commission that there have been 11 classes offered so far, and 280 officers have been trained. All officers passed the written portion of the exam. Twelve officers failed the qualification portion. Mr. Zettlemoyer announced that Temple has hired a female probation officer to assist with the firearms instruction, and she has assisted with the last three sessions. A schedule is currently being drafted for spring training sessions.

Chairman Straitiff offered his opinion on the first session held in State College. He was not pleased with the training or the organization of the training. His officers attending the second State College session were dissatisfied as well. There was a lengthy discussion among the Commission regarding the positive and negative aspects of the current Temple training program.

Chairman Straitiff presented the Commissioners with several questions/comments on behalf of those at the recent Adult Chiefs' meeting he attended. The Commissioners held a brief discussion.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to empower the Executive Director with the ability to contact the counties to find out how many officers may be interested in a Winter Basic Training Session. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope informed the Commission members that he and Dan Klarsch had a display booth on behalf of the Firearms Commission at the Harrisburg Hilton for the JCJC Resource Day held on Friday, November 2, 2001.

Chairman Straitiff called an Executive Session at 12:00 PM to discuss confidential matters. The Executive Session concluded at 12:50 PM.

### **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. Curriculum**

Commissioner Schlechter announced that the Curriculum Committee is planning to develop a Simunition tactical training program and offer it to the counties in calendar year 2003. The extended training is expected to last two days, and would include a Train the Trainer Course for the firearms instructors. The training will (tentatively) be offered six times per year. Chairman Straitiff suggested making this new training an elective for the first year, changing to mandatory training in subsequent years depending on its success rate. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this issue.

Mr. Kope mentioned that the Commission's contract with Temple will expire in 2002 and, if the Commission wants to exercise the next two year training option for 2003-2004, a decision as to whether or not the contract will be renewed must be made by the Commission no later than January, 2002.

Commissioner Erickson presented The Commission with the current policy regarding appropriate holsters. He also presented the proposed revision to the policy. Commissioner Erickson showed an example of the proposed holster, with a primary retention device.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Erickson motioned to have the manual revised in regards to the wording concerning holsters. The proposed change would define holsters as having a primary retention device, rather than a thumb break or safety-strap. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Erickson discussed the pictures added to the new student workbook. There were a few discrepancies that need to be corrected.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Erickson made a motion that the manual, and its revisions, be accepted. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners.

#### **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 or questions.

#### **VIII. ADJOURN MEETING**

Chairman Straitiff adjourned the meeting.