

**Members:**

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman  
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.  
Marshall R. Davis.  
William R. Erickson, Jr.  
R. Scott Schlechter  
Hon. William F. Ward  
Gregory A. Young



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July 16, 2002

A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers' Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on July 16, 2002 at the Days Inn, State College, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman  
R. Scott Schlechter  
Marshall R. Davis  
Gregory A. Young  
William R. Erickson Jr.

Chester A. Kope, Executive Director  
Dan Klarsch, Administrative Officer  
Linda Laub (PBPP)  
Gary Scicchitano (PBPP)  
Ginger Smeigh (PBPP)

**I.** Chairman Straitiff began by leading the Pledge of Allegiance before calling the meeting to order. He asked that a motion be made to accept the May 21, 2002 Commission meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to accept the May 21, 2002 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

**II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a list of the counties that are currently carrying firearms. Currently there are 42 Adult Probation Departments, 19 Juvenile Probation Departments, three (3) Domestic Relation Departments, and one (1) Intermediate Punishment Department that are carrying firearms. At the end of the 2001 calendar year there were 662 officers certified to carry firearms. However, that number changes because of officers leaving county employment, or because they decided to quit carrying firearms. When the Commission completes the 26<sup>th</sup> Basic Firearms Training Academy in September, the Commission will have trained approximately 122 officers this year.

Mr. Kope recommended to the Commissioners that they consider contracting the Basic Firearms Training out. He explained that when the Commission started there was not enough money, so he had to do the Basic Firearms Training in-house, using volunteers. However, the Commission currently has approximately one million dollars in reserve and it is now possible to contract it out. Mr. Kope explained that both he and Mr. Klarsch are spending most of there time setting up and running the Basic Firearms Training Academies and don't have enough time do the administrative work required to run the entire firearms training program. When the Commission began, there were only 29 counties carrying firearms and 287 probation officers were certified to carry firearms. Those figures have more than doubled. With all the current and proposed training initiatives, they will not have the time to effectively monitor and administer all of the Commissions initiatives. It was Mr. Kope's opinion that even if they contract out the Basic Firearms Training, he and Mr. Klarsch will still not have

enough time to complete all the work that is mandated by the Commission and the Act. He recommended that the Commission consider hiring an additional person.

Chairman Straitiff requested that each of the Commissioners provide their opinion regarding contracting out the training:

- Commissioner Erickson did not have any problem with contracting the Basic Training out.
- Commissioner Schlechter had no objection to contracting the training out, as long as the counties would still have the option to do the Basic Firearms Training in-house.
- Commissioner Young stated that he had no problem, as long as whatever vendor is selected is monitored so the Commission does not end up with a black eye as we did with the In-Service Firearms Training contract.
- Commissioner Davis said that one of the strengths and one of the biggest problems is using our certified firearms instructors. One of the strengths is that they come from the probation officer ranks, and the officers taking the training can relate to probation officers better than someone who is a retired municipal cop. He was also concerned that this would have a negative effect on Commissioner Schlechter's proposal to hire full time Commission training staff.
- Mr. Scicchitano stated that the possibility of adding full-time staff this fiscal year and probably next year would be zero. If you demonstrate the need by contract, they are more likely to approve full-time staff provided that a cost benefit analysis shows that it is more costly to contract it out.
- Commissioner Straitiff stated that he would prefer to hire additional staff. However, he knows that it's not feasible at this time. So in the short term he believes that contracting the Basic Firearms Training is the best way to go.

After a lengthy discussion, the Commissioners authorized Mr. Kope to begin preparing an RFP for the Basic Firearms Training.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to reschedule the next Commission meeting from September 17, 2002 to September 24, 2002. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a new form that he developed titled, "Emergency Response Plan". The reason he developed the new form is because the one they have been using is copyrighted by Protective Safety Systems. Mr. Kope developed the form to be used at all Commission sponsored trainings. After reviewing the form, the Commissioners gave their verbal approval to use it.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a letter that he received from Mr. Terry Davis, Chief Adult Probation Officer in Dauphin County, petitioning the Commission for an extension of time for Officer George Miller to complete the In-Service Firearms Training and the annual requalifications. Officer Miller has been on active military duty since September 2001 and is not expected to return from active duty by October 31, 2002.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the request, and permit Officer George Miller to complete all training requirements and the annual requalifications within six months following his return from active duty. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a petition he received from Mr. John Roller, Adult Chief Probation Officer in Cumberland County, requesting a waiver for Officer Brian Pomian. Officer Pomian transferred from Columbia County to Cumberland County in 2001 and due to an oversight did not requalify in that year. However he did attend the In-Service Firearms Training class that was provided by Temple University.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to require Officer Pomian to take and successfully pass the Commission's two Basic Firearms Training written examinations and shoot the qualification course of fire. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of the Range Safety Rules and wanted to get a point of clarification regarding Rule #2. At one of the In-Service Firearms Training classes an officer indicated that they were taking a prescription medicine. The officer then answered 'no' to Part 2-A, indicating that the medication would not impair their ability to safely handle a firearm. If an officer states 'no' to Part 2-A, they are not required to answer Part 2-B. However, the officer answered that part indicating that they did not have a doctor's authorization to participate in the Commission's range activities. Because the officer did not have a doctor's excuse, the Range Master did not permit the officer to participate in the range activities. The Commissioners held a lengthy discussion. The Commission decided that a doctor's excuse is not needed for an officer to participate in range activities. However, it is at the discretion of the Range Master to make the final decision. The Commissioners directed Mr. Kope to add a comments section on the back of the form so the Range Master can document their observations of why they would not permit the officer to participate in the range activities.

The Commission discussed the contract with Temple University to provide In-Service Firearms Training. The Commissioners discussed the problems with the current contract and what they would like to do if it was decided to exercise their right to take one of the additional two year training options. Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to renew the contract with Temple for the next two years. Temple would not develop new curriculum, but provide the present curriculum on a limited basis. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope asked the Commissioners if they wanted to develop a new RFP to provide training. The Commissioners agreed that they wanted to develop a new training RFP. The Curriculum Sub-Committee would develop the training topics and present them to the Commission for approval. Chairman Straitiff recommended to the Commissioners that they should make a motion authorizing Mr. Kope to begin preparing an RFP while the Curriculum Sub-Committee prepares the Training Plan.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Young made a motion authorizing Mr. Kope to begin to prepare an RFP for firearms training. In the interim, the Curriculum Sub-Committee would develop the training topics and present it to the Commissioners for their approval at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope gave the Commission a copy of the Monthly Financial Report dated 6/27/02. The Commissioners had no comments or questions regarding the Financial Report.

### **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Schlechter stated that the Sub-Committee drafted guidelines for firearm instructors to conduct In-House Basic Firearms Training. He reviewed the guidelines with the Commissioners. Based on the Commissioner's comments it was decided that Commissioner Schlechter would take the guidelines back to the Sub-Committee for revision and they would also develop an Evaluation Form for Mr. Kope to

use to evaluate the firearms instructors. The revised guidelines and form will be presented at the next Commission meeting.

## **B. POLICY COMMITTEE**

Chairman Straitiff stated that the Policy Committee did not meet. However, a copy of a draft policy, Section V. Notice of Hearings, was given to the Commissioners for review. After a lengthy discussion regarding the policy it was decided that the policy committee would make the revisions that were discussed and present the revised policy to the Commissioners at the next Commission meeting on September 24, 2002. Ms. Laub requested that Mr. Kope e-mail her a copy of the Operational Policy.

## **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business

## **VII. LEGAL ISSUES**

There were no legal issues.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTION**

There were no public comments or questions.

## **IX. ADJOURN MEETING**