

**Members:**

Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman  
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.  
Marshall R. Davis.  
William R. Erickson, Jr.  
R. Scott Schlechter  
Hon. William F. Ward  
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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 19, 2002 at the Days Inn, State College, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Larry J. Straitiff, Chairman        | Eric Christensen (Guest, Erie County)     |
| Honorable Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.    | Rusty Duncan (Guest, Westmoreland County) |
| R. Scott Schlechter                 | Paul Foltz (Guest, Erie County)           |
| Marshall R. Davis                   | Robert Repard (Guest, Tioga County)       |
| Gregory A. Young                    | Gary Scicchitano (PBPP)                   |
| William R. Erickson Jr.             | Linda Laub (PBPP)                         |
| Chester A. Kope, Executive Director | Jackie Achey, Commission Secretary        |
| Dan Klarsch, Administrative Officer |   |

**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 July 16, 2002 Commission meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to accept the July 16, 2002 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission. Commissioner Clark abstained.

**II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Mr. Kope is in the process of preparing the Annual Report for fiscal year 2001-2002. If anyone would like to prepare something for this report it needs to be submitted to him no later than Friday, December 20, 2002. The events must have occurred between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002.

Mr. Kope presented the Commissioners with an application from Mr. Ronnie L. Millward, Centre County, to become a certified firearms instructor. Mr. Kope recommended approval. The Commissioners reviewed the application.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Schlechter made a motion to approve Mr. Millward's application to become a Commission Certified Firearms Instructor. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners a copy of a letter he received from Northumberland County Adult Probation Department requesting a medical extension to conduct the range requalification for Mr. Peter Avellino. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Davis to grant Mr. Avellino an extension, however Officer Avellino must complete all requalification requirements by January 31, 2003. Commissioner Clark 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 Dauphin County Adult Probation Department requesting an extension of time for Officer Lara Foster to requalify. Officer Foster has been undergoing fertility treatments, and at present is not pregnant. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Young that Officer Foster has until December 31, 2002 to requalify if she is not pregnant. If she doesn't requalify by said date, she needs to submit a request for extension. Commissioner Davis seconded. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners. Commissioner Clark abstained.

The next request was from Wyoming County Probation Office for a medical extension for Officer Joseph Francis. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to give Officer Francis an extension until March 31, 2003. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners. Commissioner Marshall abstained.

The next request was from Allegheny County for a medical extension for Officer Darryl Sammartino. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to give Officer Sammartino until March 31, 2003 to complete all requalification requirements. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

Mr. Kope presented the Commissioners with copies of two letters he received from Westmoreland County requesting extensions of time to take the range requalifications. Officer Patrick Michaels was on Military duty, and Mr. Kope recommended he complete all requalification requirements within 60 days from his return from active military service. Officer Traci Grace was on medical leave and unable to complete the requalification. Mr. Kope recommended that Officer Grace complete all requalification requirements within 90 days from her return to work. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to grant the request for extension for Officer Michaels to complete all requalification requirements within 60 days of his return from active military service. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to grant the request for extension for Officer Grace to complete all requalification requirements within 90 days from her return to work. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope presented a letter he received from Susquehanna County requesting an extension for Officer Michael Koscelnak who is serving the military in Bosnia.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to grant the request for extension for Officer Koscelnak to complete all requalification requirements within 60 days of his return from active military service.

Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope presented a letter that he received from Westmoreland County on behalf of Officer Michael Yawitz requesting an extension of time to shoot the annual requalification course of fire. The request was made and received after the mandated October 31, 2002 deadline. Mr. Rusty Duncan, speaking on behalf of Officer Yawitz, stated that he was told that he had to shoot the requalification course of fire before October 31, 2002. However he did not. The Commission held a brief discussion and the matter was tabled until the January 7, 2003 Commission meeting.

Mr. Kope presented a letter he received from Venango County requesting a medical extension for Officer Julie Baxter.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Davis to grant the request for extension for Officer Baxter to complete all requalification requirements by January 31, 2003. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Kope presented to the Commissioners a list of 17 individuals who had failed to attend the mandatory In-Service Firearms Training. Commissioner Schlechter mentioned that he was under the impression that from the point individuals went through the Basic Training they had two years to attend the offering from Temple, because it would be offered on an on-going basis. The Executive Director pointed out that 635 officers took the training over the two-year period and all officers that attended the Basic Firearms Training Academies in 2001 were told that they had to attend the training in 2002. In addition, there were a few officers that attended a Basic Training in 2002 who took the In-Service Firearms Training. After a lengthy discussion on why these officers were not able to attend this training, Commissioner Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to have the Executive Director send letters to eight of the officers granting them a conditional extension of time, certifying them to carry a firearm until January 31, 2003. This conditional extension of time will allow them the opportunity to provide the Commission with more information and details regarding their inability to attend one of the In-Service Firearms Training classes. At the next Commission meeting scheduled for January 7, 2003, any materials and explanations that have been forwarded to the Executive Director will be reviewed and considered by the Commission. These eight officers are as follows:

- Officer Michelle Clark, Blair County Adult Probation
- Officer Jeffrey Donnelly, Blair County Adult Probation
- Officer Kimberly Cooper, Carbon County Adult Probation
- Officer Jolene Elliott, Clarion County Adult Probation
- Officer Kerry Stackhouse, Dauphin County Adult Probation
- Officer Aloysius Munley, Lackawana County Adult Probation
- Officer Steven Russel, Union County Juvenile Probation
- Officer Robert Murnock, Westmoreland County Adult Probation

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

There were six individuals who failed to attend the mandatory In-Service Firearms Training, who are on approved medical leave. They are:

- Officer Susan Wolfe, Columbia County Adult Probation
- Officer Nicole Scott, Dauphin County Juvenile Probation

- Officer Maureen Zerbe, Dauphin County Juvenile Probation
- Officer Carol Lasky, Somerset County Juvenile Probation
- Officer Michelle Gawlinski, Venango County Juvenile Probation
- Officer Bruno Mediate, Westmoreland County Adult Probation

After a brief discussion Commissioner Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Erickson to grant the six officers an extension to take the first In-Service Firearms Training class that is offered. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Two of the officers on the list, Erik Christensen and Paul Foltz from Erie County conducted the training, and were therefore credited with having attended the In-Service Firearms Training.

The last officer who did not attend the mandatory In-Service Training is George Miller, Dauphin County Adult Probation, who is on military leave. After a brief discussion the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Erickson made a motion to grant Officer Miller an extension to take the In-Service Firearms training within 90 days of his return from the military or take the first In-Service Firearms Training class that is offered, whichever is longer. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commissioners. Commissioner Clark abstained.

The next item discussed by Mr. Kope was a meeting he had with Dan Klarsch and Mr. James Todd, who represented the Board of Probation and Parole's Training Division. This meeting was to discuss proposed revisions to the Board of Probation and Parole's Basic Skills Academy and to discuss incorporating the Commission's Basic Firearms Training Program into their training. Prior to this meeting Mr. Todd met with Chief Murray, President of the Adult Chiefs Association and suggested that the Commission's Basic Firearms Training Academy should be incorporated into the Board's Basic Skills Academy. In Mr. Kope's opinion there were several problems with incorporating the two Academies. The first being that the Basic Skills Academy is only for adult probation officers. The Commission currently has 18 juvenile probation departments that carry firearms and this number will most likely increase in 2003. Another issue is that just because an adult county probation officer attends a Basic Skills Academy does not mean that they would get into our Basic Firearms Training Academy. If we get more applications for the training than there are range positions, we will limit the number of officers from any one county that can go to a scheduled firearms training class. The Commissioners held a brief discussion on the merits and disadvantages of consolidated training.

Mr. Kope presented a list of 121 officers who attended a Basic Firearms Training Academy in 2002. Three individuals failed, but have since requalified, one did not show and another cancelled. Mr Kope also gave the Commissioners a list showing the number of officers that the Commission has certified by class and year since training began in 1997. Currently, 711 officers have been certified by the Commission to carry firearms.

Mr. Kope gave the Commissioners the financial status report that showed an available balance of \$993,110.42. He also gave the Commissioners financial reports that he prepared summarizing the expenses that were incurred to hold both the Commission and the Curriculum Sub-Committee meetings. In addition, Mr. Kope also presented financial information on the cost to conduct the Basic Firearms Training Academies and send officers to the Simunition Instructor School Training in 2002.

Commissioner Straitiff asked the question as to whether the Basic Training schedule was established for the year, and if a winter Basic Training could be scheduled. A discussion followed regarding the availability of an indoor range, and that most indoor ranges could only handle a maximum of 12 – 14 people. The Executive

Director commented that the only indoor range that would be available is down near the Philadelphia Airport, Delaware County and he thought that it was a 15-position range. However, the range has been under renovation and he did not know if it was available. After a brief discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark authorizing the Executive Director to initiate a Basic Training Academy in January or no later than February 15, 2003. They would utilize the range in Delaware County if the Executive Director can find the necessary logistical support to do it and that there are at least 10, but not more than 15 students. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Mr. Kope had a concern regarding the reimbursement for hotel rooms for students that would be attending the Basic Firearms Training Academy in the Delaware County area. After a brief discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to raise the hotel reimbursement for the proposed Basic Training in Delaware County from the current allowance of \$50.00 to up to \$75.00. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

The Commission approved the following Commission Meeting Schedule for calendar year 2003:

|                    |         |                   |
|--------------------|---------|-------------------|
| January 7, 2003    | Tuesday | Harrisburg, PA    |
| March 11, 2003     | Tuesday | State College, PA |
| May 20, 2003       | Tuesday | Harrisburg, PA    |
| July 15, 2003      | Tuesday | State College, PA |
| September 16, 2003 | Tuesday | Harrisburg, PA    |
| November 18, 2003  | Tuesday | State College, PA |

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

### **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Commissioner Schlechter stated that the Sub-Committee met on November 18, 2002 and developed an outline for the Simunition Training and that they are hoping to begin to provide training starting 2003. They would like to hold the next Curriculum Sub-Committee at the Holiday Inn in Grantville, PA so they can inspect the proposed Simunition Training site at Fort Indiantown Gap. They also want to invite all 15 instructors who have gone through the Simunition training. The sub-committee developed an itemized list of equipment that would be needed to conduct the Simunition Training. Commissioner Schlechter reviewed the equipment needs with the Commissioners. He estimated that it would cost approximately \$50,000 to purchase the equipment and that it is imperative that this equipment be ordered as soon as possible. Commissioner Schlechter stated that he will have this list prepared and submitted by the next meeting scheduled for January 7, 2003. This list will include all protective gear designed for the training. Commissioner Clark raised the question as to whether this \$50,000 would be a one-time cost. Commissioner Schlechter stated the only additional ongoing expense would be approximately \$2,000 per year for ammunition. The majority of the expense will be for the purchase of weapons. The sub-committee proposed that since there are five basic guns that the counties utilize, the Commission will purchase the guns and conversion kits and have them designated as weapons for training, rather than putting conversion kits in the students weapons, which can cause problems. The cost for these weapons and conversion kits would come to approximately \$31,000. The question arose

as to where these weapons would be stored. The Executive Director pointed out that there is a storage area where Commission supplies are currently stored, however, in this case a large gun safe would need to be purchased and the Commission may need to get additional storage space. This \$50,000 expense is not included in the total cost to provide the Simunition training. After further discussion, Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Clark to authorize \$50,000 for the purchase of the equipment as outlined by Commissioner Schlechter. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Schlechter also stated the Curriculum Sub-Committee prepared a list of 17 In-Service Firearms Training topics that the Commission could present. There was a brief discussion regarding the In-Service contract that the Commission had with Temple University. Commissioner Clark wanted to know what checks and balances are in place to make sure the Temple situation is not repeated. A lengthy discussion followed. Commissioner Clark also asked that a committee be established to begin the development of an RFP. The committee members will be Commissioners Schlechter, Davis, and Young, Chet Kope, Dan Klarsch, and Legal Counsel Linda Laub. A discussion then followed on the number of RFPs that would need to be developed. It was decided that the Commission would develop three RFPs.

Gary Scicchitano asked the question if anyone knew if any of the state colleges have a law enforcement program that includes firearms. The reason for this question of the Commissioners is there may be a way around the RFP, to get it done quicker. The State System of Higher Education Enterprise Resource Group will do a MOU with us, and will actually do whatever is needed to get this to work. The resources can be obtained through the State System of Higher Education, rather than go to an outside vendor, eliminating the need for an RFP. Mr. Scicchitano will provide the name of the contact person and all the necessary information to begin this process.

## **B. POLICY COMMITTEE**

On October 24, 2002 the Commission's Policy Sub-Committee held a meeting in State College, PA. In attendance were Chairman Straitiff, Commissioner Davis, Linda Laub, Legal Counsel, and Dan Klarsch, Administrative Officer. They revised Sections V, VI, and VIII of the Commission's Operational Policy and developed a new Section IX, titled "Notice of Hearings". These revisions were sent to the Commissioners to review before this meeting. Chairman Straitiff reviewed the new policy with the Commissioners line by line. The Commissioners and Mr. Kope made several recommendations to change various sections of the policy. All discussed changes/revisions were approved, with the exception of Section IX - C. Ms. Laub will do more research with the assistance of Commissioner Clark.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Chairman Straitiff to accept the proposed changes with the exception of Section IX – C. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

## **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Straitiff stated that the Chiefs Association is giving plaques to former members who have retired thanking them for their service. He suggested that Commission give plaques to all of the former Commissioners. After brief discussion Chairman Straitiff called for a motion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Davis that the Commission purchase an appropriate plaque for all former commissioners and that they are invited to attend the PAPP meeting and make the presentation there. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

## **VII. LEGAL ISSUES**

There were no legal issues.

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

There were no public comments or questions.

## **IX. ADJOURN MEETING**