

Commissioners:

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
(Vacant)
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January 7, 2003

A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers' Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on January 7, 2003 at the Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. The following Commission members and guests were present:

Larry Straitiff, Chairman
Honorable Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.
R. Scott Schlechter
Marshall Davis
Gregory A. Young
William R. Erickson, Jr.
Dan Klarsch, Administrative Officer
Conway Bushey, PBPP
Linda Laub, PBPP

Gary Scicchitano, PBPP
Kim Coon, Educational Resource Group
Richard Varner, Educational Resource Group
Edward Vollbrecht, Educational Resource group
Eric Christensen, Guest, Erie County
Rusty Duncan, Guest, Westmoreland Co.
Christopher Sult, Guest, Columbia County
Matthew Dunio, Guest, Blair County
Jackie Achey, Commission Secretary

- 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 November 19, 2002 Commission meeting minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Davis made a motion to accept the November 19, 2002 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Clark noted a correction to the minutes of July 16, 2002. He indicated that these minutes were unanimously approved, however he was not present at that meeting, therefore there was one abstention. There were no additional corrections. A vote was taken noting the correction and was approved by the Commission.

II. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES GROUP PRESENTATION

Chairman Straitiff introduced Messrs. Kim Coon, Richard Varner, and Edward Vollbrecht from the Educational Resource Group (ERG). These gentlemen were invited by the Executive Director to present an overview of how their organization could achieve out-sourcing for our training requirements without going through the formal RFP process. Mr. Coon began the presentation by introducing Mr. Richard Varner, Director of the Institute for Law Enforcement Education, and Mr. Edward Vollbrecht, Executive Vice President. Mr. Coon explained how he had met with Chet Kope and Dan Klarsch on December 9, 2002 to review the Commission's needs regarding Basic Firearms Training and In-Service Firearms Training. He then took this information back to his team and determined that they do have a statewide infrastructure that is dependable and accessible to those who need to be trained. Mr. Coon provided an overview of ERG, and then turned the meeting over to Mr Varner who explained how he would propose to do the various trainings. Handouts were distributed with a summary of Mr. Varner's presentation and an organizational overview. The meeting was then opened up to a question and answer session. The Commissioner's raised the following questions:

Commission Erickson: Would you and your group be able to present a preview, or pilot presentation for review?

ERG: Yes, we could do that.

Commissioner Erickson: Some of the other potential In-Service Firearms Training programs mentioned might not be applicable to our group, i.e., crime scene preservation, DUI, etc. Although this information may be valuable to our parole officers, in general, what we're focusing on here is strictly firearms training.

ERG: Our organization's strategy is not to ask the Commission to fit our program; our strategy is to do what we need to do to serve the people who need to be trained. We will be extremely flexible in order to meet your needs.

Commissioner Clark: I'd first like to express my concerns about the unfortunate circumstances the Commission experienced with the previous In-Service Firearms Training provider. This situation was a positive experience in that it caused the Commission to become more critical of what our mandate is. Another concern of mine is if Mr. Coon's organization is interested in a long-term partnership.

ERG: If everyone collectively reviews the proposal and concludes they would like to enter into a partnership with our organization to do this training, we would conclude that this would indeed be a long-term partnership.

Commissioner Schlechter: What accessibility does the ERG have to ranges? Also, you mentioned that you have a staff of 35. Are they retired law enforcement officers, retired college professors, etc?

ERG: Yes, to your questions. Most of the personnel are working in other positions; six are retired, but still active in the training. The instructional staff has three levels, A, B, and C. "A" instructors are basically Master Instructors, "B" instructors are the majority, and "C" instructors are the new people we have coming along. The instruction staff is spread throughout the state and is kept to geographic areas, but can travel and is willing to do so. Their schedules are extremely flexible. As far as access to ranges, I was not provided with a list of your ranges; therefore I do not know where your ranges are. However in contacting our instructors for this information I was told that there are ranges available for our use.

Commissioner Young: You talked about bringing specialists in, and if need be training the Commission's existing instructors to be able to handle that specially. With your train the trainer program, what kind of professional development do you do with your trainers, and what would you do with the Commission's trainers that you are utilizing?

ERG: We currently offer a two-week instructor level training program every other year. Depending on the course, there are instructors who are required to go through an additional two-week program. It could take two years before an instructor can reach the Master level. Basically it would be up to the Commission to determine where, and at what level your instructors are trained. If you feel that they require additional training that could be provided.

Commissioner Straitiff: It is my understanding that at present you do firearms training, mostly law enforcement related, but not firearms based, and that some of the people you have on staff right now are certified firearms instructors and you would pull on this resource and also use some of the Commission's instructors.

ERG: We would pull on our resources, but also would go off site, which is one of the advantages we have in working within the state system, the ability to do that.

Commissioner Clark: Would you be willing to have us train a body of individuals that might work with your organization to our standards, such that we would then have a confidence level that we know to a certainty that those instructors that you might invite into your environment have, in fact, been able to pass muster according to the training standards that we have established, and give us a sense of confidence that there will be a uniformity to this process?

ERG: Yes, we would be open and flexible to this. We would really like to use your instructors. This would give us a confidence level in the training and is a critical requirement in terms of our organization deciding to move forward with this whole program.

Chairman Straitiff: One additional comment I would have is in regard to the Commission maintaining all the records and record keeping. I personally feel that as far as maintaining the certifications and decertifications and tracking of the officers, this is a Commission function. I liked the concept of video conferencing; a large amount of Commission funds could be saved through this tool as far as tying in the classroom training through this medium, eliminating much of the travel time.

Commissioner Davis: Basic firearms training has only existed for the last 7 years, through the good graces of all the county departments committing their officers and giving of their time to do that. I assume that when we're talking about the instructors that the contracting system that you have always had with your instructors would be similar or would pertain to the people that we're talking about in these programs.

ERG: That's correct.

Commissioner Davis: As far as the Basic Firearms Training, do you think it's a realistic goal that if we decided to do an MOU with you that you would be able to field a pilot program in 2003?

ERG: No question about it, most of the time it's done within a week. This would not be a problem.

Commissioner Clark: What is the chair's intention, are we at the threshold to make a decision as to charting a course here as to In-Service Firearms Training, which is the small piece of this and are they able to deliver on this and where do we go next?

A brief recess was called to discuss the presentation.

Chairman Straitiff reconvened the meeting and determined that the consensus from the discussions that he was privy to was that the Commissioners seemed to be very interested in pursuing this relationship further. It was noted that Mr. Coon had a list of preliminary financial aspects of what would be involved in doing the two training programs that were discussed. At this point Mr. Coon presented this financial portion of his presentation. This information was included in the handouts distributed at the beginning of the presentation.

Commissioner Clark recommended that a motion be made to suspend the pursuit of the three Request For Proposals (RFPs).

MOTION: Commissioner Young made a motion to suspend action on the three RFPs: i.e. Basic Firearms Training, Temple In-Service Firearms Training, and the development of new In-Service Firearms Training modules. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. A vote was taken and unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chairman Straitiff stressed his concern, along with Commissioner Clark, that the Commission should not wait until the next meeting in March to decide on whether to make a decision on the information that was presented by the Educational Resource Group. A question was asked of our Legal Council, Ms. Laub, as to whether we could, after having additional discussion on the material that was presented, suspend adjournment of this meeting and reconvene by phone to take a vote on this topic. Commissioner Clark stated that he did not think that was possible because of the Sunshine Law. A discussion then followed.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion that the Commission authorize the appropriate representatives of the Commission to enter into whatever form of agreement is necessary to solidify the proposal as it relates to the In-Service Firearms Training matter at a cost not to exceed that which is specified on page # 7 of the proposal, \$34,350.00, and on behalf of the Commission to sign the appropriate binding documents with ERG. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. Commissioner Clark then amended the motion to a cap of \$50,000 that includes a pro-rated share of the miscellaneous costs for the In-Service Firearms Training. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the amended motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission. (See Page 8 under Old Business for the list Commission Representatives that were authorized by the Commission to enter into an agreement with ERG.)

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion that as a collateral but on-going pursuit of the Commission that we move forward in the negotiations with a train-the-trainer program in the amount not to exceed \$15,000 and a pro-rated share of the miscellaneous costs so that we may approach that as well. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion for the Commission to be authorized to speak to the Educational Resource Group about long-term implementation of the Basic Firearms Training Program, and for ERG to resubmit a revised proposal at the March meeting. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

Mr. Coon indicated that Mr. Richard Varner would be the ERG point of contact for these efforts.

III. SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

A. CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE

Commissioner Schlechter reported that the Sub-Committee met yesterday (January 6, 2003) with an expanded membership to include all those firearms instructors who have gone through the Simunition training. The Sub-Committee took a tour of the MOUNT site at Fort Indiantown Gap (FTIG), where they wanted to conduct the Simunition training. The condition of this facility was not as favorable as Commissioner Schlechter remembered. After viewing and videotaping this site there was mutual agreement that this was not where the training should be conducted. The committee members went back to Range Control and were shown a site that is used by the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center (NCTC). That site has an old two-story barracks, and the east side of this barracks had a room set up realistically for the type of training that they would like to conduct: i.e., kitchen, rooms sectioned off, etc. When Commissioner Schlechter asked if it would be possible to use this site, they said we could, however there were plans for this site to be bulldozed within the next 6 months to possibly a year. The committee members then visited a third site that was in the process of being built by NCTC. This site will have a 50-person

classroom on the second floor, and the rest of the building will be set up for Simunition type training. Also, a virtual reality room will be available. The Navy came to the Gap and said there would be some additional technology they would give the Gap for this new facility, technology that is not available yet, if they would set it up to their specifications. The one condition would be that it would be made available for the Navy Seals to train every once in a while. This was naturally agreeable to the Gap. The committee believed the first site would be ideal for their training needs. However it will be bulldozed in May or June. If they have to use the site that is currently under construction, they would be restricted to 2 scenario areas, which would limit the number of officers who could be trained.

A meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2003 with members of Range Acquisition and Development Sub-Committee and Colonel Hulings the Base Commander of FTIG, to discuss the Commission building a range at FTIG. Commissioner Schlechter said that there is a possibility that the Simunition Training site situation could also be addressed at this meeting. He will contact Mr. Trinkle of FTIG to see if we can discuss the Simunition Training sites. He stated that they could definitely use the third site for Simunition Training if the second site was not available. Commissioner Schlechter will be holding a Curriculum Sub-Committee meeting on February 27, 2003 in State College, PA to discuss any additional information that will be addressed at the January 16, 2003 meeting at FTIG. In addition, the Sub-Committee will review the Simunition training scenarios that the members were asked to develop.

B. POLICY COMMITTEE

Chairman Straitiff reported that this committee did not meet. There is still one legal issue being developed involving the revised Commission Operational Policy. The committee will have this information for the next Commission meeting scheduled for March 11, 2003.

C. RANGE ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT

Chairman Straitiff reported that there is a meeting scheduled for January 16, 2003 at Indiantown Gap with the commander and legal council will also be in attendance. Some of the issues that are to be discussed at this meeting are funds, however the major issue for discussion will be who will pay for what, and other legal issues will be addressed as well. There was no new information from other counties interested in range development. Additional discussion followed.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

In Executive Director Kope's absence, Dan Klarsch presented the Executive Director's update. Mr. Klarsch reviewed the information that was sent to the Commissioner's in advance for this meeting. There was a schedule of the meeting dates for the remainder of 2003, and a list of the counties and departments that are carrying as of January 1, 2003 and a map showing how many officers in each county are carrying.

Also discussed was the application for PAPPC Conference that's taking place in May. This application has to be filled out and returned if the Commission intends to have someone be a speaker or have a booth set up. This form must be submitted by January 15, 2003. Chairman Straitiff indicated that the Commission would definitely sponsor a booth, and the question was raised as to whether there should be a Simunition overview. After brief discussion it was determined that a response should be sent back indicating that there would be a booth, and that we would do a presentation at the conference regarding Simunition training. Commissioner Schlechter will submit will complete the provided PAPPC application form and deliver the presentation.

Mr. Klarsch then presented a memo from the Executive Director regarding the purchase of plaques for former commissioners. In this memo it is pointed out by the Director of the Fiscal Management Division that the Commission could not use their funds because they are not directly related to firearms education and training and we cannot use Commonwealth funds because the Commissioners are not Commonwealth Employees. Legal Council indicated that the former commissioners are not employees and the Management Directive is for employees. It was decided to discuss this subject with the Executive Director, however Chairman Straitiff feels very strongly that it is more than appropriate to recognize these Commissioners for their service and if the Commonwealth does not supply the funds for these plaques, funding will be found elsewhere. The Commission would like to present these plaques at the PAPPC Conference in May.

Mr. Klarsch then presented two evaluation forms that were developed by the Executive Director. The forms will be to be used to evaluate instructors to determine whether they are to be granted Master Instructor status. One form will is to be used for Classroom evaluation and the other form will be used for Range evaluation. Commissioner Davis made the comment that the rating system is numbered from 1 – 5, with (1) being the lowest and (5) the highest. He feels there should be a more specific description to delineate what the scores actually mean, i.e. a descriptor of what the number stands for. Commissioner Davis will supply a new rating scale to be considered for these forms.

Mr. Klarsch then discussed a list, prepared by the Executive Director, of officers who did not meet the requirement to attend a mandatory In-Service Firearms Training. Letters were sent out to each individual officer via certified mail and in these letter they were advised that they were being given the opportunity to provide the Commission with more information and details regarding their inability to attend one of the In-Service Firearms Training classes. Their explanations would then be reviewed at this meeting and a determination of their status made based on their explanation, and they were, in fact, welcome to attend this meeting.

Discussion then followed on each letter as to why the training was not taken. It was decided by Chairman Straitiff to make a motion on each individual officer.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that the certification of Michelle Clark from Blair County be revoked until she can attend and successfully complete an In-Service Firearms Training and requalify. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that certification of Jeff Donnelly from Blair County be revoked until he can attend and successfully complete an In-Service Firearms Training and requalify. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Kimberly Cooper from Carbon County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Jolene Elliott from Clarion County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. Five Commissions voted to approve the motion; Commissioner Davis voted to disapprove the motion, the Commission approved the motion.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Clark that Susan Wolf from Columbia County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Schlechter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Nichole Scott from Dauphin County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Clark that certification of Kerry Stackhouse from Dauphin County be revoked until he can attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training and requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Maureen Zerbe from Dauphin County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Aloysius Munley from Lackawanna County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Clark that Carol Lasky from Somerset County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Schlechter that Steven Russel from Union County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Clark that Michelle Gawlinski from Venango County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Davis that Robert Murdock from Venango County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Chairman Straitiff seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Davis that Bruno Mediate from Westmoreland County be given an extension of time to 6/30/03 to attend and successfully complete the next available In-Service Firearms Training sponsored by the Commission and to requalify. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. A vote was taken and approved by the Commission.

Mr. Klarsch presented a copy of the financial report, showing a balance of \$988,193.29. The question was raised as to whether there is any other budget prepared, other than what is submitted to the Parole Board. Commissioner Clark stated that he would like to see a long term and short term budget projection, a real accounting of what is going on, an internal operating balance sheet, not just numbers. The Executive Director did present a more detailed budget breakdown at the previous meeting, however the Commissioners would like to see it broken down further. The Commission felt they should be projecting costs, and should be encumbering funds to meet those projected costs rather than have them sitting in one area. Also mentioned was a need to have a real meaningful financial report that everyone understands and can look at and compare information from meeting to meeting. Commissioner Straitiff requested that Mr. Klarsch get back to the Executive Director to create a budget that is more user friendly, easier to read and understand, and that measures what our current finances are against that budget to see how we're doing. Commissioner Clark mentioned that a simple software program like the ones used to run a small business would easily meet the Commission's needs

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no new business.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Klarsch presented the Commissioners with a list of 14 officers who no longer carry firearms. Certified letters were mailed to each indicating that their certification would be revoked on January 1, 2003. Also handed out to the Commissioners were the forms from the State Ethics Committee for the financial disclosure. This form needs to be filled out and returned to the Executive Director in the attached self-addressed envelope. Chairman Straitiff was not given a copy at this meeting, he indicated he would require a form; one will be sent to his attention

A negotiating committee was appointed to work with the Educational Resource Group. These members are as follows: Commissioners Young, Schlechter, Erickson and Davis and Linda Laub, Legal Council.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Young seconded it. A vote was taken and the motion to adjourn was approved.