



**Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission Meeting**  
**Thursday, Nov. 9th, 2023, at 10:00am**

Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy  
1650 State Rt. 56 S.W., London, Ohio 43140  
Meeting was held in the cafeteria.

**Minutes – November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

- A. Opening- Call to Order, Chair Sheriff Vernon Stanforth** called meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Chair Vernon Stanforth led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Ms. Denise Becerra called the roll call.

**Commissioners Present:**

Chair, Sheriff Vernon Stanforth  
Sheriff Michael Heldman  
Vice-Chair, Chief Clayton Harris  
Chief Robert Chabali  
Ms. Carol O'Brien  
SAC J. William Rivers

**Commissioners Absent:**

Lieutenant James Fitsko  
Colonel Charles Jones  
Ms. Wynette Carter-Smith  
Ms. Leah Amstutz

**Ms. Denise Becerra** confirmed there was a quorum with 6-Present, 4-Absent

**Attorney General Staff in Attendance:**

Judith Wilson, OPOTC Staff  
Denise Becerra - OPOTC Staff  
Teresa Coffey - OPOTC Staff  
Art DeLeon, Certification Specialist-OPOTA/C  
Elizabeth Fulton, OPOTC Staff  
Heather Cloutier, OPOTC Staff  
Arienne Fauber, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C  
Scott Spangler, Director of Advanced Training – OPOTA  
Courtney Delong, Director of Professional Standards - OPOTC  
Alexis Miller, Deputy Director of Curriculum- OPOTC  
Cynthia Peterson, Principal Assistant Attorney General- OPOTA/C  
Deana Leffler, Senior Assistant Attorney General – OPOTA/C  
Shelli Brock, Associate Attorney General- OPOTA/C  
Nicole Hendrix, Law Clerk- OPOTA/C  
Susan Boggs, Project Coordinator- OPOTA/C  
Robert Strausbaugh, Regional Provider Program Manager  
Jill Curry, Curriculum Design Specialist, OPOTA/C  
Kristen Samworth, OPOTC Staff  
Brittany Brashears, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C  
Carol Simon, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C  
Barbara Cain, OPOTC Staff  
Michael Walton – Senior Assistant Attorney General - AGO  
Bryan Lee- Senior Assistant Attorney General- AGO  
Thomas Quinlan, Assistant Executive Director- OPOTA/C

**Guests in Attendance:**

Sgt. Lon Etchison- Xenia Police Department  
Commander Al Bille- Great Oaks  
Captain Jeff Davis- Ohio State Highway Patrol  
Major Mike Kemmer- Ohio State Highway Patrol  
Director Steven Hammett- Tri-Academy  
Elijah Baiselen III- Tri County Academy  
Commander Ernie Oergel- Polaris Career Center  
Paul Hartinger- Great Oaks  
Sharon Montgomery- Ohio Traffic Safety Council  
William McGee- Cuyahoga County, Sheriff Deputy

Lieutenant Marc Dopp- Columbus Police Department  
Stephanie Stephenson- Columbus Police Department  
Commander Lowell Rector- Columbus Police Department  
Commander James Rease- Central Ohio Technical College  
David Wiseman- Delaware County Sheriff's Office  
Commander Bryan Cook- Greene County Academy

**Chair Stanforth** announced there was a set of minutes to approve.

**Motion: A motion for the approval of the Sept. 21st, 2023, minutes by Chief Clayton Harris. Chief Robert Chabali seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 6, No- 0, Absent- 4.**

## **B. Chair Report**

**Chair Stanforth** welcomed guests and asked everyone to identify themselves to know who was in attendance. He advised that the Director, Dwight Holcomb has retired, as of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. During this time the Deputy Executive Director, Thomas Quinlan, has been placed in the interim position as Executive Director of OPOTA/C. Appointing the new Executive Director is a combined effort from the Attorney General as well as from the commission body. There has been a process that has been outlined which was designed to be efficient. The Attorney General and the commission concur on the appointment of new Executive Director Thomas Quinlan. There have been situations where it has been non-contiguous, and the process was not followed properly which ultimately was an issue. Dave Yost and his staff have done the vetting and have made this transition a very efficient process. Dave Yost and his staff have brought a candidate which is being considered today. The intention was to start the process of an executive session, however after consultation with our legal counsel they have recommended starting an executive session if there is any discussion with the candidate being considered today. Otherwise, if there is not then we will move forward with the process of the appointment of Thomas Quinlan as the new Executive Director. Prior to this meeting the commissioners were sent a biography of Mr. Quinlan. Chair Stanforth stated he didn't need the bio because he already knew Mr. Quinlan. He stated that his career has been honorable, which eventually led him to Columbus Police Department. At CPD he moved through the ranks then moved to the training academy and then became the chief of police at Columbus Police Department. He is honored to call him a friend, a colleague. He stated it's his honor to enter the motion to approve Thomas Quinlan as the new Executive Director of the Ohio Peace Officer training Academy and the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission.

**Motion: A motion to approve Thomas Quinlan as the new Executive Director of OPOTA/C by Chair Stanforth. Chief Clayton Harris seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 6, No- 0, Absent- 4.**

**Chair Stanforth** stated it will open the floor for discussion. He advised that Thomas Quinlan will be available for any questions.

**Sheriff Heldman** asked what some of his thoughts, goals, or ideas that he has as director for the coming years.

**Thomas Quinlan** stated that he first wanted to first separate OPOTA into the academy side into two umbrellas. It will be Professional Standards and Curriculum which are the regulatory processes, and the other is the training and operation side. Therefore, with these two sections we will have two executive director positions who will be able to focus on the CPT matters as well as the regulatory side. He believes this will allow for better balance and efficiency. This will allow us to produce and process all the requests submitted in a timely matter. Hopefully this will meet the expectation for the law enforcement community. He is also looking at the delivery in the Advanced Training section. He confirmed that the basic training is well formatted, however advanced training is not as conducive for officers to timely training that is relevant or pressing matters. The idea is to have accessible training where officers don't have travel to a regional provider or to main campus be trained. The training would be accessible to a not limited number of officers versus be assessable to a larger number of officers. Additionally, while these officers are training, they are away from their agencies for a weeks' time which might not benefit their agencies. Their agencies might incur extra expenses due to their absence. We will be creating scenario-based training where they will be learning a skill set that all officers will receive therefore, they will be adopting the new training versus going back to how it was done before.

### **C. Continuing Professional Training Committee Report**

**Sheriff Heldman** stated there was nothing new to report for CPT.

**Chair Stanforth** stated that he encourages law enforcement agencies to submit their CPT hours to OPOTA as soon as possible. Please do not wait until December 31<sup>st</sup>, which could potentially put officers in jeopardy by placing them into cease function capacity. As of the last meeting there were approximately 600 agencies that still had not reported their CPT hours.

#### **D. Curriculum Committee Report**

**Sheriff Heldman** stated that the Curriculum Committee meeting was held prior to the Commission meeting. Discussion regarding the 2023 Canine Unit Evaluator Update. Due to updated legislation of House Bill 392. The updates are under patrol related certification which include handler protection section, which details the handler will command the canine to release verbally and physically using a lift or break to prove the handler has control. Also adding the “E- Collar signal” to terminate an apprehension during the “Terminate without Engagement”. Maintaining a Neutral Position section which details the replacement of “Apprehending a Subject who Discharges a firearm”. Previously the canine would have to apprehend a suspect, while the suspect fires blank rounds. It was determined that this is not realistic, the handler will not send their canine and risk it being injured or shot. Canines now must maintain a neutral position next to their handler, while the handler fires one blank round, away from the canine. Additionally Special-Purpose Certification includes marijuana which was removed from the list of narcotic substances for detection certification. Canines cannot differentiate between the smell of hemp and marijuana. Hemp has been legalized since the previous lesson plans. It has been indicated that there is a PowerPoint presentation to reflect the new lesson plan as well as a 24-hour course with an 8 hour 8-hour refresher by December 31, 2024.

**Motion: A motion to approve Canine Evaluator Training Updates by Sheriff Heldman. Chief Clayton Harris seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 6, No- 0, Absent- 4.**

#### **E. House Committee Report**

**Chair Stanforth** stated that the house committee did not meet. He did state that he would like the house committee to consider appointing the chair and the vice chair as well as establishing a quorum. Presently there are 10 commissioners which means we must establish 6 members to have a quorum. We do have the authority to establish our own quorum. The legal team can assist the house committee with establishing a new quorum. Additionally, the administrative code states that we need to meet 4 times a calendar year, it was exceeded this year out of necessity of the volume or work that was being done. Another issue to consider is that we have individuals who are traveling from far away attending a meeting which lasts approximately an hour. If the commission could consider meeting quarterly that would include the 4 mandated meetings a year. The calendar can be based off the 4 mandated meetings.

## **F. Legislative Committee Report**

**Chair Stanforth** asked if there is a legislative report? He stated there were topics that were discussed at the last meeting due to the new constitution amendments. There were major changes because of the change in legislation which we will continue to monitor.

**Chair Stanforth** stated we could move on to the Directors' report.

## **G. Commission and Academy Report**

**Director Quinlan** wanted to recognize some new advancements and new hires here at the academy since our last meeting. Stephanie Parish, who is a new Administrative Assistant II, Robert Strausbaugh who is our new Close to Home Regional Manager, Kristen Samworth who is an Administrative Professional II, he welcomed all our new employees. He stated that OPOTA has posted an instructor position in advance training for the third time. He advised it has been extremely difficult to find a candidate who is centralized to the main campus and able to be on sight every day. He asked the commission if they knew of any candidate with knowledge of firearms/subject control who they could recommend, the job posting will be up again, soon. Additional positions that need to be filled are the E-Learning Design Specialist position as well as the Curriculum Design Specialist position. The Annual Law Enforcement Conference has concluded, which there have been recommendations for changes in the future.

**Project Coordinator Susan Boggs** stated that the Law Enforcement Conference successfully concluded with one minor issue, which was the city-wide power outage. The presenter Dan Rooney was able to finish his presentation without any issues as well as the breakout sessions. There were 400 attendees and of that amount 211 were full conference attendees.

**Director Quinlan** stated that he is hoping for some changes for the 2024 Law Enforcement. There has been suggestions to open the award submissions year-round as well as nominations year-round as well as expanding the award categories. Hopefully these suggestions can help with attendance.

**Director of Professional Standards Courtney DeLong** stated that as of this morning approximately 16,000 officers have not reported their CPT hours. Approximately 7,000 officers have not reported any CPT hours for the year. She stated that she will be working with the regional providers to make visits to these agencies who have not reported any CPT hours. She was concerned and does not want these agencies to completely fall into cease function status. A final warning letter will be sent to those officers who are out of compliance. Hopefully by the end of the week the SME's will be working with us to offer the Canine Evaluator course.

**Chair Stanforth** asked if there was anything the commission could do to urge the agencies to report their CPT hours.

**Director of Professional Standards Courtney DeLong** advised that the commission could share the information with any agencies who have not reported it yet.

**Chair Stanforth** stated he doesn't know what relationship we have with the chiefs; however, we could contact them now. Currently, we have entered a critical time. We have 45 days remaining in the year and police officers will be in cease function status. He believes it would be a good idea to reach out to the BSSA and have them communicate the situation to everyone.

**Director Quinlan** stated that the process to report CPT hours has changed. In the past, the agencies had to send in the information in an excel spreadsheet. Our staff then had to review that information and transfer that information line by line. It could potentially take a few months before we could realize an officer was in cease function. OPOTA has improved its technology, which agencies can now report their training online. OPOTA now has the technology and will know on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, which officers have not completed the training and are in cease function status.

**Sheriff Heldman** advised that next week the BSSA has their annual meeting and would like Courtney DeLong to send him the informational breakdown therefore, he could present this to the Sheriffs at the meeting.

**Chair Stanforth** believes that officers are not out of compliance. He believes that the coordinator or the individual who is assigned has not reported the officer's information to the agency. He believes that these individuals are waiting until the last minute to report, thinking that it could be done within a day. If these are large agencies who have a lot of officers will not be able to report the CPT hours within a day. He believes the best way to report the CPT hours incrementally.

**Director Quinlan** informed that an incentive for agencies to report the CPT hours quarterly is that the agencies will get reimbursed quarterly. If they do this, they will get their funding

earlier in the year instead of waiting until the end of the year. Agencies can report hours that were completed during that quarter. Then, report the remaining hours throughout the year.

**Chair Stanforth** stated that he was confused, he thought that all 24 hours needed to be reported once all 24 hours were completed.

**Director Quinlan** confirmed that was incorrect. He stated that the CPT hours can be reported as you go. Therefore, if an officer has hypothetically completed 8 hours, the agency can report those hours and report the remaining hours later. The portal is designed to deduct the amount of time and know the difference regarding the reimbursement. Our finance department would prefer agencies to report quarterly.

**Deputy Director of Curriculum Alexis Miller** informed that they are currently receiving applications for the Curriculum Design Specialist and well as E-Learning positions. The E-Learning position is looking for an individual who has experience in the systems that OPOTA utilizes to make it a more streamlined process. Once Dr. Erica Wilson has returned, they will start conducting interviews. The 2024 CPT lesson plans are currently done. There are 3 lesson plans that have been completed and are currently being reviewed by our legal department. Once approved by legal they will be uploaded online, however its contingent on being able to hire someone for the E-Learning position.

**Advanced Training Director Scott Spangler** advised that the project for the indoor and outdoor range at the Tactical Training Center has started. Once that project is completed the range will be fully enclosed range. A visit was made to the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy to see their indoor range, which had been modernized recently. This visit was to get an idea of how we would like to proceed with ours. The range will be closed starting in March. Therefore, we will make accommodations to work around the closure. Two ranges will still be available for those training that have to be completed. The firearms instructor position has been posted. Once this position is filled, they will be fully staffed. He mentioned that there are new projects that are currently being discussed.

**Senior Attorney Deanna Leffler** reiterated that CPT lesson plans are being reviewed. They are also creating the legal updates as well as reviewing all the CPT approvals that are being sent in for approval. The vacancy for the E-Learning position will affect any online training for CPT lessons plans. The lesson plans will not be available online in January as anticipated due to the vacancy. Legal is also reviewing Advanced Training lesson plans due to new courses being developed as well as older courses which have never been reviewed by legal. She also informed that all CPT approval requests should be sent in my December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. That will allow legal a 30-day time frame to review them and either approve or not approve. Additionally, any agency who requests an extension will need to do so prior to December 15<sup>th</sup>. If those requests are not sent in and approved by the executive director by December



15<sup>th</sup> the individual will be in cease function status on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Public records continue to be sent in at an astonishing rate.

**Regional Provider Program Manager Robert Strausbaugh** stated he visited all the regional providers and drafted the MOU terms. He also stated that he had a meeting with all the regional providers, which had never been done before. He stated that he has been working closely with communications to update the AGO website with the regional providers information. He advised that he quickly realized that nowhere on the AGO website was there information on the Close to Home partnership with the regional providers. Hopefully by the end of the month communication will have that information reflected on the AGO website. The information that will be accessible via the AGO website will be each regional provider's link to access their academy as well as advance training information. He is also trying to streamline the reimbursement process due to the confusion of the documents. Updating the instructor information for each regional provider was important, therefore he has updated that reporting process. Instructor information will be updated every six months therefore scheduled for January and July every year. The form will include their instructor's information, the course that is being taught as well as how they meet the requirements per ORC. This process will be beneficial because OPOTA will be able to confirm the instructor's information to teach at the regional locations. He stated that he reached out to the Regional Providers for help with filling vacant positions at OPOTA. He stated that there are students in the Criminal Justice career that might want to apply for jobs at OPOTA.

**Assistant Director Thomas Quinlan** mentioned that the Virtual Reality filming has been completed and is currently in post-production with Ohio University. There are currently 160 headsets which will be able to be distributed around and blend these into different courses for advanced training as well as basic training. The 59 academies that are within Ohio, 43 of them have recruit classes in progress with 115 recruits in those classes. Those numbers give a better understanding of how many academies are functioning and how many officers are currently attending those academies. Former Director Holcomb received 9 requests for CPT extensions prior to his departure. There are currently 30 pending CPT requests, of which 21 of those are military and 9 are due to injury or long-term illnesses. Therefore, the total for the year is approximately 39. The Blue-Ribbon Task Force has met and one of the main topics is the physical fitness test. There was a recommendation to implement a scoring system. He stated he challenged the individual to submit a proposal with the research and validity to support the recommendation. The Ohio State University has submitted a proposal to conduct a study on what law enforcement officers need to have in Ohio for a physical fitness test. He believes that it's the assumption that the standard will be decreased or easier. The results could increase from where the standard currently is, therefore, we need to be careful. If we do make that partnership with The Ohio State University, we need to take into consideration that the result might not be what we anticipate, we would have to accept the

results and implement them. Hopefully the Blue-Ribbon Task Force plans to have recommendations by January 2024.

## **H. New Business**

**Chairman Stanforth** asked if there was any new business to discuss. Confirming there were none he moved to the next item on the agenda.

## **I. Old Business**

**Chairman Stanforth** asked if there was any old business to discuss. Confirming there were none he moved to the next item on the agenda.

## **J. Open Forum**

**Commander, Great Oaks Paul Hartinger** stated that he has a couple of suggestions for CPT reporting. He stated that he has met with chiefs in South-west Ohio and reiterated how important it is to report all the training for their officers. He has also helped with showing them step by step how to report via the portal. He stated that he is glad to help and will be attending the OACP meeting and will mention this to everyone attending. He also suggested reaching out to associations that manage these Chief and have their bosses encourage them to complete the CPT reporting. Additionally, he believes that OPOTA should mandate that all chiefs and sheriffs go through CPT training.

**Carol O'Brien** stated that if chiefs need help, they need to ask. She stated that the information has been provided to them and even when reminders are sent, they respond with not so friendly emails. She does believe that the chiefs need training in the CPT reporting.

**Chairman Stanforth** stated that former Director Holcomb did a tremendous job in communicating all this information. Unfortunately, the chiefs will only hear what they want and act upon it when they want. Holcomb did a lot of traveling throughout the state and made it clear to law enforcement and we are still having these issues.

**Commander, Great Oaks Paul Hartinger** stated he wants to have chiefs and sheriffs on the same page. He will do as much as he can to help.

**Chairman Stanforth** stated that whoever needs to be notified to get this done on time, will be notified even if it's the appointing authority. He mentioned if we need to notify the prosecutor we will.

**Carol O'Brien** confirmed that they were notified. She stated it was mentioned at a meeting.

**LT. Marc Dopp Columbus Police Department** stated that he is requesting that Pearson VUE request purchase orders. He also stated it has been very complicated to work with.

**Chairman Stanforth** stated that the reason Pearson VUE was selected to make it easier.

**Director Quinlan** requested that OPOTA legal staff reach out to Pearson VUE and review the contract and see if we can negotiate with them to accept purchase orders. They need to know that there are funding requirements that don't work as smooth as with private institutions.

**Ernie Oergel Polaris Career Center** stated that he has also had issues with Pearson VUE, and they eventually gave up. He confirmed that each cadet must now pay for their own test because it has been an issue and not worth the hassle. He also recommended having chiefs learn how to submit an SF400/SF401 via the portal, because a lot of them have no idea how to do so. He is also requesting to have advanced notice of when the curriculum will be changed or updated. He would like to have the ability to object to any major curriculum changes. He had questions on why he cannot receive information on Web checks for cadets in his academies.

**Chairman Stanforth** what is allowed to be disclosed to the academies and the applicant. And how long does it take for the academies to notify the individual that they are disqualified due to what is in his Computerized Criminal History. Additionally, does the individual know what it will reflect and is only allowing time to pass knowing they will be disqualified. An easier solution to this would be to not accept anyone into the academy until they have, they physically have the CCH and can provide it to the academy.

**Deana Leffler Senior Assistant Attorney General** agreed with Chairman Stanforth.

**Ernie Oergel Polaris Career Center** stated that it's frustrating because there is a gray area and with sealed records or expungements it becomes difficult to know what is acceptable or not. He now understands it determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Chairman Stanforth** stated that those restrictions are not done by OPOTA they are done by the legislature.

**David Wiseman Delaware County Sheriff's Office** wanted to thank the commission for what they have done with CPT. Especially allowing agencies to receive pre-approvals with lesson plans, that has helped tremendously. He thanked staff for their responsiveness and stated that CPT has been a continuing issue with law enforcement.

**Sgt. Lon Etchison Xenia Police Department** wanted to compliment OPOTA staff on the pre-approvals. He stated he has submitted 5 or 6 and the staff is always quick to send them back. He is requesting the expansion of the requirements for instructors due to him having issues with individuals not having the requirements completed to be an approved instructor for those CPT hours.

**Director Quinlan** stated that only applies if you would like CPT credit for the course. The advanced training courses, you can decide who teaches those. He advised that the instructor skill course should be reviewed therefore, there might be changes in the future.

**Sgt. Lon Etchison Xenia Police Department** wanted to inform the commissioners that there is some confusion on the CCW law. He sees the confusion regarding the 18 U.S.C. and prosecutors in his area have not done a great job in educating them on the federal statute of the law. He recommends that the commission recommend a legal update for this topic in the future.

**Director Quinlan** thanked him for pointing out this issue and will note it for future discussion.

**Chairman Stanforth** asked if there was anything else that can be considered for approval of the instructor.

**Director Quinlan** stated that is the course that is set out by OPOTA to train instructional skills, unless approved by the executive director. He stated OPOTA will look at that and see what modification can be made.

**Chairman Stanforth** asked if someone from out of state can come and teach in Ohio?

**Director Quinlan** confirmed that they cannot for Basic or for CPT, only for advanced training. If the individual wants it to count toward CPT credit hours and to have a reimbursement, they must meet the criteria and code.

**Chairman Stanforth** stated that they must meet our code or criteria.

## **K. Adjournment**

**Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Stanforth. The motion was seconded by Carol O'Brien. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 6, No- 0, Absent- 4.**

**The meeting stands adjourned.**

**Time: 11:36 a.m.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Vernon P. Stanforth". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Chair Vernon Stanforth**

**These transcripts are not verbatim. Audio recordings are available on request.**