



Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission Meeting July 14, 2022

Held at 1650 State Rt. 56 S.W., London, Ohio 43140

Meeting was held in the cafeteria

Minutes – July 14, 2022

A. Opening- Call to Order, Chair Sheriff Vernon Stanforth called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Chief Clayton Harris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Lopez-DeLaet called the roll call.

Commissioners Present:

Chair, Sheriff Vernon Stanforth

Vice-Chair, Chief Clayton Harris

Ms. Leah Amstutz

Chief George Kral

Lieutenant James Fitsko

Sheriff Michael Heldman

Ms. Wynette Carter-Smith

Commissioners Absent:

Colonel Richard Fambro

Ms. Carol O'Brien

Ms. Lopez-DeLaet confirmed there was a quorum with 7-Present, 2-Absent

Attorney General Staff in Attendance:

Mr. Dwight Holcomb, Executive Director- OPOTC/A

Mr. Richard Hardy, Assistant Executive Director- OPOTC/A

Michael Walton - Associate Assistant Attorney General - AGO

Garrett Anderson - Assistant Attorney General- AGO

Scott Spangler, Director of Advanced Training – OPOTA

Courtney Delong, Director of Professional Standards - OPOTC

Scott Reinbolt, Program Administrator - OPOTC

Laura Lopez-DeLaet - OPOTC Staff
Teresa Coffey - OPOTC Staff
Dustin Lazzarine - AGO staff
Sean Smith - OPOTC staff
Arienne Fauber- OPOTC Staff
Brittany Brashears- OPOTC Staff
Carol Simon - OPOTC Staff
Arturo De Leon- OPOTC Staff

Guests in Attendance:

Sharon Montgomery - Ohio Traffic Safety Council
David Koepke - North Central State College
Brad Copeland - North Central State College
Ernie Oergel - Polaris Police Academy
Mark Lang - Columbus Police Department
Brian Grisham - IADLEST
Jamie Tavano - Tri-C Public Safety Training Center
John Altman - Ohio State Highway Patrol

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

Motion: A motion for the approval of the May 12, 2022 minutes by Vice-Chair Harris. Sheriff Heldman seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 7, Absent- 2.

B. Chair Report

Chair Stanforth spoke about his time as President of the National Sheriff's Association. He spoke of interacting with Congress and the White House. He talked about their work with the Department of Justice and dealing with consent decrees. Some of the goals were to put a deadline on consent decrees, and to make the individual who is overseeing the consent decree more accountable on making sure the agencies are coming into compliance.

Chair Stanforth stated that he was approached by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund to represent the sheriffs on the board of directors. He stated in the two meetings he has already attended he has found out there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes for every line of duty death this nation suffers. Stanforth said their goal is to reach out to all the states, all the sheriffs, and all the police departments when there is a line of duty death and get that information expedited.

C. Continuing Professional Training Committee Report

Sheriff Heldman stated he had nothing to report.

Director Holcomb gave a summary of CPT for 2022. He stated OPOTA Online has content completely filled for topics 1-7. For those topics there is actually more than 28 hours of available content. He stated that they just recently issued a 3rd update to the CPT bulletin that is posted on the CPT website. The bulletin lists what classes and credits are available. The bulletin is the best source of up-to-date information for CPT.

Director Holcomb stated that the Online staff has had over 1,800 queries in the last month either setting up new online accounts or helping with issues to current accounts. Since the launch of OPOTA Online just over a year ago we have had over 200,000 course completions on the site. Most of those have been since CPT started in January. In the month of June alone, there were 61,000 course completions.

The Education and Policy section has received 365 CPT pre-approval applications for agencies that want to create or use third party providers to train within their agencies.

Chair Stanforth asked what we had to look forward to for next year's CPT requirements?

Director Holcomb stated that what we know so far is, the Funding Committee meet in January through March and their recommendation to the General Assembly was to fund up to 40 hours of CPT per year. That amount could be anywhere from 40 to 60 million. That is currently with the General Assembly and we are just waiting to hear of movement on the issue.

Chair Stanforth asked if there was still an October deadline?

Director Holcomb stated the October deadline was for at least what we do to put something out for CPT, but we are unsure of what the legislature is going to do. So, if they come back in November with some guidance and funding, we will be moving very quickly.

D. Curriculum Committee Report

Sheriff Heldman stated the curriculum committee did not meet earlier that day.

E. House Committee Report

Director Holcomb stated there was no meeting held.

F. Legislative Committee Report

Lieutenant James Fitsko stated with summer break there was nothing to report. However, they would keep an eye on CPT funding, and try to do what they can to push that issue forward.

G. Commission and Academy Report

Director Holcomb reported some new staffing positions. Art DeLeon was recently hired as a new Certification Specialist in the Professional Standards section, and Scott Spangler is the new Director of Advanced Training. Both men were present and gave a brief summary of their professional backgrounds. Kim Eggerton the E-Learning Design Specialist recently resigned in order to seek new opportunities. She waited until all the CPT content was completed before accepting her new position. Therefore, we will be working with a third-party vendor for now to help develop or produce any new online content until the position is filled.

The Attorney General's staffing committee recently approved a few new positions for OPOTC/A. There will be a posting for a new attorney, and an administrative professional in our legal section. There is currently a posting for an instructor for the Advanced Training section.

Director Holcomb introduced Brian Grisham who works for the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training. Director Holcomb explained that the Attorney General wanted OPOTC to take a look at their process on the compliance side of the house and how they interact with academies, and how paperwork is processed.

Brian Grisham gave a brief summary of his background in Tennessee. He stated that he was here to perform an audit and asked that any Commissioners or Academy Commanders who had time to talk with him to please get with him after the meeting.

Director Holcomb reminded everyone that the 2022 Attorney General's Law Enforcement Conference was scheduled for October 6-7th in downtown Columbus at the Hyatt.

Director Holcomb gave an update on the Star Academy Program. He stated that just a few weeks ago the Polaris Career Center was awarded the Star Academy designation. With the Polaris Career Center designation, it brought the total number of designees up to ten. There are two more that have already been approved and are awaiting presentations. Those are Lorain County Community College and Hocking College.

Director Holcomb gave a brief update on the OPOTA Portal. He reminded the audience this was the place to go for registration for in-person classes, and officers can view their records. He also stated that the public records portion is currently being worked on by IT, and the hope is it will be available this fall.

Scott Spangler gave an update on the Advanced Training section. He stated that they are looking at track improvements in August as well as some building improvements to the Tactical Training Center. He invited anyone who had an interest to stop by for a tour. Mr. Spangler also said that staff is currently working on putting together their planning schedules for the 2023 calendar year.

Director Holcomb stated that part of the improvements that Mr. Spangler was referring to is the track and skid pad are getting completely repaved. The state is putting a lot of funding into making sure the facility stays good. They are looking at potentially enclosing the outdoor range and making it an indoor range, which would allow us to operate it year-round.

Scott Reinbolt gave an update on regional providers. He stated that currently regional providers have 25 courses on the books for both CPT and Advanced training. Mr. Reinbolt said that the registration for in-person CPT training had been a little disappointing due to the popularity of the online training. They are anticipating an increase at the end of the year for anyone who waited to finish their CPT requirements.

Chair Stanforth asked if someone could explain what is the process for prior equivalency and certification turnaround? He stated that he recognized there is not a staff of 20 working on these, but that a lot of people seem to get frustrated by the timeframes.

Courtney DeLong responded that the prior equivalency process has not changed that much. The only thing that has changed is that the applicant does not need to be appointed with a law enforcement agency to request the determination. There are two different types.

- 1) More than five years officer experience, - everyone has the same requirement. Everyone is going to be assigned approximately 176 standard hours.
- 2) Less than five years officer experience- the officer has to provide us all the information from the training that they received from the state they are coming from. Sometimes it can be difficult for the officers to get that information. We do an hour by hour comparison of the training they received in their academy compared to what is currently being taught in our academy. Once we complete the review we assign the training determination telling the officer how many hours they need.

That process is the same, and the turnaround time is the same. There are four certification specialists to cover the whole state. Currently there is an uptick in the number of prior equivalency requests because we removed the requirement for the appointment. Ms. DeLong stated we have a lot of people inquiring about what they need to do to come to Ohio. There is more volume now, but the process remains the same.

Director Holcomb mentioned another key part is the testing. When a candidate would come from another state they would take the required hours, and then be required to take the entire state certification exam. The exam covered all 740 hours of curriculum. The new exam that is being developed will cover the topics and curriculum that they were required to go over. We could be looking at 70 some questions rather than 200. This is being worked on right now and should be out in the near future.

Sheriff Heldman talked about a situation with an officer who had Ohio Peace Officer training, moved to another state, and then wanted to come back to Ohio. He stated the officer

called and was told that he had been out of Ohio for more than four years, and would be required to take the whole academy over again.

Courtney DeLong stated that was incorrect. They can not use the officer's experience from Ohio if they have had a break in service over four years, but that they would use the experience from the state the officer was currently in. Depending how much time the officer has in the current state would determine the type of prior equivalent they would fall under. It may be the 176 hours or it may be the hour by hour.

Mark Lang asked if you have two years of Ohio service and three years in another state do you count that as five years? He also asked if there were any states that are an exception, that wouldn't be counted even if you have more than five years?

Courtney DeLong answered the first question, it would depend on when the officer left Ohio, if it has been more than four years it would be like that officer didn't serve. We are only going to take into consideration where the officer served in the last four years. To the second question Ms. DeLong answered no.

Arienne Fauber stated another issue that may be causing a delay are that web check processes are not being done correctly. Those results need to be marked direct copy for law enforcement purposes. We cannot accept print outs that say no hits. It has to be done a certain way in order for us to accept the web check.

Chair Stanforth asked is the system error proof, that if you hit the drop box it would automatically send it to the agency and not the applicant?

Arienne Fauber stated it is the web check location that you have to make sure is selected properly. The person doing the web check needs to select the correct box so that it is sent direct copy.

Brittany Brashears stated another issue is that people put in the request for the prior equivalency and then make several inquiries about where the process is currently. People need to understand the turn around on the request could take a couple of weeks to complete.

Courtney DeLong reminded everyone that the three people who are currently doing the process are not only doing prior equivalencies, but also responsible for all academy paperwork, notices of appointment, separations and all instructor and commander applications. They work on items in the order they were received.

Brad Copeland stated that the service he receives is very prompt. He stated he has no complaints. Which was seconded by Mark Lang.

Courtney DeLong said another issue that can cause delays are with federal transfers. She stated it is hard to get records from federal agencies.

Chair Stanforth asked the question with Ohio having the four-year service rule, does anyone know about other states? Are other states timeframes comparable?

Brian Grisham stated the average is four years. Tennessee is seven years others could be zero, but four years is the nationwide average.

H. New Business

Chair Stanforth asked if there was any new business to discuss. Hearing none, that concluded the new business report.

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J. Guest Forum

Ernie Oergel stated that he understood that OPOTA was short staffed. He asked that since commander applications, instructor applications, and other forms were sent to a general e-mail box, is there was a way to get a response back that the applications had been received? He stated that would help them to know that if there is a delay they know at least the information was received.

Mr. Oergel also spoke about Pearson Vue. He stated that he found out that they only have one financial person in the United States and one financial person working in India. He had reached out to them with a financial issue and the worker in America was on vacation and the worker in India was sleeping due to time zones. He was surprised they only had two financial employees for a company that large.

Asst. Director Richard Hardy stated that if any academy is having issues with Pearson Vue to please reach out to OPOTA right away. OPOTA has a direct contact with program managers, account managers as well as the vice president responsible for the OPOTA relationship. We have had some infrequent issues come up, and have been able to resolve them very quickly. Please use your primary contact as the SCE Coordinator, Kim Buehler. Please include specifics such as who you contacted, what the response was, e-mail chains. Any specific information you can provide will help us address the issue quicker.

Chair Stanforth asked how long we had been working with Person Vue? He asked if maybe by the next commission meeting we could have a recap of how the first year has gone?

Director Holcomb stated they could get something together.

Chair Stanforth spoke about an e-mail thread dealing with physical fitness. The thread not only spoke to the Cooper standard to get in, but also about maintaining throughout your career. He said he is guessing that most agencies have their own standards. He said the comments in the thread came from different states. Some have state physical fitness standards throughout the officers' career, and most of them have agency mandated standards throughout the officers' career. He said he was sure this was a topic the commission had discussed previously, but he wasn't sure it was ever brought back up?

Director Holcomb stated it was an issue currently being worked on by staff. They are getting an SME (subject matter expert) group put together to discuss physical fitness, especially for basic academy and entry level.

Chair Stanforth asked if there was discussion on not just the beginning but throughout the officer's career?

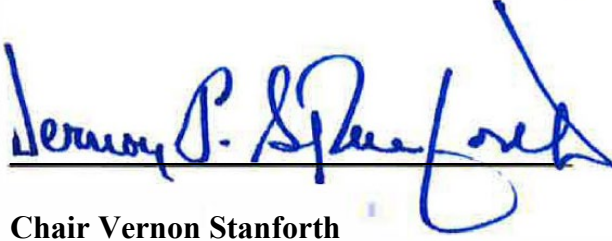
Director Holcomb stated that there was not. He said that would be difficult with so many bargaining unit agreements around the state.

K. Adjournment

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Wynette Carter-Smith The motion was seconded by Chief Kral. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 7, Absent- 2.

The meeting stands Adjourned.

Time: 10:52 a.m.



Chair Vernon Stanforth

These transcripts are not verbatim. Audio recordings are available upon request.