



THE OHIO PEACE OFFICER TRAINING COMMISSION- OPOTC Meeting

Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy  
1650 State Route 56 S.W., London, Ohio 43140

Minutes  
February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vernon Stanforth at 10:14 a.m. in the cafeteria of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, London, Ohio.

The following members attended the meeting:

**Voting Members**

Sheriff Vernon Stanforth  
Sheriff Thomas Kochert  
Chief Andrew Powers  
Chief Robert Chabali  
Colonel Charles Jones  
Lieutenant James Fitsko  
Wynette Carter-Smith  
SAC Gregory Nelsen

**Non-voting Members**

Beth Fligner, AG

**Absent**

Carol O'Brien  
Leah Amstutz

**Staff**

Erica Wilson  
Art DeLeon  
Brittany Brashears  
Thomas Quinlan  
Robert Graziano  
Melissa Day  
Anthony Traska  
John Bates  
Cathy Abbott

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 10:14 a.m.

Chairman Vernon Stanforth moved to approve the November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, OPOTC minutes. Without objection the motion was approved with a vote of 8-0.

Chairman Vernon Stanforth welcomed the newly appointed commission members, as well as staff in attendance. He further noted that the commission is preparing to extend its appreciation and bid farewell to SAC Gregory Nelsen and Lieutenant James Fitsko in recognition of their forthcoming retirements. He stated there was nothing to report for the Chairperson report.

Sheriff Thomas Kochert advised that the CPT Subcommittee met earlier and discussed the 2027 CPT Topics.

Director Thomas Quinlan advised that a significant number of officers were in cease functioning due to CPT errors or misreporting, often caused by confusion about how the training should be categorized. The proposed 2027 CPT Plan is as follows:

(See Memorandum- Proposed 2027 CPT Plan for Consideration by Commission)

### **Legal- 2 HRS**

Legal topics must cover materials that have been released in the last 3 years and originate from sources that impact Ohio peace officers such as:

U.S. Supreme Court Cases  
6th Circuit Court Decisions  
Ohio Supreme Court Cases  
Ohio Legislature  
Federal Legislature

### **Situational Decision-Making Familiarization (BRTF) 2 HRS**

Sit-D, developed by the University of Chicago as a 16-hour certification course has recently been released in Ohio with a train-the-trainer program. There are currently at least 24 trainers in Ohio. This 2-hour course is meant to ensure all peace officers understand the concepts taught in this course. This looks at how the police officer is responding to a scene base on internal triggers. This will be available online or in person. Interested officers are encouraged to pursue a full certification course if desired.

### **ICAT Familiarization (BRTF) 2HRS**

ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics, published by the Police Executive Research Forum) training is now standard and required in all POBT academies. This is a familiarization for all Ohio Peace Officers.

There will be multiple paths for peace officers to acquire the remaining 18 hours of training.

- OPOTA will post online training courses that support our Cinematic Virtual Reality Training series. These courses are comprised of 8 training hours from series 1, 6 hours from series 2, and 7 hours from series 3. The course offerings total 21 hours of training materials. Combined with the 6 mandatory hours online there will be more than 24 hours of training materials readily available.
- All OPOTA courses delivered in person are CPT credited. There are over 100 courses and hundreds of hours of training available.
- Third-party providers continue to generate a large pool of training opportunities. For reference, in 2025, OPOTA approved 1,716 courses totaling over 8,000 hours of training, all available for CPT credit and reimbursement.

Agencies will have multiple options provided which will allow chiefs and sheriffs to decide what training needs best fit their agency, their community, and their officers to satisfy hours 7 – 24+. Reporting of CPT hours will be limited to 3 categories, all counting towards the required 24 hours.

A motion to approve the 2027 Continued Professional Training plan of 6 mandatory hours with 18 hours required at agency direction.

**Sheriff Thomas Kochert moved to adopt the proposed 2027 CPT Plan. Colonel Charles Jones seconded the motion. Motion was approved with a vote of 8-0.**

Dr. Erica Wilson presented the Basic Training Program Changes and the Curriculum Update Release for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 (reference attached document):

**Peace Officer Basic Training – Curriculum Code BAS045:**

- Curriculum Update Release
- 12 lesson plans totaling 109 hours reviewed/updated
- 0 hours added

**1-3 Fundamentals of the CJS:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs increased by 1

**2-2A Crimes Against Persons:** Full review and content update; number of SPOs decreased by 2; Separate game show PPT created

**5-1 Driving:** Full review and content updated/completed with instructor courses running in 2026; POBT update to be released 01.01.2027 and curriculum code will be assigned at that time.

**7-2 Critical Injury First Aid:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs decreased by 1.

**8-2 Companion Animal Encounters:** Full review and content updated

**8-9 Booking & Handling:** Full review and content updated

**10-4 Traffic Crash Investigation:** Full review and content updated

**11-1 Crime Scene:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs increased by 1

**11-11 Lineups:** Full review and content updated

**11-12 Gambling:** Full review and content updated

**11-15 Interview & Interrogation:** Full review and content updated

**12-2 Critical Incident Stress Awareness:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs decreased by 1.

**Private Security Basic Training – Curriculum Code PSA041**

- Curriculum Update Release
- 5 lesson plans totaling 20 hours reviewed/updated
- 0 hours added

**1-2 Role of Private Security:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs decreased by 1

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**2-1 Overview of the CJS:** Full review and content updated

**4-2 Report Writing:** Non-discretionary update

**4-3 Interviews:** Full review and content updated

**5-1 Loss Prevention:** Full review and content updated

**Corrections Basic Training – Curriculum Code CBT038**

- Curriculum Update Release
- 3 lesson plans totaling 7 hours reviewed/updated
- 0 hours added

**2-1 Overview of the CJS:** Full review and content updated

**2-4 Overview of Full Service & Release:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs increased by 2; OAC coding changes by JCARR

**3-3 Admission Classification & Release:** Full review and content updated

**Jailer Basic Training – Curriculum Code JBT037**

- Curriculum Update Release
- 2 lesson plans totaling 3 hours reviewed/updated
- 0 hours added

**2-3 Overview of the 12 Day Standards:** Full review and content updated; number of SPOs increased by 2

**3-3 Admissions and Release:** Full review and content updated

**After detailed explanation of the Basic Training Program Changes and the Curriculum Update Release for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, the Commission moved to vote. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

The committee reviewed the document, Introduction to ORC/OAC new definitions. The reason for this request is due to the OACP and the BSSA stating that there currently isn't a structure for what OPOTA recognizes as a patrol rifle. As part of our ongoing commitment to staying current with adjoining states and for clear definition of specific firearms and use within OPOTC. These terms will explicitly help guide Law Enforcement for training and certifications.

(reference attached document- Memorandum- Introduction to ORC/OAC new definitions)

**After detailed explanation of the ORC/OAC new definitions 2026, the Commission moved to vote on establishing definitions in the OAC regarding firearms. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

Colonel Charles Jones stated there was nothing to report on for the House Committee. Chairman moved on to the Commission and Academy Report.

Nothing to report for the Legislative Committee.

Director Thomas Quinlan advised of the retirement of Assistant Executive Director Richard Butsko and confirmed that Anthony Traska is the Interim Assistant Executive Director. He provided an update on new hires and vacancies currently at OPOTA.

Art DeLeon provided all the statistics and updates for Professional Standards.

Brittany Breshears provided statistics and updates for Continued Professional Training.

Robert Strausbaugh provided updates for Advanced Training and new information on Crisis Response Canines.

Deputy Metz provided detailed information about the use of canines for crisis response.

Director Thomas Quinlan confirmed that there have been officers around the state using canines for crises response without any training. OPOTA will be offering training at the academy as well as providing an evaluation which will create a module to use throughout the state. OPOTA will have its first class of certifying canines in Crisis Response. This will occur under the definitions rule, 109:2-7-01. The term "special purpose canine" is any canine which performs one or more of the following: (1) Tracking (2) Explosive detection (3) Narcotic detection (4) Article detection (5) Any other special purpose designated by the general assembly or the commission. He is asking that the commission designate a special purpose canine as a Crisis Response Canine.

Lt. James Fitsko asked if this would apply to courts who have their own canines.

Director Thomas Quinlan confirmed that this rule would apply to any agency who the commission regulates. The court would set their rules and what is acceptable in their courtroom. However, the canines that are trained by OPOTA would be trained to meet those criteria.

**A motion was made to expand OAC Rule 109:2-7-01 to include definitions and certification under special purpose canine for Crisis Response K-9's. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

Caty Abbott discussed rule changes 109:2-5-04, 109:2-5-05, 109:2-5-06 being proposed for recommendation for initial filing.

(See Rule 109:2-5-5 Year Rule Review Changes)

**Motion was made to recommend the initial filing of the three proposed rules changes to the Attorney General (109:2-5-04, 109:2-5-05, 109:2-5-06). Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

Director Quinlan stated there was an issue that was created, in part, due to the General Assembly's passage of out of state licensing regulations. Passage of that law, designed to create a path for out of state certification, inadvertently created an issue for troopers because it invalidated the prior equivalent framework OPOTC had been using for years. The same prior equivalency code sections that OPOTC used for out of state applicants ([Rule 109:2-1-12 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws](#)) was used to support appointment of troopers who eventually decided wanted to work as commissioned peace officers. This has left us in uncharted waters.

A replacement framework in the Administrative Code is necessary to clarify that there still is a path for troopers to be appointed as peace officers.

- Division B of [Section 109.77 - Ohio Revised Code | Ohio Laws](#) says no one can receive an original appointment as a peace officer, on a permanent basis, unless they receive a certificate of completion of basic training program from the executive director.
- The basic training program has, as a requirement, passage of the state certification exam
- All out of state law enforcement who wish their prior training to count must still pass the State Certification Exam.

We would like the commission to recommend rules that would provide a similar path to receiving a certificate for in-state troopers as we use for out-of-state law enforcement. It has worked well so far and imposes minimal barriers to Ohio's troopers becoming peace officers.

The rule which we would ask the commission to recommend would provide troopers can be issued an equivalency certificate if they have successfully completed the following:

- The highway patrol academy
- Passed the state certification examination within 2 tries (just like standard cadets and out of state applicants)
- Left the patrol in good standing
- If they have a break in service of 1 year or greater (between OSHP employment and peace officer appointment)
  - They complete the refresher course required of peace officers with the same length of break in service

Complete the same criminal records check and student disclosure form that is required of all other applicants who wish to sit for the SCE set forth in [Rule 109:2-1-03 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws](#).

**Motion was made to proceed with necessary rule changes to implement a path for Ohio State Highway Patrol to become a certified peace officer by offering State Certification Exam. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

Director Thomas Quinlan stated that The Ohio State Highway patrol also presented a pilot program- Fentanyl Imprinting K-9's that has been completed and has been successful. The OAC does allow the commission to adopt "special purpose canine". However, they are not asking for it to be added to the general narcotics, they would be considered special purpose canines imprinted with Fentanyl. He stated there is no OAC change, only the commission recognizing it as a permissible imprint.

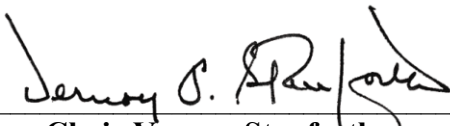
**Motion was made to approve Fentanyl as an approved Imprint for working K-9's with proper certification. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

Chairman Vernon Stanforth advised there was a 119-hearing scheduled for Paige Mitchell. He stated it will continue until the next scheduled commission meeting.

**Motion was made to continue the 119 Hearing for Paige Mitchell to May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Motion was approved without objection 8-0.**

**Motion was made to adjourn. Motion approved without objection 8-0.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.

  
Chair Vernon Stanforth

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