



Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission Meeting
Thursday, August 8th, 2024, at 10:00am

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

Minutes –August 8th, 2024

- A. Opening- Call to Order, Chair Sheriff Vernon Stanforth** called meeting to order at 10:08 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
Chief Clayton Harris
Colonel Charles Jones
Ms. Leah Amstutz
Ms. Wynette Carter-Smith
SAC Gregory Nelsen
Chief Robert Chabali

Commissioners Absent:

Lieutenant James Fitsko
Ms. Carol O'Brien

Ms. Denise Becerra confirmed there was a quorum with 8-Present, 2-Absent

Attorney General Staff in Attendance:

Nicole Hendrix, Law Clerk- OPOTA/C
Brian Malachowsky, Senior Assistant Attorney General- OPOTA/C
Cynthia Peterson, Principal Assistant Attorney General- OPOTA/C
Dr. Erica Wilson- Director of Curriculum and Development- OPOTA
Alexis Miller, Deputy Director of Curriculum- OPOTC
Scott Spangler, Director of Advanced Training – OPOTA
Richard Butsko, Assistant Executive Director of Advance Training- OPOTA/C
Thomas Quinlan, Assistant Executive Director- OPOTA/C
Brittany Brashears, CPT Manager- OPOTA/C
Eddie Parker, III., Community Engagement Liaison- OPOTA Staff
Susan Boggs, Project Coordinator- OPOTA/C
Art DeLeon, Deputy Director of Professional Standards-OPOTA/C
Elizabeth Fulton, OPOTC Staff
Shawn Clagg, OPOTC Staff
Carol Simon, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C
Barbara Cain, OPOTC Staff
Anthony Traska, CALEA Accreditation Manager- OPOTA/C
Kristen Samworth, OPOTC Staff
Arienne Fauber, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C
LeAnn Myers, Certification Specialist- OPOTA/C
Judith Wilson, Testing Coordinator- OPOTC Staff
Bryan Lee, Senior Assistant Attorney General- AGO
Byers Emmerling, Associate Assistant Attorney General-AGO
Sean Fouts, Procurement Director- AGO

Guests in Attendance:

Captain Jeff Davis- Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy
Major Mike Kemmer- Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy
John Hawkins- Columbus Police Department
Zac Scott- Columbus Police Department
Commander Lowell Rector- Columbus Police Department
Academy Commander Bryan Cook- Greene County CJ Academy
Major Lon Etchison- Xenia Police Department
Sharon Montgomery- Ohio Traffic Safety Council

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

Motion: A motion for the approval of the May 9th, 2024, minutes by Sheriff Micheal Heldman. Chief Clayton Harris seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 7, No- 0, Sustained- 1, Absent- 2.

B. Chair Report

Chair Stanforth welcomed guests and asked everyone to speak into the microphone when addressing the commission. He stated he did not have anything to report.

C. Continuing Professional Training Committee Report

Sheriff Heldman stated that the Continuing Professional Training Committee had nothing to report.

D. Curriculum Committee Report

Sheriff Heldman stated that the Curriculum Committee had nothing to report.

E. House Committee Report

Coronel Charles Jones stated that the House Committee had nothing to report.

F. Legislative Committee Report

Chair Stanforth stated that Lieutenant Fitsko was not present to provide the Legislative Committee report. He asked if anyone knew if there were any pending issues. Hearing none, he moved on to the Directors' report.

G. Commission and Academy Report

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan wanted to congratulate Sheriff Heldman on his tenure and thanked him for the contributions he's made to the staff and to the operations of OPOTA. He has been very valuable. He wanted to remind commissioners of the due date for the Ohio Ethics Training. The training should be completed before the end of the year. He acknowledges that the staff has been very busy for the last six months to a year and will detail the achievements that they've made throughout the year as well as some organizational

changes. Previously, OPOTA was broken down into two parts, Standards and Curriculum and Training and Operations. Standards and Curriculum has been reformatted due to the departure of one of our assistant executive directors. Standards and Curriculum, Training and Operations will all now be under one assistant executive director, Richard Butsko. There have been several promotions and positions that have been eliminated. Arturo DeLeon, who was the Deputy Director of Professional Standards, has now been promoted to Director of Professional Standards and Erica Wilson will remain the Director of Curriculum. Robert Strausbaugh was the Regional Program Manager; he has now been promoted to Director of Advance Training. Regional Programing and Advance Training will now be under Training and Operations. Scott Spangler was promoted to Director of Safety Programs. Susan Boggs, who is the Project Manager, will report to Scott Spangler. Brittany Brashears, who was under Standards and Curriculum, will now be under Training and Operations and Tony Traska will continue to be under Standards and Curriculum. These changes were completed due to matters of control. Eddie Parker will continue to report to his office. There are also two new attorneys, Brian Malachowsky and Melissa Day; Nicole Hendrix who recently passed the bar and now is part of legal counsel as well. That detailed description gives an update on operations and functions.

The Law Enforcement Symposium has been moved this year to Kalahari in Sandusky, Sept. 29th – Oct. 1st. The registration has been open now for approximately a week. The Symposium has been broken down into pods: Leadership, Instructor Track, Investigations and Legal Track, Field Operations or Tactical Track and all eight hours of mandatory CPT are provided. There will be numerous training opportunities. There will also be keynote speakers and an awards program.

A question that always comes up is CPT. He wanted to thank Dr. Erica Wilson and Nikki Mazzocca who have successfully completed CPT courses and are now online. The 2025 CPT that has already been approved is currently being worked on. He is in hopes that there will not be a lag for the 2025 CPT courses being available online like the year prior. There have been 1,065 CPT courses approved, not counting the ones that have been rejected. This number reflects the amount of work that Dr. Wilson's team has been reviewing and approving. Therefore, there has been a significant increase in work from 2023. After looking at the 1,065 CPT approved courses, there were 4,825 hours of training for those officers to receive those additional 16 hours that they must receive to be CPT compliant. There is no shortage of classes due to online courses, courses offered throughout the state as well as all the classes offered at OPOTA. Quarters one and two have already reimbursed, 1.7 million dollars were reimbursed to agencies for completing training. There have been 412 agencies that have entered data on completed training. There were also 12,561 officers, all or some of have satisfied the CPT requirement. The third quarter reimbursements will be paid in October and the fourth will be paid in January. He wanted to thank staff for their work and the progress of this year.

There is an issue that has been brought up by several open academies. The issue deals with the federal FASA form where students apply to receive financial aid to attend a college or academy. The way the system is set up is that the curriculum is 740 hours, and if an academy provides more than that, then the students are not eligible for financial aid. What probably happened in the past is that colleges were requiring 60 hours for an associate's degree. However, when you complete 60 semester hours, there are classes that need to be completed as prerequisites. Therefore, they were technically taking anywhere from 75-80 hours to get a 60-hour associates degree. This has now trickled down to open enrollment academies. Every academy offers more than 740 hours of curriculum because they must equip their students with uniforms, policies, rules and regulations, etc. which means that they are surpassing the 740 hours. Therefore, students are now not eligible for financial aid. He stated he wanted to bring it up to the attention of the commission. Ideally, the federal government could address this through the FASFA process. Currently, there are numerous open enrollment academies that are worried they will lose enrollment due to students not being covered by financial aid. One solution would be that financial aid would be covered for 740 hours and the students would pay of any additional classes. This will not affect the closed academies due to those agencies already paying them to attend the academy. The other option would be from the Blue-Ribbon Task Force which removed 72 hours of training which was approved by the commission. Another option would be for the commission to require potentially a certain number of hours to become a police officer, and the additional number of hours would be up to the agency. Theoretically, the open enrollment academies can add training hours to their discretion to add additional hours. This topic needs to be discussed due to it impacting officers entering the field who will not receive financial aid and then will not be able to attend an academy. It would be in the best interest to require more hours which the academies are already providing and allowing some training at the sole discretion of the academy. A decision does not to be reached at this time, however it will be a topic that needs addressed.

Additionally, there is a need for re-implementation of the K9 THC Evaluation. It was removed previously due to a subject matter expert suggesting it to be removed due to the changing of the law. The evaluation is still something that is needed in the process due to agencies still using this process. OPOTA has training that trains the evaluators regarding marijuana. Therefore, this would need to be placed back into the curriculum.

As of today, 44 of 59 academies which are actively running academies. Twelve of them will start on Monday, 582 students enrolled. There have been 853 certificates issued to peace officers this year. There have been roughly 24 new courses added. There have also been 214 classes delivered as of today, 3,034 officers trained as well. Their workload has increased tremendously for everyone over the past year.

The VR series for 2024 is complete. There are 6 episodes that are done. There have been 160 headsets deployed. This idea started as a conversation at the end of last year and as of July of this year there were 2 classes that have been trained. The VR for 2025 has already started production.

Dorm use will be allowed for certain individuals. There are also 55 reciprocity applications that have been received from other states. There have been 14 approved applications, 8 have been denied. With the adjustment of the PT standards, 34 individuals, 8% did not graduated the academy due to not passing one portion of the PT. Those individuals have now passed the PT.

The MOU (memorandum of understanding) is now in place for the Ohio State Highway Patrol for the driving track. Also, for the Ohio University for the VR Series from now until April of 2025. The CALEA accreditation on site visit will happen this month.

The curriculum team can now use the Ohio Collaborative Standards moving forward. The courses that are offered by OPOTA will be using the Ohio Collaborative Standards. Therefore, we are progressing than what was done previously.

Currently, there are three reports that are completed or being completed. Those reports are the OSU John Glenn Report, the IDALEST Report, and the Blue-Ribbon Task Force Report. There are many recommendations currently at OPOTA on both the academy and the commission side. He wanted to point out that the recommendations are not being overlooked, they are being implemented currently.

The VR Series consists of 6 videos: de-escalation, crisis mitigation, first amendment auditors, teen brain, duty to intervene, duty to render aid. The VR series are all 10–20-minute videos. After each series there are also different lessons like de-brief, crisis intervention, supervisor expectation, looking beyond the call, officer wellness, case law, community perspective and discussion points. There has been good feedback from numerous individuals.

Chief Clayton Harris asked if there is a capability to access the VR series with other equipment versus equipment that is provided by OPOTA.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan answered no. The series are formatted specifically for the Meta 3 headsets. Other VR headsets that are currently available are interactive, which are focused on shooting scenarios. OPOTA wanted to create a soft skill where it focuses on de-escalation, crisis mitigation, first amendment auditors, teen brain, duty to intervene, duty to render aid, all which are not ending in a shooting. The headset and the case are about \$560.00, OPOTA will provide the software on the headset if they purchase the headset. OPOTA has 20 headsets that can be loaned out and once returned OPOTA can re-loan them out.

Chief Clayton Harris asked if an agency has the same exact oculus headset as the software, can be uploaded to it.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan answered yes, if the memory is large enough.

Chief Clayton Harris stated that students are having financial difficulties due to FASFA. He understands the options to resolve the issue and is in favor of either one. He wanted to state that this has already been enacted and needs to be addressed as soon as possible to assist those individuals with this issue.

Executive Director Thomas stated that Art DeLeon, Director of Professional Standards, is currently contacting all the commanders of open enrollment agencies to see how many hours they deliver. Once the number is collected, we can implement the highest number of hours for a new minimum of hours.

Chair Stanforth suggested that next time we could identify everyone on the organizational chart. That way everyone could see and identify who OPOTA staff are.

Sheriff Michael Heldman wanted to comment that CPT has progressed from where it was when he first started with the commission. He commends OPOTA for what has been done with CPT, it's now easier for law enforcement report training.

H. New Business

Chair Stanforth asked what needs to be done regarding the FASFA issue.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan suggested increasing the set number of hours. There were 72 hours taken out, which can be added back in, and the agencies have the discretion to pick what training they would like to replace it with. The other option is to have Arturo DeLeon collect the information on how many hours are given, then decide on the number of hours.

Chief Clayton Harris stated that he agrees with the 72 hours because it gives them extra space to work with. However, on the other hand increasing the number of hours later would work as well.

Ms. Leah Amstutz asked how much longer it would take to collect all the information from the academies.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan advised it could be available next week.

Ms. Leah Amstutz would take a special meeting to vote on the decision.

Dr. Erica Wilson, Director of Curriculum states there will be a need to set up a special meeting with the education committee to make the decision due to the 72 hours need to be added back into curriculum to the audit sheets.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan added the difference would be that the agencies would not be required to complete those courses. They could write in the class they want.

Dr. Erica Wilson, Director of Curriculum stated the academies are under a course code as of now. They will need to move to the new course code if the commission approves to put the hours back. Another option is to wait for the research to be completed or determine the number of hours that need to be added back to the curriculum. This will need specific curriculum detailing the specific curriculum that is being added back into basic academies.

Chief Robert Chabali asked if there was an approximate amount the Art DeLeon has.

Art DeLeon, Director of Professional Standards stated he does not have the information at this time and needs more time to research.

Chief Clayton Harris stated that the semester starts this month. Therefore, he knows they will be looking for some type of answer soon. Some may not qualify for FASFA based upon this.

Ms. Leah Amstutz asked if the commission could provide OPOTA staff permission to decide once the research is completed.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan stated that if the commission is sanctioning 740 hours as the required hours, all they are saying is that these are general electives outside of those required hours. That should satisfy that need because you are not specifying the minimums.

Ms. Leah Amstutz stated that the challenges are that FASFA will look at the 740 hours.

Dr. Erica Wilson, Director of Curriculum stated that even though the hours were removed from the audit sheet, they are still placed in a separate box stating that departments can still use those hours as pre-requisites or post-requisites if they would like to. Therefore, they are still there as a general education but are not added into the 740 hours. She was not sure if the new hours could be added in the pre or post requisite box stating that yes, 740 hours are sanctioned by the commission. However, the additional hours can be applied for the FASFA credit.

Chief Clayton Harris believes that the language used is what is required. Therefore, the number of hours will need to be increased.

Ms. Wynette Carter- Smith asked if there could be a cap on the additional hours.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan that would be something that needs to investigate. The legal team could research that information.

Dr. Erica Wilson, Director of Curriculum advised that what need to be understood is that some academies go over the 740 hours. However, when the commission makes the decision to increase the number, those specific hours need to go into specific courses to increase them. Even though academies are doing additional hours, they must make sure they are getting them in that specific course that the commission adds those hours to. She stated she does not want to put a burden on academies to place additional hours to courses that they have never done those additional hours in.

Executive Director Thomas Quinlan stated that at this time the best option is to wait on the research and decide later to help those students in the spring and have work completed for November.

Ms. Leah Amstutz stated that this is not ideal, however the students will be covered for the 740 and in the meantime have a financial plan for the additional hours until there is a resolution.

Chair Stanforth no action needs to be taken at this time.

Motion: A motion to re-implement the K9 THC Evaluator Program by Chief Clayton Harris. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wynette Carter- Smith. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 8, No-0, Absent- 2.

I. Old Business

Chairman Stanforth state that members of the commission conducted a 119 hearing. The decision has been made and under the attorney client privilege and it was sent to the commissioners for review, and it is up to the members of the commission to vote on that decision.

Motion: A motion to approve the decision on the 119 Hearing by Chief Robert Chabali. The motion was seconded by Sherif Michael Heldman. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 7, No-0, Sustained-1 Absent- 2.

J. Open Forum

Chairman Stanforth asked if anyone wanted to address the commission in an open forum.

Sharon Montgomery, Ohio Traffic Safety Council wanted to provide the traumatic experience of road traffic victims today for law enforcement attendees. This information will be provided at their event which is on Sunday, November 14th. She wanted to thank, law enforcement, medical personnel and public officials who helped during these experiences.

Chairman Stanforth wanted to thank Sheriff Michael Heldman on his service. The BSSA will be making a recommendation for his replacement.

Sheriff Michael Heldman stated that being a part of the commission has been very educational for him, as well as all the people he has met during his time here. He stated he has enjoyed his time on the commission.

Chief Clayton Harris asked for a round of applause for Sheriff Michael Heldman.

K. Adjournment

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Chief Clayton Harris. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wynette Carter-Smith. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. Yes- 8, No-0, Absent- 2.

The meeting stands adjourned.

Time: 11.24 p.m.

Chair Vernon Stanforth

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