

MINUTES OF ARKANSAS STATE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

June 06, 2024

The Arkansas State Police Commission met on Thursday, June 06, 2024, at the Arkansas State Police Headquarters, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commission Chairman Teague called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Jeffery Teague, Chairman
Commissioner Jim Hinkle, Secretary
Commissioner Ken Reeves
Commissioner Neff Basore
Commissioner Steve Edwards

MEMBER ON CONFERENCE CALL:

Commissioner John Allison, Vice-Chairman

MEMBER ABSENT:

Commissioner Mike Akin

STATE POLICE PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Colonel Mike Hagar	Lt. Colonel Mike Kennedy
Major Roby Rhoads	Major Ron Casey
Major Stacie Rhoads	Major Jeff Drew
Captain Randall Murphy	Major Mike Moyer
Captain Dustin Morgan	Lieutenant Aaron Easley
Kalika Rogers	Sherry Woods
Susan Tedford	Captain Brad Lann
Sergeant Jason Martin	Sergeant Jesse Woodham
Jorge Mendoza	Iris Alvarado
Jenna Castleberry	Lieutenant Darren Austin
Sergeant Rodney Davenport	Captain Kyle Drown
Lieutenant Jay McAllister	Captain Jeff Plouch
Captain Chris Goodman	Caitlin Teague
Sergeant Chase Melder	Corporal Deston Linkous
Cindy Murphy	Donna Humphries

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sarah DeBusk – Attorney General’s Office	Joan Shipley, DPS
Hugh Finkelstein, DPS	Phillip Warriner, DPS
David Richard, Senator Tom Cotton’s Office	
Owen May, Senator Tom Cotton’s Office	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commission Chairman Teague led the pledge of allegiance.

NOTIFICATION OF MEDIA:

The media was notified of this meeting on May 28, 2024.

MINUTES:

Commission Chairman Teague stated Commissioners you have before you the minutes of May 9 meeting. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 09, 2024, regular monthly commission meeting. Commissioners Basore/Edwards seconded the motion. Commission Chairman Teague stated we have a motion and a second, all in favor, I, any opposed and the motion passed.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next, we have promotion certificates presented by Colonel Hagar.

PROMOTION CERTIFICATES:

Colonel Mike Hagar presented a promotion certificate to Sergeant Rodney Davenport promoting him to Sergeant in the Criminal Investigation Division, Company A.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented a promotion certificate to Sergeant Jesse Woodham promoting him to Sergeant in the Administrative Services Division, Training.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next, we have some Official Commendations.

OFFICIAL COMMENDATIONS:

Lieutenant Darran Austin stated good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and Colonel Hagar, I appreciate the opportunity to get to honor some members of the state police from Troop J, actually 2 of these are now former members of Troop J as they are now on the ICP Team. Lieutenant Austin stated on July 5, 2023, Trooper Ervin Clokey attempted to perform a traffic stop on a tractor trailer truck around the 51-mile marker of Interstate 40 east bound in Johnson County. The tractor trailer truck refused to stop and kept traveling at speeds around 70 to 80 mph. As you are aware an 80,000-pound truck is not easy to stop, we regularly use TVI to stop vehicles, but this creates a whole new scenario with this tractor trailer. Even though at some point during this we had a trooper volunteer to do that, but Sergeant Melder told him no. As the pursuit continued local units from Johnson County and a couple of cities came to assist him and they got in front of the tractor trailer truck, trying to create a rolling roadblock trying to get him to stop. With law enforcement vehicles all around him to let him know that law enforcement is trying to stop him, he continued traveling and refuse to stop. The pursuit entered Pope County at the 81 mm, Pope County Sergeant Rodney McNeese deployed spike strips in an attempt to stop the truck and was successful in getting one tire. In his attempt to avoid the spike strips, the truck struck Sergeant McNeese's patrol unit and completely disabled his unit. It slowed the truck down a little bit, but the truck continued fleeing from officers and troopers at speeds around 50 mph. So, Sergeant Melder made the decision to take it to the next level to stop the tractor trailer truck because he was being more aggressive in his driving moves even though it was not high speed, he was being aggressive, basically letting officers know he was not going to stop. Sergeant Melder directed Corporal Deston Linkous to the overpass at the 94-mile marker and Sergeant Melder met him there. Sergeant Melder had other local officers from the county and cities to block the on-ramps to keep other traffic from getting on the interstate. This is now traveling on 30 - 40 miles trying to get this truck stopped and trying to keep other traffic off the interstate because the decision was made to fire upon the tractor trailer truck. Officers backed off, got the interstate clear and as it approached the 94-mile marker Sergeant Melder and Corporal Linkous fired their service weapons and rifles into the engine block area of the truck trying to hit vital components in order to get it to stop. At the same time, he was also preparing to send troopers and other officers to overpasses on down the road, if this doesn't work, the next step would be lethal force on the driver. Trying to do this first, hoping to bring the truck to a controlled stop and if they had to shoot the driver there is no one to control the truck and it could have been worse. Their attempt to shoot the truck was successful, they shot into the engine block area and were able to strike some vital components and slowly brought the truck to a stop. At that point there was a standoff, the driver refused to cooperate, refused to give up, and refused to come out of the truck. Corporal Deston Linkous is on the Emergency Response Team and carries what they call a pepper ball device, a less than lethal device. Corporal Linkous got it prepared and they got a little quick reaction force and arrest team prepared to be able to take action, if necessary, when they could get the driver out of the truck. On that team was Deputy Michael Brown who carried a less than lethal bean bag shotgun. At the point they knew the driver was not going to cooperate and give up and with both lanes of interstate shut down which could cause other problems, secondary accidents and fatal accidents, Sergeant Melder made the decision and gave Corporal Linkous the order to fire less lethal pepper balls into the truck. It can be used on a person or in this case it has an irritant in it and will involve your skin, your breath and force the driver out of the truck as he is not comfortable to be inside the truck with the pepper ball.

The driver still refused to follow commands, wouldn't lay down, wouldn't come back to them, the less lethal shotgun was deployed by Deputy Michael Brown on the driver neutralizing him. They were able to approach safely in a controlled manner, put him in handcuffs and get him in custody safely. Nobody, no motorists, or citizens were injured during this incident, the only minor injury was to the suspect because of the bean bag shotgun. During this event, while this is taking place, Chief Operator Jorge Mendoza and Operator Iris Alvarado were in the Troop J Communications Center handling all radio traffic between Troop J Troopers as well as coordinating with all the other agencies that were assisting during this event. Other troopers were involved in this as well, everybody did an outstanding job, remained calm, controlled, followed the training state police provided and brought this

incident to a close safely without anybody being seriously injured or hurt. Actually, no injuries other than the minor injuries to the suspect. One other thing to add, after all of this was brought to a resolution, it was found out that a few years ago the suspect did almost the exact same thing in another state, so hopefully at this point he will never get to drive a commercial vehicle ever again.

Colonel Hagar presented Telecom Specialist Iris Alvarado, Telecom Supervisor Jorge Mendoza, Corporal Deston Linkous, and Sergeant Chase Melder with Official Commendation Awards.

Commission Chairman Teague stated that brings us to our division reports and the first one up is the Fiscal Report.

Fiscal Section – Jenna Castleberry

Jenna Castleberry stated good morning, Colonel, Chair, and Commissioners, May was a fast-paced month for us. Our annual operation plan for FY25 was due and we had about six days to prepare and get that submitted, so we did that. We loaded a budget in operating funds of about \$127 million, of that fuel was \$4.9 million, we loaded \$4.00 a gallon for the year, and our average this year was \$2.92 a gallon. We are in the works of closing out the fiscal year. The fiscal year ends June 30, 2024, so we are getting busy working hard to close that out and everything is in good shape.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next is Administrative Services, Major Rhoads.

Administrative Services – Major Roby Rhoads

Major Roby Rhoads stated Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and Colonel Hagar good morning, the Administrative Services report for May includes the following personnel transactions, on the uniformed noncommissioned side we had three new hires, and four voluntary resignations. The commissioned transactions included one retirement and four promotions. We currently have five military deployments.

Major Roby Rhoads stated for our troop school that we are hiring for now; we still have 111 applicants in the process, and they are moving into the polygraph phase.

Major Roby Rhoads stated the Wellness Unit for last month assisted 31 individuals, had one critical incident debrief for six participants, and our nurse practitioner saw 43 people.

Major Roby Rhoads stated for the ASP Health Plan, the May paid claims were a little over \$1,481,121.00 last month and that was a decrease of almost \$100,000.00 from the month before. Our fund balance was \$311,114.00 higher this month than it was last month, and our total fund balance is \$11,641,346.00.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next is Crimes Against Children.

Major Jeff Drew stated good morning, Colonel, Chair, and Commissioners, the CACD Hotline received 5,588 calls in May, with 2,280 of those being accepted for investigation. Major Drew stated we had twelve child deaths reported, two were investigated, six were assessed, and four of those were only documented. Major Drew stated the CACD Investigations Unit accepted 524 cases and closed 467 cases, with 147 of those being found true and the substantiation rate was 32% for the month.

Commissioner Edwards asked when the cases are found true do you send them over to DHS or who handles those going forward. Major Drew stated no sir, the agents and I, in CACD pretty much perform the same duties. We will have the more severe stuff that will come to us and the only time that DHS will be involved in the ones that we have is if they have some type of protection plan in place for the kids. Once we complete it then they will go on the registry, the maltreatment registry that DHS handles. Commissioner Edwards stated so we don't have anybody who does home visits, do we do that? Major Drew stated during our investigation they will go by and see if there are any issues within the home. But as far as something coming in about the conditions of the home, that say no food, dirty, unclean and things like that, DCFS handles those.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next is Criminal Investigations.

Major Stacie Rhoads stated good morning, Colonel, Chairman, Commissioners, for the month of May CID opened 130 cases. I am happy to report that we did not work any officer involved shootings, I think that is the first time in quite a while that we have not been asked to investigate one. We conducted 19 death investigations and seven of those were homicides and we conducted one in custody death that occurred in a jail facility. Major Stacie Rhoads stated I want to talk to you about our Internet Crimes Against Children, we have maintained a task force across the state since 2006. Since that time, the internet has just run rampant with predators looking to harm our kids in a variety of ways. With the onset of summer coming on, kids being out of school, the internet has become a playground for kids to go to. Probably when you and I were growing up we were riding our bikes or watching the Price is Right or getting caught up on Young and the Restless. They look to gaming, gaming sites, social media applications to connect with the world and that has just become a predatory place for our children. So, you know we decided what can we do to get ahold of this before summer starts. Most of our cases with Internet Crimes Against Children is typically in a reactionary role so we decided what can we do proactively. So, we spent the last two months conducting proactive investigations and I am going to tell you some of the numbers that came out. So, this went from mid-March to the end of May and of those pro-active investigations, we initiated 160, we made 42 arrests, we actually rescued 5 child victims from ongoing abuse, 22 children of child exploitation were identified, and we conducted 178 search warrants. We also partnered up with Arkansas Community Corrections in their sex offender section and assisted with 1,652 home visits. Obviously with that we collected evidence, and we conducted 565 onsite forensic interviews and that is where we go in the house and look at their devices to see if they have any of what we call CSAM, that is child sex abuse material. There is a whole lot of other stuff on here that I could tell you about, but what I want the message to be is this, if you have kids or grandkids, this should scare the hell out of you. Every year our Internet Crimes Against Children receive cyber tips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and each year we have seen an increase in the number of tips that we get from that, and it is one of those things that we are constantly, proactively trying to do what we can do to help reduce this and thanks to our agents and our task force affiliations across the state, we are doing, we have made a real difference. I want to brag on two of our most recent additions to our Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Back in January we got Chris Harper who was in Troop K, he came over and was assigned to that unit. Then we hired a gentleman from Saline County out of our certified school last fall and he came in directly just to conduct these types of investigations and it is really hard work, I am not kidding. They came in and we have really built that unit up and out of two of the cases that they have worked, one of them showed us what artificial intelligence can do to exploit our kids. In one of those cases, a gentleman down in Clark County was taking sexual videos and adding children's faces onto those videos. The threat or concern was how long has he had them, and these were kids in his neighborhood and obviously our concern was had he ever really had hands on offense to that and we conducted probably 12 to 15 interviews of kids and so far, we have not had anybody to disclose any type of abuse. Danny Harris who came to us from Saline County worked a case and again it was a cyber tip that came in he identified the guy and was able to make an arrest. But again, as he was conducting the forensic interviews of this guy's devices he sees where he has had a lot of sexual contact with a lot of people, like over 20 people. In his interview, when he does a suspect interview with this gentleman, he learned that he was HIV positive. Danny spent an entire month locating and identifying these people because they had been exposed to HIV. Danny didn't have to do that; he could have just stopped with the arrest, but all of those unknown people that had contact with him now have a life altering situation, because of Danny's efforts now maybe at least they have the opportunity to address it sooner rather than later. We are doing some really great work in that division; it is not anything anybody likes to talk about, but the reality is it's here and we are going to keep doing our part.

Commissioner Reeves stated you made a distinction between child abuse and child exploitation, what is the difference? Major Stacie Rhoads stated so child abuse can be anything like physically hitting, things like that and child exploitation is more along the lines, so there could be sexual abuse, someone could be having sex with a child, the exploitation comes when they video tape that and then they share it online or distribute it to their buddies and stuff like that. So, there is that continuation, the exploitation outside of just the actual abuse. Commissioner Reeves asked so would trafficking be the next step above exploitation? Major Stacie Rhoads stated so exploitation is a little bit different than trafficking, but we do see trafficking in exploitation. So, there is a whole criminal element, like commercial element of people who don't necessarily have to sexually abuse a child, but they will go out here and they will pay for people, it is an exorbitant amount of money they will pay people. Say hey, if you go do this with your daughter and send me the video, I will give you x amount

of money. Then they will take that video, and they will sell it to people who are in the market to look at this kind of stuff. It is frightening, it is a really really ugly world, but we are going to carry the sword and the shield and do what we can to keep our kids safe.

Commission Chairman Teague stated next is Highway Patrol Division.

Captain Brad Lann stated good morning, Colonel Hagar, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission, the month of May was an extremely busy month for Highway Patrol. Captain Lann stated we made 2,766 criminal arrests, with 1,801 total persons arrested. There were 325 DWI arrests, five DUIs, the total number of hazardous arrest was 7,593, there were 608 physical arrests and total arrests were 19,342. We had 55 pursuits for the month of May. Troopers investigated 1,419 crashes with 32 fatalities. They recovered 14 stolen vehicles at a value of \$324,000.00. Troopers drove a total of 920,625 miles. There were 17 aircraft missions. The Troops held Memorial Day Saturations throughout the state and had a total of 1,699 officer violator contacts. There were 1,268 pounds of marijuana confiscated, 3.31 pounds of methamphetamine, 35.18 pounds of cocaine and \$216,795.00 in money seizures. Captain Lann stated another mission we have been working on, we have brought back Operation Safe Streets, we started that the 14th of May, we run it through the last 4 weeks and matter of fact they are finishing up the last day of it today, then we are going to get a few more dates lined out. In this operation we are working alongside our Federal partners and trying to get some of these high crime areas and focusing a lot on criminal arrests. Just in the last 3-4 weeks, we have made 134 criminal arrests and a total of 825 officer violator contacts. During that time, we have recovered 2 handguns that were linked back to homicides and also a vehicle that was linked to a homicide. Captain Lann stated that consisted of Troop A Troopers and ERT members from different parts of the state that we brought in, so these missions have been so successful we are going to get some more dates lined out and continue those. During the month of May dispatch received a total of 31,797 calls for service and our DL/CDL team gave 18,615 test for the month of May.

Commission Chairman Teague stated it sounds like you were busy, thank you sir.

Commission Chairman Teague stated Regulatory and Building Operations Division.

Major Mike Moyer stated Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Colonel Hagar good morning. During the month of May, the Identification Bureau processed 26,346 civil background checks and 9,066 criminal fingerprint submissions. The Used Motor Vehicle Dealer Section processed 172 dealer applications. The PI Security Section processed 452 applications. The ASP Bomb Squad handled five explosive calls. Major Moyer stated currently we are in the process; Troop I Headquarters got hit by a tornado and we are in the process of going through all the quoting and DBA paperwork to try to get that headquarters repaired.

Commissioner Reeves stated I would like to mention and go on the record thanking Governor Sanders for her visit to Harrison this past week. She came to our area which had a lot of damage, like 20 something miles, but her first stop was at Troop I Headquarters where we had a lot of damage. I had the opportunity to be there and thank her for being there and to thank her for all of the support she has given the state police.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commission Chairman Teague asked Colonel do we have any new business? Colonel Mike Hagar stated yes sir, I would ask that we retire to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commissioner Reeves stated I make a motion that we retire into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Edwards seconded, and the motion passed. Commission Chairman Teague stated we have a motion and a second, all in favor, any opposed and the motion passed. The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:32 a.m.

Commission Chairman Teague called the meeting back to order at 11:15 a.m. and stated personnel matters were discussed but no action was taken.

NEXT MEETING:

Commission Chairman Teague stated the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Commission Chairman Teague asked if there was anything else that we needed to talk about, if we have nothing further, we stand adjourned. Commission Chairman Teague adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Commission Chairman

Commission Secretary