

COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT STANDARDS AND TRAINING

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 13, 2024

ARKANSAS STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS

9:00 a.m. Meeting called to order.

Commissioners present:

Chairman Doc Holladay
Vice Chair Barry Phillips
Sheriff Phillip Miller
Sheriff Lafayette Woods
Mr. James Montgomery
Mr. Thomas Marsh
Mr. Richard Wingard
Major Stacie Rhoads

Commissioners absent:

Chief Heath Helton
Chief Mike Reynolds

Others present:

Eric Wacaster, ADLEST Deputy Director
Jason Lawrence, ADLEST Deputy Director
Taylor Reavis, ADLEST Attorney
Kreasha Williams, ADLEST Paralegal
Molly Wrigley, ADLEST Paralegal
Sue Albritton, ADLEST Administrative Assistant
Amie Martin, CLEST Agent
Coby Copeland, Court Reporter
Charles Moulton, Hearing Officer
Tia Marsh, Ft. Smith
Jessica McCord
Drew Miller, Attorney
Misty Goss, White County Sheriff's Office
Tim Warhurst, Department of Correction
John Bean, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
Todd Grooms, Crittenden County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Mike Allen, Crittenden County Sheriff
Butler Bernard, Attorney
Spencer Morris, Arkansas State Police
Marcus Daniels, Arkansas State Police
David Richrdson, Senator Tom Cotton's Office
Austin Coleman, Senator Tom Cotton's Office
Chris Madison, Bauxite
David Cooper, Hot Spring County Sheriff's Office
Shane Davis, Hot Spring County Sheriff's Office
Kenneth Anders, City of Calion
Eric Koonce, Van Buren County Sheriff's Office
Ethan Wood, Van Buren County Sheriff's Office
Amanda Andrews, DPS Attorney
Tillman Kennon, Hickory Ridge, Mayor
James Saxe, Ravenden Police Department
Crystal Walker, Springdale
Chief John Keding, Ravenden Police Department
J. Shamlin, Saline County Sheriff's Office
Jason Aaron, Arkansas State Police
Randall Murphy, Arkansas State Police
Jeff Sheeler, Arkansas State Police
Bobby Brown, Arkansas State Police
Christiana McKibben, Arkansas State Police

A motion to accept the minutes of the September 10th and 11th, 2024 meeting was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

Item I: Item one was a request from the City of Calion to reactivate its police department under ACA 12-9-118. Having met all requirements, a motion to grant the request was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item II: Item two was a request from the City of Hickory Ridge to establish its own police department under ACA 12-9-118. Having met all requirements, motion to grant the request was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

Item III: Item three was a request from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office for a waiver of the two-year period under CLEST Rule1005 for Deputy Tyler Steely. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Wingard. Motion carried.

Item IV: Item four was a request from the Pea Ridge Police Department for a waiver of the two-year period under CLEST Rule 1005 for Officer Aaron Matthews. No department representative appeared to present the request. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item V: Item five was a request from the Ravenden Police Department for a waiver of the two-year period under CLEST Rule 1005 for Officer James Saxe. A motion to grant the request was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item VI: Item six was a request from the Hot Spring County Sheriff's Office for an extension under CLEST Rule 1002 for Deputy Jonathan Smart. A motion to grant the request was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

Item VII: Item seven was a request from the Saline County Sheriff's Office for a waiver of the two-year period under CLEST Rule 1005 for Deputy Hayden Jones. A motion to grant the request was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Marsh. Motion carried.

Item VIII: Item eight was a request from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office for an extension under CLEST Rule 1002 for Deputy Cameron McCaskill. A motion to grant the request and allow Deputy McCaskill to attend ALETA 25A Class was made by Commissioner Wingard and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Commissioner Woods recused. Motion carried.

Item IX: Item nine was a request from Henry Topps for recertification under CLEST Rule 1034. Mr. Topps did not appear to present his request. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion carried.

Item X: Item ten was a request from Crystal Walker for recertification under CLEST Rule 1034. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

Item XI: Item eleven was a request from the Benton Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Steve Antoine. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

Item XII: Item twelve was a request from the Crittenden County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Jeffery Wheeler. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

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Item XIII: Item thirteen was a request from the Cleburne County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Logan Winters. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion carried.

Item XIV: Item fourteen was a request from the Texarkana Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Jacob Yarbrow. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

Item XV: Item fifteen was a request from the Saline County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Carla Matlock. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item XVI: Item sixteen was a request from the Cleburne County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Jacob Teel. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item XVII: Item seventeen was a request from the Little Rock Police Department for the decertification of former Officer James Stone. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item XVIII: Item eighteen was a request from the Faulkner County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Lynn Goza. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item XIX: Item nineteen was a request from the Conway County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Lucas Covington. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Wingard. Motion carried.

Item XX: Item twenty was a request from the North Little Rock Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Jesse Gossage. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item XXI: Item twenty-one was a request from the Faulkner County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Brant Haight. A motion to proceed to a hearing was made by Commissioner Woods and seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

Item XXII: Item twenty-two was a request from the Fordyce Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Wesley Hogan. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item XXIII: Item twenty-three was a request from the Garland County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Mercedes Benefield. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Miller. Commissioner Montgomery recused. Motion carried.

Item XXIV: Item twenty-four was a request from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Kevin Burt. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Commissioner Woods recused. Motion carried.

Item XXV: Item twenty-five was a request from the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Natallia Carpenter. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item XXVI: Item twenty-six was a request from the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office for the decertification of former Deputy Sparkle Bailey. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

Item XXVII: Item twenty-seven was a request from the Little Rock Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Troy Byrd. A motion to deny the request was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. Motion carried.

Item XXVIII: Item twenty-eight was a request from the Little Rock Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Brad Stewart. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item XXIX: Item twenty-nine was a request from the West Memphis Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Zachary Jones. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried.

Item XXX: Item thirty was a request from the Pocahontas Police Department for the decertification of former Officer Arthur Cochrell. A motion to proceed to a decertification hearing was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried.

Item XXXI: Item thirty-one was a discussion of the proposed CLEST Rule changes. A motion to accept the proposed changes and proceed with the promulgation process was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Marsh. Motion carried.

Item XXXII: Item thirty-two was a discussion of items of concern of the Standards Office. Standards Office requested the authority to require currently employed law enforcement officers that have failed to meet the CLEST annual training requirements for three years or greater to complete the Part-Time/Refresher course of 120 hours to continue law enforcement employment. Standards also requested clarification that the previously granted waiver for Omaha Police Department to employ a part-time Chief was specific to Officer Troy Burleson. The Commission granted the requested authority and confirmed that the previously granted waiver was specific to Officer Troy Burleson.

Two (2) Consent Agreements were presented for final vote on behalf of **Aaron Runyon** and **Blake Ringberg**. A motion to accept and to decertify Runyon and Ringberg was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Motion carried. A hearing was held for **Quinton Price**. After hearing all the evidence and testimony presented, a motion that the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law had been met and to decertify Quinton Price was made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Woods. Motion carried. A hearing was held for **Nicholas Smith**. After hearing all the evidence and testimony presented, a motion that the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law had been met and to decertify Nicholas Smith was made by Commissioner Woods and seconded by Commissioner Marsh. Motion carried. A hearing was held for **Daniel Johnson**. After hearing all the evidence and testimony given, a motion that the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law had been met and to decertify Daniel Johnson was made by Commissioner Woods and seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. Commissioner Miller recused. Motion carried. A hearing was held for **Jessica McCord**. After hearing all the evidence and testimony given a motion that the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law had been met and to decertify Jessica McCord, was made by Commissioner Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Marsh. Commissioner Rhoads recused. Motion carried. All hearings were presided over by Hearing Officer Charles Moulton and recorded by Court Reporter Coby Copeland. A total of **six (6) officers** were decertified.

Directors Report

As Director Chapmond was asked to speak at an event at Black River Technical College and the Law Enforcement Training Center with the Governor celebrating the groundbreaking for their new dormitory project Deputy Directors Eric Wacaster and Jason Lawrence presented his report to the Commission. Deputy Director Wacaster advised that Director Chapmond attended the funeral of Al Harris, former Aleta supervisor, and we have received two donations to the Law Enforcement

Family Relief Fund. One in the amount of \$50 and the other \$100. Those donations came in memory of Mr. Harris. One of Mr. Harris's last acts of service to law enforcement was to request donations to that fund in lieu of flowers. That Northwest ALETA graduated 38 new officers with Chief Frank Gamble as the keynote speaker and Central ALETA graduated 34 students with Chief Kristie Bennett as the keynote speaker. That Director Chapmond also attended Fort Smith Police Department's Regional Academy graduation ceremony and witnessed 14 new officers graduate. Deputy Director Lawrence advised that ADLEST conducted ASP Leadership training (65 students), Fayetteville Leadership program (35 students); September 8, 2024 Leadership Training Ft. Smith Police Academy; September 9th and 10th 2024, Shooting Class at McGhee Police Department; October 24, 2024 CRASE Northwest Health Care Springdale, AR; October 28, 2024 Defensive Tactics Cross County Sheriff's Office; October 29, 2024 Self Aid Buddy Aid Cross County Sheriff's Office; October 30, 2024 Self Aid Buddy Aid Crittenden County Sheriff's Office; October 28 through November 1, 2024 Field Training Officer Marion County Sheriff's Office; October 28 through November 1, 2024 Crisis Intervention Training Independence County S.O.; November 4 and 5, 2024 Crime Scene Photography Fayetteville Police Department; November 4 through November 8, 2024 Field Training Officer Central Academy; November 4 through November 8, 2024 Telecommunicator Central Academy with a total of 311 officers trained from September 8th to November 8th. Deputy Director Lawrence also advised that the upcoming classes are Leadership Jonesboro Police Department November 14 and 15 and Firearms Instructor Class Searcy Police Department December 2 through 6. Deputy Director Lawrence also provided an update on the building projects, advising that when bids opened on the Northwest project, the bid price was approximately \$6.9 million, which is considerably lower than expected and below budget. East Camden bids will open on November 20th. It is our understanding that there will be 4 bidders for the project. We hope to start construction phases in December. Deputy Director Wacaster advised that on October 10, 2024, approximately 250 professionals from Arkansas and 8 other states gathered for our Annual Jail Resource Day. The conference brought together a diverse group of attendees, including law enforcement officials, jail commanders, judges, national experts, reentry professionals, workforce development agencies, college administrators, researchers, community leaders, and more. Workshops and sessions were designed to strengthen partnerships and share valuable insights on improving jail operations, enhancing public safety, advancing reentry and recidivism reduction programs, optimizing budgets, and addressing other critical areas of mutual concern. It was a successful day that highlighted the value of partnerships, shared resources, and innovative solutions for agencies and communities across Arkansas. Deputy Director Wacaster advised that the audit team, consisting of Agent Martin, Johnson, and Bishop has been busy. They've visited almost twenty agencies since our last meeting. This has been an area that was neglected, not for lack of effort or intent, but it's always been reactive instead of proactive. Complaint came in, audit team went out. What that's led to is agencies who've never been visited, or if they were it was many years ago. We are piloting a new process as we close out this

year with the intention of hitting the ground running in 2025. The new process should allow us to 10x the number of audits we do annually. What we've seen in the pilot process so far is a huge increase in efficiency as well as dozens of officers from these agencies that were out of compliance. Our rules require a reasonable amount of time for these officers to get in compliance, and then they are subject to suspension if unable to get into compliance. I appreciate the direction ya'll gave reference some of the more egregious lack of training issues (the "traskwood" standard for getting back into compliance). On the topic of training, we sent out 4000+ emails back in July for officers who had not yet completed their 2024 training. We did a follow-up email blast this month (in process) still have 3000+ that have not completed training. Our intention, and agencies will be made aware, that January 1 we will do another blast showing who is out of compliance with '24, 30 days to get in compliance, and officers not in compliance Feb 1 '25 will be suspended. I don't want to sound harsh, but if we have a standard and the standard is not enforced, I would say we do not have a standard. The bar is not high. 24 hours a year. With the exception of their firearms qualification, everything can be completed online. While at last count 3000 were out of compliance, that tells me around 11,000+ officers across the state were able to handle business and do what they are supposed to. Deputy Director Wacaster stated that this was our first meeting with no "uncontested" hearings. That's our world moving forward. I want to applaud Taylor, Kreasha, and Molly for adapting processes and taking what could have been a real roadblock to the progress the Division is making, working the problem, and coming to a solution that keeps us on track. Our division is what it is because of the staff on both sides of the house. I can't brag on them enough. Standards agents, Legal team, Training Agents, our administrative assistants, they are all bought in, mission focused and doing great things. Again, our division is, because they are. Finally, Deputy Director Wacaster advised the budget process is ongoing and we will provide an update to the Commission at our next meeting.