

MINUTES

BLEOST MEETING

May 13, 2021

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by the Chair, Ed Snyder. This meeting was held by conference call.

Roll Call:

The Chair called the roll, and a quorum was established. Board members present were:

Officer Brad Carter
Hon. Kassie Coleman
Chief Don Gammage
Sheriff Jim Johnson
Dr. Steve Mallory
Constable Glenn McKay
Sheriff Greg Pollan
Chief Vance Rice
Hon. Ed Snyder
Mr. Windy Swetman
Lt. Col. Thomas Tuggle

Hon. Candace Rucker, Board Counsel

Board members not present were:

Mayor Gary Rhoads
One Vacancy-Police Chief
Captain Lori Travis

Introduction of Guests, Introductory Remarks:

The guests introduced themselves and they were welcomed. Lt. Col. Tuggle is representing the Colonel from MHP today.

Speakers/Guests present were:

Sgt. Joseph Green, SRPSI
Director Phyllis Colson, N.E.M.C.C. Reserve Training Center
Lt. Mike Cowan, DeSoto Training Academy
Lt. Paula Henges, Harrison Co. S.O.
Ms. Lynn Carey, Meridian CC L.E. T. A.
Director Michael Street, Meridian CC L. E. T. A.
Sgt. Stephon Richardson, Hattiesburg P.D.

Staff Members Present were:

Certification Officer Bebea Boney
Bureau Director Robert Davis
Division Director Bob Morgan
Training Director, Michael Nash
Certification Officer Donna Rogers

Approval of Minutes:

A copy of the minutes from the March 2021 meeting was emailed to each member. Sheriff Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Chief Gammage seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition.

OLD BUSINESS

In-Service Training – Request for Approval

1. NIBRS 101: Introduction to NIBRS – NIBRS Report Writing (National Incident-Based Reporting System); DPS/FBI, 16 hours.
2. Online Criminal Intelligence; ROCIC, 2 hours.
3. 2021 Emergency Services Administrative Professional Conference; 12 hours.
4. Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment Training (8 hours); U.S. Supreme Court Updates on Criminal Law (1 hour); First Amendment Training (1 hour); Liability for Police Ranges (1 hour); Social Media for Law Enforcement (2 hours); 1983 Claims (Shootings)(1 hour); MTCA Claims (Car Accidents)(1 hour); Legal Training for Crisis Negotiation (1 hour); Rules Regarding Citizens Videotaping Police Officers and/or Police Stations (1 hour); Norman E. Comeaux-Retiring May 2021, FBI Chief Division Counsel.
5. Online Civil Rights (1 hour); Police Officer Liability (1 hour); Command-Core Competencies of Leadership (1 hour); The Art of Effective Communication (1 hour); Officer Survival-Physiological Response to Stress (1 hour); Vector Solutions.
6. Special Reaction Team Training (SRT) for Newton County S.O.; 150 hours and continuing.
7. Trauma Informed Care Conference 2021; MS Department of Mental Health; 20 hours.
8. Desoto County S.O. Basic K9 Handler Course; 9 weeks.

The Chair entertained a motion. Chief Gammage made a motion to approve the courses for in-service training. Chief Rice seconded the motion, and it was approved without opposition.

NEW BUSINESS

Review House Bill 1263:

House Bill 1263 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The Bill requires an occupational licensing board to issue a license or government certification to a person who establishes residence in this state that holds a current and valid license in good standing in another

state in an occupation with a similar scope of practice or has work experience in another state that does not require a license. This includes military training. AG Counsel Candice Rucker advised the Board to request an official opinion to the AG's office in order to determine if this bill includes this Board.

The Chair entertained a motion. Officer Carter made a motion to authorize the Chair to request an official opinion on this matter to the Attorney General's Office. Mrs. Coleman seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Discuss Basic Defensive Tactics Training – Use of Force; Discuss Basic Training Needs:

The goals and objectives for basic course "Officer Safety/Mechanics of Arrest, Restraint and Control", "Use of Force", and "Conflict Management" were reviewed. Lt. Col. Tuggle advised the Board that there have been inquiries concerning our training curriculum related to "Positional Asphyxia" and he felt that this topic should be spelled out in our curriculum. Other topics discussed concerned duty to intervene, choke holds, and recognizing drug use when arresting a suspect. It was requested that our training academies recommend goals and objectives that are needed in the curriculum. Research will be conducted to see if additional goals and objectives concerning these topics should be included in the basic curriculum.

Discuss Basic Training Tuition:

The basic training tuition is set at \$3600.00. This averages to \$300.00 per week. Academies have stated that their operating cost have gone up and have requested that we research our funds to see if an increase could be allowed. Since the Board reimburses 50% of tuition costs, this would cause the agencies to spend more money on training. After the beginning of the new fiscal year in July, a study will be conducted on funding this request.

Discuss Municipal In-Service Training; Reporting In-Service Training; Reimbursement of Training Costs:

Because of the Pandemic, the Board allowed that all municipal in-service training could be completed online. The Chief's Association has partnered with an online company known as Virtual Academy. This company allows unlimited access to their courses at the cost of \$35.00 per officer per year. Chief Gammage stated that in the first quarter after Virtual Academy became available, 731 officers from 41 agencies used this training method. After discussion, Chief Gammage made a motion to continue allowing officers to receive their in-service training from online courses for the fiscal year beginning in July 2021 and ending June 2022. Mrs. Coleman seconded the motion, and it was approved without opposition. All of the required 24 hours may be obtained online. The agency head may choose online or classroom training.

After the end of the fiscal year, rosters are mailed to municipal agencies to be completed. All active officers are listed on this roster along with the number of training hours each officer completed during the prior fiscal year. The staff plans on randomly choosing agencies to provide proof of the training that was provided.

Recently a complaint came from an officer that stated that he nor others in his department were receiving training, but his chief was reporting that all officers were getting the appropriate amount of training. The Attorney General's office also received this complaint. The S&T staff sent this chief a request to provide proof of training. We did not receive a response. The AG's office looked into this matter and the chief admitted that he falsified the rosters that were sent back to Standards and Training. The AG's office is requesting to know what the Board would do in this situation, before they made a decision on what action to take including filing charges for submitting false documents.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold a hearing on this matter, if the chief remains in law enforcement.

Certification of Officers:

Director Davis presented 6 F/T Basic classes, 1 P/T Basic class, and 1 refresher/updates class for certification pending completion of all requirements. There are 23 F/T equivalency candidates and 11 P/T equivalency candidates for certification pending completion of all requirements. The Chair entertained a motion. Dr. Mallory made a motion to approve the equivalency candidates for certification subject to meeting all requirements and Sheriff Pollan seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

Director's Report:

A police chief position on the Board is vacant and we have had only one recommendation to send to the Governor's office. This position is for a chief of a town with less than 5000 population. Chief Thomas of Wiggins has been nominated. Chief Gammage stated that the Chief's Association had a name to be submitted. These names will be submitted after receiving the name from the Association.

It appears that some agencies have trouble receiving the transfer reimbursements from agencies hiring their newly trained officers. Some agencies struggle to afford to send cadets to the academy, just to have them leave for another law enforcement job.

The Board discussed beginning to meet in person again. There are hearings that need to be conducted. A decision will be made concerning the next meeting.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next meeting will be announced at a later date.

Concluding Remarks; Adjournment:

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Chief Gammage made the motion, Mrs. Coleman seconded the motion. There was no opposition.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R".

Director, Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training