

MINUTES

BLEOST MEETING

January 9, 2020

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chairman Mallory.

Roll Call:

Chairman Mallory called the roll and a quorum was established. Board members present were:

Chief Matt Barnett
Officer Brad Carter
Hon. Kassie Coleman
Chief Don Gammage
Chief Vance Rice
Sheriff Jim Johnson
Dr. Steve Mallory
Constable Glenn McKay
Sheriff Greg Pollan
Hon. Ed Snyder
Mr. Windy Swetman
Captain Lori Travis

Hon. Emiko Hemleben, Board Counsel

Board members not present were:

Mayor Gary Rhoads

Staff members present were:

Mrs. Mary L. Bailey
Mrs. Bebea Boney
Mr. Robert Davis
Ms. Geneva Hill
Mr. Bob Morgan
Mr. Michael Nash
Mrs. Donna Rogers

Speakers/guests present were:

Director Clint McMurry, CLETA
Director Amy Vanderford, MDCCLETA
Sgt. Joseph Green, SRPSI
Mrs. Jackie Posey, Adams Co. S.O.
Chief Fred Shelton, Columbus P.D.

Training Director Liz Patrick, Columbus P.D.
Officer Dashun Reed, Marion P.D.
Deputy Paul Holley, Rankin Co. S.O.
Deputy Paula Hentges, Harrison Co. S.O.
Captain Steve Godfry, Rankin Co. S.O.
Lt. Col. Thomas Tuggle, MLEOTA
Chief Dwight Harris, Holly Springs P.D.
Sgt. Roderick Brown, Holly Springs P.D.

Introductory Remarks:

The guests introduced themselves and they were welcomed by Chairman Mallory.

Approval of Minutes:

A copy of the minutes from the previous meeting was emailed to each member. Mr. McKay 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. The International Association of Chiefs of Police in Collaboration with the Southaven Police Department – Enhancing Rural Law Enforcement Response to Violence Against Women – 14 hours.
2. Managing Millennials – Major Bill Cox, Olive Branch Police Department – 2 hours.
3. Forensic Pieces Training & Consulting, hosting agency: Panola Co. S. O. – 40 hours.
4. 7th Annual One Loud Voice Conference – 15 hours.
5. FBI ERT Crime Scene Management and Investigation – 40 hours.
6. Mississippi Human Trafficking Summit – 7.5 hours.
7. MDIAI Annual Training Conference – 20 hours.
8. Prevention Mini Conference – Gangs 101, Games Children Play, Message in the Music – MS Public Health Institute – 10 hours.

Sheriff Johnson made a motion to approve the courses for in-service training. Chief Rice seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Discuss Final Approval of Proposed Changes to Policy, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 13 – Fresh Start Act:

The Occupational Licensing Review Commission reviewed the proposed changes and will not hear these changes because it is felt that the BLEOST doesn't fall under the Fresh Start Act. They requested that the Board get an Attorney General's opinion. Chief Gammage stated that the Chief's Association is asking for an opinion. No further action will be taken until an opinion is issued.

New Business

Review and Discuss Academy of Record and Academy Release:

The Chief's Association requested that this topic be placed on the agenda and discussed. The Board reviewed the policy concerning Academy of Record and Academy Release. Chief Gammage stated that Chiefs were having problems getting their new hires released from certain academies for them to attend another academy. He stated that the Chiefs believe that they should be able to get releases upon their request to send their people to another academy, the only exception should be for disciplinary reasons. When a cadet does not complete the training at an academy for academic reasons, injuries, or personal reasons, it is felt that due to time or money reasons, that a chief should be able to send the cadet to another academy. Two chiefs and academy directors presented their thoughts and experiences with this matter. It was noted that academies refusing to release former students could hurt their reputation.

It was stated that this policy is in place to prevent academy shopping. The Board did not want to make changes to the policy and requested that academy directors be notified and asked to come to the next meeting and explain their reasons for not releasing a student when asked by a department head.

Certification of Officers:

Director Davis presented 5 F/T Basic classes, 22 F/T equivalency candidates, 2 P/T Basic classes, 1 Refresher/Update, and 4 P/T equivalency candidates for certification pending completion of all requirements. Sheriff Pollan made a motion to approve the classes and equivalency candidates for certification subject to meeting all requirements and Sheriff Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition.

Certification Review Hearing – Officer Roderick Brown Jr.:

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training's Certification Section determined that Officer Roderick Brown Jr. was not eligible for law enforcement certification. He was hired by the Holly Springs Police Department as a law enforcement officer. He requested a hearing before the Board.

The Board reviewed 3 documents from his file, one document contained 27 pages, the second document contained 11 pages, and the third document contained 10 pages. According to the record, he was certified by the Board on November 9, 2017. While employed as an officer for

the Forrest City, Arkansas Police Department, according to the record, he was engaged in conduct that would violate the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics or would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer. He was accused of attempting to leverage his position to extort sexual favors from a female arrestee on or about May 17, 2017. Previously, two other females reported that he made inappropriate and unwelcome sexual advances towards them where he solicited sex from them in exchange for his help. The State of Arkansas was setting up a decertification hearing when he surrendered his law enforcement certification in that state. Mississippi was not informed of this conduct until after he was certified.

The Board heard from Officer Brown and his Chief. They requested that he be allowed to work in law enforcement and requested the approval of his certification. Officer Brown denied the accusations against him. He claimed he was the front runner for a Lieutenant position and the person in charge of the investigation always sided with another sergeant wanting that position. He also stated that he had gone against the Chief, before these allegations and the Chief said he couldn't trust him. Chief Harris of Holly Springs stated that Officer Brown was a great investigator, a leader, was good with grants and the city did not want to lose him. Officer Brown stated that he didn't go back to the Arkansas hearing because he already had a job in Mississippi, so he surrendered his Arkansas certificate. Officer Brown submitted documents into evidence for the Board's review.

The Chair entertained a motion. Chief Gammage made a motion to enter closed session to consider an executive session. Mr. McKay seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

In closed session, the Chair entertained a motion to declare an executive session to consider the allegations of misconduct and evidence produced during open proceedings, and the possible issuance of an appealable order. Mr. Snyder made a motion to enter executive session with a second from Sheriff Johnson, the vote was unanimous.

After executive session, everyone was called back into the meeting room. Chief Gammage made a motion to come out of executive session with a second from Mr. McKay, the vote was unanimous.

The Chairman announced that the Board finds by clear and convincing evidence that Roderick Brown Jr. had actions that violated the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and these actions would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer.

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training issued professional certificate number 25834 in the name of Roderick Brown Jr.

The Board voted 7 – 5 to recall and cancel certificate number 25834 in the name of Roderick Brown Jr. This action is effective on Thursday, January 9, 2020. Members voting against the recall and cancellation were Chief Gammage, Constable McKay, Chief Barnett, Mr. Swetman and Captain Travis.

Certification Review Hearing – Officer Dashun L. Reed:

The Board cancelled and recalled Officer Dashun Reed's certification on May 11, 2017. He has been hired by the Marion Police Department and has requested another hearing.

The Board reviewed 2 documents from his file, one document contained 9 pages and the other document contained 17 pages. The Board has been provided information that while serving as a Meridian Police Officer, on several occasions he used the Police Department's gas card for his personal use and admitted the improper use. This conduct violates the Code of Ethics and diminishes the public trust in his competence and reliability.

Officer Reed stated that he made bad decisions and did not deny these actions. Since he lost his certification, he has been deployed by the Army overseas. He has learned from these bad decisions and is not looking back. He asked the Board for another chance and to let him have his certification back.

The Chair entertained a motion. Mr. McKay made a motion to enter closed session to consider an executive session. Chief Barnett seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

In closed session, the Chair entertained a motion to declare an executive session to consider the allegations of misconduct and evidence produced during open proceedings, and the possible issuance of an appealable order. Mr. Snyder made a motion to enter executive session with a second from Sheriff Pollan, the vote was unanimous.

After executive session, everyone was called back into the meeting room. Sheriff Pollan made a motion to come out of executive session with a second from Chief Barnett, the vote was unanimous.

The Chairman announced that the Board voted unanimous with one member abstaining to reissue his certification.

Director's Report:

The Director noted that there seems to be an increase in terminations with reasons of misconduct. This week the staff has received notice that two former officers surrendered their certifications due to felony charges and another was convicted of a felony.

The Golden Triangle Regional Airport of Columbus is beginning to employ law enforcement officers.

There are 28 new sheriffs that took office at the beginning of the year. We are receiving many applications for new hires as well as terminations. One agency sent in 19 terminations. Our office will host New Chief's Training next week, 31 Chiefs are expected.

Election of Board Officers:

Chairman Mallory nominated Captain Travis for Chair. Mr. McKay seconded the motion and she was elected without opposition.

Sheriff Johnson nominated Chief Barnett for Vice-Chair. Chief Gammage seconded the motion and he was elected without opposition.

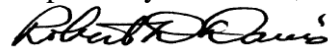
Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next meeting was set for March 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Planning Building.

Concluding Remarks; Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Director, Board on Law Enforcement
Officer Standards and Training