

Board Meeting Minutes Date: May 14, 2026 **Time:** Approximately 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
(adjourned at 12:00 p.m.) **Location:** 209 Allen Stuart Drive, Pearl, MS

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Johnson, Lee County Sheriff.

Pledge- Chief Hall of Guntown PD

Prayer- Chief Quaka, Tupelo PD

Role Call -present

Jim H. Johnson, Chair, Sheriff, Lee County

Amy Vanderford, Director, Office of Standards & Training

Sean Tindell, Commissioner, MDPS

Brandon Hendry, Captain, Director of Law Enforcement Training Academy

John Quaka, Chief, Tupelo Police Department

Michael Hall, Chief, Guntown Police Department

Billy Seal, Chief, City of Long Beach

Kassie Coleman, Esq.

Robert Hancock, Constable, Mississippi Constables Association

Kenny Rogers, Chief, Mississippi State University

Tadd Pitts, Colonel, Director of Highway Patrol

Randy Johnson, Sheriff, Jasper County

BOARD ATTORNEYS PRESENT:

Luke Williamson, Esq.

Royce Cole, Esq.

4. Approval of the March 5, 2026 board minutes. Motion, Sheriff Randy Johnson, and a second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

Executive Session for a board personnel matter. Motion, Chief Hall, and a second by Kassie Coleman: All in favor, none opposed.

Hearing panel decisions: Luke Williamson read the decisions for the hearing panel that convened on May 13, 2026. The Board took the following actions on these recommendations:

Christopher Bell- to cancel and recall certificate #20774 and prohibit reapplication for recertification for a period of 10 years. Motion, Kassie Coleman, and a second by Constable Hancock. All in favor, none opposed.

Craig Andrew Chandler- to cancel and recall certificate #27031 and prohibit reapplication for recertification for a period of 10 years. Motion, Sheriff Randy Johnson, and a second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

Rebecca Lomax- to cancel and recall certificate #21554 and prohibit reapplication for recertification for a period of 10 years. Motion, Constable Hancock, and a second by Brandon Hendry. All in favor, none opposed.

Caleb Wayne McQueen- to suspend certificate #24550 pending his completion of a psychological fitness for duty evaluation; once complete, upon providing the office a copy, then suspension will be lifted. Thereafter, probation for 18 months where any infraction is reported by McQueen to this office. Motion, Kassie Coleman, with an amendment to probation of 5 years instead of 18 months, and the evaluation of McQueen be an in-person evaluation, and a second by Sheriff Randy Johnson. All in favor, Chief Quaka opposed.

Old Business

A. Sheriff Calhoun's Presentation (Mississippi Board Meeting, 3/5/2026):

Sheriff Calhoun returned to the Board to renew a request he made at a prior meeting: to upgrade one of his long-serving deputies from a part-time to a full-time law enforcement certificate.

Key Details: The deputy has held a part-time certificate since 2003 and has had continuous service with no breaks. In 2007, the sheriff's department became the first in Mississippi to achieve state accreditation (a hybrid process with CALEA standards). CALEA at the time did not recognize part-time officers, so the department required them to complete additional training equivalent to full-time standards.

Main Request: Upgrade the deputy's certificate to full-time without requiring him to attend a standard full-time academy now, acknowledging this would be an exception to normal procedures.

Board Discussion and Outcome: Board members asked clarifying questions about the timing (2008), service history, training format, terminology (auxiliary/reserve to part-time paid), and why the full-time certificate wasn't requested originally. Legal counsel noted that records would

need to be reviewed to compare the training against current full-time curriculum requirements. No final recommendation was possible yet.

Motion- Sheriff Johnson, for counsel to examine the records and report back on equivalency and whether the Board can approve this under current policy/statute, and a second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

B. Bridge Program- Brandon Hendry's Proposal (Summary):

Captain Brandon Hendry proposed a "bridge" program/process (not full additional training) allowing currently certified part-time officers to obtain full-time certification without repeating the entire basic academy.

Key eligibility requirements: Current BLEOST part-time certification. Actively serving in law enforcement (as defined by statute). Minimum 3 consecutive years of service + at least 40 hours per month. Meet employment/moral character standards. Affidavit from agency head confirming good standing. Pass the existing equivalency examination (used for out-of-state and military applicants). Complete physical fitness assessment (50% standard), firearms qualification, EVOC (emergency vehicle operations), and defensive tactics evaluations.

All testing/evaluations conducted at a Board-accredited residential, full-time academy by certified instructors. Academy director reviews/approves before submission to Standards and Training. One attempt only — failure on any component requires attending the full academy.

Academies can charge reasonable fees for testing and include a sunset provision (Hendry suggested ~3 years) to eventually move toward a single certification standard.

The proposal is modeled closely on existing equivalency pathways and aims to be a fair but controlled "bridge" while maintaining standards. The Board discussed possible amendments (e.g., raising service to 5 years, limiting to residential academies, refining sunset language, adding "residential" qualifier).

Questions/Comments from Others: Josh Fortenberry (Training Director, Northeast Mississippi Community College Reserve Officer Program):

Raised concerns that a 3-year sunset + 5-year service requirement would exclude newer officers currently in or entering part-time classes. Suggested flexibility on the 40-hour/month requirement (e.g., for military/Guard activation or injuries — perhaps use annual/quarterly totals). Asked for clear, published standards/guidelines for the physical fitness, driving, and defensive tactics evaluations so applicants know what to expect. Questioned the "one chance only" rule and suggested allowing some remediation/retake opportunity (similar to what full academy students receive).

Sheriff Charlie Sims (Forrest County):

Questioned the need for the physical fitness test (50% standard) in the bridge process, noting that long-serving full-time officers (e.g., his 22-year reserve deputy example) face no ongoing PT requirements after academy graduation.

Motion- Commissioner Tindell to accept the presentation, Rule 9.5, and a second by Sheriff Randy Johnson. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion- Commissioner Tindell to change 3 years to 5 years in the requirements, and a second by Constable Hancock. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion- Commissioner Tindell Rule 9.5.4, program requirements, that the language be amended to say that applicants must successfully complete all phases of the bridge program through a board-accredited, full-time, and add "residential" training academy and a second by Chief Seal. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion- Commissioner Tindell to add under 9.5.9, a number 3, the Board may waive any one or more of the above provisions required for completion and grant full-time certification upon a vote of a supermajority of the Board, and a second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed. Moved for adoption.

Motion- Commissioner Tindell to add to 9.5.9, a number 4, the bridge program shall not be available after five years from the date of full adoption of this policy or as otherwise extended by a vote of a supermajority of the Board and a second by Brandon Hendry. All if favor, none opposed.

Motion- Kassie Coleman to reference residential in subsection 9.5.5 and 9.5.6 for clarity, second by Commissioner Tindell. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion- Brandon Hendry to make the equivalency exam unwaivable, Commissioner Tindell with a second. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion- Brandon Hendry to adopt the bridge program, second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

New Business

5. Julie Levanway presented the John Ballard Gorman Foundation to the board.

6-7. Were omitted due to already being discussed.

8. Luke Williamson presented on the SkillBridge Program

9. Joseph Green, Assistant Director of MLEOTA, presented curriculum updates.

Motion- Amy Vanderford to recommend that we look at these hours and that we vote on the hours as they have been changed or added or taken away, added to online training, that we agree

on the online training portions. The cost of this is not increasing. The tuition for basic training will remain at \$4,000. Motion- Tadd Pitts, second by Constable Hancock.

Motion- Brandon Hendry- come back with policy change to activate the change in the hours of the basic curriculum. Tadd Pitts withdrew his original motion to adopt the hours.

10. Amy Vanderford, presentation on MOU requirement with School Districts and police entities.

11. Amy Vanderford, presentation on certification of officers. Motion- Brandon Hendry to omit #4- Chief of Edwards, Terrence Crump, and second by Chief Hall. All in favor, none opposed.

12. Amy Vanderford, presentation to raise the reimbursement from 350-375 for the chiefs' conference. Motion- Chief Seal to accept the recommendation to raise, second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

13. Amy Vanderford, Director's Report. Director Vanderford addressed compliance issues with academy training requirements. Part-time academies are required to run one per year, and full-time academies are required to run two per year.

It was noted that Columbus had significant gaps in running required academies (last runs referenced in 2012 and 2017), and none had been conducted since Ms. Turpin joined. Captain Hendry expressed concerns about maintaining competent and proficient staff under these conditions.

Motion- Captain Hendry moved to revoke all relevant academies and a second by Tadd Pitts. All in favor, none opposed.

Executive Session

Chairman Johnson called for a motion to enter executive session to discuss a policy matter involving potential litigation.

The Board returned from executive session. Director Vanderford confirmed that hearings are required every other month and noted that September 9–10 dates are already set. Hearings originally planned for July were postponed at Luke's request.

Hearings- May 14, 2026

Colundula Green- Inv. Reginald Cooper

Derek Felton- Inv. Reginald Cooper

Jaquez Brown- Inv. Reginald Cooper

Next Meeting Date / Scheduling- July 16, 2026

Motion- Commissioner Tindell moved to change the July regular board meeting (and associated hearings) to the above dates and a second by Kassie Coleman. All in favor, none opposed.

Commissioner Tindell reminded the Board that smaller panels may be utilized for emergency or expedited hearings to improve efficiency.

Adjournment -Chairman Johnson adjourned the meeting at **12:00 p.m.**

The Board reconvened at 1:00 p.m. for hearings for three officers who had been previously certified. The Board considered evidence presented and heard testimony from witnesses who were placed under oath prior to their testimony. The Board moved into executive session to deliberate and consider its decision in each hearing. The Board took the following action in each case:

Colendula Green – The Board unanimously voted to cancel and recall certificate #18273 and prohibit reapplication for recertification for a period of ten (10) years.

Derek Felton - The Board unanimously ruled that Derek Felton is eligible for certification with certificate #25360 upon completion of certain conditions. Felton shall reapply for certification and complete all necessary requirements, including skills updates and legal classes. Upon becoming recertified, Felton shall be on probation for a period of five (5) years and shall be required to self-report an infractions, discipline, or violation of Board policy to the Office of Standards and Training.

Jacques Brown - The Board unanimously voted to cancel and recall certificate #28337 and prohibit reapplication for recertification for a period of five (5) years.