



Vermont Criminal Justice Council

TRAINING ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Minutes

September 23, 2021

Location: Physical Location – VT Police Academy, Pittsford, VT and Online Meeting (via Teams)

Committee Members Present: Chair: Lt. Steve Coote, VSP; Vice Chair: Sgt. Jason Covey, Middlebury Police; Sgt. Fred Whitcomb, Stowe Police; Sheriff Jennifer Harlow, Orleans CSD; Sgt. Andrew Bent, Washington CSD; Chief Derrick Tienken, Winhall Police; Lt. Robert Giolito, Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles; Chief Skyler Genest, VT DLC; Major Justin Stedman, Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife; Commander Greg Sheldon, Rutland Police; Christopher Louras, Governor Appointee to the CJC, Inspector John Federico, Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles/VSEA.

Others Present:

Cindy Taylor-Patch, LECTC's Ken Hawkins and Andrew Graham.

Absent: Commissioner Michael Schirling, Maira Tungatarova, Governor Appointee to the CJC; Vermont Dept. of Public Safety; Tammy Boudah, Howard Center; Sgt. Adam Murach, Brandon Police; Sgt. Dan Delgado, Burlington Police; Chief George Merkel, Vergennes Police; Brian Searles, Governor Appointee to the CJC.

Call to order: 1240 hours by Chair Lt. Steve Coote.
(Late start due to difficulty getting a quorum).

Approval of Prior Minutes: A motion was made by Sgt. Covey, seconded by Sgt. Bent to accept the meeting minutes of September 9, 2021; All in favor. Motion passed.

Field Training requirements for Level II officers who become Level III certified: Members gave examples of the different ways this can occur. Chief Tienken stated that his department has been through this experience and required a couple week of re-acclimation, but less time than a new officer would need. Sgt Bent discussed his own experience as having been Level II certified, working for six (6) years, and then going to the Level III Academy. Commander Sheldon spoke about his first job in policing (Level II) where he worked infrequently. Lt. Coote stated that anyone entering employment with the State Police is required to complete 405 hours, regardless of prior status (even if Level III with another agency). Members discussed the Field Training experience and acclimation to geography, agency-specific paperwork, agency culture, scope of responsibilities, etc. Lt. Coote offered that we could possibly recommend agencies complete a 40-hour Field Training in this case, but not require it.

Sgt. Covey made a motion that Field Training requirements for a Level II officer who has completed 120 hours of Field Training, then completes Level III Basic Training, be left to the discretion of the employing agency head. Seconded by Sheriff Jennifer Harlow. All in favor. Motion passed.



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Basic Training Review (Discussion of Training & Curriculum Review Working Group, membership, method, meeting schedule):

Members discussed the distinction of the Curriculum Review Working Group (WG) (a sub-group of the TAC) to determine the TAC members' interest in membership and division of work (full TAC vs. WG). Coote and Covey both noted that they believed the purpose of the two groups are one in the same. Coote identified the value of the experience the larger group brings to the table. Genest agreed. Covey further stated that working groups could be established as needed if there is an identified topic that would benefit from a hyper-focus. Coote inquired of the group if there was any difference of opinion and there were none who disagreed. Taylor-Patch stated that she would ask the Executive Director how to manage this issue as there was no distinction in who wished to be members of the two groups. A schedule plan become moot.

Rules Subcommittee: Taylor-Patch relayed that the CJC Rules Subcommittee has asked the TAC to provide input on several Council Rules currently under revision. She will ask Rules Subcommittee members to attend the next TAC meeting to provide further guidance. TAC members should review the Rules in preparation.

Waiver Subcommittee: Taylor-Patch relayed that the Waiver Subcommittee is asking the TAC to provide input on out-of-jurisdiction waiver training prescription, with specific questions about the concept of those intending to be "administrative" Chiefs. Discussion ensued regarding how to define the concept of "administrative Chief." Chief Genest suggested that TAC tackle the issue of out-of-jurisdiction waivers first in hopes that it can help relieve recruiting/hiring pressure in some cases. Commander Sheldon discussed the idea that one may intend to be "administrative" but that it might not be very practical for most Vermont agencies. Sheriff Harlow offered that we may want to think about alternative training options or options to "test out." Inspector Federico posed the issue of power dynamics when chiefs are put through a Field Training process by a subordinate.

VCJC Subcommittee and TAC Working Groups Progress Updates

- **Entrance Testing Working Group update** – Lt. Coote reported out about the current status of the entrance exam review process. RFI is out. Psychological assessment is also being explored. Fitness test need is recognized and they are early in their conversations about a revision.
- **Fair & Impartial Policing Training update** – Taylor-Patch reported that contracts are nearing completion and a training will be out soon, date to be announced as soon as the schedule is finalized with the contractor.

Motion made by Sgt. Covey to adjourn at 1:45; seconded by Sheriff Harlow.