



Vermont Criminal Justice Council

CANINE COMMITTEE: Minutes

April 14, 2022

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

Committee Members Present:

Chair: Cpl. David Dewey, Colchester PD
Sgt. Richard Slusser, Vermont State Police
Chief William Dodge, Barre Town PD
Robert Ryan, Canine Training Coordinator, VCJC
Capt. Scott Dunlap, Vermont State Police
Michael Carifio, US Forest Service
Officer Jeremy Perkins, Lebanon NH PD
Sgt. Mark Redmond, South Burlington PD

Call to order at 0910 Chair Cpl. Dave Dewey.

Introduction of VPA Deputy Director Brickell. We discussed the PT test for handlers and potential changes. VPA entrance test is a row, but once in the VPA PT includes pushups, run, sit ups. Standard is that officers need to row 2,000 meters at 40 percentile, need 50th percentile to graduate. K9 Committee to vote on the testing change and submit to the Council.

Slusser brought up question of can we design our own that is more task based, agility and obstacle, dog carry etc. Discussed need for being a research based test and determine what the expected results should be. Those present felt it good to adapt the rowing standard to start while members design a test over a two year period of gathering data to create a measurable standard. Slusser offered to assist in the design of a new test.

Those present also discussed removing the “grandfather clause” of the PT test, as it only truly applies to a few (believed to be 4) teams. Those present felt it would build a better team. To be voted on at a later date. Hope to implement May 2023.

Schutt made the motion to adopt the rowing standard, Slusser seconded, passed 4-1. (Later discussed that the vote was not valid due to not having a quorum).

Slusser made the motion to remove the “grandfather clause” of the PT test, seconded by Redmond, passed 5-0. (Later discussed that the vote was not valid due to not having a quorum).

We discussed the multiple ways to train a dog, specifically operant conditioning and traditional training. We discussed whether it could be problematic for court and/or certifications. We also discussed that there are currently multiple different ways that training is documented. There was no vote, only discussion.



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The Committee voted on the meeting minutes of 12/10/21, Schutt motioned, Redmond seconded, vote passed.

New certification forms/checklists: Dewey created forms to use for certifications. Showed to the Committee, took feedback and made changes.

Bite Reports: We discussed the policy of reviewing bite reports. Agreed that before we review a Bite Report, it should be reviewed/Approved by the Handler's agency as it is a use of force. We discussed that the purpose per our standards for reviewing Bite Reports is for training purposes, NOT to determine if the bite is "good or bad." We agreed that there is no need or justification in making a "good or bad" determination as we are not use of force experts, do not have access or time to do a full investigation which could include interviews, video review, etc. Those present agreed that the review is for training purposes, and that no further written reviews will be presented.

Slusser discussed new handlers in the VSP K9 program. His patrol school starts in May. Ryan voiced concern about the new handlers being officers for less than the required three years per the standards. We discussed how we measure the three years. Schutt made a motion to require handlers have at least three years of law enforcement experience prior to completing VT Police Canine Program certification.

The meeting ended abruptly at approximately 1445 due to a family emergency, and the vote was not carried through.