

PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COMMISSION

June 16, 2021

8:30 AM

Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission
101 Federal Street, 12th Floor
Boston, MA

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Documents Distributed in Advance of the Meeting:

- Draft Minutes of June 2, 2021 meeting
- Proposed Guidance on Developmentally Appropriate De-escalation and Disengagement Tactics, Procedures and Other Alternative to Use of Force for Children

In Attendance:

- Chair Margaret R. Hinkle
 - Commissioner Hanya H. Bluestone
 - Commissioner Lawrence Calderone
 - Commissioner Clementina M. Chéry
 - Commissioner Larry Ellison
 - Commissioner Marsha V. Kazarosian
 - Commissioner Charlene D. Luma
 - Commissioner Kimberly P. West
 - Commissioner Michael Wynn
1. Call to Order
 - The Chair recognized a quorum.
 2. Vote to Adopt Remote Participation
 - All Commissioners attended the meeting in-person and a vote was not necessary.
 3. Approval of Minutes of June 2, 2021 Meeting
 - The Chair asked for a motion to approve the June 2, 2021 meeting minutes.
 - Commissioner Ellison moved to approve the minutes.
 - Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion.
 - The Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes.
 4. Vote to Create a Screening Committee to Review Applications for Executive Director
 - At the last meeting, the Chair indicated that a Screening Committee consisting of the Chair and Commissioners Kazarosian and West could be useful for evaluating application for the Executive Director position.
 - Commissioner Ellison moved to create a Screening Committee.

- Commissioner Chéry seconded the motion.
 - The Commission unanimously voted to create a Screening Committee.
5. Discussion of Statutory Responsibility Under Section 119: “Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, not later than June 30, 2021, the Massachusetts peace officer standards and training commission established in section 2 of chapter 6E shall issue guidance on developmentally appropriate de-escalation and disengagement tactics, techniques and procedures and other alternatives to the use of force for minor children that may take into account contextual factors including, but not limited to, the person’s age, disability status, developmental status, mental health, linguistic limitations or other mental or physical condition.”
- Presentation by Lisa Thureau and David Walker from Strategies for Youth
 - Commissioner Luma introduce Ms. Thureau, Mr. Walker, and Strategies for Youth.
 - Ms. Thureau and Mr. Walker presented their research on youth neurological development, current police training, youth response to law enforcement and reasons for escalation and provocations, best tactics for interactions and de-escalation with youth, and key elements for guidance on the same.
 - The Commission discussed Ms. Thureau’s and Mr. Walker’s presentation, and asked Ms. Thureau and Mr. Walker questions.
 - Commissioner Calderone expressed his gratitude for Ms. Thureau’s and Mr. Walker’s expression. He suggested that children would benefit from education as well, so they know how to interact with police officers.
 - Commissioner West asked Ms. Thureau and Mr. Walker whether any police departments have units or teams of police officers with advanced training. They reported that a number of municipal police departments have different programs targeted at serving youths. Commissioner Calderone volunteered that the Boston Police Department has a similar program.
 - Commissioner Ellis expressed concern that resources already in place for youth are being pulled back, such as School Resource Officers and the Youth Connect program.
 - Commissioner Wynn expressed concern that in small communities, there are no resources other than the police.
 - Chair Hinkle raised concerns about how to serve youth with linguistic limitations. Ms. Thureau and Mr. Walker agreed that bi-lingual officers are important. They also noted the increasing recognition of speech and language processing disorders.
 - Presentation by Commissioners Bluestone, Luma, and Wynn
 - Commissioners Bluestone, Luma, and Wynn presented their proposed guidance on education & training, trauma, community, de-escalation and disengagement.

- Discussion

- Commissioner Calderone asked whether the Municipal Police Training Committee's new training protocol was available yet. Commissioner Wynn said he would circulate it to the Commission.
- Commissioner Ellison expressed concern that this guidance is "one size fits all" and does not account for small communities that have a different set of needs. Commissioner Wynn recognized the concern, and clarified that the proposed guidance is broad in order to provide officers with a baseline understanding that will be applicable everywhere.
- Commissioner Kazarosian expressed concern that the guidance was not specific enough, particularly with respect to de-escalation strategies. Commissioners Bluestone, Luma, and Wynn clarified that they have drafted more specific guidance, but wanted to discuss general guidance first. Commissioner Kazarosian encouraged the Commission to add more specificity to the guidance. Commissioner Bluestone emphasized that the proposed guidance is merely a starting point, and will evolve. Commissioners Bluestone and Luma recognized that even though the proposed guidance is general, because there is no training or acknowledgment of developmental differences in youth, acknowledging that there is in general terms is a big step forward.
- Chair Hinkle cautioned the Commission that while these are guidelines and not regulations, this guidance will inevitably be brought up in a decertification proceeding so the Commission needs to remain mindful of the significance of the guidance.
- Commissioner Chéry echoed the need for more specific guidance and suggested the Commission build a recommended resources list so departments can find guidance that suits their specific needs.
- Commissioner West also echoed the need for more specific guidance. Commissioner West asked the Commission whether they wanted to require a certain percentage or number of officers receive youth specific guidance.
- Mr. Povich reminded the Commission of the context in which this guidance became the Commission's statutory responsibility. He also urged the Commission to develop more specific guidance. Mr. Povich also reminded the Commission of its obligation to limit its discussions to public for as to comply with the Open Meeting Law.

- The Commission agreed to meet again on June 23 to discuss revised proposed guidance.
6. New Business the Chair Did Not Anticipate at the Time of Posting
 - Jim Walsh, in attendance at the meeting, introduced himself and expressed his interest in the Commission's work.
 7. Adjournment
 - Commissioner Calderone moved to adjourn the meeting.
 - Commissioner Kazarosian seconded the motion.
 - The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn.