

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
CONSTABLES' EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

Thursday, February 13, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance	PCCD Staff
Chairman, Craig Westover, Constable, Venango County	Jackie Weaknecht, Director, Office of Justice Programs
Vice-Chairperson Patricia Norwood-Foden, Court Administration, Chester County	Deborah Sandifer, Chief Counsel
Major Gerard McShea, Pennsylvania State Police	Allison Gantz, Communications Director
Joshua Stouch, Constable, Montgomery County	Michael Vaughn, Supervisor, Constable's Program
Honorable Wilden Davis, Magisterial District Judge, Delaware County	Tracy Beaver, Constables' Program
Harry Albert, Constable, Lebanon County	Nicholas Hartman, Constable's Program
Guests	Deborah Williams, Bureau of Training Services
Anthony Luongo, Temple University	Theresa Ford, Manager
Michael Marcantino, Temple University	Dorthey Jacobelli
Stephen Shelow, PSU-JASI	Ekaterina Shull
Tony Mucha, PSU-JASI	Abby Carter

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Westover welcomed the members and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Chairman Westover reminded those in attendance that the meeting was being recorded.

Major Gerard B. McShea was welcomed as a new Board member representing the Pennsylvania State Police. Nicholas Hartman introduced Jackie Weaknecht as the new Director of the Office of Justice Programs. Board members then introduced themselves, followed by introductions of PCCD staff and training delivery contractors by Constable Supervisor Michael Vaughn.

As required by statute, the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman was held at the first meeting of the year. Judge Davis nominated current Chairman Craig Westover, with the nomination seconded by Harry Albert. The motion passed unanimously, and Chairman Westover will continue serving as Chairman of the CETB. Chairman Westover then nominated current Vice

Chairperson Patricia Norwood-Foden. Judge Davis seconded the motion, which also passed unanimously. Vice Chairperson Norwood-Foden will continue in her role.

II. Approval of the Minutes from November 7, 2024

A motion to approve the November 7, 2024, minutes was made by Joshua Stouch and seconded by Judge Davis. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Action Items

- **Financial Report February 13, 2025**

Ekaterina Shull presented the fiscal report for 2024-2025, highlighting key figures such as receipts, expenditures, commitments, and uncommitted funds. The report showed a carryover balance of \$3,737,882.74 from the previous fiscal year, along with additional receipts of \$815,923.34 for the second quarter, bringing the total to \$4,553,806.08. Total expenditures for the second quarter amounted to \$543,332.25, with cumulative expenditures and commitments reaching \$4,325,578.59, including \$388,866.84 in administrative costs. A detailed breakdown of these figures is provided on page 8 of the meeting materials. The total uncommitted funds stand at \$228,227.39, and checks deposited for class reimbursements totaled \$57,745.25.

Joshua Stouch requested the total cost for administering the training program from December 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, as well as the amount collected from the Constables Education Training Act (CETA) during the same period. Ekaterina Shull clarified that the fiscal year runs from July to June, and the current discussion pertains to the upcoming quarter. Projections for CETA collections were discussed, with an estimated amount of \$1,575,000.

A discussion followed regarding projected costs versus actual expenditures. Nicholas Hartman explained that purchase orders are often extended over multiple years, and actual costs are not finalized until invoices are received. As a result, the numbers presented tend to be higher than the actual expenditures. Schools often over-budget to create a financial buffer, which leads to uncommitted funds being returned to the CETA account once final invoices are processed. Additionally, schools submit budgets on a six-month basis, considering the discrepancy between the training calendar year and the state fiscal year.

A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Joshua Stouch and seconded by Vice Chairperson Patricia Norwood-Foden. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Instructor Applications**

Nicholas Hartman presented two instructor applications from Temple University. The first was Philip Carlo, a certified firearms instructor. Staff recommended recertification for Philip, as he had previously served as an instructor for Temple University. The second application was from John Labella, also a former certified instructor at Temple University, who requested recertification in both general topics and firearms.

A motion to approve the two instructor applications was made by Vice Chairperson Patricia Norwood-Foden and seconded by Joshua Stouch. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion Items

- **Supervisor Report**

Michael Vaughn reported that 36 classes are scheduled, with three already completed. Seventy-five individuals have successfully completed in-person training, while 63 have finished online training. A firearms qualification class was held, with 20 participants enrolled, resulting in a 50% failure rate. Upcoming training schedules with Temple University were discussed, including basic firearms training classes.

Joshua Stouch inquired about how many constables failed to renew their insurance following the recent deadline. Tracy Beaver estimated that 180 constables did not renew their insurance. A notice was sent in the training bulletin reminding constables of the deadline and informing them that insurance must be obtained through their respective counties.

Chairman Westover inquired about the availability of additional spots in a Basic Training class with Temple University. Concerns were raised about the lead time required for enrollment due to the payment processing for the online precursor subject. To ensure adequate preparation by Temple University and program staff, a cutoff date was established. The payment processing and enrollment procedures were explained, emphasizing the need for this cutoff to allow enough time for staff to manually process payments and send enrollment files to Temple University, a process that typically takes about a week and a half.

The method for providing proof of payment was also discussed. Chair Westover requested that the process be clearly outlined and posted in the training bulletin and asked for clarification on acceptable proof of payment methods. The consensus was that a physical check is currently required. Vice Chair Patricia Norwood-Foden inquired about the possibility of an online payment method. Michael Vaughn responded that a proposal and process for accepting online payments have been under development since 2020, but the timeline for implementation remains uncertain.

- **Draft Consolidated Training Policy**

Nicholas Hartman explained that the consolidated board policies have been presented three times and will be brought forward as an Action Item for approval at the May Board meeting. A recent edit regarding optics for firearms was added and reviewed. The board plans to finalize the policies during the May meeting. No comments or edits were proposed for the Consolidated Training Policy.

- **Prior Law Enforcement Officer Training Cost**

A discussion between Chair Westover and Judge Wilden Davis addressed the significant challenges constables face due to stagnant wages since 2009. The low pay is impacting the availability of constables, creating a bottleneck in service. The conversation highlighted the need

for effective lobbying to address this critical issue and improve efficiency within the judicial system.

Nicholas Hartman reported that in 2022, the board eliminated the waiver for law enforcement officers, as fewer individuals with prior law enforcement experience were requesting to take the exam. The discussion then focused on the costs associated with training for these officers. Currently, there is no system in place to determine the required courses or how the officers would pay for them. A proposal was made for a reduced training cost for prior law enforcement officers, where they would not be required to pay the full cost of Basic Training but still complete 80 hours of training. Most states no longer accept law enforcement waivers. Factors leading to the waiver's elimination included low usage, no-shows for exams, and poor exam scores. Chairman Westover emphasized the importance of addressing and clarifying the reasons for the program's removal.

Major McShea suggested offering an abbreviated version of the training, which could be more affordable and attract more participants, citing the Delaware State Police as an example. However, Michael Vaughn raised concerns about the potential liability of an abbreviated program, and Nicholas Hartman highlighted administrative challenges related to recertification periods.

- **Constable Certification Fee**

Michael Vaughn presented a proposal to assess an annual certification fee to allow constables to enroll in Continuing Education and Annual Firearms courses. The fee would help offset rising training costs. Joshua Stouch provided specific examples of the costs for both online and in-person training.

Chairman Westover expressed concerns about the fairness of charging a fee to constables, especially those who already work for the courts or are struggling to find employment. He proposed conducting a survey to compare recertification costs across various occupations in the state.

Vice Chairperson Patricia Norwood-Foden raised concerns about the potential burden on program staff and the impact on their workload. Suggestions were made to either automate the payment process or delay implementation. Since processing a single check can take up to 30 minutes, implementing an online payment system is desired but not feasible for the 2025-2026 year.

- **In-person Training Hours and Annual Firearms**

Nicholas Hartman presented information from a 2018 Board meeting, outlining the pros and cons of shifting firearms training to a "show and shoot" model and moving Continuing Education to online formats. The discussion included feedback from program staff, raising concerns about administrative issues, particularly regarding board liability, as firearms certification is granted through the CETB.

Chairman Westover and Joshua Stouch discussed concerns about the effectiveness and cost of the program, specifically focusing on reduced training hours and rising ammunition costs. Further discussions are needed to find the optimal balance between in-person and online training and to address the financial impact of increasing ammunition costs.

- ***Commonwealth v. Steven Wiggs***

Chairman Westover requested that legal counsel review the case and provide a recommendation on whether it should be incorporated into the learning curriculum.

V. Informational Items

- **Training and Delivery Contractor Updates**

Tony Mucha provided an update on the 2025 training cycle, reporting that completed classes have gone smoothly. The training materials were updated to focus on handcuffing, searching, and drills.

Michael Marcantino reported that all nineteen constables enrolled in the first firearms class brought the required 50 rounds of ammunition. Three constables failed the course, but he also noted positive feedback from participants. Additionally, the final cost per book was estimated at \$65.

Anthony Luongo updated the group on curriculum development, noting that the 2025 online continuing education program went live in January, with a completion deadline of November 21, 2025. A discussion followed regarding an issue where constables who completed the online education were not receiving their certification cards. The conversation explored the possibility of generating a printable completion certificate as proof of completion. Currently, constables are using cell phone screenshots as a workaround.

VI. Other Business

None Provided

VII. Public Voice

Abraham Smith, a constable, and attorney from Westmoreland County, commented on the market-based costs of training and recertification for constables and attorneys. He pointed out that attorney recertification through the Pennsylvania Bar Association costs \$400 and covers multiple credits, while Act 235 training is estimated to cost around \$100. Smith also raised an issue with finding the meeting agenda on the website. PCCD Communications Director, Allison Gantz, clarified that the website has been updated and the agenda is now available on the calendar.

VIII. Executive Session

A motion to move into Executive Session was made by Chairman Westover and seconded by Judge Davis. The motion passed unanimously.

During Executive Session, Chief Counsel Debra Sandifer discussed pending litigation against the Board.

A motion to return from Executive Session was made by Joshua Stouch. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Joshua Stouch and seconded by Judge Davis. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.