

Commission Meeting Number 355

State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety  
Division of Criminal Justice

**POLICE TRAINING COMMISSION**

Minutes of Commission Meeting

October 4, 2023

Location: **Monmouth County Sheriff's Office**  
**2500 Kozloski Rd. Freehold, NJ 07728**

Commission Members Present

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Attendee(s)/Representative(s)</u>
Office of the Attorney General, State of New Jersey	John F. Cunningham
New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association	Kevin Lyons
New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police	James Abbott
New Jersey State Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police	James Sharrock
County Prosecutors' Association of New Jersey	Angelo Onofri
Sheriffs' Association of New Jersey	Robert A. Nolan
Police Academy Director's Association	Daniel Colucci
Commissioner-Department of Education	James Scaringelli
Commissioner-Department of Corrections	David Scott
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Elisabete Santos
New Jersey Juvenile Detention Association	Jorge Sandoval
New Jersey State Parole Board	Samuel Plumeri

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives	Edward Steed
Citizen Member—Governor’s Appointment	James Polos
Citizen Member—Governor’s Appointment	Vacant
New Jersey League of Municipalities	Absent
New Jersey Jail Wardens Association	Oscar Aviles
New Jersey State Police	Captain Michael Tierney

Division of Criminal Justice Staff Present

Deputy Attorney General Alessandra Baldini, Office of Public Integrity & Accountability

Deputy Attorney General Stephen Wenger, Chief, Office of Public Integrity & Accountability

Academy Coordinator Pat Jones, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator LaShante Murray, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator Forest Kairos, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator Allison Gosley, Police Training Commission

Analyst, Tykeria T. Lockhart, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator Unit Supervisor, Kathleen McSorley, Police Training Commission

Chief Investigator, James Byrd, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, John Janowiak, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Dion Feltri, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Kim Arroyo, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Rae Coles, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Daniel Brown, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Donald Robertella, Police Training Commission

Field Representative, Aaron Erven, Police Training Commission

Curriculum Unit Supervisor, Tyeka Knight, Police Training Commission

## **Police Training Commission Meeting Minutes for October 4, 2023**

Administrator John F. Cunningham called the 355<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission to order at 12:00pm.

Administrator Cunningham led the Commissioners in the flag salute. Commissioner Cunningham asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of the Law Enforcement and military personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Analyst Tykeria T. Lockhart announced that “notice of the Commission meeting has been publicized in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law by notification to the Secretary of State and five newspapers. The notifications included a copy of the meeting agenda.”

Administrator Cunningham asked the Commissioners to consider the minutes of the August 2, 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioner Onofri made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nolan. The Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

### **Administrator Cunningham asked Chairperson Robert Nolan to report on the business of the Appeals and Legislation Committee.**

1. Commissioner Lyons reported the following appeals were received since the August 2, 2023 meeting:

*2A PTC Instructor Certification issued to Krishnadat Munusami*

*2B Justin Raab v. Cape May County Police Academy*

*2C Jason T. Robles v. Bergen County Law & Public Safety Institute*

*2D Daniel Romain v. Essex County Police Academy*

*2E Antwain Auletta v. Juvenile Justice Commission Training Academy*

Commissioner Lyons reported that all of the above appeals were postponed prior to the meeting at the appellant’s request.

*2F Christopher Megna and Dominic Megna v. Passaic County Police Academy*

Recruits are appealing their dismissal from Passaic County Police Academy on July 25, 2023 for violation of Academy Rules/Regulations and alleged misconduct.

Commissioner Nolan reported that a hearing was held where the recruits and their attorney were present. On behalf of the Appeals Committee, Commissioner Nolan moved and seconded a motion to table the matter again pending additional investigation. The motion passed.

Commissioner Lyons reported that **Agenda Item 4** was **Consideration of Extensions of Training Time** for Juvenile Detention Officers and County Correctional Police Officers

On behalf of the Appeals and Legislative Committee, Commissioner Lyons moved and seconded a motion to combine Agenda Items 4A-4H and approve the extensions. The Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

**Commissioner Lyons concluded the Appeals and Legislation Committee Report**

**Administrator Cunningham asked Commissioner Sharrock to report on the business of the Standards Committee.**

1. Commissioner Sharrock indicated that **Agenda Item 6A was a Consideration of a Waiver of Training Request** from Chief of Detectives, Weldon Powell, NJ Division of Criminal Justice on behalf of Detectives Ehtasham Chowdry and Michael Duffield

On July 10, 2023, the Commission received waiver requests, submitted by the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, to grant waivers for Enrichment BCI to BCI. The request was submitted by Weldon Powell, Chief, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, on behalf of Detectives Ehtasham Chowdry, and Michal Duffield. Detectives Chowdry and Duffield attended the Basic Course for Investigators at the Division of Criminal Justice Training Academy from January 3 I, 2007, through June 18, 2007. Detectives Chowdry and Duffield were not issued Police Training Commission Certification in 2007, because Division of Criminal Justice Detectives did not fall under the Police Training Act at the time of their attendance in the basic course.

Chief Powell submitted all the required documentation, both detectives have kept current with all required mandared trainings, therefore, no additional course work would be required.

Commissioner Sharrock, on behalf of the Standards Committee moved and seconded a motion to approve the waiver requests. The Commissioners approved the motion.

2. Commissioner Sharrock indicated that **Agenda Item 7A was Consideration of an Investigative Report** regarding the actions of PTC Instructor, Sara Toro, Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute.

On July 20, 2023, the Commission received two anonymous letters, which included photographs, via U.S. Mail. The letters contained information related to the conduct of Police training Commission Instructor Sergeant Sara Toro, Bergen County Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Toro is certified through the Bergen County Police Academy. The letter alleges inappropriate conduct on the part of Instructor Toro during Basic Course for Police Officers (BER-NBCP 6007) held at the Bergen County Police Academy from July 22, 2022 through December 16, 2022. The complaint was forwarded to Donald Robertella, PTC Field Investigator, for appropriate fact finding, and investigation.

On September 19, 2023, Administrator Cunningham reviewed the investigative findings (Attached), submitted by Investigator Robertella. The report details that Instructor Toro, PTC Instructor, Bergen County Police Academy, violated several sections of the Police Training Commission, Standards of Conduct for Instructors, specifically;

- 1.3 Instructors shall exhibit the highest standards of professional, moral, and ethical conduct while teaching recruits/trainees. Instructors will maintain the same level of professionalism when interacting with fellow instructors.
- 2.1 Instructors shall ensure the safety of recruits/trainees under their immediate control and supervision. Instructors must be constantly alert for evidence that a recruit/trainee may be experiencing a medical, physical, psychological or emotional problem that effects health and/or performance. When necessary, instructors shall intervene and take immediate action to mitigate the problem, including, if appropriate, notification to emergency medical service

- 3.4 Instructors shall refrain from physical contact with recruits/t unless such contact is necessary to ensure the safety of a recruit/trainee to provide emergency first-aid, or for a legitimate instructional purpose, such as teaching a curriculum-based skill, demonstrating correct technique, or correcting improper performance of a required skill. Physical contact for non-training purposes is strictly prohibited. Whenever possible, both male and female instructors should be present to provide physical contact instruction to classes that include both male and female recruits/trainees.
- 5.1 Instructors shall set an example in appearance, competence, courtesy, knowledge, dignity, deportment and professional bearing for the recruits/trainees entrusted to their care and control. Instructors shall endeavor to instill confidence and self-discipline in recruits/trainees whom they supervise.
- 6.1 Instructors shall report to the school director or to the Police Training Commission conduct or behavior by any person that is illegal, unethical, or contrary to Commission Rules, school rules, or these standards of conduct.

PTC Field Investigator, Donald Robertella was present and provided additional information about the investigation he conducted into the matter. A lengthy discussion was had by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Sharrock, on behalf of the Standards Committee moved and seconded a motion to revoke the PTC Instructor Certification for Sara Toro. The Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

The Commissioners also expressed discontent with the operations at Bergen County Police Academy. The Commissioners voted that Administrator Cunningham would be instructed to write a letter to the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office addressing the inconsistency of leadership at the police academy as well as additional issue found during the investigation involving Instructor Toro. The Commission also recommended that additional PTC oversight be put in place at the academy.

### **Commissioner Sharrock concluded the Standards Committee report**

Administrator Cunningham reported that **Agenda Item 8A was a Report** of the Law Enforcement Officers Training and Equipment Fund (LEOTEF).

1. Commissioner Colucci reported that quarterly expense reports for the 4th quarter of State Fiscal Year 2023 (4/1/23 – 6/30/23) have been reviewed and processed. All 16 LEOTEF grants for SFY 2023 have been closed. Supplemental academy requests for LEOTEF purchases have been reviewed and approved. The 1st quarter of State Fiscal Year 2024 will end on September 30, 2023. Quarterly reporting for the 1st quarter should be

submitted by October 16, 2023. Staff is currently working on the next round of funding (the 35th LEOTEF distribution) and hope to have it out within the next month.

2. Administrator Cunningham reported that **Agenda Item 8B was a Report on Pre-Employment Psychological Interviews**

At the direction of the Commission, Administrator Cunningham reached out to Dr. Lewis Schlosser, PHD, Institute for Forensic Psychology, concerning the utilization of video interviews for new law enforcement candidates. He requested information from Dr. Schlosser related to the reliability of telemedicine interviews, as an alternative to an in-office visit. It should be noted that the telemedicine alternative became the primary mode of interview during the height of the COVID pandemic. Dr. Schlosser supplied Administrator Cunningham with several papers written on the subject, as well as, a memorandum for the Commission related to the subject. In addition, Administrator Cunningham requested that Dr. Schlosser appeared before the Commission on October 4, 2023. Several documents were supplied to the Commissioners for their review.

Dr. Schlosser was present and provided ample information and recommendations on the subject. This matter will go on the agenda for the December meeting to possibly adopt the proposed recommendations.

Administrator Cunningham reported that **Agenda Item 10A was Good and Welfare**

1. DAG, Sarah Luciano was present and was presented with an award to thank her for her time she worked with the Commission as counsel.
2. Administrator Cunningham introduced four new PTC employees and also spoke about licensing seminars being held statewide and thanked Maggie Diaz for putting the seminar training dates together.

Administrator Cunningham asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:47pm.

Commissioner Sharrock voted to approve the motion. Commissioner Nolan seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

**Administrator Cunningham announced the next meeting is Wednesday, December 6, 2023**