

Commission Meeting Number 357

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

POLICE TRAINING COMMISSION

Minutes of Commission Meeting

January 16, 2024
(Special Meeting)

Location: **Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

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 James Sepp
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

Jiles Ship

Citizen Member—Governor's Appointment

James Polos

Citizen Member—Governor's Appointment

Vacant

New Jersey League of Municipalities

Ray Heck

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

Deputy Attorney General Edward Simonson, Office of Public Integrity & Accountability

Academy Coordinator Pat Jones, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator Forest Kairos, Police Training Commission

Academy Coordinator Allison Gosley, Police Training Commission

Analyst, Tykeria T. Lockhart, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, Aiyah Harris, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, James Stigliano, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, Nnamdi Ezewuiro, Police Training Commission

Analyst, Jeremy Fogg, Police Training Commission

Analyst, Katherine Tholen, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, Ninibeth Quesada, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, Jessy Morveli, Police Training Commission

Technical Assistant, Maquasia Scott, Police Training Commission \

Technical Assistant, Christine Wereminjenko, 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

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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

Training Tech, Angelica Sanchez, Police Training Commission

Training Tech, Rocco Manfre, Police Training Commission

Training Tech, Debra Freeman, Police Training Commission

Senior Management Assistant, Lea Cipriano-Ermi, Police Training Commission

Management Assistant, Dajhonna Collins, Police Training Commission

Mark Musella, Bergen County Prosecutor

Bergen County Sheriff, Anthony Cureton

Tom Duch, Assistant Chief Executive

Matt Finck Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Chief of Detectives

Heather Suffin, First Assistant Prosecutor

Kenneth Ehrenberg, Deputy Administrator County of Bergen

Police Training Commission Special Meeting Minutes for January 16, 2024

Administrator John F. Cunningham called the 357th meeting of the Commission to order at 10:15 am.

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.”

1. Agenda Item 6B was a Bergen County Police Academy Administrative Report.

On October 4, 2023, the Commission directed staff to supply additional administrative oversight at the Bergen County Police Academy. A letter detailing the Commission's concerns was delivered to the academy, and a meeting was convened by this writer at the Bergen County Police Academy, in attendance were the following; Brett Rothenberger, Academy Director, Damian Pope, Deputy Director, James Byrd, PTC Chief Investigator, and Donald Robertella, PTC Field Investigator. I explained the concerns raised by the Commission, and the actions that will be taken moving forward. Field Investigator Donald Robertella was assigned to the Bergen County Police Academy three days per week.

PTC was recently advised that Brett Rothenberger, Academy Director, received a new assignment within the Bergen County Prosecutors Office, therefore, Lieutenant Jennifer Rueda Bergen County Prosecutors Office, has been assigned as the new academy director. With the reassignment of Director Rothenberger, and the assignment of Director Rueda, this is the fifth director in five years, and the third in the last twelve months. In addition, Commission staff have received two more anonymous complaints concerning very serious matters at the Bergen Academy.

On December 6, 2023, the Commission made a motion to suspend Bergen County Police Academy's certification effective immediately. Current recruits in the BCPO class can complete Agency Training and have graduation. The Commission suspension of their academy certification in reference to a complaint that was referred for investigation over to the Bergen County Prosecutors Office regarding the most recent matter. The investigation is now complete.

Bergen County Prosecutor, Mark Musella, Sheriff Anthony Cureton, Deputy Chief of Detectives, Matt Fink, First AP Heather Suffin and other staff were present to answer any questions and provide additional information.

Prosecutor Musella advised that an IA investigation was conducted in reference to incidents going on at the academy. All individuals who were implicated were referred back to their agency for remediation. He stated that going forward, no activities will take place outside of what is permitted by PTC. He also stated that the academy will be dedicated to instructing dedicated, safe, humble and educated officers. Deputy Administrator Ehrenberg added that the academy will only utilize PTC approved curriculum and all records will be filed on site and no off-site record keeping will be utilized. In addition, while staff is conducting a search for a new academy director, Ehrenberg will be full-time at the academy as interim director.

After a lengthy discussion the Commission, Commissioner Sharrock made a motion to lift the suspension. Commissioner Abbott seconded the motion. Thirteen (13) Commissioners voted in favor of the motion and four (4) opposed the motion. The motion carried and the suspension was lifted.

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 Monday, February 5, 2024