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TO: Police Training Commission

FROM: John F. Cunningham, Administrator

DATE: June 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Suggested Enhancements to the Basic Course for Police Officers' Training

This memorandum addresses two proposals: (1) the Police Training Commission's proposed enhancements to the training curriculum at New Jersey police academies; and (2) the Unarmed Defensive Tactics Subcommittee's proposed recommendations on how to improve law enforcement defensive tactics training. Both proposals are submitted as a means to supplement and enhance the training law enforcement officers receive in an effort to increase the delivery of safe and effective police services to the public. I request that the Commission adopt the recommendations and forward to the Attorney General, as requested in his December 4, 2019 letter to the PTC.

Proposed Police Training Commission Course Enhancements

Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day to protect the citizens that they serve. Their job is difficult, dangerous and at times requires the making of split-second life or death decisions. The goal of every law enforcement agency is to equip its officers with the skills necessary to ensure that at the end of the work day, each officer can return safely home. To that end, it is an equally important goal that law enforcement agencies provide new and veteran officers with sufficient and appropriate training to help ensure the delivery of safe, professional police services, while minimizing the use of unnecessary or excessive force when arresting or apprehending a member of the public.

To accomplish this goal, the Police Training Commission (PTC) is proposing to enhance the training curriculum of New Jersey training academies to include courses that balance the importance of officer safety with the delivery of professional police services that minimize the use of excessive force on citizens. As such, the PTC proposes training courses that incorporate



national best practices in police training into academy and in-service training courses. Such training will include, but not be limited to:

- Enhanced de-escalation techniques;
- Crisis intervention training (CIT);
- Interpersonal communication skills training;
- Cultural diversity training;
- Situational training scenarios;
- Practical interactive exercises during both academy and field training;
- Defensive tactics training; and a
- Mandatory field officer training program.

In addition, a study should be conducted to examine the feasibility of delivering training in a combination of an academy and practical application field setting. The Basic Course for Police Officers presently consists of a 20-week continual course of instruction. The PTC will explore whether it would be beneficial to a recruit to apply techniques and information taught at the academy in a live simulated work setting. Splicing academy training with on-the-job training throughout the course of instruction will allow a recruit to apply what they have learned in the academy to real life situations. This change to the PTC's current training structure should be closely reviewed, likely in a pilot program, noting the potential positive returns and the possible drawbacks to a mixture of academy training and field application. The study should review any safety risks presented to the recruit and the public while working in the field.

The PTC staff submits that the above suggested training courses will increase public confidence in law enforcement, reduce the frequency and degree of the use of force, and reduce incidents of citizen fatalities from officer involved shootings, arrests and apprehensions. The PTC will be discussing the proposed in its next meeting scheduled for June 24, 2020.

Unarmed Defensive Tactics Subcommittee

One of the most important courses listed above that will help ensure officer safety and the delivery of professional police services is the “defensive tactics” training course. In March, 2019, the PTC formed the “Unarmed Defensive Tactics Subcommittee” (UDTS) to conduct a curriculum review of the Basic Course for Police Officers’ Performance course entitled “Unarmed Defensive Tactics.” The curriculum review was performed in order to improve police officer defensive tactics training, and in turn, improve the delivery of professional police services. The information provided below addresses the findings of the UDTS in developing and implementing a course that will enhance and standardize the defensive tactics training provided by all New Jersey police academies.

The curriculum review conducted by the Defensive Tactics Subcommittee was led by subject matter experts who conducted a critical examination of the course material for the purpose of optimizing the learning experience of the police recruits, improving teaching and learning practices, and addressing gaps within the current program. The curriculum review is one component of the overall quality assurance strategy being implemented by the Defensive Tactics Subcommittee, and is focused on ensuring the BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics course

adequately equips the police recruit with the skills and abilities needed to ensure a safe and professional delivery of police services within their operational environment upon graduation.

Polis Solutions, Inc. will be partnering with the Defensive Tactics Subcommittee in the review, and revision of the course curriculum. Polis Solutions, Inc. was recently awarded the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY19 Officer Safety Initiatives Program grant for Adaptive Defensive and Protective Tactics (ADAPT). The goal of the ADAPT grant is to provide federal funding to...

“...assist in the evaluation and updating of existing defensive tactics trainings for state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies, and training academies. The TTA provider will not be expected to deliver widespread training under this program but instead to work closely with selected agencies and academies to evaluate existing defensive tactics trainings and subsequently develop a model defensive tactics training program that law enforcement agencies and academies can implement. ("Adaptive Defensive and Protective Tactics FY19 Grant Award," 2019.)

Polis Solutions, Inc. will be responsible for providing the results of their research to the Subcommittee in furtherance of supporting evidence-based curriculum development. Polis Solutions, Inc. President and CEO, Jonathan Wender, (Jonathan.wender@polissolutions.com) will serve as the organization's point of contact.

The three deliverables that have been identified as immediately necessary to improve the efficacy of the BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics course are as follows:

I. BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics Course

- a. Revise and update course curriculum for the BCPO Defensive Tactics course to include
 - i. Expand training hours from 40 hrs. to 80 hrs.
 - ii. Include scenario-based training component
 - iii. Include critical decision-making component
 - iv. Use modern Case Studies
 - v. Use updated video examples
 - vi. Include body worn camera policy review
 - vii. Create video library of approved techniques
 - viii. Injury prevention: how to utilize only force needed to effectuate arrest
 - ix. Equity lens: allow visibility of course curriculum from select community groups
 - x. Require recruits to pass proficiency exam in order to be certified

II. BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics Recertification Course

- a. Create an annual BCPO Defensive Tactics Recertification Course
 - i. Require annual/semiannual certification
 - ii. Pass/Fail

- iii. Proficiency test should be scenario based and involve critical decision making
- iv. Test should be recorded
- v. Written Objective Review process
- vi. Makeup component with remedial training

III. BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification Course

- a. Create BCPO Unarmed Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification Course
 - i. 40 hr. course
 - ii. Recertification every 3 years
 - iii. Pass/Fail
 - iv. Focusing on
 - 1. Adult learning principles
 - 2. Coaching and mentoring
 - 3. Risk management
 - 4. Injury prevention
 - 5. Performance improvement
 - v. Written Objective Review process
 - vi. Makeup component with remedial training
 - vii. Record exam

IV. Additional Recommendations

- a. Build an incident library using police body worn camera video
 - i. Use videos depicting proper application of defensive tactics techniques
- b. Conduct randomized control trial
 - i. Control group: officers who have not received updated training
 - ii. Experimental group: officers who have received updated training
 - iii. Identify metrics for comparison
 - iv. Determine timeline
 - v. Prepare report
 - vi. Modify training based upon research