

**Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association
Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission**

**Regular Commission Meeting
January 23, 2025**

Call to Order

The Regular Commission meeting of the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission was called to order on Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 10:31 a.m. at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel, Harrisburg, PA. Chief Benson presided.

Members Present

Chief Benson, Chief Bergmann, Executive Director Bohn, Chief Cortazzo, Captain Crone, Admin Assistant Feaser, Chief Ficco, Chief Fogel, Chief Haberman, Chief Hendershot, Chief Hettinger, Chief Kilgore, Chief Kitzinger, Chief Lash, Chief Lauth, Esquire Lavery, Corporal Madrak, Director McVey, Sergeant Ross, Captain Sharif, Chief Sokoloski, Chief Splain, Chief Swartz, Chief Wagner

Coordinator Adams was absent.

The commission stood, recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Chief Swartz made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 24, 2024, Regular Commission meeting. Chief Lash seconded the motion. All agreed.

Introduction of Guests

Also present were representatives from the following agencies: Chief John Deluca, Lieutenant John Chickos, Sergeant Michael McQuaide, Patrol Tech Tim Depenhart, Patrol Tech Josh Causer, Borough Manager Mario Leone, Mayor Tina Lorifdo, Police Secretary Leslie Basalyga, Borough Councilman Russ Basalyga, Ambridge Borough Police; Chief Michael McLouth, Captain Scott Dempsey, Detective Corporal Ryan Vresics, Bushkill Township Police; Chief Alexander Coghill, Deputy Chief Donal Cross, Canonsburg Borough Police; Chief John Slavin, Lieutenant Andrew Snyder, Lieutenant Joseph O'Neil, Lieutenant Richard Schaffer, Sergeant Jarreau Francis, Cheltenham Township Police; Chief Jennifer Brubaker, Lieutenant Matthew Pohle, Lieutenant Christopher Chase, Sergeant Anthony Lombardo, Sergeant Jeremy Henry, East Hempfield Township Police; Chief William Tierney, Lieutenant Christopher Graham, Lieutenant Jeffrey Boyd, Hatfield Township Police; Lieutenant Adrienne Gori, Lieutenant Ryan Devlin, Lansdale Borough Police; Chief Mike Jackson, Lieutenant Bill Hopkins, Accreditation Manager Lauren Cook, Lower Providence Township Police; Chief Steve Kingsborough, Detective Dylan Kuhn, Officer Nicholas Boehme, Middlesex Township Police; Lieutenant Dave Loughner, Sergeant Brian Hummert, Penn Township Police; Chief Nick Ferretti, Accreditation Manager Kayla Garver, Strasburg Borough Police; Executive Director Timothy Edwards, Chief Stephen Kiessling, Lieutenant Jon

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Greenawalt, Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority; Chief Tom Stauffer, Corporal Brandon Pokrop, Lieutenant Dennis Krahling, Lieutenant Dave Milsteen, Lieutenant Tim Shatto, Swatara Township Police; Superintendent William Righter, Corporal William Dean, Detective Sean Ryan, Officer Robert Loder, Tinicum Township Police; Chief Thomas Nicoletti, Lieutenant Michael Fritts, Upper Saucon Township Police; Chief Jason Gaborik, Deputy Chief Kurt Gaebel, Investigator Brett Newbould, Mayor James Nowalk, Jennifer Ruggeri, Whitehall Borough Police; Chief Royce Engler, Sergeant Scott Rozitski, Wright Township Police

Assessment Reports for Consent Agenda

Cheltenham Township Police Department
Clairton City Police Department
Colonial Regional Police Department
East Hempfield Township Police Department
Hatfield Township Police Department
Lansdale Borough Police Department
Lower Providence Township Police Department
Penn Township Police Department (Westmoreland County)
Swatara Township Police Department
Upper Saucon Township Police Department
West Whiteland Township Police Department

On a motion by Chief Haberman, seconded by Chief Hettinger, the consent agenda was approved, and all agencies were granted Accredited Status for an additional 3 years. Chief Benson abstained from West Whiteland Township PD. Captain Crone, Chief Hendershot, and Corporal Madrak abstained from Clairton City PD, Lower Providence Township PD, and West Whiteland Township PD.

Premier Agency Recommendations

The following agencies have successfully completed five or more reassessments and are eligible for Premier Status: Colonial Regional Police Department, Lower Providence Township Police Department, Swatara Township Police Department. On a motion made by Chief Hettinger and seconded by Chief Ficco all three agencies were granted Premier Status for 2024-2027. Captain Crone, Chief Hendershot, and Corporal Madrak abstained from Lower Providence Township Police Department.

Assessment Reports

Ambridge Borough Police – Presented by Team Leader Captain McGarr

Captain McGarr noted that the department has a good, strong relationship with the residents of their borough, and the residents are very supportive of them.

On a motion by Chief Hendershot and seconded by Chief Lauth, the Ambridge Borough Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

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Bushkill Township Police - Presented by Team Leader Captain Bird

Chief Benson commended the department for having only eleven file maintenances on their first assessment.

On a motion by Sergeant Ross and seconded by Chief Fogel, the Bushkill Township Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

Canonsburg Borough Police - Presented by Team Leader David Kostiak

Chief Lash asked for clarification on how the department dealt with standard 1.2.4 being non-compliant. Team Leader Kostiak explained that a resolution was added to address this.

Chief Haberman commented that Chief Coghill is very well respected in their county.

On a motion by Chief Haberman and seconded by Chief Hettinger, the Canonsburg Borough Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

Strasburg Borough Police - Presented by Team Leader Officer Ketchem

Captain Sharif asked Chief Ferretti if he had any advice for small agencies working out of old buildings that are seeking accreditation. Chief Ferretti said the agencies need to be willing to ask for help and think out of the box for ways to comply with the standards.

Chief Wagner commented that he had worked with officers from Strasburg Borough PD, and they had represented the department well.

On a motion by Corporal Madrak and seconded by Captain Sharif, the Strasburg Borough Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority - Presented by Team Leader Captain McGarr

Chief Kiessling thanked the Commission and said that their agency is extremely honored to be the first airport police department to be accredited.

On a motion by Captain Crone and seconded by Corporal Madrak, the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

Tinicum Township Police – Presented by Team Leader Captain McGarr

Captain McGarr noted that the department is maintained very well and is very organized.

On a motion by Chief Swartz and seconded by Chief Ficco, the Tinicum Township Police Department was granted accredited status. Chief Hettinger, Sergeant Ross, and Chief Splain abstained.

Whitehall Borough Police - Presented by Team Leader Officer Ketchem

Esquire Lavery commended the department for having an excellent fingerprint compliance rate. Chief Benson thanked the Mayor of Whitehall for the work he does on the Radar Team.

On a motion by Chief Cortazzo and seconded by Chief Lauth, the Whitehall Borough Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

Wright Township Police - Presented by Team Leader David Kostiak

Chief Engler thanked their assessment team for the hard work they put in and noted that it's a great honor to now be an accredited agency.

On a motion by Chief Splain and seconded by Chief Hettinger, the Wright Township Police Department was granted accredited status. All agreed.

At 12:00 p.m., the meeting recessed for lunch.

At 12:44 p.m., the meeting was reconvened. Executive Director Bohn and Chief Lash did not return due to other meetings.

Committee Reports

Assessor Committee

Committee Chairman Chief Hendershot presented the Commission with an amendment to the Administrative Manual concerning the consolidation of two or more currently accredited agencies. On a motion by Chief Kitzinger and seconded by Chief Cortazzo the amendment will be added to the manual. All agreed.

Standards Committee

Committee Chairman Captain Crone presented the Commission with proposed changes to the Standards Manual. He noted that the "Automated Red Light Camera Systems" standard did not have a number, but it should be 2.4.2. After the Commission members review, there was discussion on proposed standard 1.9.4 "Employee Recognition Program".

Corporal Madrak made a motion to accept the presented changes.

Chief Hettinger and Chief Ficco both believe that this standard should be an "if standard" not a required standard.

Corporal Madrak believes that they are looking into this too much. The recognition could be as simple as a chief forwarding a complimentary email from a citizen to the corresponding officer.

Chief Ficco is in agreement with making it a standard if it can be as simple as Corporal Madrak had said.

Chief Hettinger doesn't think the narrative wording reflects that as it says a "robust" program.

Corporal Madrak suggested adding a simple note to the sample assessment clarifying how simple it can be. He does not think that the standard should not be approved due to the narrative.

Chief Hettinger agrees that a recognition program is a good idea but shouldn't be required, after all there are some things that PLEAC doesn't mandate that are required by law.

Chief Cortazzo questioned why a standard would be created that needed to be clarified by a simple note. He suggested clarifying the language of the standard.

Corporal Madrak suggested replacing “robust” with “meaningful” in the narrative.

Chief Swartz suggested adding a sample proof that is very simplistic.

Chief Kilgore suggested removing the word “program” as that gives the impression that it must be a more in-depth process.

Captain Crone said that the Standards Committee will have a meeting and will discuss changes to the wording.

Corporal Madrak amended his motion to include:

- 1) Updating narrative wording to replace “robust” with “meaningful”
- 2) Adding a simple note to the sample assessment
- 3) Standards Committee will discuss changes to the wording of the standard.

Sergeant Ross seconded this motion. All agreed.

Administrative Committee

Committee Chairman Chief Hettinger had no report.

Strategic Planning Committee

Committee Chairman Chief Wagner had no report.

Coordinator’s Report

In Coordinator Adams absence, Chief Benson discussed the Coordinators Report, Ephrata Borough PD’s extension, and Lehigh Township PD’s extension.

Old Business

There was nothing reported for old business.

New Business

NEPPCA’s PLEAC Appointment

Chief Benson discussed Chief Scalzo’s resignation from the Commission. Chief Scott Fogel from the Lehigh Township Police Department was selected to replace him.

Middlesex Township Police Department’s Extension

Due to their MOCK assessment revealing many issues, Middlesex Township Police Department requested an extension for their assessment. Being that this would be their second extension, Coordinator Adams was unable to grant it to them, and thus it came before the Commission for discussion.

Chief Kingsborough explained that the AM for the department had retired in 2022. The two new AMs were under the impression that they had until March to complete their on-site instead of January.

Chief Ficco questioned how large the department was and whether they use a consultant. MTPD has 14 officers and does not use a consultant.

Chief Benson asked for clarification on when the new AMs had been appointed. Chief Kingsborough appointed them at the end of 2022.

Chief Cortazzo questioned why the Commission should believe that the department would have been ready for an assessment in March when the two AMs had been in place for quite a while and the MOCK revealed many issues.

Officer Boehme explained that they thought they had everything in order based on the paper files from their previous cycles. However, their MOCK assessment revealed that they were uploading, highlighting, and labeling incorrectly. They also hadn't had access to the PLEAC sample assessment. Once they gained access to it, they were able to see their mistakes.

Chief Haberman asked how long it would take for the department to be ready for their on-site. Chief Kingsborough said that they have been ready as of January 1st.

Corporal Madrak asked the AMs if they have ever attended PPAC meetings, reached out to other departments, or participated in any MOCK assessments.

Both of the AMs said they had not.

Captain Crone clarified that they had reached out to him but not with file maintenance questions.

Chief Ficco questioned what the issue was if they are ready for their assessment.

Chief Benson stated that no assessors are scheduled for their on-site assessment.

Chief Cortazzo does not think they should be granted an extension and that they should be decertified. Chief Hettinger and Corporal Madrak agreed as it hinders the integrity of the program.

Chief Cortazzo made a motion to deny the extension. Chief Ficco seconded the motion. All agreed. Middlesex Township Police Department will be required to sit out of the program for one year before they can apply for reaccreditation.

Pennsylvania State Police's GenAI Policy

Captain Sharif presented the Commission with the Pennsylvania State Police's policy on GenAI. PSP prohibits their officers from using GenAI to create reports because when they do their data points are forever on the web whether right or wrong. He gave the example that if he would arrest someone for possession of cocaine and create the report through AI, and if later it was determined that it was not cocaine, there would be no way to correct that on the web. He thinks a standard should be created to prohibit the use of text-based AI.

Chief Lauth said that Carnegie Mellon University uses many different versions of AI. Currently, a professor is doing a report on using AI for police reports. There is a system that generates reports based off body cameras. The professor is looking at the pros and cons. Once Chief Lauth receives the report, he will distribute it to the Commission.

Captain Crone stated that using it to write reports would be disseminating criminal information into a non-criminal web base which is illegal.

Captain Sharif recommends that this be reviewed and possibly be made into a standard so that officers cannot do this on a public site.

Chief Lauth made the distinction that it can be done if it's done using a law enforcement site.

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Chief Kilgore stated that his department had an officer that was creating reports using AI. Their District Attorney prohibited this because if an officer testifies in court, they must use their own words from their own account.

Chief Benson instructed that the document provided by Captain Shariff be distributed to the Commission by Admin Assistant Feaser.

Additional Discussions

Corporal Madrak wanted to address agencies being placed on the consent agenda. Re-accredited agencies are placed on the consent agenda unless a Commission Member finds an issue to move it to the assessment reports. Corporal Madrak believes that a percentage should be established on the number of file maintenance errors that allow departments to remain on the consent agenda. If a department reaches or exceeds that percentage, they are moved to the assessment reports, and they must send an officer to the Commission meeting.

Chief Benson tabled this discussion until Coordinator Adams could be present.

With the Middlesex Township PD's extension being presented at the Commission meeting after their accreditation date, Captain Crone suggested requiring extensions to be presented at the Commission meeting before their accreditation date. That way a moratorium does not have to be placed on the department.

Corporal Madrak asked if this was an issue that could be addressed in a Special meeting over Zoom.

Chief Cortazzo doesn't think that's a good idea as it puts the pressure on the Commission when it should be up to the agencies to make sure they are requesting their extension in a timely manner.

For the Good of the Order

There was nothing reported for the good of the order.

Date of Next Meeting

The next Regular Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel.

Adjournment

At 1:41 p.m., a motion was made by Chief Hettinger to adjourn; seconded by Sergeant Ross. All agreed.

PLEAC Meeting – January 23, 2025

Abstentions Noted in Advance

<u>Commissioner</u>	<u>Business Interest</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Reason(s)</u>
Lee Benson	No	West Whiteland PD	Own agency
Leon Crone	Yes	Clairton City PD	LEAS client
	Yes	Lower Providence PD	LEAS client
	Yes	West Whiteland PD	LEAS client
Jason Hendershot	Yes	Clairton City PD	LEAS client
	Yes	Lower Providence PD	LEAS client
	Yes	West Whiteland PD	LEAS client
Guy Hettinger	Yes	Tinicum Twp PD	Aspirant client
David Madrak	Yes	Clairton City PD	LEAS client
	Yes	Lower Providence PD	LEAS client
	Yes	West Whiteland PD	LEAS client
John Ross	Yes	Tinicum Twp PD	Aspirant client
David Splain	Yes	Tinicum Twp PD	Aspirant client

Commission Member / Consultants Stating Their Intent Not to Abstain