

Verda Colvin
Gerald Couch
Eddie DeLoach
Sonja Fillingame
Bert Flewellen
Tyler Harper
George Hartwig



Vivadon Horton
Dan Kirk
Michael Persley
Alan Powell
Mitch Ralston
Pat Strode
Scott Woodell

Law Enforcement Task Force

Chris Wigginton, Co-Chair
Ken Vance, Co-Chair

Law Enforcement Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, February 7, 2017
 Office of Planning and Budget Boardroom,
 2 Capitol Square SW, Atlanta, GA 30334

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES

Task Force Member	Present	Absent	Excused	Comments
Verda Colvin, Superior Court Judge		x		
Gerald Couch, Sheriff Hall County				Conference Call
Eddie DeLoach, Mayor Savannah				Conference Call
Sonja Fillingame, City Manager	✓			
Bert Flewellen, Senior Policy Advisor DCS	✓			
Tyler Harper, Senator	✓			
George Hartwig, DA Houston County	✓			
Vivadon Horton, Citizen Liaison		x		
Dan Kirk, Assistant Director GBI	✓			
Michael Persley, Police Chief Albany	✓			
Alan Powell, Representative	✓			
Mitch Ralston, Sheriff Gordon County		x		
Pat Strode, CIT Program Administrator	✓			
Ken Vance, POST Director, Co-Chairman	✓			
Chris Wigginton, GPSTC Director, Co-Chairman	✓			
Scott Woodell, GSP Training Director	✓			
Others Attending				
Angie Bowen, GPSTC	✓			
Andrea Briscoe, Gov. Office	✓			
Cheryl Greathouse, GPSTC	✓			
Marcus Neville, Cptn. Hall Co. SO	✓			Attending for Sheriff Couch
Sharla Shockley, GPSTC	✓			
Rep. Powell's Aide	✓			

PURPOSE

Governor Nathan Deal appointed the Law Enforcement Task Force to examine the Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course and establish competency-based standards for any course revisions deemed appropriate.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairman Chris Wigginton

The Task Force Initiation Meeting was called to order at 1:31 pm.

OPENING REMARKS

Co-Chairman Chris Wigginton

Welcome by Director Wigginton and introduction of Director Ken Vance of POST. He explained the enormity of the task ahead and the fact that some will not agree with the outcomes of this group. Current curriculum is 408 hours. We rank way behind the curve when compared to other states for the amount of time we spend basic training of officers. Rather than teaching to a standard, we should write the standard and then teach to it, then decide how many hours it takes. Some people won't like what we do, but it's up to us to bring recommendations to the Governor.

Co-Chairman Wigginton then introduced the 82nd Governor of the State of Georgia, Governor Nathan Deal.

WELCOME

Governor Nathan Deal

Governor Deal thanked the two co-chairman and the task force members for accepting the appointment to this important task force. He noted the vast and impressive experience and background that each member brings to the task force and how critical these are to the success of this initiative.

He discussed the economic impact of the raise for over 3300 state employees is approximately \$79 million over ½ FY 17 and full FY 18. Appropriate to do the second part of the package. Taskforce job is to look at the training requirements and curriculum and bring forth recommendations for improvements. Suggestions for things that need to be added, omitted, or stressed more in basic. One thing being done is moving CIT to GPSTC to be able to reach more local officers by expanding the availability. Make sure what we are proposing is the right thing to do.

Director Wigginton-We are already behind the curve. We have a lot of work ahead of us. No timetable, but need to have the recommendations ready. Need to work diligently and aggressively to make recommendations. Georgia is 8th largest state in nation, but 4th in prison population. All have had contact with law enforcement before they went in and will most likely have contact when they come out. Mental health rehab center is the general community. We have to improve training in that area. We must work on this aggressively and get a recommendation to the Governor as quickly as possible. Meetings will be close together. If you can't attend, call in or send someone in your place. We will work aggressively but not hastily. We will do our due diligence and research.

Pat Strode, Program Administrator with NAMI. Would like to see more collaboration and communication with community stakeholders and something for police officers on self-care. What

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to expect when experiencing mental trauma and how to take care of themselves. Also something that will help families know how to help and support officers.

Sonja Fillingame, city manager Union City. Would like to see stronger community connection and strengthen law enforcement through training.

Bert Flewellen-Deputy Director DCS. 180K people on probation and parole. Somewhere in the training, we need to address that and have training on DCS and partnerships.

Michael Persley, Albany Police Chief. Needs a way of helping officers come back from basic to apply what they learned on the street. Wants to improve the basic training so they can build off of that back at the agency.

Scott Woodell, Director of Training GSP. Rising chair of State Police and Provincial Academy Directors, a subcommittee of IACP trying to do the same thing we are trying to do. People can't believe it only takes 10 weeks of training. Doesn't want to see check off the box training based on a set number of hours until the content is developed. Hopes to be applicable and the best training we can provide. Believes we can develop something unique that is immediately applicable on the street.

Ken Vance, Exec. Director of POST. Hopes to build something that serves as a good foundation. Unless officers understand fundamentals they will not be successful.

Capt. Marcus Neville-Hall Co. SO, substituting for Sheriff Gerald Couch. Sheriff Couch wants to set the tone and pace for preparing officers for the future. Real training, meaningful and applicable.

Dan Kirk, asst. director GBI. Is a problem-solver. Would like to see more scenario-based training, putting students in pressure situations and forced to make decisions. Electricians have more training than officers.

George Hartwig, DA Houston Co. He attended the academy in Florida in 1978 the academy was 640 hours and has been increased since then.

Alan Powell, Chair of House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. Law enforcement needs changes in training. In some areas locals don't have training that state officers have. Complaints about cost of training. Those things have to change. Locals tend to be more punitive than corrective. Local officials more concerned about fines and forfeitures. In addition to training, we need to change attitudes. Every citizen deserves and expects to be protected if they call on an officer. If anything we want to do legislatively, better get it in now, only 28 days left in the session.

Tyler Harper, Senator. Chair of PS Committee. Wants to make sure we are creating professional officers so that the most professional person is interacting with the community.

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Eddie DeLoach, Mayor of City of Savannah. (On the conference call.) Just wanted to echo what everyone else has said.

Director Wigginton. Our officers lack communication skills and need more training on use of force. Need more scenario-based training. Need to prepare officers to deal with the unexpected. GPSTC has been working on these initiatives since before Ferguson and other events; those events are not driving this initiative. We have done a poor job at teaching communication skills and how to interact with people. Can't talk about de-escalation without talking about escalation. The use of force is not pretty. The officer can try to de-escalate as much as possible, but the citizen makes the decision on how things go. We must address how to come up with the best training possible to save citizens lives and officers lives. Can't take one for granted over the other. We've already scheduled next meeting. DNR Board Room at Twin Towers. Suite 1252 East Tower. Feb. 21 at 10:00 a.m. In the meantime, will send out current POST standard, what other states have as a standard, and what other proposals are out there. Would like GACP to attend and present their findings of a recent study. Would also like Ray Saxon, Director of Basic Training at GPSTC to explain what we currently do in Georgia. Need to talk about what we do now before we can move forward with what direction we need to go in.

Ken Vance-He and Director Wigginton have been talking about since September. Hanging our legacy on this so we got to get it right. Hairdressers have to get a lot more training that officers. Takes standards seriously. Got to have a certification exam for officers to pass before certification is issued. Goal is to have a certification exam that officers have to pass; that we come up with something, which we already have, where the student has to show and apply what they have learned. Big believer in scenario-based training. Won't have anything this legislative session. Let's work hard and be able to hang our hat on it.

Director Wigginton-any material or comments anyone would like to have? We will compare ourselves to the Southeast and maybe others that compare to us from a population and demographic makeup. Please ask for information or anything else you need. Wants to first establish where we are and what is required before we start deciding what to change. Believes there are some topics (lecture-based training) we could put online as prerequisites. Could test students before they show up and then spend the time on hands on training. Can shift hours around; can increase hours. Need to include some topics that aren't covered now. Everything is open to discussion. We will resend email with everyone's contact information and reading material for the next meeting.

DCS asked if Ken can send a copy of the certification test. Ken will generate a random test as an example. They are currently using it as an equivalency test. They have been trying to establish a base-line for 2 ½ years by sending the test to academies around the state and having cadets take it before graduation. Ken will randomly generate a 100 question test and distribute it for review.

Chief Persley is excited.

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Director Wigginton-we have a lot of work ahead of us. Feels like we are four months behind, so we must be aggressive. Everyone must bring something to the table, you may have ideas that we have considered. We must have very open discussions.

Next meeting 2/21 at 10:00 a.m. at DNR Boardroom, East Tower.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

