A meeting of the County Probation and Parole Officers’ Firearm Education and Training Commission convened at 9:00 AM on May 20, 2003 at the Harrisburg East Holiday Inn in Harrisburg, PA. The following Commissioners and guests were present:

Larry Straitiff, Chairman
Hon. Lawrence F. Clark, Jr.
Marshall Davis
William R. Erickson, Jr.
Hon. Benjamin A. Martinez
R. Scott Schlechter
Gregory A. Young
(Vacant)
(Vacant)

Gary Scicchitano, PBPP
Conway Bushey, PBPP
Kim T. Coon, ERG (Guest)
Rick Varner, ERG (Guest)
Eugene Stull, ERG (Guest)
Eileen Showers, ERG (Guest)
John D. Holt, Crawford County (Guest)
Mary Williams, Secretary

May 20, 2003

I. Chairman Straitiff opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a motion to accept the March 11, 2003 and April 15, 2003 minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Martinez made a motion to accept the March 11, 2003 Commission meeting minutes and the April 15, 2003 Special Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Young seconded the motion.

Chairman Straitiff stated that he noted two minor mistakes in the March 11, 2003 minutes. Mr. Kope said that he would make the corrections. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Chairman Straitiff gave a brief summary of the April 15, 2003 Special Commission meeting, which was held to review the financial status of the Commission and look at the five year revenue and cost projections. He stated that the Commission would need to decide today to accept or reject ERG’s cost proposal associated with Schedule One to provide three In-Service Firearms Training classes.

Commissioner Young raised the issue about ERG purchasing start-up equipment: i.e., a public address system, staplers, and other items. He mentioned that ERG has the impression that the Commission was going to loan them Commission equipment. Chairman Straitiff said he had agreed to loan ERG Commission equipment to conduct the three In-Service Firearms Training classes, but they would have to purchase all of the necessary equipment to conduct future trainings.

Executive Director Kope mentioned that ERG has never conducted any type of range training. They have done classroom training and this is their first venture in doing any type of range training.
Chairman Straitiff asked if anyone else had any comments or wanted to raise other issues before inviting the ERG representatives to join the meeting. He also said that this is an opportunity for Commissioners to obtain additional information about the per student costs.

Commission Young asked if the Commission plans to allow ERG to use our instructor/student manuals and other materials for the training. Director Kope said that he gave ERG paper copies of all the training materials and a CD. Commissioner Young then stated that he thought the copying expenditure was rather high. Chairman Straitiff also questioned the $125.00 expenditure for furniture.

Chairman Straitiff stated that he felt the Commission should vote on Schedule One today and at a later time vote on a more permanent contractual agreement. He then mentioned that ERG prematurely sent out In-Service Firearms Training letters to several Chiefs.

Mr. Kope distributed copies of ERG’s May 12, 2003 letter that was sent to the Chiefs. He said Mr. Stull was told in writing to send him a copy of the letter for review and approval prior to sending it to the Chiefs. However, ERG sent the letters out and subsequently he has received several calls from different counties requesting clarification.

Chairman Straitiff explained that although the Commission has signed an overall agreement, setting forth the relationship between ERG and the Commission, the Commission has not signed Schedule One specifically for In-Service Firearms Training. He asked if there were any other comments or questions regarding the letter.

Commissioner Martinez asked if the Commission signed a contract with ILEE or with ERG and asked for an explanation of the relationship between ILEE and ERG and a definition of a Schedule. Linda Laub explained that ERG is a sub-component of ILEE and that Schedule One outlines the costs associated with three offerings of In-Service Firearms Training classes. Chairman Straitiff went on to explain that he signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on behalf of the Commission for ERG, but that the MOU did not go into any specifics and only talked about the relationship between the Commission and ERG.

Ms. Laub explained that the MOU cross-references the various Schedules and that the MOU is an overall agreement approved by the Office of the General Counsel. With a signed MOU each Schedule does not have to go through the approval process, the Commission can periodically develop a schedule with ERG if we want them to do other training, and the Commission does not have to go back through the governmental process. A Schedule is an Appendix of a contract (MOU). Commissioner Martinez then asked what if the Commission decides that it does not want to accept the proposed Schedule what would it mean. Ms. Laub explained that the contract (MOU) will still be enforce but there will not be a Schedule attached to it and from a logical perspective it could lead to the revocation of several certifications because officers did not complete their mandatory In-Service Firearms Training.

Chairman Straitiff explained that the Commission would be voting today to approve to pay ERG to do conduct three In-Service Firearms Training classes between now and June 30, 2003. Commissioner Martinez asked what options do we have if we find ERG’s proposal unacceptable. Ms. Laub responded that Executive Director Kope and Dan Klarsch would have to coordinate and do the training using in-house instructors.

Commissioner Davis commented that he is not particularly concerned about the one time offering of three trainings. He thinks the Commission should be more concerned about the other trainings we want to do. He added that if ERG does the three offerings, we would have some time to look at their training.
specifically and perhaps negotiate future cost. He said ERG’s cost is less than Temple’s and he would like to see what they can do over the next couple of months and then negotiate a price for other training, which is a more long-term concern.

Chairman Straitiff invited the ERG representatives to join the meeting in order to discuss the price per student and other issues. Following introductions Chairman Straitiff thanked the ERG representatives for attending the meeting. He reported to the ERG representatives that the Commission has discussed and reviewed ERG’s latest proposal. He said that the Commission has signed an overall agreement with ERG and is at the point of approving a schedule that delineates the cost associated with the offering of three In-Service Firearms Training classes between now and the end of June. He also stated that the Commissioners had a couple of questions on ERG’s “One Time/Enhancement Expenditure Budget”. One issue is that the budget is based on 45 students over three training programs. He said that Schedule One references 20 students per class, which would total 60 students for the three In-Service Firearms Training classes. The Chairman asked 1) if the cost would be the same for 60 students or would the cost per students remain the same and 2) is ERG prepared if we enroll 20 students per class and how would 20 students per class affect the cost.

Mr. Rick Varner from ERG said that the cost would depend on where the instructors come from. One problem ERG is currently having is employing instructors from Erie to teach at Ft. Indiantown Gap. He said if ERG employs instructors from Erie, it would increase the cost because they will have to paid travel, lodging, and subsistence. So until ERG receives the final bills, they do not know what the final cost would be. They do not have much room to maneuver based on the proposed cost structure; therefore, the cost per student would remain the same. Chairman Straitiff asked if there were 15 or 20 students enrolled, would the cost for instructors remain the same and would the only increase be for supplies. Mr. Eugene Stull explained that 16 students would cost considerably more than 15, but 17, 18 or 19 students would cost less and 20 students would be the maximum cost. However, 21 students would require an additional cost for an instructor.

Chairman Straitiff said the only other question had to do with the figure that included student materials, manuals, and instructor manuals, which we thought was a little high ($1,291). He also said that he understood that the Commission gave ERG training material and that ERG would copy the manuals. Mr. Varner said that the Commission would receive some cost reduction since they are supplying the range materials. The Chairman then explained that the Commissioners were not questioning the range materials; they question the cost for the student materials, manuals, and instructor manuals. He explained that the Commissioners did not understand the $1,291 cost for copying 45 student manuals.

Ms. Linda Laub asked if the cost should have been incorporated in with the $350 for postage, telephone, copying, and shipping fees. Commissioner Young questioned the $1,291 to copy 45 manuals. Mr. Varner agreed that figure was high and said that he would make adjustments to the $138.62 per student depending on what the actual costs would be. Ms. Laub explained that the Commission wanted a fixed cost per student because that cost amount would be included in the schedule. Mr. Varner said that ERG would need to know how many students would be enrolled before they could provide a fixed cost per student. He went on to say that one of the problems ERG has is that they do not know how many of 130 students would participate in the three courses that ERG is offering. Ms. Laub explained that one of the problems the Commission had with the other vendor was they did not provide a cost per student.

Mr. Stull commented that in order for ERG to cover their cost they would need 15 students at $139 per student and ERG would invoice the Commission for 15 even if there were not 15 students. Linda Laub
said that the Commission was thinking of a schedule that would state the cost for a minimum of 15 students and any number above 15 would be a per student cost.

Mr. Kim Coon stated that he understands the Commission is facing budgetary constraints and that the Commission money will not go as far as the Commissioners thought. He also stated that ERG’s goal was to work as a true partner, to get the training up and running and for the Commission to see the quality and efficiency that ERG could provide. He also said that ERG’s goal was not to walk away with a lot of money, but to cover their costs. Ms. Laub said she understood their goals, however the Commission and ERG need to reach an agreement on Schedule One in order that the payment schedule is delayed. She then asked if ERG would agree to a payment schedule that stated 1-15 students would cost $139.44 and included a fixed amount for the cost per student above 15 students and a total cost per session. Mr. Varner said under the Commission’s requirement they would have to bring in another instructor if there were 16 students in the class and another instructor would drive up the cost of the training by $200 plus other expenses. He also stated that ERG needed guidance from the Commission on how stringent the guidelines are because one additional student would cost approximately $275-300 more.

Mr. Coon suggested incremental cost increases and said that 15 to 20 students would be a different price based on the actual cost. He said that the cost for 15 students is on the submitted budget, however if the student enrollment increased to 16, the cost increases as well.

Chairman Straitiff commented that in order for the Commissioners to act responsibly we do not want to pay for a class of three students and we have to establish a minimum number of students per class.

Commissioner Clark said that if, out of the 130 officers required to have this training, only six have shown some significant interest in attending, there is a problem. He stated that the perception problems are with the officers, chiefs, and some departments since they do not believe that their certifications will be revoked. Commissioner Clark agreed that ERG should not be asked to perform this type of training without being able to cover their base costs.

Chairman Straitiff said with respect to those 15 officers there should not be any misunderstanding. The Commission sent them letters last fall telling them that they were extended to June 30, 2003. With regard to the other 115, the Commission has not given them notice that they have until June 30. In fact they have until the end of the year. He also commented that it might not be reasonable for the Commission to say that this training will only be offered three times over a six-week period.

Mr. Stull said he had called every chief because he knew that the letters were a little late in being sent out. He also stated that he has made contact with every chief except one that had not returned his call.

Commissioner Clark said that the point he was making is that the chiefs should be notified that theoretically there is a minimum of 45 and a maximum of 60 seats available, and if the Commission does not complete this training that has been offered in good faith by the end of the year, then any officers who have not attended will not be given an extension, nor will the training be offered in the future. He also said that if each of the three courses were not full, the Commission would take an economic hit. The Commission also needs to forcibly tell the chiefs if they do not take advantage of this training opportunity, it will not be offered again this year. He also said it would be in the Commission’s economic interest to take a firm hand with the 14 officers required to take this training. He suggested that if we do not get a certain number of students by a certain date, we drop some of the courses. ERG could still conduct the course, but at a later date.

Mr. Varner asked what is the minimum cost for running a class.
Chairman Straitiff said that question relates to what he was speaking about earlier. He asked the Commissioners if they want ERG to bill for up to 15 students, even if there are only four students registered for a class. He believes the Commission should make a decision regarding the minimum number of students in a class and he does not think the Commission should spend thousands of dollars for nothing.

Commissioner Young said he believes that there should be a 10-student minimum. ERG should have the option to cancel the training if they do not receive the names of 10-students a week prior to the scheduled training.

Commissioner Martinez suggested that we look for a minimum of 10 students for the first three classes, but in the future we establish a minimum number of students.

Ms. Laub said she does not think it is possible to establish a minimum number of students for the first three classes. She would, however, include in Schedule One a statement that the class size will be limited to no more than 20 students and no less than 15.

Chairman Straitiff asked for a motion to approve the Schedule One as defined to include the cost of $139 per student up to 15 and ERG will provide the Commission with additional figures for the other 15-20.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Young made a motion to accept the schedule with a caveat that if the student roster goes over 15 that ERG would then supply the Commission with the additional cost from 15 to 20 students. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion and commented that the cost for the additional 15 to 20 students should not exceed $200 for the students and may be less than that based on actual cost to ERG.

Mr. Varner asked for time for ERG to do the math and for them to consider the proposed changes.

Commission Clark suggested an amendment to the motion that would allow ERG to provide the Commission with an actual per capita cost to the Schedule for additional students over 15. There were no other questions on the motion and the Chairman asked for a vote. A vote was taken and the Commission approved the motion.

Ms. Laub stated that she needs to finalize Schedule One and would send a copy to Mr. Coon and Chairman Straitiff for their signatures.

**II. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. Curriculum Committee

The May 19th Meeting was cancelled. There was nothing to report.

B. Policy Committee

Following the April 15, 2003 Commission meeting, the Policy Committee met to review a proposed revision of the due process requirement in the event the Commission takes an adverse action against someone, e.g. revokes an instructor’s or officer’s certification or denies a request for reconsideration or hearing.
Commissioner Clark said that if the same body hears the initial complaints and votes on the complaint, the outcome could appear to be biased or unfair.

Chairman Straitiff said that Ms. Laub prepared some recommendations and the Committee adopted and/or approved those changes. He asked Ms. Laub to summarize what the Committee had approved.

Ms. Laub said that at a meeting a couple of months ago, the Commission approved changes to the Policy and Procedures Manual, but did not approve Section IX – C.

Commissioner Clark had raised some concerns about the due process. He said the Lyness decision is based upon the basic notion of due process, namely adequate notice, the opportunity to be heard, and the chance to defend oneself before a fair and impartial tribunal.

Ms. Laub said she made revisions to the policy to accommodate the potential Lyness issue. The Chairman should also rescue himself from any decisions rendered by the Commission related to Requests for Reconsideration under Section VIII of the Policy and Procedures Manual, and if a hearing is requested, the hearing examiner will issue a Proposed Conclusion. These procedures are based on a case that was heard in the Commonwealth Court.

Chairman Straitiff noted that Page 2 is a summary of the process and how it would work, including how decisions rendered affect the rights of an individual, and when the Chairperson should rescue himself from any decisions rendered by the Commission related to requests for reconsideration. If a hearing is requested, the hearing examiner will issue a Proposed Conclusion, which will be accepted by the Chairperson and passed on to the parties and will then issue a Final Order. He stated by removing the Chairperson from the consideration early in the process, we remove the conflict of interest.

Ms. Laub noted that she revised both Section VIII and IX to make the reconsideration process mandatory before a hearing can be requested and said that the Commission could discuss whether the process is mandatory or discretionary at the next meeting.

Commissioner Martinez asked Ms. Laub if she could include a clause that would say “surrender the weapon until the matter is resolved”. Ms. Laub replied that she wonders if, in a county where they have mandatory carry, the officer surrenders their weapon can the officer still work.

Chairman Straitiff said the Commission couldn’t ask an officer to surrender his weapon, but the Commission could suspend their certification. However, the county can still allow officers to carry weapons without certification from this Commission.

Commissioner Clark said if the Commission suspends an officer’s right to carry, the courts could decide whether they carry and do not work. If the procedure has a gray area where the Commission has a written timeline where we give them an opportunity to exercise their due process, but the officer asks for a continuance or an extension, can the Commission say that it is vacating the stay or that there is only one continuance granted and it is for a limited period of time, no exceptions? He suggested that a continuance only be granted for extraordinary cause shown and then not for the maximum number of days, but for “X” number of days.

Ms. Laub wanted to know why the Commission would need to grant a continuation.

Commissioner Clark said sometimes certain circumstances would require a continuation; e.g. death in the family or an accident.
Ms. Laub said there is a code that says when continuations are granted under the Administrative Agency Law. The Commission can include the language from the code in our regulations and it will become part of the Commission’s policy.

Commissioner Davis suggested the Commission return to the original practice where the President Judge controls county policy, and if the employee gets into a legal process where the employee is appealing a decision, he thinks the President Judge should make a decision on his own.

Commissioner Martinez asked Ms. Laub to walk the Commissioners through a quick case example.

Ms. Laub said that if the 15 officers do not complete their In-Service Firearms Training they lose their certification. If they are from a county that requires their officers to carry, the Commission is going to enter into a decision as to why we are going to revoke an officer’s certification. Director Kope will notify the officer via a certified letter of the Commission’s decision and the officer has an opportunity to seek reconsideration of the Commission’s decision. The Commission will review the reconsideration request and either decide they do or do not want to revoke the officer’s certification. Following the Commission’s review of their decision, the officer has an opportunity to request a hearing, which is conducted in accordance with the Administrative Agency Law. Once the Commission reviews the hearing examiner’s findings of facts, the Commission will issue the Final Adjudication. The officer has a right to appeal the Final Adjudication in accordance with the requirements of the Rules of Appellate Procedure and the Administrative Agency Law.

Commissioner Clark mentioned that filing an appeal could actually render a stay. He also said that the Commission is focusing on the period between when the Commission makes its first decision and when the hearing is held.

Chairman Straitiff questioned if the officer should be carrying a weapon during that time when the revocation is under appeal.

Commissioner Clark suggested that on a case-by-case basis the President Judge of a particular county take the authorization to carry a weapon away from an officer. He also suggested that the President Judge be made aware of the Commission’s decision to revoke a certification, but not be made aware of why.

Chairman Straitiff said he agreed up to the point of notification and explanation of the reason, but does not believe we can tell a President Judge what to do and does not believe it is appropriate to make recommendations to the President Judge, because the officer is the President Judge’s employee and therefore it is his call.

Commissioner Martinez suggested that the Commission request or recommend some language to the President Judge to make them aware of the situation.

Commissioner Clark said the language to the President Judge could read, “we recommend you consider” making a determination if you want this officer to carry a firearm.

Ms. Laub stated that there are five causes for revocation of an officer’s certification. There are failure to comply with requalification and/or in service requirements; conviction of a crime; unsafe conduct during training; unprofessional conduct; and providing false or misleading information.
Chairman Straitiff said that the Commission will not be changing the policy but will include in the notification letter the cause for the revocation. He also said that he understood there would not be an official record of the reconsideration request, only the minutes from the Commission meetings and documents that may or may not have been submitted. He also asked if there is an official record made in the hearing office. Ms. Laub said that the process is not part of the policy manual.

Chairman Straitiff asked if there are any amendments to what has been presented to the policy provision.

Commissioner Clark replied that the policy has to be rewritten and should state timelines that clearly indicate time frames.

Chairman Straitiff asked for a motion to adopt the amendments to the policy and procedures with time references.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Martinez made a motion to adopt amendments to the policy and procedures that would include time references. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

**C. Range Acquisition**

Chairman Straitiff said the Commission has had three or four meetings with Ft. Indiantown Gap personnel and they have responded with two proposals for the Commission to consider. The Commission had requested a 30-position range that would meet our Basic Training needs. Sgt. Snesavage provided the Commission with prices for two separate targeting systems, the Caswell and ATS Systems. Both are automatic turning systems and can be configured to record the number of hits. With the pavilion, tower and all of the things we asked for the cost for the ATS System is $100,284.16 and for the Caswell System is $129,889.16. Chairman said he questioned the $30,000 figure for range construction, which was not identified in the proposal, and he does not know what that includes. Commissioner Clark asked if there were drawings available and asked if there was a development plan provided to the GAP. Chairman Straitiff said everything at FTIG is computerized.

Commissioner Clark wanted to know if anyone knew anything about these two systems. Also from reading the material he sees that one system is mobile and the other requires a concrete buffer of some kind. It appears to him that once the Commission decides on a system it would exclude the other system.

Mr. Klarsch explained that the Caswell system is what is generally used at FTIG. The only reason Sgt. Snesavage provided the ATS price is to give the Commission an alternative system. Sgt. Snesavage said the GAP uses Caswell and recommended that system to the Commission.

Ms. Laub said they plan to finalize the acquisition issue at the June 3, 2003 Acquisition Meeting with FTIG personnel.

Commissioner Davis asked if the Commission gave FTIG plans of what we want.

Chairman Straitiff replied that the Commission gave FTIG some generic NRA course descriptions or lay outs. The last discussion was about threat levels. FTIG needed to put information into the computer to determine threat levels from other ranges and how shooting might threaten adjacent ranges. FTIG wanted to go with only 15 spaces to ensure safety, however, they have concluded that they are able to do it with 30 spaces. He asked if it was the consensus of the Commission to pursue the range acquisition issue and find a place to do the Simunition training.
Commissioner Young said he had spoken to Sgt. Guido at the Carlisle Police Department about possible training sites. He reported that Erie and Westmoreland counties said they may have sites available. In Carlisle he knew of at least three or four buildings that the Carlisle Borough Police utilize for this style of training. He mentioned that Commissioner Schlechter had asked him to videotape the Carlisle facility. By reviewing the videotape, the Curriculum Committee could get a preliminary look at the facility and decide if the facility was acceptable for Simunition training.

Chairman Straitiff asked if there were any more comments on the range acquisition issue and said the ERG representatives were ready to return to discuss the In-Service Firearms Training cost.

Mr. Varner provided the Commission members with an update of the in-service training cost. ERG did the figures in two different ways. The first cost was for 16-20 students using an escalating scale. He asked the Commissioners if they would like ERG to use an escalating scale or an average cost per student. He gave the example of the 16th student costing about $335, the 17th would be $168, the 18th student would be $112, the 19th would be $72, and the 20th would be $67 per person.

Chairman Straitiff commented that using Mr. Varner’s example, the Commission would know how much they were paying per student and agreed to include ERG figures in Schedule One. He thanked ERG and said the Commission would do everything they could do to push the counties into scheduling their officers.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Executive Director Kope announced that two certified firearms instructors (Chad Libby, Dauphin County Juvenile Probation and Matt Dunio, Blair County Adult Probation) conducted the 28th and 29th Basic Firearms Training Academy. Both Mr. Libby and Mr. Dunio conducted the classroom training and each served as Range Master for the range training. Both officers did a very good job and as a result of their evaluations he would like to recommend both to be considered becoming Master Instructors. The Chairman asked if both officers have met the established criteria and Director Kope said they had. Commissioner Clark asked if Mr. Libby had conducted a Basic Firearms Training class in the past and Mr. Kope replied that he had assisted, but had not conducted the class. The Chairman asked for a motion on Director Kope’s recommendation.

MOTION: Commissioner Davis made the motion based on Director Kope’s recommendation that Chad Libby and Matt Dunio will be made Master Instructors. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

Mr. Kope reported that he has received Linda Laub’s videotape and that she did a really good job. The tape is 52 minutes long and the Power Point presentation was dubbed into the tape. Overall the tape was very good and we can send the tape out to be used to conduct In-House Training. He said he was given an estimated cost of $3,200 to produce the tape.

Mr. Kope distributed copies of his April 16, 2003 memorandum to the Commissioners regarding the accidental discharge of Chief Charles L. Locke’s weapon.

Commissioner Clark asked what would be the basis for the Commission to impose sanctions or suspend Mr. Locke’s instructor’s status. He also asked if Mr. Locke had ever done anything in the past that would be the basis for imposing a sanction against him.
Mr. Kope responded that Mr. Locke has a 21-year unblemished record and his only blemish is the sanction imposed by the President Judge.

Commissioner Davis felt that if an officer has been suspended, the Commission should not use him as a firearms instructor.

**MOTION:** Commission Davis made the motion to suspend Mr. Locke’s Certified Firearms Instructor status and not use him as an instructor during the sanction period imposed by the President Judge. Director Kope was also instructed to draft a certified letter to Mr. Locke and the President Judge outlining the Commission’s position regarding his status as a certified firearms instructor. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. A vote taken and the motion was approved.

Commissioner Clark also said that the Commission has been remiss in the past in developing procedures for loading and unloading weapons in office space. Chairman Straitiff said this is a possible in-service training topic.

Mr. Kope presented the Commission with the fiscal report. Commissioner Clark said if the financial reports were presented in an Excel format, they might be more useful.

**IV. Unfinished Business**

Commissioner Clark reported that he has not yet given the plaque information to Director Kope because his computer crashed.

**V. New Business**

Chairman Straitiff asked if there was any new business to discuss. Commissioner Young said he thinks the Commission should develop a strategic five-year fiscal plan that is proactive and include regulations. The Chairman asked for nominations for Commissioners of the planning committee.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Davis made a motion to nominate Commission Young as Chairman of the Committee with Commissioner Clark and Conway Bushey as Commissioners. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion and recommended that the Committee have an in-depth discussion and communicate via e-mail. A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

**VI. Public Comment**

There was no comment and the meeting was adjourned.