

MINUTES OF ARKANSAS STATE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING  
March 12, 2015

The Arkansas State Police Commission met on Thursday, March 12, 2015 at the Arkansas State Police Headquarters, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commission Vice Chairman Guinn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Frank Guinn, Vice Chairman  
Commissioner Dr. Lewis Shepherd, Secretary  
Commissioner Bob Burns  
Commissioner Jane Christenson  
Commissioner Neff Basore  
Commissioner Bill Benton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Commissioner John Allison

STATE POLICE PERSONNEL ATTENDING:

Colonel Bill Bryant	Donna Humphries
Captain Lindsey Williams	Captain Ron Stayton
Major Henry LaMar	Captain Jeff Drew
Lieutenant David Sims	Captain Steve Coppinger
Sergeant Stuart Woodward	Emma French
Sherry Woods	Lieutenant David Lafferty
Lieutenant Scott Woodward	Lieutenant Stacie Rhoads
Major Mike Foster	Lieutenant Charles Hubbard
Lieutenant Brady Gore	Captain Forrest Marks
Lieutenant Paulette Ward	Lieutenant Darran Austin
Jenna Castleberry	Lieutenant Jason Aaron
Corporal Jeff Whitlock	Lieutenant Dennis Overton
Lieutenant Brant Tosh	Mary Claire McLaurin
Jackie Baker	Harmony Daniels
Lieutenant David Moore	Lieutenant Mark Hollingsworth
Miranda Dennis	Alexis Winters
Major Stan Witt	Lieutenant Brant Tosh
Sergeant Brad Lann	Sergeant Eric Henson
Sergeant Kenneth Whitmore	Gary Glisson
Sergeant Matt Miller	Lieutenant Barry Saffold
Corporal Trent Behnke	TFC Ben Hoyt
Sergeant Doug Thomas	Corporal Bobby Clemence
Trooper Steven Roberts	Jimmy Plataska
Sergeant Jim Moore	Greg Downs
Elaine Lee	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Joe Thielke – ASPF	Gene Crouch - DEA
David Downing – DEA	Jerry Spurgers - FBI
Michael Thompson – FBI	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commissioner Basore led the pledge of allegiance.

NOTIFICATION OF MEDIA:

The media was notified of this meeting on March 03, 2015.

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INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Commission Vice Chairman asked Ms. Donna Humphries to recognize the guests in attendance, and she recognized the troopers' families, Joe Thielke with the ASP Foundation, ASAC David Downing and GS Eugene Thompson with DEA, Supervisory SA Jerry Spurgers, and SA Michael Thompson with FBI.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Christenson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2015 monthly Commission Meeting. Commissioner Basore seconded the motion. The motion passed.

WEAPON RESOLUTIONS:

Captain Steve Coppinger presented the below resolutions for consideration by the ASP Commission.

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe efficiently and effectively served the Arkansas State Police for a period of twenty-three years, ten months, and twenty-seven days;

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe retired from this department January 31, 2015;

WHEREAS: His departure creates a vacancy that will be most difficult to fill, which is recognized by each and every member of the Arkansas State Police Commission;

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe has made formal request that his service weapon be retired with him and remain in his possession;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: The Arkansas State Police Commission, in its regular meeting at Arkansas State Police Headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas on Thursday, March 12, 2015, in accordance with Act 547 of 2003, awards him his Glock Model 21, Serial Number PKS279, as a token of their esteem and appreciation for service devoted to the Arkansas State Police.

Commissioner Basore made a motion to approve the above weapon resolution presented to the Commission. Commissioner Burns seconded and the motion passed.

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe efficiently and effectively served the Arkansas State Police for a period of twenty-three years, ten months, and twenty-seven days;

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe retired from this department January 31, 2015;

WHEREAS: His departure creates a vacancy that will be most difficult to fill, which is recognized by each and every member of the Arkansas State Police Commission;

WHEREAS: Corporal Charles Roe has made formal request that his shotgun be retired with him and remain in his possession;

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BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: The Arkansas State Police Commission, in its regular meeting at Arkansas State Police Headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas on Thursday, March 12, 2015 in accordance with Act 547 of 2003, determines the fair market value of the Remington shotgun, serial number D591242N, that Corporal Charles Roe has carried be affixed at \$100.00, and that Corporal Charles Roe be permitted to purchase the shotgun for his personal use.

Commissioner Burns made a motion to approve the above weapon resolution presented to the Commission. Commissioner Christenson seconded and the motion passed.

### DIVISION REPORTS:

#### Fiscal Report – Emma French

Ms. French gave an overview of the reports which were distributed to the Commission. She stated we are at 67% and on track, right about where we should be, but we continue to keep watching things. In the Legislative Session our Appropriation Act for the next biennium has been through Special Language and has been through Personnel Committee and is hanging around in Joint Budget. We are working real hard to try to keep everything that we have.

Commission Vice Chairman Guinn asked how the budget was going, are we ahead or behind or gaining any ground? Ms. French stated it is intense and we are not gaining any ground.

Commissioner Christenson asked whether the audit is still going on. Ms. French stated they just began auditing FY14, so they are catching up and they will be probably about 6 months.

#### Administrative Services – Harmony Daniels

Harmony Daniels presented an oral summary of the written report distributed to the Commission. She began by reporting the Human Resources/Personnel transactions for the month; we had three civilian new hires, three civilian voluntary resignations, one transfer, two retirements, and one new hire extra help personnel. The Commission transactions included one voluntary resignation, and eight lateral transfers. At this time we currently have six military deployments.

We currently have 188 applicants that are going through the hiring process for Troop School. They are at different phases in the process such as physical assessment test, written exam, and polygraphs. We are on schedule to begin Troop School on May 17, 2015.

Regarding the ASP Health Plan, February claims were \$957,444 this was a slight increase of \$42,000 from last month. The total fund balance is at \$8.5 million that is \$197,149 lower than last month and the average discount savings for the month was 56%. We will continue to monitor the fund balance, claims and plan utilization on a monthly basis.

Commission Vice Chairman Guinn asked if any Commissioners had any questions. Commission Vice Chairman asked if you see this trend continuing of the balance going down. Ms. Daniels stated we are monitoring it and it has been fluctuating, but that has been primarily due to the large high dollar claims. We currently have seven of those right now and we do expect those to continue. What we are looking at is the utilization, the fund balance, the claims, and we are also monitoring the discount savings because that is important for the overall picture. We will continue to do that and see if there are any actions that we need to take.

NEW BUSINESS

DEA Presentation by ASAC David Downing and GS Eugene Crouch

ASAC David Downing stated GS Eugene Crouch was going to give the particulars about the case for which the presentations are going to be given. He stated he just wanted to applaud our partnership with Arkansas State Police and let the Commissioners know what a good partnership the DEA and Arkansas State Police share and reiterate what we do would not be possible without the partnership.

GS Crouch read a letter from the SAC Keith Brown which expresses his appreciation for the excellent cooperation and work done by Arkansas State Police personnel in the DEA investigation into the methamphetamine and money laundering activities of Joseph Farrell. He stated the ASP personnel to be recognized were Corporal Clinton Calderon, Sergeant Jim Moore, Corporal Eric Henson, Lieutenant Dennis Overton, Corporal Trent Behnke, and TFC Ben Hoyt. In particular, we would like to highlight the bravery and exceptional piloting skills exhibited by Sergeant Jim Moore and Corporal Eric Henson, who was the spotter, on August 11, 2014 that led to the seizure of a significant amount of methamphetamine and the apprehension of Joseph Farrell who was the main target in our investigation. Speaking personally this was probably the most impressive display of piloting and bravery I have seen since I have been in law enforcement. On that day Joe Farrell received a load of methamphetamine in Monette, Arkansas and went on a high speed chase trying to head towards Missouri and because of Sergeant Moore and Corporal Henson, they were able to apprehend him in a cotton field within a mile or two of the Missouri border. It was extremely impressive in what they were able to do. The professionalism and skill exhibited by the Arkansas State Police was integral to the investigation's successful conclusion and the dismantlement of a drug trafficking organization led by Joe Farrell whose criminal activities negatively affected communities not just in Arkansas, but also in Dallas, Texas, southern and northern California and we were also able to trace the investigation back to Colima, Mexico. The investigation resulted in methamphetamine seizures totaling over 70 pounds, the seizure of over \$234,000 in cash and assets and the arrest of nearly 30 subjects in Arkansas and California. We do anticipate possibly making more arrests in Arkansas as well as in Colima, Mexico. It was a pretty impressive job and without the assistance of the troopers I mentioned earlier, it would not have been possible. The investigation was greatly enhanced by their efforts and we greatly appreciate all their hard work, dedication and cooperation. Certificates were awarded to Corporal Trent Behnke, Corporal Clinton Calderon, TFC Ben Hoyt, Sergeant Jim Moore, Corporal Eric Henson, and Lieutenant Dennis Overton.

Let me add, it was Lieutenant Dennis Overton, Corporal Trent Behnke and TFC Ben Hoyt whose assistance in Conway on May 22 lead to the largest methamphetamine seizure in our office for all of last year, it was 125 pounds and we really appreciate them for that too.

FBI Presentation by Supervisory SA Jerry Spurgers and SA Michael Thompson

Supervisory SA Jerry Spurgers stated I am here today on behalf of ASAC David Resch who was summoned out of state. I want to echo ASAC Downing's comments; we do not want to pass up an opportunity to express our appreciation for the cooperation between our agencies. I consistently talk to my peers in my division, agents transferring in and explain the spirit of cooperation we share. We had a recent transfer from one of the big cities out east and two or three times he said I need to propose something and I told him to call so and so at the State Police and I get this look of bewilderment and he said I just call them myself. I do not ever want you to think we take you for granted.

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For a little background on the case, FBI offices in five or six different states began working a case on a guy that was called the “Loan Ranger Bandit” this guy robbed at least 20 banks that we know of over a five year period including three here in the State of Arkansas. The last robbery was in Benton on July 1, 2014. A BOLO was put out and Trooper Steven Roberts made an arrest on Interstate 40 at the Palestine exit around Forrest City, Arkansas. Thanks to the rapport that Trooper Roberts established, SA Michael Thompson and a Benton detective were able to drive over to Forrest City, interview the suspect and get a confession on 20 bank robberies.

Just yesterday, we found out that he was sentenced to 40 years and it may not sound like a lot, but there is no parole in the federal system, if he lives long enough, he will serve those 40 years.

Supervisory SA Jerry Spurgers then read a letter written to Colonel Bryant from SAC David Resch commending Trooper Steven Roberts for the traffic stop of Richard Wayne Swicegood. In the letter it states that Richard Swicegood specifically commented to the investigators during the interview he thought he had escaped because he drove past several marked police units during the day as he drove towards Tennessee on Interstate 40. Richard Wayne Swicegood pled guilty to a 13 count superseding information for bank robbery in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, Waco Division which included the two robberies committed in Benton.

Supervisory SA Jerry Spurgers then read the certificate that was presented to Trooper Steven Roberts and it stated the FBI extends its appreciation for your outstanding assistance in a joint investigative effort. Your contributions were immeasurable and you have the gratitude of the FBI for all you did to help accomplish the objectives of the investigation. You can be proud of the role you played and I join my associates with whom you worked in congratulating you on a job well done and is signed James Comey, Director. Trooper Steven Roberts was then presented the certificate from the FBI.

Colonel Bryant stated he would like to thank the FBI and DEA, they talked great about us but it works both ways, every time we call them they are always on board for us and we really appreciate you for coming today and being in front of the State Police family.

Commission Vice Chairman Guinn stated they are going to take a break and then go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:24 a.m. and returned at 10:56 a.m. Commission Vice Chairman Guinn asked Colonel Bryant if he had any recommendations.

Colonel Bryant recommended the Commission consider Lieutenant Charles Hubbard for the vacant Captain position in the Highway Patrol Division, Troop F. Commissioner Christenson made a motion that Lieutenant Charles Hubbard be promoted to Captain, Commissioner Burns seconded and the motion passed.

Colonel Bryant recommended the reinstatement of Jason Baethke to the Arkansas State Police. Commissioner Christenson made a motion to approve the reinstatement of Jason Baethke, Commissioner Basore seconded and the motion passed.

Commission Vice Chairman Guinn asked if any commissioners have anything to discuss before closing the meeting. Commissioner Shepherd stated he wanted to thank Colonel Bryant for coming to Arkadelphia on February 19 for what was our first law enforcement appreciation day including first responders as well. The support from the community was extremely overwhelming, we had hoped to raise enough money just to get part of the meal and the program paid for and the very kind folks of Clark County gave us enough to take care of 2014, 2015 and 2016. Colonel Bryant, your remarks were well received and I thank you for coming down that day.

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Commissioner Jane Christenson stated she needed to thank all of the state police family who came to the hospital when my husband Jeff had brain surgery two weeks ago. She stated he is home and doing well and she wanted to thank everyone for their help.

NEXT MEETING:

The next monthly meeting of the Commission will be held Thursday, April 09, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Burns made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Shepherd. The motion passed and Commission Vice Chairman Guinn announced the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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Commission Vice Chairman

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Commission Secretary