

MINUTES OF ARKANSAS STATE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING  
January 14, 2021

The Arkansas State Police Commission met on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at the Arkansas State Police Headquarters, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commission Chairperson Christenson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Jane Christenson, Chairperson  
Commissioner Neff Basore, Vice Chairman  
Commissioner Steve Edwards  
Commissioner Jeffery Teague  
Commissioner Jim Hinkle  
Commissioner Murray Benton, Sr.

MEMBERS ON CONFERENCE CALL:

Commissioner John Allison

STATE POLICE PERSONNEL ATTENDING:

Colonel Bill Bryant	Lt. Colonel Shawn Garner
Major Mark Hollingsworth	Major Jeff Drew
Lieutenant Matt Miller	Major Jason Aaron
Lieutenant David Williams	Major Forrest Marks
Emma French	Jenna Castleberry
Major Charles Hubbard	Sherry Woods
Caitlin Teague	Captain Paulette Ward

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sara Farris, Attorney General's Office	J. R. Hankins, DPS
Jackie Baker, DPS	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commission Chairperson Christenson led the pledge of allegiance.

NOTIFICATION OF MEDIA:

The media was notified of this meeting on January 08, 2021.

Commission Chairperson Christenson welcomed Murray Benton to the Commission. He will be taking over for his dad and will serve out the rest of his term. Commission Chairperson Christenson stated Murray you are going to have some big shoes to fill. Murray stated absolutely and he misses you guys and says hello. Commission Chairperson Christenson asked Murray if he would like to say anything. Murray stated just that it is an honor to be here and just proud to be associated with a group like this who protect our state and thank you for the chance to serve.

Commission Chairperson Christenson stated our first order of business today is our election of officers for the next year and we will start with Chairman.

ELECTION OF ASPC OFFICERS FOR 2021:

Commissioner Teague made a motion that Commissioner Neff Basore be elected Chairman for 2021. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Hinkle and passed.

Commissioner Hinkle made a motion that Commissioner John Allison be elected Vice-Chairman for 2021. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Basore and passed.

Commissioner Hinkle made a motion that Commissioner Steve Edwards be elected Secretary for 2021. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Basore and passed.

Commission Chairperson Christenson stated before I pass the gavel, I would just like to say a few words and I promise it will be short. Fourteen years ago on a Friday afternoon, I received a phone call from Governor Mike Beebe, he told me he wanted to appoint me to the State Police Commission. Needless to say I was shocked since I had been trying to get reappointed to the Parks and Tourism Commission of which I had served two terms. I told him I needed the weekend to think about it. He said well that was a first. I had been going

through boxes that weekend of some things from my dad after he had passed away the year before. Sitting on top of one of the boxes was an article when my father, J. E. Dunlap Jr. had been appointed to the State Police Commission. Almost fifty years to that date. Needless to say that was my sign to accept the appointment. This was actually an easy transition since I grew up meeting State Troopers for over twenty-two years and two months that my dad spent on the commission. He served under five governors, so that makes a combined thirty-six years and two months that he and I have served the State Police. After two months on the Commission, we had a new Colonel, Winford Phillips. Ironically, dad hired him for his first job as a radio operator in Huntsville, so that shows how far back these things go. I would like to thank Governor Beebe for the opportunity to represent and serve you. Although as commissioners, you serve the Governor, the people of Arkansas and the State Police. I want to thank Donna for keeping me organized and always there to answer my questions. We consider her our den mother and thank you, Bill Sadler, for all of your support on the communications side. Bill and I had a special bond, he and I were born in the first hospital in Harrison. His father actually worked for my dad in the newspaper printing business. I would also like to thank Frank Guinn and the Arkansas State Police Foundation for all they do for the Troopers and their families and making our new driving track a reality. Thank you Highway Patrol and CID, Command Staff and our Colonel Bill Bryant for making our communities safe. Colonel, I have served under several Directors but you have been my longest one and I hope you continue to stay here. I would like to thank all of my fellow commissioners for making this an easy time on the commission and my mentor, former commissioner Woody Futrell. Since I wasn't reappointed to the commission, I was excited to learn that my replacement was a friend of mine, Ken Reeves, from Harrison. Ken would you stand, congrats. Ken and I have been lifelong friends, he was actually my attorney and we have served on several boards in Harrison together. Our parents were longtime friends who fished together. Ken will represent all of you well. I will spend my time trying to beat this rare cancer I have. The state police have been my family for almost forty years and they will continue as I come up for different banquets and things. Thank you!

**PASSING OF THE GAVEL:**

Commissioner Christenson passed the gavel to the new Commission Chairman Neff Basore.

Commissioner Allison asked, Madam Chairman, can I say a few words. Commissioner Christenson stated yes sir. Commissioner Allison stated I just want to thank Jane, it has absolutely been a pleasure serving with you. You have been a wonderful commissioner, you have been a wonderful team player and we will miss you dearly. I have enjoyed you, as much or more than anybody I have ever worked with in my life, you are a real good asset and a real star and it is a loss to the commission. Good luck and stay in touch. Commissioner Christenson stated thank you so much Commissioner Allison.

Colonel Bryant stated I would like to say a couple of words please on behalf of the men and women of the Arkansas State Police. When I first became Director and I was sworn in, you were here on the commission and it didn't take me long to understand just what a great person and what a great leader you were. I always listened to you and you provided sound advice. Not to mention, you and my wife became very good friends, you constantly communicate and you are just a great person and your friendship I will always value. But what really makes the difference is your heart was always for the state police and the troopers on the road. You always, your decisions were always first for those troopers on the ground. Fast forward six years, I am about to say good-bye to a commissioner I have come to have the utmost respect for and an everlasting friendship. Jane only a few people in this room understand and know how you came to have the level of respect for the Arkansas State Police that you do. It was sixty-four years ago this month your dad, J. E. Dunlap, was appointed as a State Police Commissioner. For twenty-two years he sacrificed just like you have the past fourteen years. Father and daughter gave up part of their lives for thirty-six years to ensure the needs of the Arkansas State Police were provided. On behalf of the citizens in Arkansas, and every Arkansas State Trooper past and present, I extend a heartfelt thank you to the Dunlap and Christenson Family and pray for God's blessing on you and your husband Jeff, we will miss you. On behalf of the State Police Commission and the men and women of the Arkansas State Police we would like to present you with this plaque.

Colonel Bryant stated I would like at this time to recognize Bill Benton, you know Murray is taking his place. Bill Benton loved the Arkansas State Police, he loved to go to the troops and visit with the troopers on the ground just a true love and I know he is going to miss this.

But we are very fortunate to get Murray, I have known Murray and the Benton Family who is a special family and you can't think of a better family in the State of Arkansas. They are a close family and they care about law enforcement and support law enforcement. So, Mr. Benton if you are listening or if you get a tape of this, I just want you to know how much you will be missed by me, my family and the Arkansas State Police. Thank you.

Commission Chairman Basore stated the next item on the agenda is the minutes from the December 10 meeting.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Hinkle made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2020 regular monthly commission meeting. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed.

Commission Chairman Basore stated the next item will be our Division reports.

DIVISION REPORTS:

Fiscal Section – Emma French

Ms. French gave an overview of the reports which were distributed to the Commission. Ms. French stated there is really not anything new to report. We are doing just fine, there has not been any significant changes, we are half way through the year and that is really it for us financially.

Administrative Services – Major Charles Hubbard

Major Hubbard presented an oral summary of the written report distributed to the Commission. He began by reporting the Human Resources/Personnel transactions for the month. The uniformed noncommissioned transactions include two new hires and one termination. The commissioned transactions include two promotions and two transfers. We currently have five military deployments.

Regarding the ASP Health Plan, December paid claims were \$1,283,201 an increase of \$319,302 from last month and the fund balance is \$745,038 higher than last month for a total fund balance of \$9,126,856. The average discount savings for the month of November was 67.6%.

Just a quick brief on our Troop School, we have forty-four recruits. They attended an orientation day on January 5 here at headquarters. The school was initially scheduled to start on Sunday, January 10 and as you are aware that did not happen. In accordance with the Arkansas Health Department's recommendations, we would like to postpone the start day until this Sunday, January 17 and we are in regular contact with those recruits. We are looking forward to starting this class and we just want to do it with the health and wellness as our priority for everyone that is involved. Regarding the graduation we had tentatively scheduled that for April 1, however, we are going to have to see how the training goes between now and then and be flexible on that as that could change at any moment as we progress forward with training.

Commissioner Edwards stated on the insurance \$9 million or so, in a situation like the pandemic or something like that if it just went crazy and we had big huge claims, do we have like an umbrella type policy that would kick in? Major Hubbard stated we do not, we have some catastrophic funds that are available to us but there is a limit to that obviously. At one time we did have re-insurance, we do not have that currently, it was a decision that we made in an effort to try to save money during this transition to the new health plan this past year. There are some options there and what we try to do is just try to forecast what to expect in the future based upon the trends, the current trends, and hopefully we stay on path to that and so far we have been able to do that. Commissioner Edwards stated but with something like the Coronavirus, we never expected that and if it stepped up to another level it could break the program. Major Hubbard stated we do our best to try to watch and we also communicate regularly with the Employee Benefits Division which obviously has a larger umbrella of members on their plan and that kind of gives us an idea of what to expect for ours and they work close with us on that.

Commissioner Hinkle stated Major something just came to my mind, when you were talking about the possibilities of delays during Troop School. Maybe I should know the answer to this, I apologize if I should, but when does this person become in a compensated position with us. When they start troop school, during it, when they graduate where does the compensation start. Major Hubbard stated it started last Sunday for this group. You know one reason we look at that, Colonel and I discussed this as well as and these men and women have already committed to this job and they have already given notice to their previous employers so we want to work with them as closely as we can so we were able to go ahead and put them on payroll as of last week. Now obviously they won't become troopers until they graduate Troop School and meet all of those training qualifications and that is what we hope to do within the next twelve weeks. Commissioner Hinkle stated I think you can see my concern there, just dropping off, if they weren't being compensated how some of these people would get by, and so I am glad that is the answer, thank you.

Commissioner Edwards asked are they added to the insurance program as soon as they start on the payroll. Major Hubbard stated yes sir.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commission Chairman Basore asked Colonel Bryant if we need an executive session. Colonel Bryant stated yes, Mr. Chairman, we have some promotions to consider today. Commission Chairman Basore asked for a motion. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of considering employment, appointment, promotion, demotion, disciplining, or resignation of employees, Commissioner Hinkle seconded and the motion passed. The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:17 a.m.

Commission Chairman Basore called the meeting back to order at 11:16 a.m. and stated under new business we have the approval of the monthly stipend.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### STIPEND AND MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT:

Commission Chairman Basore asked for a motion to approve the stipend of \$60.00 per meeting. Commissioner Teague made the motion to approve the stipend payment and it was seconded by Commissioner Benton. The motion passed.

Commission Chairman Basore asked for a motion to approve the mileage reimbursement. Commissioner Hinkle made the motion to approve the mileage reimbursement and it was seconded by Commissioner Teague. The motion passed.

##### APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES FOR 2021:

Commission Chairman Basore stated the Health Insurance Committee for 2021 will be Commissioner Edwards, Commissioner Teague and Commissioner Allison.

Colonel Bryant stated before we get started on promotions, I would like to introduce two of our new employees. We have a new attorney, Tess Bradford, and she will be handling all the legal and personnel matters before the commission. We also have Katlyn Nelson who is a legal specialist and will be assisting our legal section and will be handling the FOIA requests.

Colonel Bryant stated in regards to appeals, I believe we had the Billy Ealy appeal hearing scheduled for February and due to medical reasons we need to move that to August. Commission Chairman Basore asked for a motion to change the appeal hearing to August. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to move the Billy Ealy appeal hearing to August. Commission Hinkle seconded the motion and the motion passed to move the hearing to August.

Colonel Bryant stated the first promotion will be the Captain in the Highway Patrol Division, Troop E. My recommendation to the Commission would be Lieutenant David Williams. Commissioner Edwards made a motion that Lieutenant David Williams be promoted to Captain in the Highway Patrol Division, Troop E. Commissioner Hinkle seconded and the motion passed.

The second and last promotion today is an ASP Lieutenant in the Administrative Services Division, Training. My recommendation to the Commission would be Sergeant Craig Teague. Commissioner Benton made a motion that Sergeant Craig Teague be promoted to Lieutenant in the Administrative Services Division, Training. Commissioner Christenson seconded and the motion passed.

NEXT MEETING:

Commission Chairman Basore stated the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

With no more business, Commission Chairman Basore asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Christenson seconded and the motion passed. Commission Chairman Basore adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

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Commission Chairperson

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Commission Secretary