



Kim Vickers
Executive Director

TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

TCOLE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING June 18, 2014

The special called meeting of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2014, starting at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the TCOLE office, 6330 East Hwy 290, Austin, Texas.

Commissioners attending were Sheriff Joel Richardson, Presiding Officer; Ms. Patt Scheckel-Hollingsworth, Assistant Presiding Officer; Dr. Johnny E. Lovejoy, II, Secretary; Major Jason D. Hester; Constable Ron Hood; Mr. Rob Kyker; and Senior Police Officer Joe Pennington. Mr. James Oakley and Chief Ruben Villegas were absent.

TCOLE staff attending included, Executive Director Kim Vickers, John Helenberg, John Beauchamp, Brian Roth, Gary Connella, Lisa Fontenot, Laurie Abernathy, and Kaye Wilson.

Presiding Officer Joel Richardson called the meeting to order. He noted that a quorum was present. Presiding Officer Richardson stated that the purpose of the meeting was to follow up and take action on the agency's strategic plan. After the December meeting, workshops were held around the state to receive input from the agency's stakeholders. Numerous suggestions were made at these meetings.

The goals that were established in December were reviewed. Additional directions pertaining to these goals were given. The information provided at this meeting included:

- **Continued emphasis on customer service**

The Presiding Officer noted that huge strides have been made in the area of customer service. He and Mr. Vickers agreed that this will always be a goal for the agency.

TCOLE needs to keep law enforcement agencies informed via email on rule changes, etc.

- **Continued legislative education**

The Presiding Officer asked that this be an area of concentration by all commissioners and staff. He said that it is not just the responsibility of the Executive Director, but of everyone. Legislators need to be informed that the agency does not conduct law enforcement training. Help the legislators to understand what the agency has been tasked with, and that the resources have not been made available. He suggested that the legislative committee, consisting of Commissioners Hollingsworth, Lovejoy, Pennington, and Kyker, meet prior to the September meeting.

Mr. Vickers noted that all indicators point toward more money available for budgeting than in the past decade. Staff at the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has offered to assist TCOLE by discussing strategies and insight for this legislative session. They have suggested establishing a joint effort between the Texas Rangers and the TCOLE enforcement staff. Commissioner Hollingsworth asked that the commissioners be provided with information that DPS has shared. Commissioner Lovejoy asked for a list of legislators that should be contacted with talking points about the agency. Presiding Officer Richardson tasked each commissioner with either getting the executive director an audience with the legislator from their area, or the commissioner visit with the legislator. Mr. Vickers stated that he will be asking for a 20% - 30% increase in staff, and with that increase, we will still be within the 116 Funds that help fund the agency. Mr. Helenberg has spoken with Representative Munoz of McAllen and he supports the joint effort between DPS and TCOLE. Mr. Vickers pointed out that the cartels and prison gangs are trying to infiltrate law enforcement. This is not just a border problem, it's statewide.

- **Continued work on curriculum update**

Mr. Vickers noted that curriculum updates will be an on-going process. Due to legislative cuts, TCOLE only has one curriculum specialist; therefore, we depend on subject matter experts (SME) to help. Commissioner Lovejoy asked if on-line courses will be updated. Mr. Vickers said Denco 911 has offered free telecommunicator and peace officer courses which TCOLE staff is currently vetting. We hope this will prompt others to provide courses. Commissioner Pennington asked if there can be a standing curriculum development committee. The agency doesn't have funds budgeted to pay travel so we must rely on the

generosity of the law enforcement agencies to provide the assistance that is needed. There was further discussion whether TCOLE should be back in the curriculum business or in the curriculum coordinating business. Commissioner Hester stated that agencies providing SME's should be reimbursed, and that TCOLE should ask for these funds from the legislature.

- **Improve the process for approving Academies or Training Providers**

The commissioners concluded that this item has already been discussed and a plan is in place. Mr. Vickers noted that before a contract comes to the commission, the application will have been through a vetting process that includes geographical consideration.

- **Electronic feedback process with agency administrators**

Develop an email list of agency administrators, chiefs, sheriffs, constables, for notification purposes. When there is a rule change, administrators want to know about the changes so that they can have input.

- **Increase fees for the for-profit contract training providers**

The Presiding Officer suggested that TCOLE develop a fee schedule for a contract training provider that allows for a waiver and abatement of fees at the executive director's discretion. The question was asked, "Should large companies and Mom and Pop companies pay the same?"

- **Improve the process for new agency start-ups**

Mr. Helenberg explained that occasionally TCOLE will grant a law enforcement agency a number, then the agency drops to less than minimum standard requirements, and TCOLE has no authority to remove the agency number. There was discussion whether this should be remedied by statute or by rule. Commissioner Hollingsworth suggested that by rule, if an agency falls below

minimum standards, remove or suspend their commissioning authority. Mr. Vickers noted that statute grants the authority to create an agency, it may take statute to suspend the commissioning authority. Commissioner Lovejoy asked that we consider police departments and special districts (sheriffs and constables) separate to which Mr. Beauchamp and Mr. Vickers agreed as special districts are not in our purview. Mr. Vickers suggested that administrative penalties be imposed to ensure compliance of suspending the commissioning authority. Commissioner Pennington clarified that by suspending the commissioning authority, those currently commissioned will no longer have a commission.

- **Improve the process on evaluations/audits of academies**

Mr. Helenberg noted that we are in the process of standardizing evaluations and audits. In the agency's "dream budget," we'd like to add 3 FTE's to conduct academy and contract training provider audits who could visit all academies every 1 to 1½ years. These could be civilian positions. Currently academies are evaluated once every 2 years and agencies once every 5 years.

- **Improve investigation process**

Mr. Vickers said that at this time if a license holder is charged with a criminal offense, we visit with the District and County Attorney to suggest a plea bargain for a Permanent Voluntary Surrender (PVS). We have noticed an increase in surrenders. The agency's "dream list" would include compliance specialists rather than having investigators work the non-compliance cases.

Commissioner Hester made a motion to adopt the established goals for the 2013 strategic plan. Commissioner Hollingsworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presiding Officer Richardson introduced former Commissioner Charles Hall. Commissioner Kyker introduced Chris Love with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The Presiding Officer invited public comment and Charles Hall said that he appreciates the Class A waiver. He believes this is a step in the right direction.

The Presiding Officer adjourned the meeting at 4:29 p.m.

Dr. Johnny E. Lovejoy, II, Secretary
JL/kw