



CONNECTICUT POLICE OFFICER STANDARDS & TRAINING



DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

Police Officer Standards and Training Council Action Committee Regular Meeting

Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 9:00 A.M.
285 Preston Avenue, Meriden, CT, Classroom 9/10

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting is called to order by Chief Mello at 9:03.

ROLL CALL

ATTENDANCE:

Subcommittee Members Present: Chairman Chief Keith Mello (Milford Police Department), Chief Paul Melanson (Farmington Police Department), Chief Vernon Riddick (West Hartford Police Department), Chief Neil Dryfe (Avon Police Department), Chief Scott Sansom (Granby Police Department), Chief Jonathan Mulhern (Branford Police Department) (via Zoom); First Selectman Michael Freda (Town Administrator North Haven) (via Zoom), Michael Lawlor (Associate Professor - University of New Haven) (via Zoom)

Subcommittee Members Not Present: Iran Nazario (Peace Center of Connecticut)

Other Attendees: Executive Director Thomas Wydra, Academy Administrator Karen Boisvert, Attorney Jessica Gouveia, Director Jessica Blank, Director Carrie-Jo McGuffey; Attorney Colin Milne, Administrative Assistant Lois Pisani, Secretary 1 Amaris Lucky, Field Program Consultant Michael Francis; Attorney Gene Zingaro, Attorney Samantha Wong (via Zoom); Marshall Segar (via Zoom); Inspector General Joe Lopez (via Zoom); NBC News

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes of June 24, 2025, was made by Chief Riddick; seconded by Chief Sansom and motion passed unanimously; No discussion and no abstentions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Hearing Officer and Proposed Final Decision
 - a. Koepfel, Catherine – Connecticut State Police
 - b. Ramirez, Theresa – UCONN Police Department

Chief Mello began to bring item 1a. above forward. Attorney Milne, representing POSTC had not yet arrived. Academy Administrator Karen Boisvert confirmed via telephone call that Attorney Milne was on his way to the meeting. A motion to reorder the agenda to accommodate Attorney Milne, moving both items a. and b. to the end of the meeting was made by Chief Melanson; seconded by Chief Sansom and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

2. Review and approval of *Proposed Policy of POSTC on Permitting Chief Law Enforcement Officer to Withdraw Request to Review Police Officer Certification for Revocation, Cancellation or Suspension*

Chief Wydra discussed that POSTC received a number of petitions to withdraw requests for revocations from chiefs. The proposed policy was to address these requests.

There was discussion regarding the proposed policy on the withdrawal of revocation requests. Chief Melanson acknowledged the need for a systematic approach to handling these requests. Chief Mello provided some background. Chief Mello indicated that when a request enters the process, not a lot of work is done until the matter gets through the compliance conference and compliance officer report and gets calendared for a contested hearing. Chief Mello recognized that there is a back-log of cases, and that the policy was devised to enable chiefs to withdraw certain non-mandatory requests to alleviate the backlog. The policy distinguishes between a petition to withdraw non-mandatory requests that have not yet been calendared for a contested hearing and requests that have reached the contested hearing stage.

The policy makes clear that decisions of the Labor Board do not impact the decertification process, and a decision by the Labor Board is not a good enough reason to withdraw a request for decertification.

Chief Wydra adds for the record that since statutes and POSTC regulations are silent on withdrawals of requests to review police officer certifications for revocation, cancellation and suspension, the policy offers guidance to chiefs that may be confused on how to proceed.

Concerns were raised about the impact of certain Labor Board decisions on the revocation process. Members pointed out that as a result of Labor Board decisions, some chiefs believe they must wait for arbitration to conclude before submitting requests for revocation and that Chiefs may choose not to submit a request for decertification if arbitration comes out in favor of the officer. Chief Mello clarified that labor decisions do not affect the decertification process.

Professor Lawlor pointed out that the policy indicates that requests for revocation cannot be withdrawn if the officer used unreasonable or excessive force while acting in a law enforcement capacity.

Motion to approve the Proposed Policy of POSTC on Permitting Chief Law Enforcement Officer to Withdraw Request to Review Police Officer Certification for Revocation, Cancellation or Suspension was made by Chief Melanson. Seconded by Chief Sansom and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

3. Petition to withdraw request to review police officer certification for revocation, cancellation or suspension
 - a. Thomas, Gregory – Hartford Police Department

Motion to move request forward was made by Chief Riddick and seconded by Chief Sansom. Professor Lawlor asked if this case is a mandatory decertification request. Specifically, Professor Lawlor raised a question as to whether use of unreasonable or excessive force while acting off duty is a mandatory request for decertification.

Motion to table 3a. made by Mr. Lawlor in order to go back and review legislation history to clear up the confusion as to whether use of unreasonable or excessive force by an officer off duty would trigger a mandatory decertification request. Seconded by Chief Riddick and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

- b. West, Paul – Hartford Police Department

Motion to move request forward was made by Chief Melanson and seconded by Chief Dryfe; Professor Lawlor asked for status of officer. Chief Wydra stated his understanding that the officer had been terminated. It was noted that the request to withdraw referenced the pending employment matter.

Chief Dryfe noted the tension for chiefs between a decision ordering them to bring the officer back to work and having an officer on the payroll that cannot perform police officer duties due to decertification.

Motion to table 3b. above made by Chief Melanson. Seconded by Chief and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

c. Vlake-Neff, GinaRose – Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Police Department

Motion to move request forward was made by Melanson. Seconded by Chief Riddick and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

Regarding Item 1a above, the committee heard from both Attorney Zingaro and Attorney Milne in the case of Katherine Koepfel. The hearing officer's recommendation for revocation was discussed. Ultimately, the committee voted to accept the hearing officer's recommendation for revocation based on clear evidence of misconduct that undermined public confidence in law enforcement.

Motion to accept hearing officer's recommendation was made by Chief Melanson. Seconded by Chief Riddick and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

Regarding Item 1b above (Therea Ramirez), motion to accept stipulated agreement was made by Chief Melanson. Seconded by Sansom and motion passed unanimously. No discussion and no abstentions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Next Action Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

NEW ITEMS

There were no new items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn is made by Chief Sansom and seconded by Chief Riddick. The meeting ended at 10:00 A.M.