

Colorado Rangers (“CLER”) Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

10:00 AM, Friday, September 16, 2022
CLER Headquarters
330 Park Avenue
Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Attendance – Board of Directors: Senator Kent Lambert, Senator John Cooke and Chief John Fryar (via video teleconference), Chief Ronald Abramson (in person). Chief Stephen Hasler was not in attendance and excused for good cause (attending Arvada Police Officer Dillon Vakoff’s funeral).

Attendance – CLER Command Staff & Support Staff: Deputy Chief Robert Pabst (in person), CLER Controller & CPA, Ranger Norm Townley, and Board Secretary Ranger Carl Luppens (in person), Support Division Chief Robert Gray (via teleconference). Operations Division Chief Michael Morgan and Captain Idilio Moncevidas and Lieutenant John Snider were also present along with Ranger Royce Powell. No members of the public were present.

At 10:00 Chairman Lambert called the meeting to order and took roll. Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting began.

Chief Abramson thanked everyone involved in the very busy and very successful summer operations of the Rangers. He mentioned that he had received constant praise from partner municipalities for the Ranger’s service.

Chairman Lambert stated that the Rangers are a far more efficient and well-run agency than when it started.

Chief Abramson explained that summer was typically the busiest time for the Rangers.

Chairman Lambert asked “When aren’t you busy?”

Chief Abramson responded that’s accurate, we are clearly a 24/7 agency, but 2020 was somewhat slower during Covid, except for extraordinary events like the Denver Riots and other Covid related assignments.

Chief Abramson moved for the approval of the minutes of the April 29, 2022 CLER Board of Director’s meeting as presented, Senator Lambert seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted by unanimous consent.

Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to give his report.

Chief’s Report

Chief Abramson reported that the Second Amendment to the Inter-Governmental Agreement (“IGA”) governing the Rangers had been approved unanimously by all member municipalities. He explained that to continue to successfully recruit the most talented Board members possible, the revisions expanded the qualifications for the Board (now known as the Board of Governors) to include “former or current chiefs or command officers” and “current or former elected officials” and others that are qualified to sit on police boards. Recently appointed Governor, Chief Stephen Hasler, is a prime example of the quality of Board members available under the new IGA. He has served as Chief of Police for 4 cities in Colorado so far. Chief Hasler was a former initial CLER Board member and an instrumental part of CLER’s starting government operations and initial operational policies.

Chairman Lambert moved to adopt the 2nd Amendment to the IGA, Senator Cooke seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Chairman Lambert instructed Chief Abramson to file the second amended IGA with the Colorado Department of Local affairs (“DOLA”).

Chief Abramson reported on the plans for Academy 10. Since some of the original Rangers from the initial Academy classes of reconstituted Colorado Mounted Rangers are “aging out” from patrol work after over four (4) years of serving as Reserves, the Rangers need fresh, more physically capable candidates in replacement over the next few years so he is already planning Academies 10 & 11.

Academy 10 will occur in either the fourth quarter of 2023 or, more likely, the first quarter of 2024. Chief Abramson is targeting 40 new recruits for Academy 10. A class of 40 should yield 36 sworn officers if historic attrition rates continue. 36 new officers would put the total number of Rangers well over 100.

The Rangers are in good financial shape and have the funds for at least Academy 10. Chief Abramson commented that interest in policing, at least at the reserve level, has re-ignited post the 2020-2021 state and national challenges and the introduction of legislation affecting officer personal liability among other things. His goal is 250 inquiries which should produce 100 candidates yielding 40 cadets. The early results are very encouraging, with over 125 inquiries so far. The quality of current applicants is notably high.

Senator Cooke asked if there was a point of diminishing returns with respect to academy class size?

Chief Abramson stated that a class of 50 was probably the most that makes sense and reiterated the necessity to balance the cost per Ranger for insurance and ancillary expenses against the demands for service. He commented that the Flatrock Regional Law Enforcement Training Center’s firearm range lane capacity was a practical limitation on training academy cadet numbers. He wanted to staff with Rangers who could serve for 5 to 10 years at a minimum.

Chief Fryar commented how hard it has been for police departments to be fully staffed in the current policing environment.

Chairman Lambert stated again how important it is to provide reserve police officers because of the severe stress regular officers are operating under. He asked about the status of Homeland Security.

Chief Abramson responded that he is in communication with Homeland Security and the State and that, at this time, they do not want to formally join the IGA, but that they intend to encourage local Police Chiefs and Sheriffs to engage the Rangers immediately in emergencies and they would help facilitate those connections.

Chief Abramson then discussed the update to the policies and procedure (“P&P”) manual. After extensive review by command staff and suggestions from numerous Rangers and others over the past six (6) months, Deputy Chief Pabst and Ranger Ringer (an attorney and former prosecutor) reviewed the policies in depth and revised them in accordance with best practices, new state and local laws, and Lexipol language. Chief Abramson noted that a tremendous amount of work went into the revisions and a particular focus was placed on ensuring our Reserves were available for planned and un-planned police duty by our partner agencies as is their, and the agency’s, responsibility.

The Board carefully and extensively reviewed the P&P changes and the suggestions were all discussed, refined and incorporated with revisions.

Chief Fryar moved for adoption of the revised P&P’s as presented and revised by the Board, with the addition of Division Chief Gray’s suggestion that language recommended by CIRSA as best practices regarding officer wellness be added as Section 31, and Chairman Lambert seconded the motion.

Chief Fryar commented that Ft. Lupton likewise incorporates the CIRSA “wellness” recommendations citywide.

Chairman Lambert called for a vote on the motion that the revised P&P’s, as presented with the incorporation of additions as discussed, and “cleaned up” in formatting and pagination by Chief Abramson and associates, be approved. The motion was passed by the Board unanimously.

Division Chief Morgan had nothing to report. He indicated that he would report total service hours at the end of the year.

Division Chief Gray reported that he had applied, yesterday, for a \$480,000.00 training grant to hold the next two (2) Reserve Police Academies. He also asked Ranger Townley to report on the financial status of the Rangers. The detailed financial statements had been previously circulated to the Board members. There is \$174,300 in the operating account and approximately \$50,000 in the training account. The Rangers have had \$84,000 in income year to date with additional income to go. \$24,000 was received yesterday from Dillon which was not included in the financials. There were no questions.

Chairman Lambert then commented, in particular to Senator Cooke, that the Rangers were in much better financial condition than previously, and Senator Cooke exclaimed "Great work!"

The Board of Governors then unanimously ratified the following Motion after Chairman Lambert moved the same and Senator Cooke seconded:

That the CLER Board, ratifies and approves all the acts of the Chief of CLER and any persons acting for CLER which are consistent with the authority granted by the Board in the December 2017 Organizational Meeting, and by the Intergovernmental Agreement establishing CLER as well as the current Policies and Procedures manual

Public Comments:

There were no public questions or comments.

Schedule for Next Meeting:

The next Board of Governor's Meeting was scheduled for Friday December 2nd, 2022 at 10:00am, in Fort Lupton.

Closing Comments:

Chief Abramson mentioned that, in the sadness of the day, the Rangers were given the honor of driving as the first police vehicle (directly following the Colorado State Patrol lead vehicle) in the funeral procession this morning for Arvada Officer Dillon Vakoff. This reflects, in part, the outstanding relationship the Rangers have with the Colorado State Patrol who organizes and leads these processions

Chairman Lambert expressed the sympathy and prayers of the entire agency for the family of Officer Vakoff. In addition, he said how glad and appreciative he was to have Chief Hasler back on the Board of Governors.

Adjournment of Meeting

It was moved by Chief Abramson and seconded by Senator Cooke to adjourn the meeting and it was adjourned at 10:58 AM by unanimous vote.