

Colorado Rangers ("CLER") Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

10:00 AM, Friday, December 2, 2022

CLER Headquarters

330 Park Avenue

Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Attendance – Board of Directors: Senator Kent Lambert, Senator John Cooke, Chief Stephen Hasler (via video teleconference), Chief Ronald Abramson (in person). Chief John Fryar was not in attendance.

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 Moncivais were present. No members of the public were present.

At 10:02 Chairman Lambert called the meeting to order and took roll. Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting began.

Chief Abramson moved for the approval of the minutes of the September 16, 2022 CLER Board of Director's meeting as presented, Senator Lambert seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to give his report.

Chief's Report

Chief Abramson announced that the Ranger operations had come "back to life" in 2022 and commented that the Agency had been pressed to its limits with the service requests from partner police and sheriff departments.

Chief Abramson announced that the 5th Annual State Wide Ranger Summit, bringing Rangers from across the state together, would be held on Saturday December 3 at the Flatrock Regional Law Enforcement Training Facility in Adams County and the Governors were all invited. The meeting would address changes in relevant law, agency policy, and would be held in conjunction with a semi-annual firearms qualification.

Academy 10 was discussed. Chief Abramson explained that, as expected, in the transition from the Colorado Mounted Rangers to the POST Certified, Sworn Colorado Rangers, some Rangers would "age out" of "street duty" at around the 5 year mark which we are just hitting. He is focused on providing Academy 10 in either late 2023 or early 2024 to replace retiring Rangers. The goal will be 30 to 40 cadets of a lower target age (mid 40's similar to Academy 9) than the average current Ranger age. CLER will likely have enough money to run Academy 10 since there is still money in the Training Budget and revenues are sharply up, but we are still seeking additional grant support.

Liability insurance has been the greatest operational expense for the Rangers and now the annual maintenance of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) program has become the second significant expense. With potentially 30-40 additional Rangers next year, the expenses will increase roughly \$2500 per Ranger including BWC costs.

CLER put in a grant request with the state for a Reserve Academy, but was denied. Chief Hasler inquired about the grant rejection and Division Chief Gray responded that this grant process was discovered a little late and the manager at the State was not familiar with the Rangers. After some explanation, the grant was still not awarded but the relationship was clarified and improved so we are hopeful for the next round of grant money that will be awarded.

Chief Gray and his team scour the grant availability and other potential financial resources weekly. He mentioned that the Rangers should consider to look to the Colorado legislature for funding at some point in the future to grow the agency, but currently our finances are strong.

Chief Abramson explained that the BWC requirement has increased the Ranger annual expenses by over \$40,000 and that, currently, Denver is providing considerable financial support to the Rangers because Denver has had great needs for Reserve Officers (it would not be challenging to host major events, including Bronco football games). Because of the BWC grant expenses, it is a bit of a struggle for the Rangers to support only small agencies which pay very low annual access fees which fall far short of covering the costs to support those agencies.

Chief Hasler observed that Senate Bill 217 was a State mandate without State funding.

Senator Cooke asked if there is a "top number" for the maximum number of Rangers?

Chief Abramson said that was a question he has considered deeply and at some point, the agency might need to "thin the herd" if the current financial structure does not continue in the long run. It will be hard to support 80 to 100 Rangers if Denver was not paying the significantly increased fees. The agency has had over 80 Rangers at points.

Chief Abramson explained that T-Mobile stores BWC footage live "in the cloud". There is "zero" management of the service, but it is costly. Commanders get alerts when BWC's are activated. T-Mobile donated 10 years of phone service but the VisualLabs service costs about \$700 per Ranger per annum. Partner fees pay for insurance and overhead but academies and BWC maintenance goes above these fees.

Senator Lambert observed that BWC expenses are a statewide program and thought that perhaps the Police Chief's Association or the County Sheriff's Association effective lobbyists could be pursuing State funding since many agencies are facing the same problem. A discussion ensued regarding the legislative priorities of the Chief's Association and Chief Hasler's level of recent activity.

Senator Cooke made an e-mail introduction to Chief Abramson of the recently elected State representative, Gabe Evans, who had been an Arvada police lieutenant and knows the Rangers well and is now on the Joint Budget Committee.

Operations Division Chief Morgan presented the service hours to date: 16,773 which is 1,453 more than last year. We expect to finish the year with around 20,000 hours of service, a remarkable accomplishment.

Support Division Chief Gray 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 approximately \$169,000 in the operating account and approximately \$50,000 in the training account. The badge reserve liability is \$28,000. The Rangers have had \$267,000 in income and \$188,000 in expenses in 2022. The Rangers account on a cash basis and therefore the 2022 income appears somewhat higher because some Denver PD 2021 payments were received in 2022.

Funding for Academy 10 is not in the budget. If the next academy occurs in 2022, funds will need to be raised and the budget revised.

The 2023 budget was reviewed. \$183,987 in revenue is projected. Operating expenses are projected at \$145,410. The \$108,000 grant for BWC's was incorporated into the 2022 budget.

A discussion of reserve academies, typical community college police academy costs, charging cadets and opening the academy to outside reserve agency recruits at full pay ensued.

Chief Hasler asked “What is the standard partner fee?” Chief Abramson answered “\$5,900” but a number of agencies pay considerably more - Dillon pays \$25,000 (since Rangers support a long public concert performance season). Avon also pays more. A large amount is due from Louisville since the Ranger provided 1,743 hours of post fire patrol and policing services and Louisville will be reimbursed by FEMA as a declared disaster.

Denver has a \$350,000 contract with the Rangers but here are some variable aspects of the terms and amounts that may be paid.

Senator Lambert asked if there were any more questions on the budget.

Chief Gray commented that the budget is conservative, only \$120,000 in partner contributions, and he expects more. Dillon, though, may reduce its number of concerts next year so the Ranger’s fees may be reduced proportionately.

Senator Lambert moved to accept the revised 2022 Budget and the submitted 2023 budget. Chief Hasler seconded the motion. The budget was voted on and accepted unanimously.

Chief Hasler stated that, since he left the Board for a few years and has now returned, the progression of leadership in the Rangers over the last few years has been “phenomenal!” and Senator Lambert agreed stating that there has been a strong evolution and agency maturity and the Rangers have overcome initial objections.

Chief Abramson explained that the Senior Command team is incredible with deep appreciation for Deputy Chief Pabst & Division Chief Morgan; Division Chief Gray and the captains are outstanding and the line Rangers are the highest quality the agency has ever had.

Chairman Lambert opened the meeting for new business. Senator Cooke mentioned that there is also a newly elected Colorado House Representative from HD 55 who had been a Larimer County Deputy that might be helpful with funding in the legislature.

Public Comments:

There were no public questions or comments.

Schedule for Next Meeting:

The Board determined that three (3) meetings is the appropriate number for 2023 in light of the new flexibility in the number of Governors meetings. If any additional meetings are needed, the Chairman has full authority to authorize Special Meetings. The next Board of Governor’s Meeting was scheduled for Friday April 14th, 2022 at 10:00am, in Fort Lupton with a teleconferencing option for Governors to attend.

Closing Comments:

Chief Abramson emphasized that he asks a lot from the individual Rangers and Ranger leadership, not just service hours but high ethics and professionalism and the team meets and often exceeds these high expectations.

Adjournment of Meeting:

It was moved by Senator Cooke and seconded by Chief Hasler to adjourn the meeting and it was adjourned at 11:10 AM by unanimous vote.