

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

10:00 AM, Friday, December 8, 2023
CLER Headquarters
330 Park Avenue
Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Attendance: Board of Directors: Senator Kent Lambert, Senator John Cooke, Chief Stephen Hasler, (all via video teleconference) and Chief Ronald Abramson (in person), were in attendance. Chief John Fryar was absent and excused by Chairman Lambert.

Attendance: CLER Command Staff & Support Staff: Deputy Chief Robert Pabst, Captain John Snider, Administrative Section Captain Aaron Ruffalo, CLER Controller Ranger Norm Townley, CPA, and Emergency Management and Communications Officer, Ranger Chad Clifford (in person). Board Secretary Ranger Carl Luppens and General Counsel Mark Ringer, Esq. (via video teleconference), No members of the public were present.

At 10:04 Chairman Lambert called the meeting to order, and Secretary Luppens took roll. Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting began.

Chief Hasler moved for the approval of the minutes, of the September 15, 2023 CLER Board of Governors meeting, Chairman Lambert seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to give his report.

Chief's Report: Chief Abramson stated that Ranger Reserve Police Officer Academy 10 had started three weeks ago at Highlands Ranch Law Enforcement Training Center and Arapahoe Community College ("ACC"). ACC is a wonderful partner; it is providing classroom space, on an "as available" basis at no cost to our agency, and the primary contact for ACC, David Bruce is also a POST PPCT Lead Arrest Control instructor. CLER will supply the majority of the POST instructors which is very cost effective. The Academy was designated for 20 cadets, and after two drops, the Academy is proceeding forward with 18 cadets.

Firearms instruction is taking place at the Highlands Ranch Law Enforcement Training Facility in Douglas County, and it is going very well despite Winter weather. The Academy 10 class is strong and well qualified with eighteen cadets that include an emergency practice physician, a prior military captain, the chief operating officer for a major city on the front range, the Governor's director of technology and other diverse and high achieving responsible individuals.

Chairman Lambert suggested that there could be potential to expand Ranger reserve operations throughout the State in partnership with various community colleges. The community college association is well represented at the Colorado legislature. Ranger Chad Clifford is working on legislative affairs and took note of Chairman Lambert's suggestion.

Chief Hasler asked when the current academy will conclude – Chief Abramson reported that graduation is May 4th and the Governors are all invited to attend. ACC has offered its auditorium to hold the 150 or so graduates, family members and Rangers who typically attend.

New Partners: Chief Abramson explained that with some recent additions, the Rangers are up to roughly two dozen active Mutual Aid partners, the most in agency history. The service offerings have been revamped into three structures:

There will be a "Standby" structure in which a municipality pays a relatively minor retainer and executes a Mutual Aid Agreement so that the Rangers can respond if needed. No services are included under the

retainer, Ranger services will then be charged on a "per shift" basis. The Town of Parker, among other municipalities, is currently working to come under this arrangement.

The "Standard" relationship and fee structure will continue with refinements wherein the municipality pays an annual fee which entitles them to up to eighteen duty shifts (of up to 10 hours each).

A "Large" service arrangement will also be available, and is being utilized by a number of partners, subject to Ranger capacity, for more extensive services. The Severance patrol relief arrangement is an example. The Town of Severance will pay \$50,000 for Ranger support over the first half of 2024 whereby Rangers will be responsible for weekend night Patrol shifts, with supervision from a full time Severance officer, to relieve the regular officers from the very busy police department.

Chairman Lambert asked Chief Abramson to define the Severance patrol functions. Chief Abramson responded that the duties will be normal Ranger supplemental patrol functions, just on a more regular basis, including handling all 911 dispatch calls. The scope of the Severance patrol work will provide great training, exposure and patrol experience for Rangers, and a large number of Rangers are interested in assisting Severance.

Chief Hasler inquired about CIRSA liability insurance while working in Severance and Captain Ruffalo responded that it has been expressly agreed and documented that the Rangers will be covered under Severance's insurance policies while working on patrol.

Chairman Lambert observed that towns around the country have lost their entire police department, and that the Severance experience would prepare the Rangers to take over as a town's police force in an emergency. Chief Abramson noted that the Rangers were, in fact, approached to step in in this manner for Kit Carson County last year.

Funding/Legislative Initiatives 2024: Chief Abramson identified that the dramatic increase in liability insurance premiums from CIRSA "woke us up" to the financial demands on the Agency and that the agency needed additional funding resources. We are in discussions with the \$2 billion Daniels Foundation, created 20 years ago by cable TV pioneer Bill Daniels, which has a focus on scholarships and law enforcement that may provide scholarships to Ranger cadets for initial equipment procurement. The equipment so obtained would belong to CLER.

Chief Abramson noted that the agency had been working on legislative funding starting in the 2023 legislative cycle, positioning the agency for legislature in 2024, which we are on track for. Ranger Chad Clifford reported on legislative initiatives. He is working to re-authorize the initial DHS \$800,000 grant for reserve academy funding. Division of Homeland Security Director, Kevin Kline, suggested that CLER introduce a bill to remove the "repealer" of the original funding legislation in 2017.

Expanding reserve police academies throughout the state would garner broad support. Allowing Ranger academies to provide POST Basic peace officer certified training to provide permanent, full time paid employment for some graduates, could create greater legislative support and attract qualified cadets but would but would diminish Ranger force growth.

The Rangers have legislative sponsors in both the House and Senate from both parties and there appears to be continued broad support for the enormously successful Colorado Ranger statewide Reserve program.

Potential clean-up legislation was also discussed specifically naming CLER in the state statutes.

Operations Review:

Deputy Chief Robert Pabst reported that, to date, Rangers had donated a total of 13,016 hours of police service to the citizens of Colorado, with more hours left to go in the year. The agency should end up in the 15,000-20,000-hour range when the year is complete, saving the taxpayers of Colorado up to \$3

million of law enforcement services in 2023 alone. In the last full year, 2022, 53% of the hours were in "declared emergencies".

Financial Report:

Ranger Townley reported that at the end of November the Rangers had received \$148,669 in income against \$103,801 in expenses. The Rangers have \$263,642 in the bank.

Chief Abramson noted that the Rangers have been so frugal and cost effective (due to the Chief's miserly ways) that the initial two-year training grant has lasted for seven years.

2024 Budget Review and Approval:

Captain Ruffalo reviewed the proposed 2024 budget and took questions commenting that the Rangers "operate on a shoestring".

Chief Abramson moved to adopt the 2024 Budget as proposed with \$200,875 in revenue and \$191,462 in expenses. Chief Hasler seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously. Chief Abramson was authorized to execute any necessary documentation reflecting this budget approval and the Governors authorized and agreed to provide signatures, digital or otherwise, for any State audit or waiver of audit requirements.

New Business:

Chairman Lambert opened the meeting for new business. There was none.

Public Comments:

Chairman Lambert invited public comments. There were no public questions or comments.

Schedule for Next Meeting:

The next Board of Governor's Meeting was scheduled for Friday May 10th, 2024 at 10:00am, in Fort Lupton with a teleconferencing option for Governors.

Closing Comments:

Chief Abramson noted that this time of year had been the "slow season" for the Rangers in the past but that is no longer the case and CLER is now a 24/7, 365 day agency with round the clock responsibilities, requests and requirements from our partners.

Adjournment of Meeting:

It was moved by Chief Abramson and seconded by Chief Hasler to adjourn the meeting and it was adjourned at 10:56 AM by unanimous vote.