

Colorado Rangers Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Colorado Law Enforcement Shared Reserve ("CLER")

10:00 AM, Friday, May 10, 2024

CLER Headquarters

330 Park Avenue

Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Roll was called, Chairman Lambert, Senator Cooke, Chief Fryar and Chief Abramson were in attendance. Chief Hasler's absence was excused. Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting commenced at 10:04.

Chief Fryar moved to accept the minutes as submitted and Senator Cooke seconded the motion to approve which was approved by unanimous consent.

It was noted that Governor's terms continue automatically until they are replaced. Some Governors' primary three-year terms are in the continuation period and all Governors outside of the primary term have been officially reappointed by the CLER IGA partners effective as of the September 2024 meeting.

Chairman Lambert asked Chief Abramson if he wanted to discuss the new Auraria campus service as a "New Partner" agenda item or later as "New Business" and Chief Abramson indicated that he would prefer to discuss it during the early phase of the meeting since it was very significant.

Chief Abramson reported that he was called by the Auraria multi-college campus police department a week prior because they were completely out of resources and the campus had been occupied by pro-Hamas / anti-Israel protestors. The Denver Police Department would not provide additional resources to Auraria even though the campus lies within the City and County of Denver. The Auraria administration and the campus police were calling on all state resources and the governor appointed Ranger Lt. Commander Murphy Robinson to lead the law enforcement response at Auraria.

The mutual aid agreement with Auraria Police Department was signed and the Rangers started deploying resources immediately.

On Friday May 3rd there was a pro-Israeli counter demonstration that needed all available resources. There were six Rangers on duty (including the Chief) on very short notice for Friday afternoon.

Rangers and State Patrol successfully kept the pro-Hamas demonstrators and the pro-Israeli demonstrators separated, although they were very close to each other.

Chief Abramson spoke with the lead of the of the Palestinian group and told them "Just to back off and settle down a little bit". He did it in a in a very kind and friendly way which was effective. There was an undercover FBI agent observing who reported back to Auraria PD and to Denver PD that the Chief of the Rangers single handedly settled all the protesters down.

Chief Abramson modestly stated that he "Did it honestly out of self-interested recognition that law enforcement was so outnumbered; there were a couple hundred "protestors" and a handful of pro-Israel marchers ,and there were only 10 or 12 police officers in total between the Rangers and the State Patrol Troopers and one or two Auraria officers.

It was reported the next day to the Auraria administration and police department how incredible and effective the Rangers were deescalating and keeping the peace between very adversarial and agitated crowds.

Two or three days later roughly 80 demonstrators tried to take control of one of the Auraria buildings and most were successfully kept out of the building by a team of Rangers and Auraria Police Department officers. Thirteen of the pro-Hamas demonstrators got in and they were all subsequently arrested. Auraria Police Department made the arrests.

13 Rangers were on duty for Metro State graduation on May 10th. Saturday May 11th, the big day for University of Colorado graduation at the Coliseum, required 20 Rangers, including the Chief.

Chairman Lambert asked, "Were the Rangers under operational control of the State Patrol?"

Chief Abramson responded that the Rangers were under operational control of the Auraria Police Department, which was leading the response with Rangers, while working in conjunction with State Patrol along with Morrison Police Department, who had been sending one or two officers.

9 news (NBC) had a segment on the Auraria protest situation, and they showed pictures of Rangers which yielded beneficial publicity.

On Tuesday May 7th, when the protestors had occupied the campus building and arrests were being made, the demonstrators were "live streaming" everything and several of them were calling the Ranger emergency line and saying that Rangers were beating protesters, none of which was true. Rangers did not participate in a single arrest. Chief Abramson had one of his Captains call back to the two most vocal complainers, and they were completely settled down. The Chief said, "I wanted to do the right thing and be responsive. We called them back and just said "Hey you know we just didn't participate in any of the arrests, but we appreciate your call to our emergency line"."

It was apparent to Chairman Lambert that State Patrol troopers were not all "armored up" with body armor and helmets and ballistic vests, shields, and gear like that, at least in the pictures, and it seems like that has generally been what the State Patrol does, even when they probably should be wearing more protective gear, as a tactic. They try to not appear like they are armored up. This is so they could use "verbal judo" de-escalation techniques and work with the demonstrators, as Chief Abramson did.

Jurisdictional issues were then discussed. Mark Ringer, Ranger's General Counsel, explained that CRS 16.2.5 at 1:01 et seq., the Peace Officer Article, allows a university and certain higher education institutions to employ peace officers. The Auraria situation is complex since Metro State, the University of Colorado, and a Community College all share the campus.

Chairman Lambert observed that Ranger Lt. Commander Robertson is providing a great service to the State of Colorado and extended congratulations to him for his leadership in this area. The reputation of the Rangers continues to elevate as we are moving into new areas and there is a mutual respect with law enforcement and civil authorities. Chairman Lambert observed that a large reserve police officer force is a necessary partnership throughout the state in today's environment of increasing tension and diminishing police resources.

Chief Abramson remarked that he and Ranger Lieutenant and Colorado State Representative Chad Clifford are considering going back to the Colorado Department of Public Safety and executing a direct mutual aid agreement with the State so that the State can deploy us in emergencies; Rangers could then deploy instantly while the effected town or city is working through the signing of the appropriate mutual aid agreement.

Chairman Lambert, Chief Abramson and Representative Clifford discussed supplemental patrol work for agencies that have lost officers and need support while they recruit, train and integrate replacement police officers (which is becoming a widespread issue). Many Rangers are interested in doing regular patrol work and they are getting direct patrol experience in Severance. Silverthorne has a new chief who learned of the incredible things the Rangers have been doing. She is interested in the same program.

Silverthorne wants to supplement their regular patrol work with Rangers performing the same services as for Severance. Silverthorne is further travel for most Rangers but we seem to have enough guys that are interested in in going up on a Saturday or Sunday to do patrol work with them.

Chief Abramson commented that the Rangers swore in 18 new Rangers this past weekend, which is considerable for a reserve force. With some Reserve Academy grant money he is pursuing, he is aiming for the 125 to 150 range agency officer strength to support all the departments that really need assistance.

The Colorado law enforcement diversity recruiting grant sponsored by Senator Cooke was discussed. The Rangers would like to add, among other demographic groups, more Spanish speakers and the diversity recruiting grant is a perfect fit for the Rangers.

The Rangers should be able to run Academy Class 11 in roughly 12 months from now if we obtain the grant money, targeting a class of 30-40 new Rangers.

Chief Abramson stated that he appreciated Chairman Lambert's comments about police relationships. With Representative Clifford, Senator Cooke and Senator Lambert and the former Ranger and speaker of the house Terrence Carroll, the Rangers have quite a legacy of politicians from both sides of the aisle.

Chief Abramson noted that he and Representative Clifford are trying to get Colorado Rangers inserted into CRS directly which will help us with the FBI and getting an agency ORI number, which would allow us to have our own terminals to access FBI data.

Chief Lambert asked "What's our inventory right now of Ranger vehicles?"

Chief Abramson replied that "We've got four vehicles; they're all deployed down to Auraria right now."

Graduation - It was an impressive class. This is the first class that we graduated 100% of the cadets that started the class. We had targeted 20 cadets but two dropped out the week before class started, so 18 started the first day and 18 graduated.

The Chief wanted to express his deep appreciation for our Deputy Chief Bob Pabst who took over our firearms instruction program. The firearms course is the hardest of everything in the Academy -- it's a "no miss" standard for graduation; it's the same course that every full-time officer goes through.

It was a very impressive class, one of the graduates is an emergency room medical doctor, one works in the governor's office of information technology, and he is also in the Coast Guard reserve. Another new Ranger is a senior official in a major Denver metro city.

Arapahoe Community College, and particularly its director, David Bruce, stepped up to the plate in the biggest of ways 60 days before our Academy started. He gave us full access to their facilities, helped us fill all the instructor positions that we had lost out with Flatrock's abandonment and with the last-minute Aurora Community College terminating their law enforcement program. David Bruce also taught; he's a PCT lead instructor, and he led our arrest control course. Our plan is to host our next Academy 11 at Arapahoe Community College due to the terrific relationship we have built there with them.

Chairman Lambert invited Ranger Norm Townley, the Controller to give the financial report.

Ranger Townley reported that the Rangers' financial position is outstanding. For the year ended 12/31/23, income was \$206,437 and expenses were \$112,294. This produced net income of \$94,143. At the end of the year the Rangers had \$312,918 in assets, which is all cash.

Chief Abramson commented that the Rangers have over \$300,000 in the bank, but still need support from the legislature. Recruits having to pay \$3,000 for equipment to become Rangers is very burdensome to many candidates and harmful to recruiting. The Rangers are perfect for Senator Cooke's diversity grant, because it can relieve the financial burden, and attract a much more diverse group of people applying.

Deputy Chief Robert Pabst reported the total hours, across all categories, logged by Rangers for 2023 was 15,049.

Chief Abramson mentioned that 15,000+ hours of service is worth about a million and a half dollars of savings for agencies across the state, which is a very considerable \$15 million benefit to our partners over a ten-year period, as well as a critical public safety benefit to the citizens of Colorado.

Chairman Lambert observed that these reported hours would not include the vast number of hours devoted to the Louisville/Marshall Fire aftermath security and support since it was provided in 2022.

Chief Abramson explained that 2022 was around 20,000 total hours with the extensive Louisville patrol effort. In 2023, approximately 65 Rangers were active over the course of the year so average service hours were about 224 hours per Ranger. In 2024 we expect to average over 80 Rangers throughout the year.

Chairman Lambert opened the floor to new business, open discussion, or public comments. There were none.

Chairman Lambert then scheduled the next meeting for the latter part of September (the latter part of the month because September is still within the regular busy season for the Rangers). 10:00 AM September 20th was agreed upon unanimously.

Chairman Lambert said that this has been a really good meeting based on outstanding actions by the Rangers and reflecting the cooperation among the command staff.

Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to make his closing comments.

Chief Abramson said that Chairman Lambert had said it all perfectly and he had no further comments.

Chairman Lambert noted that Rangers have been dealing with some dangerous situations. There have been additional felony arrests in Severance; Lt. Clifford has made two felony arrests himself. The Rangers may want to track the number of felony arrests made by Rangers as a metric reflecting increasing capability.

Chief Abramson made a motion for Senator Lambert to remain Chairman of the Rangers Board of Governors. Chief Fryar seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Senator Cooke moved to adjourn, Chief Fryar seconded the motion, and, without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 11: 07.