

Colorado Rangers Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Colorado Law Enforcement Shared Reserve ("CLER")

10:00 AM, Friday, 16 May 2025

CLER Headquarters

330 Park Avenue

Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Attendance: Board of Governors: Chairman Lambert, Chief Fryar and Chief Hasler were in attendance via teleconference. Chief Abramson was in attendance in person at 330 Park Avenue and participating in the teleconference.

Attendance: CLER Command and Support Staff: Deputy Chief Robert Pabst, Administrative Section Captain Aaron Ruffalo, CLER Controller Ranger Norm Townley, CPA and Emergency Management and Communications Officer Lieutenant Chad Clifford (also Colorado State Representative for District 37), were attending in person and Board Secretary Ranger Carl Luppens attended via video teleconference. Senator Cooke subsequently joined the meeting via video teleconference. No members of the public were present.

Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum: At 10:03 Chairman Lambert called the meeting to order. Roll was called by Secretary Luppens; four of the five Governors were in attendance, so Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting began.

Approval of Minutes of 13 December 2024: Chief Hasler moved to accept the minutes of the December 13, 2024, CLER Board of Governors Meeting as submitted and Chief Fryar seconded the motion to approve. Without revision or objection, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Welcome & Meeting Overview: Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to provide his report.

Chief's Report: Chief Abramson stated that this is a "Monumental Meeting", reflecting the unanimous passage of the legislation in the Colorado Senate and House of Representatives enhancing the authorities of the Colorado Rangers by specifically delineating the agency in the state statutes as a named POST agency and Colorado Rangers as specifically identified Peace Officers. After a 100-year hiatus the Colorado Rangers are now specifically listed as peace officers under state law. Not many police departments or law enforcement agencies are specially authorized by state statute. Most police departments are created by local municipalities. The formal recognition of the Rangers under Colorado law gives access to FBI Originating Agency Identifiers ("ORI") information among numerous other benefits.

Chief Abramson publicly thanked Representative Clifford for his legislative work during the session, emphasizing the collaborative nature of the effort.

The legislative process was described as a "team effort," with special recognition given to Senator Lambert, Senator Cook, and former Ranger and Speaker of the House Carroll for their roles in rallying bipartisan support along with the former Deputy Mayor of Denver, and the Chief's assistant, Murphy Robinson. Chief Abramson and Assistant to the Chief Robinson testified before both the Senate and House Judiciary Committees and Speaker Carroll testified before the House Judiciary Committee along with Senator Cooke.

Chairman Lambert emphasized that numerous groups (the Attorney General, POST, various internal and external individuals, the Colorado Sheriffs' Association, and the Colorado Chiefs of Police Association) priorities had to be synthesized but the ultimate bilateral, non-partisan support was remarkable (and rare in Colorado politics). The Colorado Rangers have broad support having served their partner communities with professionalism and integrity for almost 8 years now. Rangers are described as a "Colorado legacy," emphasizing the tradition of working together and fostering unity and resilience in the state.

The new status provides authority for Rangers to be paid for certain deployments (such as disasters, emergencies or when the Rangers need to assist a Sheriff or police department for an extended period) many of which may provide for reimbursement from Federal agencies like FEMA, to enjoy the same liability protection as full time officers, and to be protected with time off from regular employers.

New Partnerships and Event Support:

CU Boulder Partnership

- CU Boulder is the major new partner, with a strong relationship established through meetings with their senior leadership led by Chief Abramson.
- CU Boulder requires significant support for events, including commencement, football games, basketball games and major on-campus events like the Boulder Boulder 10k race. A team of eight Rangers was sent to commencement.
- Football games require 110 to 120 officers per game, but CU Boulder often can only provide 80 to 90, making external support critical.
- Other events include the Boulder-Boulder 10K race (50,000 participants), basketball, concerts, and more.
- The agency emphasized the need to balance resources among all partners, ensuring CU Boulder does not monopolize available support.

Johnstown One-Event Agreement

- Johnstown in Weld County requested support for a single event (corn festival).

- This is the agency's first one-event mutual aid agreement, enabled by increased flexibility and favorable timing.

Arvada PD Patrol Partnership

- Arvada is a new partner since the last Board meeting, with a strong relationship formed during the Winter.
- The deputy chief of Arvada, also a representative of the Chiefs of Police Association, provided legislative testimony generously supporting the Colorado Rangers.
- Old Town Arvada patrols have begun, with teams working every Friday and Saturday night alongside Arvada officers and Sunday during the day.
- The area has a significant homeless and drug population, leading to frequent arrests and intense patrols.
- The agency assigns its most experienced Rangers to these patrols due to their challenging nature.
- Arvada has a substantial budget and is willing to pay for services.
- Expected revenue from Arvada is estimated at \$70,000 to \$100,000 over the next 12 months for street patrols.

Academy 11:

Recruitment Process and Numbers

- The Chief and Captain Ruffalo, along with recruiters and background investigators (mostly retired Rangers), managed the recruitment process.
- Initial interest: approximately 400 inquiries.
- Applications received: about 155.
- Serious inquiries moving forward: 60 to 70.
- Candidates sent to psychological assessment: about 40.
- Final class size after interviews: 13 recruits. A substantial reduction from the number of applicants but critical to keep quality extremely high.

Challenges and Comparisons

- The Chief expressed general disappointment at the small class size, noting the need for more Rangers, but emphasized the agency will not lower standards.
- The low number necessitates another Academy in about a year, only five to six months after the current class graduates.
- High attrition was due to non-responsiveness, failed assessments, background checks, or interviews.
- Denver's police academy is experiencing similar challenges, with only 15 recruits out of a planned 40, indicating a broader trend.

Quality of Recruits

- Despite the small class, the quality is considered very high, with most expected to become top-performing Rangers.

Operations Review: Deputy Chief Pabst reported Ranger service hours: For the year 2024, the total hours (including administrative and all counted hours) were 16,919.

For 2025, year-to-date (covering the first four months), 2,908 hours have been logged. This is notable as the first quarter is typically less active, but this year has seen increased activity. It is anticipated that the Rangers will operate in a very active period from May through October, especially with new partners joining, which is expected to further increase contributed hours.

Financial Impact and Cost Avoidance

- If calculated at \$85 per hour (the rate agencies pay for extra duty hours), the 2024 hours represent nearly \$1.4 million in savings to law enforcement agencies across the state.
- Over a decade, at current levels, this equates to \$15 to \$20 million in savings.
- The fiscal note for the Ranger authorization legislation did not explicitly mention these savings, instead presenting a neutral stance that the initiative would not cost the state money. However, cost avoidance for partners has been significant, with most savings benefiting local governments, though the state also sees substantial financial benefit.

Administrative Section & Financial Update:

2025 Partial Year Financial Report: Chairman Lambert invited Ranger Norm Townley, the Ranger's Controller and CPA, to give the financial report.

Ranger Townley reported that the Rangers' financial position is outstanding. For this year to date (end of April), income was \$129,944 and expenses were \$93,237. This produced a net gain of \$36,707. Since the end of April, the Rangers had a net cash increase of an additional \$22,195. The Ranger's cash position "in the bank" was roughly \$300,000.

New Business, Open Discussion, Public Comment:

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

Schedule Next Meeting: Chairman Lambert then scheduled the next meeting for Friday September 19 at 10:00 AM in Ft. Lupton with a video conference attendance option for Board of Governors members.

Closing Comments: Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to make his closing comments.

- The agency is now working street duty almost seven days a week, supporting various agencies.
 - Example: In mid-May 2015, Rangers were deployed daily in Denver to assist Aurora PD for CU Denver, responding to intelligence about potential protester encampments.
 - Up to 10 Rangers per day were requested for this assignment, which will conclude after student graduation.
- The frequency and breadth of assignments have increased, reflecting the agency's growing role and demand.
- The agency will have just under 100 people, including civilian employees (background checks), Rangers, and Academy cadets.
- The agency is approaching the status of the 10th largest agency in the state and will likely reach that milestone in the next few years.
- A busy summer is anticipated, with significant operational demands.

Adjournment of Meeting: Chief Hasler moved to adjourn, Chief Abramson seconded the motion, and, without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 AM MST.