



Vermont Criminal Justice Council

Council Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2021

10:00 AM

Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance:

William Sorrell, Chair – Governor Appointed
Brian Searles – Governor Appointed
Tammy Boudah – Governor Appointed
Maira Tungatarova, Governor Appointed
Michael Schirling – Commissioner of Public Safety
Heather Simons – proxy for Interim Commissioner James Baker, Dept of Corrections
Anthony Facos – proxy for Commissioner Wanda Minoli, Dept of Motor Vehicles
Col. Jason Batchelder – proxy for Commissioner Louis Porter, Vermont Fish & Wildlife
Mourning Fox – proxy for Commissioner Sarah Squirrel, Dept of Mental Health
David Scherr – proxy for Attorney General TJ Donovan, Attorney General's Office
Xusana Davis – Executive Director Racial Equity
Sgt. Erin Hodges - Vermont Troopers Association
Chief Christopher Brickell – Vermont Chiefs' Association
Sheriff Mark Anderson – Vermont Sheriffs' Association
John Federico – Vermont State Employees Association
Trevor Whipple – Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Elaine Boyce – proxy for E.D. Chris Fenno, Center for Crime Victims Services
E. D. Karen Tronsgard-Scott – Network DOMV/Sexual Violence
Cassandra Burdyslaw - Vermont Human Rights Commission
Michael Major - Vermont Police Association
Karim Chapman - Governor Appointed

Other Attendees:

Major Ingrid Jonas - proxy for Commissioner Michael Schirling, Dept of Public Safety
Major Justin Stedman – proxy for Commissioner Louis Porter, VT Fish & Wildlife
Jacob Humbert - Assistant Attorney General
Interim Director William Sheets - Vermont Police Academy
Gail Williams - Vermont Police Academy
Cindy Taylor-Patch - Vermont Police Academy
Lindsay Thivierge - Vermont Police Academy
James Park - Vermont Police Academy
Jacob Hansell - Vermont Police Academy
Jennifer Firpo – Vermont Police Academy
Steven Coote – Vermont State Police
Kevin Lane – Vermont State Police



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Call to Order: VCJC Chair Bill Sorrell 10:03

Review of January 20, 2021 VCJC minutes

Approval of minutes:

Michael Major made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the January 20, 2021 meeting, second by Trevor Whipple. All in favor. Motion passed.

Interim Executive Director updates: Bill Sheets

Introduction of the Governor Appointee: Maira Tungatarova

Introduction of the new Director of Administration and Compliance: Lindsay Thivierge

Move into Executive session:

Sheriff Anderson made a motion to move into executive session, inviting stake holders, HR, and Jacob Humbert, to discuss a personnel matter. Second by Chief Brickell. All in favor.

Executive session 10:11 – 10:34

Sheriff Anderson made a motion to make a conditional offer to candidate one pending salary negotiations, background investigation, and completion of necessary steps in the hiring process. Second by Anthony Facos. Twenty members in favor, one opposed.

Update on work of VCJC Sub-Committees/Working Groups

Report out facilitated by Director of Training, Cindy Taylor Patch

VCJC Sub-Committees progress reports

- Training Advisory Committee Highway Safety Committee
 - (Cindy Taylor-Patch, Steve Coote)
- Fair and Impartial Policing Committee
 - (Justin Stedman)
- Professional Regulation sub-committee
 - (Chris Brickell)
- Waiver Sub-Committee
 - (Brian Searles, Cindy Taylor Patch)
- Domestic Violence Committee
 - (Jennifer Firpo)
- Use-of-Force Committee
 - (Jacob Hansell)
- Highway Safety Sub-Committee (1st meeting 02/19)
- Canine Sub-Committee (1st meeting 02/19)

Any member wishing to attend any of the sub committee or working group meetings are welcome.



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Discuss VCJC Co-Vice Chair concept (VCJC Chair Bill Sorrell)

*Solicit nominations: Chair Sorrell is looking for one law enforcement and one non law enforcement member as vice chairs. One law enforcement member has expressed interest. Asked if any member has interest or suggestions to communicate these in the next week or two.

*Vote on nominations during March meeting.

Working Group Seeking Interest:

VCJC Rules Revision Working Group (Bill Sorrell). Anyone with interest in being on the working group was asked to E-mail interest to Interim Executive Director Sheets

Testimony update (Bill Sheets and Bill Sorrell)

- House and Senate Government Operations
 - S. 124
 - VCJC as it relates to the Agency of Public Safety Concept.
 - Mid-January the Governor issued an order to create an agency of public safety. S-124 created the current 24 person Vermont Criminal Justice Council that operates autonomously from the Academy.
 1. How does the council feel about remaining generally independent and not under any wing of state Government?
 2. If majority view is independent, then how independent and should the Council continue to have the role of hiring an Executive Director and mid-level Directors going forward.
 - Open for questions and comments:
 - Chief Brickell – Representative of Chiefs Association on Council –Supportive of Agency model because it is sustainable as functioning for the Academy, but Council should be autonomous.
 - Sheriff Mark Anderson: In my opinion, an agency model makes sense. Sheriff's Association is neutral on Agency of Public Safety except as it pertains to the Academy and the Council. Council should be memorialized in statute and retain authority. Administrative benefits being incorporated into Agency of Public Safety for budgetary and administrative purposes makes sense. We have not contemplated assignment of the Executive Director but at this point we will remain neutral. As Co-Chair for the hiring committee, while I am appreciative of the process in finding a new Executive Director, the elimination of some of the effort to bring in a new Executive Director under an agency, I think makes sense.
 - Trevor Whipple –Unanimous support of agency model specifically to funding and budget of the Academy. The philosophy of the VLCT and my opinion the Council should be working on training models up to and including the hiring of the Executive Director, who will implement those policies as designed.
 - Q&A between Interim Director Bill Sheets and Council Member Brian Searles related to budgetary advantages.
 - Council member Karen Tronsgard-Scott –A long time ago consolidation was brought up and is needed but I also think independence is necessary.



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- Commissioner Schirling – The original modernization framework conversations began 12/2019, it has always been envisioned that the Council would remain autonomous. To ensure diversity and to ensure that services that are provided to Vermonters go beyond a single Agency and retains that representative function.
- Council member Karim Chapman – It is really refreshing to hear the overwhelming support in diversity and voices, the bigger picture is the community needs to know that it's not just law enforcement, but others have a voice in the picture.
- Proposed language for Senate Government Operations
- Consensus on authority of appointment of Executive Director
 - Brian Searles pertaining to Council carrying responsibility of the Executive Director: The person in the Executive Director chair is representative of all Law Enforcement in the state. It was important when speaking to the legislature to be viewed as independent and not controlled by any one department or agency.
 - Chief Brickell – The Council being autonomous, and appointing is a healthier choice and model.
- Affirmative sentiments are representative of the council on retaining autonomous status. No member of the council voiced in favor of a reduced independence of the council.
- House Appropriations

Initial discussion on the use of military equipment

S. 124 language

(7) Military equipment. After an opportunity for community involvement and feedback, the Council shall recommend a statewide policy on law enforcement officers' acquisition of military equipment.

- E-mail interest to Interim Executive Director Sheets

Open discussion

Motion to adjourn:

Motion was made by Chief Brickell. Second by Michael Major. All in favor. Motion passed.

Adjourn: 12:09

Next Meeting date: March 17, 2021 at 10:00 Criminal Justice Council