



# South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy

SOUTH CAROLINA  
LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, November 18, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

A meeting of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council (LETC) was held at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy on Monday, November 18, 2024. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

### ***Agenda Item 1***

Chief Mark Keel, Chair of the Law Enforcement Training Council, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chief Keel called for a roll call of the Council members. The roll was called by Opel Bunn.

Members present for this meeting in-person were Chief Mark Keel, (Chairman), State Law Enforcement Division (SLED); Sheriff Lee Foster (Co-Chair), Newberry County Sheriff's Office; Director Bryan Stirling, S.C. Department of Corrections; Acting Director Jodi Gallman, S.C. Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services; Director Robert Woods, S.C. Department of Public Safety; Sheriff Barry Faile, Lancaster County Sheriff's Office; Chief Kevin Cornett, Isle of Palms Police Department; and Chief William Holbrook, Columbia Police Department.

Members present via video/conference call were Attorney General Alan Wilson, S.C. Attorney General's Office; Director Robert Boyles, S.C. Department of Natural Resources; and Captain Nick Gallam, Aiken County Detention Center.

Guest attendees present in-person or via Webex were Marcus Gore, Esquire, S.C. Department of Public Safety; Mark Gosnell, S.C. Troopers Association; JJ Jones, S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association/S.C. Police Chiefs Association; James L. Evans, Jr., Richland County Sheriff's Department; Chief Kenneth D. Phelps, S.C. Department of Public Safety; Michael Deets; Chance Sturup, Esquire; Richard LaBruce, Esquire, Bluffton Police Department; Seth Rose, Esquire; Jazmon Kearse, Esquire, Columbia Police Department; Harry Wilson, Jr., Esquire, Sumter County Sheriff's Office; Ryan Payne, Esquire; Chief Don Roper, Lancaster Police Department; Charles Wilson; Katherine Swancy, Esquire, Chester County Detention Center; Cascenne Brown; John Steadman, Esquire, S.C. Department of Corrections; Matt Wentzel, S.C. Department of Corrections; Donald Snyder; John O'Leary, Esquire; Samuel Arthur, III, Esquire, Myrtle Beach Police Department; Chief Amy Prock, Myrtle Beach Police Department; Assistant Chief Marty Brown; Myrtle Beach Police Department; Jeremiah Beam, Myrtle Beach Police Department; Sgt. Chris White, Myrtle Beach Police Department; Cpl. JW Smith, Myrtle Beach Police Department; PFC J. Lange, Myrtle Beach Police Department; Caleb Sierra; Charlton Bourne, Jr., Esquire, North



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Charleston Police Department; Sgt. Jeremy Ledford, North Charleston Police Department; Nathan Harris; Joanna McDuffie, Esquire, Richland County Sheriff's Department; and John Wells, Esquire.

S.C. Criminal Justice Academy attendees were Director Jackie Swindler; Opel Bunn, Executive Assistant; James Fennell, General Counsel; Lauren Fennell, Accreditation and Standards Manager; Madison Reynolds, Certification; Daniel Malkiewicz, Certification Manager; Justin Miller, IT Manager; Briana Jirowetz, IT; Jared Lee, IT; Major Florence McCants, Administrative Operations; and Scott Deckard, Investigator.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

### ***Agenda Item 2***

A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Sheriff Faile. Chief Holbrook seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

## **APPROVAL FOR MEETING MINUTES**

### ***Agenda Item 3***

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2024, meeting was made by Chief Cornett and seconded by Chief Holbrook. Council voted unanimously to accept the meeting minutes as recorded.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### ***Agenda Item 4***

#### **A. General Counsel Report**

- Misconduct Cases

#### **Michael Deets (2023-CJA-02-04) (Bluffton Police Department)**

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement agency, or a representative of the agency, except when required by departmental policy or by the laws of this State. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:



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- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Michael Deets by the Bluffton Police Department has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Chance Surup, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Michael Deets and to answer questions from Council if applicable. Michael Deets was present at this meeting.

Richard LaBruce, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Bluffton Police Department and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties. Mr. Surup noted that the Hearing Officer made no recommendation as to the punishment, only to the finding of misconduct. Sheriff Faile made a motion, finding misconduct and made the recommendation to permanently deny Michael Deets's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Sheriff Foster seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Michael Deets's eligibility for law enforcement certification.

### **Christopher Widener (2023-CJA-10-10) (Columbia Police Department)**

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement agency, or a representative of the agency, except when required by departmental policy or by the laws of this State. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Christopher Widener by the Columbia Police Department has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Seth Rose, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Christopher Widener and to answer questions from Council if applicable. Christopher Widener was not present at this meeting.



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Jazmon Kearse, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Columbia Police Department and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Chief Cornett made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Christopher Widener's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Director Woods seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Christopher Widener's eligibility for law enforcement certification. ***Please note that Chief Holbrook recused himself from the voting process in this case.***

### **Gerquan Harris (2024-CJA-01-03) (Sumter County Sheriff's Office)**

**Summary:** Allegation of engaging in the unlawful use of a controlled substance. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D., finding that the allegation of misconduct reported against Gerquan Harris by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office has been proven by preponderance of the evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Gerquan Harris was not present at this meeting.

Harry Wilson Jr., Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, which he stated is a tie into the correctional center, and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from Mr. Wilson Jr., Sheriff Faile made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Gerquan Harris's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Director Woods seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Gerquan Harris's eligibility for law enforcement certification. ***Please note that Director Stirling recused himself from the voting process in this case.***



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### Timothy Workman (2024-CJA-02-22) (Lancaster Police Department)

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement agency, or a representative of the agency, except when required by departmental policy or by the laws of this State. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Timothy Workman by the Lancaster Police Department has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Ryan Payne, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Timothy Workman and to answer questions from Council if applicable. Timothy Workman was not present at this meeting.

Chief Don Roper was present and spoke on behalf of the Lancaster Police Department and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Sheriff Faile made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Timothy Workman's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Chief Cornett seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Timothy Workman's eligibility for law enforcement certification.

### Charles Wilson (2024-CJA-02-06) (Chester County Detention Center)

**Summary:** Conviction, plea of guilty, plea of no contested, or admission or guilt (regardless of withheld adjudication) to a felony, a crime punishable by a sentence of more than one year (regardless of the sentence actually imposed, if any) crime of moral turpitude in this or any other jurisdiction. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Charles Wilson by the Chester County Detention Center has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and



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- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Ryan Payne, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Charles Wilson and to answer questions from Council if applicable. Charles Wilson was present at this meeting.

Katherine Swancy, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Chester County Detention Center and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Sheriff Foster made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Charles Wilson's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Director Stirling seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Charles Wilson's eligibility for law enforcement certification.

### **Cascenne Brown (2023-CJA-04-08) (South Carolina Department of Corrections)**

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement agency, or a representative of the agency, except when required by departmental policy or by the laws of this State. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Cascenne Brown by the South Carolina Department of Corrections has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Cascenne Brown was present and spoke on his behalf and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

John Steadman, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the South Carolina Department of Corrections and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Captain Gallam made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Cascenne Brown's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Sheriff Faile seconded the motion.



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Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Cascenne Brown's eligibility for law enforcement certification. ***Please note that Director Stirling recused himself from the voting process in this case.***

## **Donald Snyder (2023-CJA-05-05) (Myrtle Beach Police Department)**

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to any court of competent jurisdiction, or their staff members, whether under oath or not. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Donald Snyder by the Myrtle Beach Police Department have not been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Expunge within thirty days of the final agency decision in this matter, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 23-23-150 (M), all evidence related to the allegations of misconduct filed against Donald Snyder by the Myrtle Beach Police Department.

John O'Leary, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Donald Snyder and to answer questions from Council if applicable. Donald Snyder was present at this meeting.

Samuel Arthur III, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Myrtle Beach Police Department to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Director Boyles disclosed a potential conflict of interest. He stated the OPS investigator at the City of Myrtle Beach is a spouse of one of his officers. Therefore, he will be recusing himself from this vote.

Chief Cornett made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to expunge the records within 30 days. Captain Gallam seconded the motion.

With a vote of 8 (No) and 2 (Yes) the motion failed.

Sheriff Faile made a motion not to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Donald Snyder's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Chief Holbrook seconded the motion.



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With a vote of 8 (Yes) and 2 (No) the motion passed not to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer, finding misconduct and to permanently deny Donald Snyder's eligibility for law enforcement certification. ***Please note that Director Boyles recused himself from the voting process in this case.***

## **Caleb Sierra (2024-CJA-04-06) (North Charleston Police Department)**

**Summary:** Allegation of willfully making false, misleading, incomplete, deceitful, or incorrect statements to a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement agency, or a representative of the agency, except when required by departmental policy or by the laws of this State. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Issue its final agency decision, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-107 D. finding that the allegation of misconduct filed against Caleb Sierra by the North Charleston Police Department has been proven by the preponderance of evidence; and
- B. Impose a sanction as the Law Enforcement Training Council in its discretion deems appropriate pursuant to its authority set forth at S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 37-108 A (1-5)

Caleb Sierra was present and spoke on his behalf and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

John O'Leary, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of Caleb Sierra and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

Charlton Bourne Jr., Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the North Charleston Police Department and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Chief Cornett made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Caleb Sierra's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Director Woods seconded the motion.

Prior to voting process, Chief Keel reminded the Council members that this Council has been very consistent when it comes to dishonesty. He expressed his concerns regarding officers being dishonest about things that would be a policy violation. He stated that they may get a letter or reprimand and may get suspended. They would not lose their jobs, and they would not lose their opportunity to continue to be a police officer.



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Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer and to permanently deny Caleb Sierra's eligibility for law enforcement certification.

## **Nathan Harris (2024-CJA-04-06) (Richland County Sheriff's Office) (Prosecutorial Discretion)**

**Summary:** The Richland County Sheriff's Office wished to exercise prosecutorial discretion pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 23-23-150 (B) (2) and declining to prosecute the misconduct allegation. **Request for Final Agency Decision.**

The Hearing Officer Recommended that Council:

- A. Order that the contested case file in this matter be closed; and
- B. Order, pursuant to the requirements of S.C. Code Ann. § 23-23-150 (M), that the "Personnel Change in Status Report: Notification of Separation Due to Misconduct" filed by the Department in this matter be expunged, and that the certification file of the Officer be updated in the records of the Criminal Justice Academy to reflect no outstanding allegations of misconduct based on the allegations reported by the Department in this matter.

Nathan Harris was present and spoke on his behalf and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

Joanna McDuffie, Esquire was present and spoke on behalf of the Richland County Sheriff's Department and to answer questions from Council if applicable.

After hearing statements from all parties, Director Woods made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer for Richland County Sheriff's Department's decision to exercise prosecutorial discretion, not to prosecute the case and grant Nathan Harris's eligibility for law enforcement certification. Sheriff Faile seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation of the Hearing Officer for Richland County Sheriff's Department's decision to exercise prosecutorial discretion, not to prosecute the case and grant Nathan Harris's eligibility for law enforcement certification.

## **B. Director's Comments**

Director Swindler



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Director Swindler provided the Council with an update on the Academy's reaccreditation with CALEA in Jacksonville, FL last week. He stated that after listening to other groups having some type of policies that had to be corrected upon that review, he reported that the Academy had none. He noted that this was due to the great job of Lauren Fennell and Gracyn Malkiewicz.

Director Swindler reported that the remained of the time, he was allowed to discuss more about some of our favorable programs and they were very impressed with the misconduct process in our state.

Director Swindler gave an update on class sizes and graduation rates. He provided an update on the assistance provided to assist some students in research in other doctoral programs around the country.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *Agenda Item 5*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *Agenda Item 6*

Council discussed proposed language for 37-024 (Investigation of Events Requiring Withdrawal of Certification; Notification to Officer) and 37-108 the wording will be changed from substantial evidence to preponderance of the evidence.

Sheriff Foster made a motion to approve the language of 37-024 and 37-108. Director Stirling seconded the motion. Present Council voted unanimously to approve the language of 37-024 (Investigation of Events Requiring Withdrawal of Certification; Notification to Officer) and the language of 37-108. ***Please note that Attorney General Wilson left the meeting and did not vote.***

## **CLOSING REMARKS/AJOURNMENT**

### *Agenda Item 7*

Acting Director Jodi Gallman announced that she will be retiring after 43 years of service with South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services. She stated that this will be her last Council meeting. She thanked the Council for everything and asked to please continue support the department after she's gone.



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Chief Keel expressed his appreciation to Acting Director Gallman for her service to the state, the department and this committee.

Chief Keel inquired whether there were any more questions or comments from Council. When there were no more remarks or comments, Director Woods made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Stirling seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Opel C. Bunn*

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Opel C. Bunn