**MINNESOTA BOARD OF**
**PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING**

TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
POST Board Office
1600 University Avenue, Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104

February 28, 2020

| Committee Members Present | Staff Present | Others Present |
|---|---|---|
| Becky Swanson, Chair | Peggy Strand | Bryan Litsey |
| Joel Powell | Abby Brown | Deb Eckberg |
| Troy Wolberson | | Mark Holden |
| Mark Fahning | | Scott Berger |
| | | Tom Draper |
| **Committee Members Absent** | | Sean Zauhar |
| Clarence Castile | | Julie Maidment |
| Sara Rice | | Chuck MacLean |
| Dave Hutchinson | | James Densley |
| Drew Evans | | Jadelle Breitbarth |
| | | Paul Iovino |

Chair Swanson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. The first order of business was approval of the agenda. Mr. Fahning moved to approved the agenda, it was seconded. The motion passed.

**Announcements:** None

**St. Paul Police Department (SPPD) and Metro State University (MSU) Consideration of Statement of Need:**

Ms. Strand explained the process for a Professional Peace Officer Education (PPOE) program conception or expansion. She explained that before a school can apply for expansion, the school must have approval by the system office that oversees the school and POST Board recognition of a need for change. In this case, Minnesota State, the college system office for Metropolitan State University has already approved the program expansion. Therefore the school is now seeking approval for it's statement of nedd (Attachment1)

Ms. Strand asked the Training Committee to consider:

- if there is a need for MSU to expand their program to include the skills component (Minn. Rules 6700.0400, Subp. 1) and
- if it is appropriate to provide the training at the Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD) (Minn. Rules 6700.0400, Subp. 3.B)

Mr. Bryan Litsey, PPOE Coordinator for MSU, provided the committee with additional information about the statement of need including a description of the two current pathways as well as the third proposed pathway for hiring.

In his presentation he said that he believed the proposed cooperative partnership between MSU and SPPD would assist in diversifying the department's police force and eliminate barriers that might keep promising applicants from applying to become a police officer in the City of St. Paul.

Mr. Powell asked who would be determining the candidates that would be eligible for Pathway 3 (see flowchart in addendum 2 of attachment 1). Mr. Litsey stated that SPPD would be determining which applicants would be admitted through this pathway into MSU's program as SPPD would be funding those students.

Mr. Powell raised a concern that Pathway 3 may not accomplish the quality of training that MSU is known for with regards to their four year degree programs within the shortened time period. Mr. Litsey stated that he believes that the content and quality for Pathway 3 would be competitive, if not exceed, the standards put forth by other PPOE schools.

Chair Swanson inquired about who would be responsible for oversight of the program. Mr. Litsey believes that the student will spend approximately 25% of their time at MSU and 75% would be spent at SPPD. Mr. Litsey believes that the merging of theory and practicum will benefit the student's education. Mr. Litsey understands that as the PPOE Coordinator, it is his responsibility to ensure the successful implementation and oversight for the collaboration with SPPD.

Chair Swanson thanked Mr. Litsey for his presentation and called Mr. Paul Iovino, Deputy Chief the SPPD Community Engagement Division, to speak to the committee. According to Mr. Iovino, SPPD Chief Todd Axtell is committed to having his police force become 50% diverse by the end of his first term. The objective for Pathway 3 would be to have nearly 100% diverse attendance in order to achieve the longer term goal of obtaining a 50% diverse agency.

Chair Swanson asked Mr. Iovino if Century Community College appears to be agreeable to the changes that Pathway 3 could create for their enrollment numbers. Mr. Iovino was unsure but stated that he will seek out that information. Mr. Litsey and Mr. Iovino believe that they have remained transparent with Hennepin Technical College in regards to this potential collaboration.

Chair Swanson followed up with Ms. Strand to verify if she wanted to add anything to the discussion at this time. Ms. Strand wanted to reinforce the idea that this program would belong to Metropolitan State University and not to Saint Paul Police Department, since the MN POST Board Rules only apply to certified schools.

Tom Draper, PPOE Coordinator from Hennepin Technical College (HTC), came before the committee next. He provided a letter of concern that has been signed by the HTC Faculty, Dean and PPOE Coordinator (Attachment 2). Mr. Draper discussed the matter that there are only 8 credits that they currently do not offer their students, that other PPOEs do provide. They include HazMat, Blood borne Pathogens, Crime Scene and Evidence, Fingerprinting and Evidence Collection. Mr. Draper indicated that HTC was never invited to the table to speak to SPPD about barriers that their cadets face. He would be willing to have discussions about travel barriers with SPPD. One major concern that Mr. Draper voiced was the declining enrollment of students in peace officer education programs at HTC, statewide and nationally. Therefore he feels that Pathway 3 will negatively affect HTC's enrollment numbers.

Next to come in front of the committee was Mark Holden, a HTC Law Enforcement faculty member. Mr. Holden raised the concern that Pathway 3 could weaken the POST Board's postion as a neutral entity that was intended by the Legislature. Mr. Holden also reiterated the question of need as PPOE enrollment is down.

Scott Berger, Dean of Law Enforcement from Alexandria Technical College was next to speak. Mr. Berger understands the need to increase diversity. He believes that based on a needs assessment survey conducted in 2006 and consequential outcomes of that study, higher education has been responsive to the needs of law enforcement education. Mr. Berger is opposed to the current proposal because Minnesota holds peace officers to the status of a licensed professional and believes that Pathway 3 is a workforce model which would not reflect the high standards that Minnesota higher education has worked towards.

Professor from MSU, James Densley spoke before the committee. Mr. Densley disagrees with Mr. Berger's assessment of the License vs. Workforce model. After evaluating SPPD's curriculum, Mr. Densley is confident that SPPD's program is superior to the current program at HTC. Mr. Densley believes that this Statement of Need is based on a need for higher quality education standards.

Chair Swanson asked for a summary of the statement of need. This was provided by Mr. Litsey and Mr. Iovino. Mr. Litsey believes that Pathway 3 will expand the applicant pool by creating an opportunity for individuals that would otherwise not pursue a career in law enforcement. Chair Swanson spoke regarding her concern that MSU's oversight may be difficult as they themselves have no experience in running a skills program.

The last community member to speak was Sean Zauhar, the Academy Coordinator for SPPD. Mr. Zauhar believes that based on his research and travel around the country SPPD has created a model that is well rounded and of high quality. Mr. Zauhar states that if this moves forward they would likely hire more staff and believes that their facility will be adequate for the additional needs that this would create.

Discussion between the Committee members and Ms. Strand ensued regarding the need for a peace officer education model such as the one described in Pathway 3. After this discussion Chair Swanson asked if there was a motion to bring the Statement of Need before the full Board for review. Mr. Fahning made the motion, Mr. Wolberson seconded the motion. Chair Swanson called for a vote where Mr. Fahning and Mr. Wolberson voted in favor of the motion. Chair Swanson and Dr. Powell voted against the motion. Without a majority vote, the motion failed. Chair Swanson stated that she would report the discussion and split vote to Chair McCarthy so that Chair McCarthy can decide whether it should be placed on the agenda for the next full board meeting.

**Selection of Tentative Next Meeting Date and Adjournment:**

The committee tentatively scheduled the next Training Committee meeting for June 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Chair Swanson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 12:26 p.m. and Mr. Powell moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed.

The foregoing minutes were approved by the Training Committee of the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training when it met on June 4, 2020.

Becky Swanson
Committee Chair

Erik Misselt
Interim Executive Director