

WLEA Advisory Board Workshop

09 October 2024

Attendees:

Chuck Bayne, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Jesse Curtis, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Warren Steele, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Justin Smith, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Shawn Milek, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Megan Doneski, Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy
Mark Francisco, Cheyenne Police Department
Craig Smith, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Ronnie Jones, Division of Criminal Investigation
Michelle Weber, Jackson Police Department
Travis Koltiska, Sheridan Police Department
Shaina Smith, Smith Psychological Services
Jeff Hodge, WASCOP
Scott Matheny, Campbell County Sheriff's Office
Bridget Hill, Attorney General's Office

Meeting called to order

WLEA Staffing Update

- New Staff Instructors:
 - Sean Alquist
 - John Lawrence
 - John Allred
- Warren Steele promoted to Training Manager
- Shawn Milek promoted to Basic Training Supervisor

Review minutes from the April 2024 Advisory Board Meeting

- Vote to approve the minutes as written
 - Motion: Mark Francisco
 - Second: Craig Smith
 - Vote: all aye, none opposed

Comment in Joint Judiciary Meeting

- Chuck Bayne wanted to address a comment made during the recent Joint Judiciary Committee Meeting

- A Committee Member stated, essentially, that he thought the Advisory Board had not been doing its job
- WLEA appreciates the work of, and sees the value in, the Advisory Board and each of its Members
- WLEA's stance could have been more clearly stated at the time

WASCOP Letter Discussion

- WLEA would like to open the floor for discussion regarding the complaint letter recently received from WASCOP
 - A copy of this letter was made available to Board Members
- Travis Koltiska: After-hours activities are causing overtime – is there anything that can be done to reduce that?
- Chuck Bayne: The curriculum time is needed. The two options are to continue having after-hours assignments and activities, or extend the length of the Basic.
- Mark Francisco: How much longer would that make the Basic?
- Jesse Curtis: An additional 2 weeks for POB and 1 week for DOB
- Scott Matheny: It doesn't make a lot of sense that 3 students in the same class are submitting 3 different timecards
- Ronnie Jones: Students could keep an activity log to show whether they are using their downtime appropriately
- Michelle Weber: It is surprising that one of the complaints is "too much downtime" and the other is "too much overtime". If you have downtime, you shouldn't be charging overtime.
- Jesse Curtis: We need to determine what a basic student should be able to do when they graduate.
 - Having a unified understanding would help clarify the complaints of "I have to retrain my student after they graduate"
- Bridget Hill: Is the complaint that WLEA is "turning out a worse product"?
- Mark Francisco: Not overall at Cheyenne PD. The results are individual based on the student.
- Jeff Hodge: Yes, that is the complaint I am hearing from other departments.
- Shaina Smith: Yes, that is the complaint I am hearing from other departments.
- Shaina Smith: It seems like communication is one of the issues.
 - The Board doesn't necessarily hear from WLEA about complaints they receive, or what WLEA is doing to address those complaints.
- Scott Matheny: The lack of funds to improve the Academy is a huge issue that needs to be addressed.
- Jeff Hodge: How does WLEA handle discipline of students?
- Chuck Bayne: WLEA does not have statutory authority to promulgate rules. Curriculum standards (academic failure, 100% attendance) are POST-approved standards. WLEA cannot take disciplinary action for non-POST-approved standards like cell phone use in class. The agency has to handle that discipline.
- Jeff Hodge: What is the solution?

- Mark Francisco: I appreciate being notified so we as an agency can promptly deal with it ourselves.
- Travis Koltiska: I appreciate being notified so we as an agency can promptly deal with it ourselves.
- Jeff Hodge: How do we handle the 1% of circumstances where the agency will not handle the problem?
- Bridget Hill: If WLEA was given rule-making authority, we could make rules to the effect of “you cannot attend the Academy if...”
 - That would keep WLEA out of any employment action between the agency and their officer.
- Jeff Hodge: WLEA should have the authority to enforce their standards.

New POB Curriculum

- Reference material is available in the packet provided to Board Members.
- Item labeled “Practical Activity” are not necessarily a live scenario.
 - It means an activity in which the student uses the learned knowledge.
- Items labeled “Enrichment Panel” have value to the student, but are not an educational component that will be tested.
 - For example, having a speaker who has experience an Officer Involved Shooting.
- Updates to UOF #2 & #3
 - These are currently individual MILO sessions
 - The plan going forward is to have 2 students in the MILO at a time – one performing and one “evaluating”.
 - This effectively doubles the student training time without adding hours to the schedule.

New DOB Curriculum

- Reference material is available in the packet provided to Board Members.
- If WLEA reverted to “traditional learning” i.e., got rid of online learning, practical learning activities would have to be reduced by almost 200 hours in order to fit 3 basics per year.
- Ronnie Jones: Has anyone provided specific examples of a deficiency their student had after graduation?
- Chuck Bayne: One agency said that the officer had the knowledge, but could not use the knowledge to make a decision.
- Michelle Weber: The onus is on the department to find the right candidate.
- Shaina Smith: A survey to the agencies to see what they feel is missing or what the specific issues are may help with communication.
- Jeff Hodge: WLEA should make Administrators more aware of what training opportunities are available to the students during their “downtime”.
- WLEA can put together a document of available “downtime” activities to share with both students and administrators.

- WLEA will move forward with presenting the curriculum updates to POST for approval
 - Motion: Travis Koltiska
 - Second: Michelle Weber
 - Vote: all aye, none opposed

Proposed Changes to the WLEA Firearms Qualification

- Reference material is available in the packet provided to Board Members.
- The updated qualification uses the same number of rounds as, and similar scoring methodology to the current qualification.
- WLEA has been beta testing the updated qualification on the 2024 basics.
- WLEA is recommending the adoption of the new course of fire as the qualification for future basics, starting in 2025.
 - Motion: Scott Matheny
 - Second: Mark Francisco
 - Vote: all aye, none opposed

Advanced Training Report

- Several classes have been cancelled recently due to low enrollment.
- Please let Justin Smith know if there is regional training you are interested in.
- WLEA will begin dormitory renovations in December, which will impact housing options for Advanced Training students.
 - Basic Training students will be given priority on housing.

Facility Report

- There has been ongoing discussion regarding expanding the current location or purchasing new land and building and entirely new building.
- There are some issues that need to be remedied promptly, so updates are being made to the current building.
 - First floor dormitory renovations will begin in December 2024.
 - Renovations to the Front Office area are anticipated in the short-term.
- Proposed floor plans are available to Board Members upon request.
- Negotiations are ongoing for a new land purchase, which would become the EVO Pad and Firearms Range.

Meeting adjourned