

Colorado Rangers ("CLER") Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

10:00 AM, Friday, February 25, 2022
CLER Headquarters
330 Park Avenue
Ft. Lupton, CO 80621

Attendance – Board of Directors: Senator Kent Lambert (via video teleconference), Marshal Larry Johns (via video teleconference) and Chief Ronald Abramson (in person). Senator John Cooke and Chief John Fryar were not in attendance and excused for good cause.

Attendance – CLER Command Staff & Support Staff: Deputy Chief Robert Pabst (in person), Operations Division Michael Morgan (in person), Support Division Chief Robert Gray (via teleconference) the CLER Controller, Ranger Norm Townley (in person), and Board Secretary Ranger Carl Luppens (via teleconference).

There were several Rangers in attendance but no members of the public present.

At 10:00 Chairman Lambert called the meeting to order and took roll. Chairman Lambert declared a quorum and the meeting began.

Chief Abramson moved for the approval of the minutes of the September 10, 2021 CLER Board of Director's meeting as presented, Marshal Johns seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted by unanimous consent.

Chairman Lambert invited Chief Abramson to provide an overview of the meeting and issues to review.

Chief Abramson stated that he is expecting a big operational season for the Rangers due to partner communities reinstating their Summer events post-Covid coupled with the new additional partner police departments. He expressed confidence in the Rangers' ability to cover these assignments due to the robust resources of the Rangers even though several Rangers had been dismissed at the end of 2021 due to either a lack of duty service hours performed or non-compliance with annual training requirements.

Chairman Lambert commented that he recalled that there were approximately 76 active Rangers reported at the December meeting.

Chief Abramson replied that after a number of dismissals from the agency, there are now 70 plus or minus CLER individuals including a few non-POST civilian administrative staff. Chief Abramson noted that recruitment efforts have been very strong and there are nearly a dozen POST sworn officers currently interested in joining CLER.

Chief Abramson nominated Senator Lambert to serve again as Chairman of the CLER Board of Directors for 2022 and Marshal Johns seconded the nomination. Chairman Lambert was elected unanimously.

Chairman Lambert commented that the Rangers success has resulted in other potential opportunities and there have been serious inquiries by major academic institutions as to how to replicate the Rangers as a statewide reserve in other states. As a reserve force that can be rapidly mobilized to provide a large number of additional officers, the value is immeasurable, especially in response to major unexpected events.

Chief's Report

Chief Abramson reported that he reached out immediately to Louisville when the Marshall fire erupted, but was not initially successful making contact. The Louisville Chief was not aware of the Rangers and their capability. He asked the Denver Police Department for assistance but Denver had no available

officers to contribute. Denver Police Department advised the State emergency operations center that the Rangers were standing by and could mobilize 50 police officers to assist in evacuation and road blocks.

Louisville subsequently reached out to CLER and Chief Abramson met with the Louisville Police Chief, Deputy Chief and Operations Division Chief along with CLER Chief Morgan. A Mutual Aid Agreement was executed within 24 hours and Rangers were on duty to supplement Louisville's resources. Louisville has provided six patrol vehicles for Ranger use and the schedule was modified to two 6-hour Ranger shifts to coordinate with the Louisville 12 hours shifts and still facilitate Rangers working while accommodating their typical full-time jobs. Captain Moncivais and Sergeant Gurak have done an outstanding job coordinating the effort which has been on-going since January.

The Rangers have received enormously positive feedback from the PD and Louisville community.

Chairman Lambert inquired that, since the Rangers have statewide capabilities, what was the Denver Police Department's position in the Rangers potential emergency response to Louisville for the Marshall Fire?

Chief Abramson explained that the Colorado Emergency Operations Center was fully apprised of CLER's operational assistance capabilities on the night of the fire. One alternative could have been to send Rangers to Louisville as Denver "reserves" to fulfill Louisville's request to Denver for assistance.

Chairman Lambert suggested that the State should have more emergency response capability noting that there was confusion and local jurisdictional issues associated with the Black Forest Fire and there needs to be a better chain of command in emergencies. The Rangers are becoming the "de facto" reserve force for the State of Colorado.

Chief Abramson explained that there are several legal issues to "button up" to put Rangers on duty. The Rangers, as reserve officers, derive their status as a police officer by being activated by local law enforcement agencies. The State is the "coordinator" for emergency response and Ranger need Mutual Aid Agreements with local jurisdictions to be activated, it cannot be done through the state.

Marshal Johns explained that communication was a major coordination issue in response to the Marshall Fire. Radio compatibility is the problem. Marshal Johns paired up with the State Patrol to "patch" radio communications back to Louisville. He said that the first three hours of the fire response was "mass chaos" but fortunately many people self-evacuated.

The ability to interface on the radio is critical. Marshal Johns asked, "How can we be more integrated"?

Chairman Lambert asked if we had upgraded to 800 MHz radios?

Chief Abramson responded that we had and that the Colorado State Patrol had just donated 20 surplus radios (worth approximately \$100,000) in addition to a prior donation last Fall. The Rangers' practice is that, when our radios are not compatible with a given partner agency and they cannot provide enough of their radios for Ranger use, we use one partner agency radio with a Ranger to interface as Marshal Johns did with the State Patrol.

Chairman Lambert reminded everyone that Weld County would not integrate with the recent State radio system conversion due to incompatibility. Also, many mountain areas require VHF radios due to terrain obstacles.

Chief Abramson stated that all new partner agencies must agree to give Rangers access to their police radio frequencies to ensure interoperability.

Marshal Johns explained that the necessary radio bandwidth was not available during the Marshall Fire. There was a second fire on the Northside of Boulder and that only intervening grazed cattle ground saved Longmont.

Chairman Lambert commented on the critical nature of command and control and asked if the State has mobile command posts with extra surge communications capability for emergencies.

Chief Abramson stated that the Louisville fire proved the need to coordinate with the Rangers ahead of emergencies and disasters. Louisville Chief Hayes said that the Rangers “saved the day” as his officers were spent and other jurisdictions could not spare any officers.

Chairman Lambert exclaimed that the Ranger response was “totally heroic” to fill the gap.

Chief Abramson announced that the Denver Director of Public Safety Murphy Robinson had stepped down and his deputy has taken his place. Denver is extremely appreciative of our support and will continue to rely on the Rangers for support in all large events. Rangers will provide traffic control and security for the upcoming St. Patrick’s Day parade for Denver as well as Woodland Park.

Chairman Lambert inquired if the Rangers were still providing security for Denver “homeless” shelters and Chief Abramson replied that assignment had concluded.

Chairman Lambert asked how long the Rangers will be providing security to the Louisville fire area and Chief Abramson replied that it would potentially be for two more months.

Chief Abramson announced that the CLER Policies and Procedure document was being revised and updated for 2022 with new legal issues that had been already addressed with statewide orders which will be incorporated into the P&P.

Division Chief Morgan reported that 3,177 hours of service had been provided so far in 2022. Several Rangers have already fulfilled their annual service requirement of 120 hours.

Chairman Lambert asked how the first quarter of 2022 compared with the first quarter of 2021 and was told that first quarter 2021 hours were approximately 1,800, so it represented a near doubling in what is traditionally our slowest quarter.

Support Division Chief Robert Gray reported on the state mandated body worn camera procurement program. The Rangers have been approved for a state grant for 84 cameras. To administer the camera program, which has strict legal compliance requirements, computers, iPads and software licenses are also being acquired. The success of this camera grant is encouraging the Rangers to apply for grants for other equipment.

Chairman Lambert asked about the data storage capability and the enormous task of evidence retention and production.

Chief Abramson explained that the body worn camera situation is almost a miracle. After looking at all the major players in the industry, including Motorola and Axon, Chief Gray discovered an early-stage program with T-Mobile using specially equipped and managed cell phones as police body worn cameras and negotiated 84 cameras and 9 years of cellular service for free. The only on-going cost will be \$45/month per “camera”.

Chairman Lambert stated that cellular communications companies are giving priority to emergency services so the new systems should be pretty resilient.

Chief Gray explained that storage is “in the cloud” (in shared system service provider data server banks instead of on local devices) relieving the Rangers of the storage burden and providing redundancy. Additionally, the recordings are uploaded in 5G real time which is extremely important for CLER. In addition, Ranger command staff can track officer locations and view incidents live which will be a significant enhancement to our operational capabilities given that our officers can be deployed in as many as a dozen cities at the same time.

Ranger Controller Norm Townley then gave the financial report. There is approximately \$108,000 in the operating accounts and approximately \$50,000 in the Training Academy account for total assets of \$158,520 and \$28,025 in the badge deposit reserve for a net worth of \$130,495. \$14,000 of revenue was received in January and \$1,200 was paid out. There were no questions.

Marshal Johns wanted to revisit the bodycam program and asked how partner departments will access camera footage?

Chief Gray responded that video can easily be shared via email and that he can also “burn” a CD to send to partner police departments with the video if requested. He also noted that integrated e-Discovery is possible. He performed significant due diligence with T-Mobile early adopter police agencies in California and Georgia and received positive feedback.

Chief Abramson commented that body worn cameras need only be activated when Rangers are “engaged in calls for service or enforcement and investigations” and that, since most Ranger interaction with the public is casual contact, it will not be filmed. Per the law “A peace officer shall wear and activate a body-worn camera when responding to a call for service or during any interaction with the public initiated by the peace officer when enforcing the law or investigating possible violations of the law.” The volume of footage should not be expected to be overwhelming, but over time we will get a better understanding of the amount of recordings. The Rangers will be one of the larger new agencies with T-Mobile. The opportunity for field command to view live action and officer location will be very valuable.

The final agenda item was a discussion of officer safety. The Rangers prioritize officer safety and routinely train at regular troop meetings with an emphasis on situational awareness and potential threats. At events, Rangers work to balance positive public relations and police goodwill interactions with active surveillance for threats to officers and citizens and we have done a very good job at that for the past four (4) years of street operations. A former Adams County sheriff’s office Division chief who is now a Ranger has been providing additional training.

Marshal Johns stated that he has never seen poor interaction with the public from any Rangers. He mentioned the recent hoax medical call that was used to ambush responding police officers as an example of disconcerting threats officers need to be aware of.

Public Comments:

There were no public questions or comments.

Schedule for Next Meeting:

The next Board of Director’s Meeting was scheduled for Friday April 29th, 2022 at 10:00, in Fort Lupton with video conferencing as an alternative to in person attendance.

Closing Comments:

Chief Abramson expressed his continuing appreciation and praise for the efforts of Ranger command staff and the individual Rangers, with a special commendation to Chief Gray for his outstanding work on the bodycam program which has been an agency priority. The Rangers accomplish enormous amounts with no paid staff which continues to astound Chief Abramson.

Chairman Lambert echoed the praise for a lean organization accomplishing more than could be imagined and noted how far CLER has come since its start as a government in 2017.

Adjournment of Meeting

It was moved by Chief Abramson and seconded by Chairman Lambert to adjourn the meeting and it was adjourned at 11:15 by unanimous vote.