

Open Session Minutes

IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETING

April 2, 2026 @ 9:00am
ILEA Building, Room 201
7105 NW 70th Avenue
4640 Burma Road
Johnston, IA 50131

A meeting of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Council was held as a hybrid of in-person and online attendance.

Members Present: Ricardo Martinez II, Academy Council Chair
Diane Venenga, Vice Chair and Chief, North Liberty Police Department
Nathan Fulk, Colonel, Iowa State Patrol
Melissa Henderson, Officer, Cedar Rapids Police Department
Sadie Weekley, Captain, Marshalltown Police Department
Aaron McClelland, Assistant Chief, Waterloo Police Department
Dave McDaniel, Sheriff, Hardin County Sheriff's Office
Jana Abens, Citizen of Iowa
Elizabeth Quinn, Lieutenant, Story County Sheriff's Office
Ryan Ridout, DOT Director, Bureau of Investigation and Identity Protection
Daniel Jansen, Captain, West Des Moines Police Department
Vicky Long Hill, Citizen of Iowa (online)
Kevin Schneider, Sheriff, Polk County Sheriff's Office
Eric Gjerde, Representative

Members Absent: Charles McClintock, Senator
Judd Lawler, Representative
Izaah Knox, Senator

Assistant Attorney General : Eric Dirth, Assistant Iowa Attorney General
David Merchan, Assistant Iowa Attorney General (online)

Staff Present: Brady Carney, Director, ILEA
Sherry Poole, Assistant Director, ILEA
Jack Heuton, Financial Manager, ILEA
Kristi Traynor, Legal Counsel, ILEA
Jennifer Rico, ILEA
Katy Fukuda, ILEA
Nicole Stevens, ILEA
Donna Hallstrom, ILEA

Guests Present: Austin Nixon Michael Anderson
Guests Present Online: Lane Reinke Bill Lodge Brad Shutts Colin Hendricks
Lisa DeFour Jon Behne Q. Ries

Ric Martinez called the meeting to order. Ric Martinez began with the welcome and introductions of the Academy Council, ILEA staff and guests.

Ric Martinez determined there was a quorum.

The first item (#1) on the agenda was the disclosure of potential conflicts of interest on the Open Session agenda. Melissa Henderson advised that she would recuse herself from the Consent Agenda.

The second item (#2) on the agenda was public comment. There was none.

The third item (#3) on the agenda was Petition for Waiver of Iowa Administrative Code Rule 501-2.1(13) for Austin Nixon.

Nixon is a current recruit at ILEA. He was served with a notice of an Order Setting Hearing on a Petition for Relief from Domestic Abuse under Iowa Code Chapter 236 on Friday, March 20, 2026. The temporary protective order had been denied, but a hearing was set for a permanent order on March 23, 2026. The petition was dismissed at the hearing on the 23rd. It then came to the Academy's attention that Nixon had a prior arrest for Domestic Abuse Assault in 2014 that was dismissed, as well as prior 236 files. The question concerning whether the applicant has committed prior acts that could result in decertification was marked "no" on the report of hire. His history: On 4/19/2013, a petition for relief from domestic abuse was filed by a female victim. A temporary protective order was issued. It was dismissed by the victim on 4/24/2013. On 9/27/2014, Nixon was arrested for Domestic Abuse Assault Causing Bodily Injury after a fight with his then-wife over finances. He threw a cereal bowl at her but missed and it broke on the floor causing an injury to her foot. The victim stated that Nixon then pinned her up against the wall and was going to hit her. In the police report, it stated that the victim had to punch him in order to get away from him and that she had some redness and swelling under her eye. His wife went to the emergency room and had to get stitches in her foot. A criminal no contact order was issued on 9/28/14 and cancelled on 10/2/14; charges were dismissed on 1/6/15. On 9/21/2017, a Temporary Protective Order was issued protecting a different female. She alleged he threatened to kill her several times; has pushed her; thrown items at her; harassed her by text almost daily; punched her in the head while she was holding their 7 month old; has pushed the infant down; and keyed her car. During text messages between Nixon and the victim about parenting their child, Nixon asked if he had enough money to buy an AR (AR-15 Rifle). Council members asked Nixon why he would ask about purchasing an AR-15 Rifle if it wasn't to intimidate the victim. Nixon stated that the girlfriend handled all of the money and he just wanted to know. Nixon stated that looking at it now, he could see why it would look like it was threatening and he takes full responsibility for that. A final protective order was issued on 10/2/2017. On 4/7/2021, a female victim filed a Petition for Relief from Domestic Abuse alleging Nixon contacted her to see the son he terminated his parental rights to in 2020. The parties had a past 236 order in 2017. She alleges he started harassing her again once the order expired. The Temporary Order was denied and the female victim dismissed the Petition the following day. On 3/19/26, another female filed a Petition for Relief from Domestic Abuse. Nixon stated that he takes full responsibility for his actions and did relay the 2014 incident to

Chief Anderson during the hiring process. Council members asked Nixon if he purposely threw the cereal bowl at the victim. Nixon stated that when he threw the cereal bowl, he missed, and it broke on the floor. When Council members asked Nixon what he meant by “missed” he could not recall if he meant to hit the victim with the bowl or not. Council members voiced their concerns with Nixon’s integrity and accountability. Council members asked Chief Anderson if he conducted a thorough background investigation before hiring Mr. Nixon. Chief Anderson stated yes that he did. Nixon was asked if he disclosed every incident to Chief Anderson at the time of hiring. Nixon stated that he did disclose his arrest for domestic abuse in 2014 and that Chief Anderson looked on Iowa Courts Online for the others. Nixon was asked if he disclosed the 2017 and the 2021 incidents to Chief Anderson. Nixon stated that he did not disclose that information but was not trying to hide anything. Nixon stated again that Chief Anderson looked on Iowa Courts Online and reviewed the information with him. Nixon stated that Chief Anderson asked him questions about the information on Iowa Courts Online and Nixon stated that he answered them. Chief Anderson stated that he did the background investigation and the only incident he was aware of at the time of hiring was the 2014 incident. He stated that when he looked at Iowa Courts Online, the only thing he saw was the 2014 incident and the other incidents were sealed and he could not see them. Director Carney advised that all of the past incidents can be seen on Iowa Courts Online and are not sealed and are available to the public. The only record that is sealed is the recent 2026 record. Council members asked Chief Anderson if he contacted any of the victims to verify the information. Chief Anderson stated that he did not contact any of the “alleged” victims. Nixon advised that he does not have anger issues and has never gone to therapy or counseling. Council members had several follow up questions and requested to go into Closed Session.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Aaron McClelland made a motion to go into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing records that are required or authorized by state of Iowa to be kept confidential pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.5(1)(a). Melissa Henderson seconded the motion. An individual voice vote was taken. Ryan Ridout-Aye; Dan Jansen-Aye; Elizabeth Quinn-Aye; Jana Abens-Aye; Aaron McClelland-Aye; Dave McDaniel-Aye; Sadie Weekley-Aye; Nathan Fulk-Aye; Ric Martinez-Aye; Diane Venenga-Aye; Melissa Henderson-Aye and Vicky Long-Hill-Aye; All Aye 12-0, motion carried.

Council went into Closed Session at 9:34am.
Council resumed Open Session at 9:41am.

Council members discussed the case amongst themselves. All members came to the same conclusion that Mr. Nixon should not serve as a law enforcement officer or reserve officer in the state of Iowa. Council members agreed that Nixon has anger issues and shows a pattern of abuse which he has not appropriately addressed.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Sadie Weekley made a motion to deny the petition for waiver for Austin Nixon. Diane Venenga seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye, 12-0, motion carried. The waiver was denied.

Council took a break at 9:56am.
Council resumed Open Session at 10:25am.

The fourth item (#4) on the agenda was review of the Screening Committee Consent Agenda.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Dan Jansen made a motion to approve the Screening Committee waivers/extensions for Brett Preston, Jason Brown, Lane Reinke, Joseph Walker and Iris McCarthy. Sadie Weekley seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 12-0, motion carried.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Dan Jansen made a motion to deny the Screening Committee waivers/extensions for Jack Wallace, Jack Davison and Chris Wilson. Ryan Ridout seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 12-0, motion carried.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Melissa Henderson made a motion to approve the CTE applications for Gregory Nyhof, Brittanie DiMichele and Matthew Beckman. Diane Venenga seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 12-0, motion carried.

The fifth item (#5) on the agenda was the approval of the Open Session Council minutes from the January 2026 and February 2026 meetings.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Aaron McClelland made a motion to approve the Open Session Council minutes from January 2026 and February 2026. Dave McDaniel seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 12-0, motion carried.

The sixth item (#6) on the agenda was the ILEA report.

Director Carney advised that ILEA currently has 96 recruits and they are in week 13. Graduation ceremonies are set for Friday, April 24th at Rising Sun Church in Pleasant Hill, IA. The next meeting with the Department of Management and their research team regarding ILEA's Basic Academy Job Task Analysis is on April 14th. They will work through the current curriculum and the administrative rules and send out a survey in the coming months. Director Carney summarized the Camp Dodge Interagency Infrastructure Summary and the Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee meeting regarding future Academy appropriations. ILEA is moving into the second round of interviews for the open instructor position. Council members acknowledged and congratulated Naimah Saadiq on her promotion to Assistant Director of ILEA. The next physical fitness testing will be on Monday, April 13th. ILEA currently has 83 candidates testing.

The seventh item (#7) on the agenda was the review of the Consent Agenda presented below.

Academy Instructor Applications (39)

Academy Curriculum Applications (2)

Cedar Rapids Des Moines

Jail Curriculum Applications (1)

South Iowa Area Crime Commission

Jail Instructor Applications (4)

Anthony Santiago; Stephen Perkins; Kelly Ehrisman; Corey Grote

Telecommunicator Instructor Applications (1)

Amber Nuehring

Residency Ordinance Requests (4)

Gavin Reitsma; Mitchell Conklin; Cole Zebley; Jayden Anderson

Reserve Officer Weapons Applications (10)

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Diane Venenga made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Jana Abens seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken, 11-Aye; 1-Recuse (Henderson), motion carried.

The eighth item (#8) on the agenda was to move into Closed Session. Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Diane Venenga made a motion that the Council go into closed session for the purpose of discussing closed session minutes, whether to initiate licensee disciplinary investigations or proceedings, to discuss the decisions to be rendered in a contested case conducted according to the provisions of chapter 17A, pursuant to Iowa Code sections 21.5(1)(a), (d), and (f). Ryan Ridout seconded the motion. An individual voice vote was taken. Ryan Ridout-Aye; Dan Jansen-Aye; Elizabeth Quinn-Aye; Jana Abens-Aye; Aaron McClelland-Aye; Dave McDaniel-Aye; Sadie Weekley-Aye; Nathan Fulk-Aye; Ric Martinez-Aye; Diane Venenga-Aye; Melissa Henderson-Aye and Vicky Long-Hill-Aye; All Aye 12-0, motion carried.

Council went into Closed Session at 10:38am.

Council resumed Open Session at 11:38am.

(it should be noted that Kevin Schneider joined the meeting at 11:22am)

The ninth item (#9) on the agenda was to vote on items discussed in the Closed Session.

Approval of the January 2026 and February 2026 Closed Session Council Minutes

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Aaron McClelland made a motion to approve the closed session council minutes from the January 2026 and February 2026 meeting. Diane Venenga seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

Review of Final Decision (Case #22-011)

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Jana Abens made a motion that the Council move forward and adopt the decision discussed in closed session. Dave McDaniel seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. 12-Aye; 1-Recuse (Weekley), motion carried.

Review of Decision and Order (Case #25-1)

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Diane Venenga made a motion that the Council approve the final decision as drafted and that the decision be signed and issued to the parties. Melissa Henderson seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

Review of Investigative Files

25-064: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Sadie Weekley made a motion that the Council administratively close this case. Nathan Fulk seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

25-065: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Dan Jansen made a motion that the Council administratively close this case. Aaron McClelland seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-003: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Melissa Henderson made a motion that the Council find probable cause of a violation of 501 IAC rules 6.2(2)(a), (2)(c), AND (2)(e)(3) and order the Academy to proceed with the case. Dan Jansen seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-004: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Elizabeth Quinn made a motion that the Council find probable cause of a violation of 501 IAC rules 6.2(2)(b), (2)(e)(3), and (2)(e)(4) and order the Academy to proceed with the case. Dave McDaniel seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-009: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Diane Venenga made a motion that the Council find probable cause of a violation of 501 IAC rules 6.2(2)(b), (2)(c), (2)(e)(3) and (2)(e)(4) and order the Academy to proceed with the case. Melissa Henderson seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-010: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Dan Jansen made a motion that the Council administratively close this case. Ryan Ridout seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-011: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Diane Venenga made a motion that the Council find probable cause of a violation of 501 IAC rule 6.2(2)(b) and order the Academy to proceed with the case. Sadie Weekley seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

26-012: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Melissa Henderson made a motion that the Council find probable cause of a violation of 501 IAC rules 6.2(2)(b) and order the Academy to proceed with the case. Elizabeth Quinn seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

Revision of Settlement Agreement

25-055: Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Aaron McClelland made a motion that the Council accept the modification to the Council's February 2, 2026 Order and issue the agreed upon Order. Jana Abens seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye; 13-0, motion carried.

The tenth item (#10) on the agenda was future agenda items. Melissa Henderson requested more information regarding background investigations and MMPI's and what those will look like with the new rules updates.

The eleventh item (#11) on the agenda was future Council meetings. The next Council meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2026 and June 4, 2026.

The twelfth item (#12) on the agenda was to adjourn.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Kevin Schneider made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:56am. Elizabeth Quinn seconded the motion. A group voice vote was taken. All Aye, 13-0, motion carried.

Diane Venenga 4/4/2026
Diane Venenga, Vice Chair Date
Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Council