

Open Session Minutes

**IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETING**

September 26, 2023, at 9:00am

Online only

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

Members Present: Diane Venenga, Vice Chair and Chief, North Liberty Police Department  
Ricardo Martinez II, Public Safety Director, Chief, Nevada Police Department  
Melissa Henderson, Officer, Cedar Rapids Police Department  
Elizabeth Quinn, Sergeant, Story County Sheriff's Office  
Vicky Long Hill, Citizen  
Sadie Weekley, Lieutenant, Marshalltown Police Department  
Ryan Ridout, DOT Director, Bureau of Investigation and Identity Protection  
Jim Steinkuehler, Sheriff, Crawford County Sheriff's Office  
Kevin Schneider, Sheriff, Polk County Sheriff's Office  
Eric Gjerde, State Representative

Members Absent: Gene Beinke, Citizen  
Nathan Fulk, Colonel, Iowa State Patrol  
Nate Boulton, Iowa Senator  
Steven Holt, State Representative  
Matthew Roberts, Group Supervisor, United States Drug Enforcement Administration  
Robert M. DeWitt, Senior Supervisory Resident Agent, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Chris Cournoyer, Iowa Senator

Legal Counsel Present: Kristi Traynor, Assistant Iowa Attorney General

Staff Present: Brady Carney, Director, ILEA  
Sherry Poole, Assistant Director, ILEA  
Jack Heuton, ILEA  
Donna Hallstrom, ILEA  
Nicole Stevens, ILEA  
Jennifer Rico, ILEA  
Katy Fukuda, ILEA

Guests Present: Josh O'Dell                      Gary Anderson  
Jennifer Wilson                Bart Richmond  
Matt Thompson                 Donald Phillips  
Benjamin Boeke                Carrie Folkerts  
Ben Scholl                        Joshua Sinnott

Diane Venenga called the meeting to order. Diane Venenga determined there was a quorum.

Diane Venenga stated the proceedings are being recorded and reminded Council members that they are to abstain from participating in and/or voting on any action items involving a potential conflict of interest.

Diane Venenga began with the welcome and introductions of the Academy Council, ILEA staff and guests.

The first item (#1\*) on the agenda was the discussion/review of the Indian Hills Site Visit for a Level II Basic Regional Academy.

Melissa Henderson summarized the Indian Hills site visit that was conducted on August 22, 2023. The Site Visit Committee was made up of the following Academy Council members: Melissa Henderson, Elizabeth Quinn and Ric Martinez. Melissa Henderson started off by saying that the visit was very impressive. They were there for three plus hours touring and visiting with the staff. Members toured the cafeteria area first. They have a chef who takes into account nutritional values for each meal. The food and the lunch facilities are more than adequate for the recruits. The Screening Committee moved to the classroom next. They have one academy classroom that is equipped with white boards and large TV monitors. The class seats 40-45 recruits. The tables/chairs are brand new. The room has Zoom capabilities in case they need to hold a class virtually. The classroom is beautifully set up. There are two other rooms/classrooms for break-out sessions that are fully equipped. From there, the committee moved down the hallway to the evidence processing room which included blood splatters, fingerprinting station, and an observation room. Next, the committee moved to the "great room" which includes a virtual reality simulator with three screens, movable walls for scenarios, room clearing and room entry scenarios. They have a big, open bay where they can drive a vehicle in to use for vehicle extractions and traffic stops. This area is also used for physical fitness and defensive tactics training. The Committee visited their firearms range. They are utilizing Ottumwa Police Department's firing range for training. It is very close to the campus. The range is sufficient but could use a good cleanup, making sure that there are no trip hazards and things like that. The Committee saw the vehicles that they would be using for PIT training and driving operations. Indian Hills has their own vehicle maintenance. They will be using the Eddyville Raceway for their driving training. They discussed the curriculum, the learning management system, plans and disciplinary procedures. They will be appointing a Director after the Council's decision. Indian Hills was open, honest and answered all of the committee's questions. Elizabeth Quinn added that Indian Hills has done a great job getting qualified instructors to teach their courses. They have done their due diligence when getting the facility ready. Ric Martinez stated that there were some contracts that Indian Hills still needed to get finalized which was in reference to the firearm range and liability issues and what needs to happen before training starts. Ric Martinez added that Indian Hills has a great facility and it would be a great environment for anyone to learn in. Jennifer Wilson from Indian Hills voiced her appreciation to Director Carney and his entire staff for their communication and professionalism during this process. President Thompson thanked ILEA, the Council and the surrounding law enforcement agencies that have shown their support in this endeavor. Diane Venenga made some remarks in regards to having consistency in the Student Handbook across the state. Jennifer Wilson advised that Indian Hills is planning on holding two Regional II Basic Academy's per year with no more than twenty recruits in each academy class. They stated they would like to have one start in January and one start around July. Each recruit would have to be hired by a law enforcement agency before entering their academy.

Sheriff Anderson, Appanoose County, advised that his agency has had a great partnership with Indian Hills Community College. There were more than 12,000 (73%) voters supporting Indian Hills and their Level II application.

Chief Boeke with the Oskaloosa Police Department spoke in support of Indian Hills Community College. He stated that he is extremely impressed with their 2-year criminal justice degree program and the strides that they have made to bring a Level II Basic Academy to that part of the state.

(It should be noted that Vicki Long-Hill left the meeting at 9:40am.)

Sheriff Philips, Wapello County Sheriff, spoke in support of Indian Hills Community College. He stated that Indian Hills has worked very hard. They are very dedicated and it is a great opportunity for the southern part of the state.

Carrie Folkerts, Southern Iowa Crime Commission, spoke in support of Indian Hills Community College. They have used Indian Hills for other training for their department and Indian Hills has done a great job with those other training.

Chief Deputy Josh Sinnott with the Davis County Sheriff's Office spoke in support of Indian Hills Community College. Josh stated that he has worked hand in hand with Josh O'Dell for several years with training some of his officers in other areas. Josh O'Dell and the Indian Hills staff have been very positive to work with and are always more than happy to assist with training and answering questions. They are 100% behind Indian Hills.

Director Carney took some time to explain the misnomer that ILEA's Basic Academy classes have been full in the past and that they have had to turn people away or put them on a "waitlist". ILEA's numbers have never been totally full, nor have they had to turn recruits away. They may have been told in the past that they are on a waitlist, merely because of the reservation process, but have never had to turn anybody away due to being at capacity. Director Carney advised that the "reservation" process is being updated and more information will be disbursed in the near future regarding that. Director Carney looks forward to building and growing ILEA's relationships with regional academies in the future.

Ric Martinez voiced his concerns with the fact that Indian Hills Regional would not "house" recruits together and therefore the recruits are not forced to get along with others, deal with different cultures, backgrounds and diverse groups. This is an advantage of being at a central academy. Ric Martinez stated that he doesn't see a need for another regional academy, yet he does see the want. Sadie Weekley stated that she does see a need for the Indian Hill's Regional academy due to the fact that timing can be an issue for agencies. Diane Venenga stated that she has had success with sending recruits to ILEA and other regional academies. Melissa Henderson reiterated that she totally supports a strong central academy but believes that there is a need for a regional academy in the southern part of the state. It will be important that ILEA and regional academies build strong relationships with each other in the future. Kevin Schneider and Director Carney brought up the fact that ILEA is trying to get the central academy fully funded to expand the central academy program and the hope is that future legislation will allow for that to happen. Eric Gjerde agreed that the legislature needs to fully fund the central academy to maintain and enhance the central academy and regionals to ensure that all of Iowa is properly staffed and being trained appropriately.

**Diane Venenga entertained a motion. Melissa Henderson made a motion that:**

**Council grants approval of Indian Hills' application to conduct Level 2 Regional Trainings, including that it be required to comply with all regulations for approval of curriculum and instructors, maintain adequate facilities appropriate to conduct Level 2 training, and comply with the protocols required by ILEA for all regional training facilities.**

**Melissa Henderson further moved that Indian Hills' be required to make revisions to its Student Handbook to correct term inconsistencies and disciplinary structure prior to its first class and that the final version of the Student Handbook be approved by Director Carney (or ILEA Council). Melissa Henderson further moved that the facilities, curriculum, and training be subject to inspections, review, and/or site visits as deemed necessary by the Council.**

**Melissa Henderson further moved that the Council authorize the Vice Chair to issue a written decision consistent with the Council's discussion.**

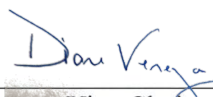
Elizabeth Quinn seconded the motion. An individual voice vote was taken. Sadie Weekley-Aye; Ric Martinez-Nay; Jim Steinkuehler-Aye; Ryan Ridout-Aye; Kevin Schneider-Nay; Elizabeth Quinn-Aye; Melissa Henderson-Aye; Diane Venenga-Aye. Motion carried. 6-Aye; 2-Nay.

The second item (#2\*) on the agenda was Public Comment.  
There was none.

The third item (#3\*) on the agenda was future agenda items.  
There were none.

The fourth item (#4\*) on the agenda was future Council Meetings.  
a) October 5, 2023 @ 9:00am

Diane Venenga entertained a motion to adjourn. Jim Steinkuehler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:08am.

  
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Diane Venenga, Vice Chair  
Academy Council

12/7/2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date