

Open Session Minutes

IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETING

May 14, 2024 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
Nathan Fulk, Colonel, Iowa State Patrol
Vicky Long Hill, Citizen of Iowa
Ryan Ridout, DOT Director, Bureau of Investigation and Identity Protection
Aaron McClelland, Captain, Waterloo Police Department
Jim Steinkuehler, Sheriff, Crawford County Sheriff's Office
Kevin Schneider, Sheriff, Polk County Sheriff's Office
Melissa Henderson, Officer, Cedar Rapids Police Department
Daniel Jansen, Captain, West Des Moines Police Department
Jana Abens, Citizen of Iowa

Members Absent: Diane Venenga, Vice Chair and Chief, North Liberty Police Department
Elizabeth Quinn, Sergeant, Story County Sheriff's Office
Sadie Weekley, Lieutenant, Marshalltown Police Department
Eric Gjerde, State Representative
Nate Boulton, Iowa Senator
Chris Cournoyer, 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

Legal Counsel Present: Kristi Traynor, Assistant Iowa Attorney General

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

Guests Present: Ben Scholl Srdjan Golub
Michael Haislet Mark Howard

Cedar Falls Police Chief, Mark Howard, advised the Council that his agency utilizes ILEA and Hawkeye to certify his officers. It would save his agency an immense amount of money to send his officers to a Level I at Hawkeye rather than ILEA in Johnston, Ia. Having a local Level I would benefit them when it comes to keeping in touch with his officers and their progress along with saving them money.

Mason City Police Chief, Jeff Brinkley, stated that his agency has sent officers to Hawkeye and he has been very happy with the training they have received from them. Approving the Level I for Hawkeye would give his agency another option for training. He fully supports Hawkeye's Level I application.

Lieutenant Nate Neff from the Black Hawk County Sheriff's Office, stated that his agency has used Hawkeye's Level II several times and has been very pleased with the training and communication that his officer's get. His agency is having trouble hiring and retaining good candidates. He just had a great candidate make it through the entire hiring process and was slated to attend ILEA for 16-weeks but he decided to withdraw on account of being away from his family for too long. The advantage of Hawkeye having a Level I, would be that officers would not have to leave their families for a long period of time. Jim Steinkuehler stated that he thinks that if the recruit really wants to be a police officer, they need to realize that sacrifice is part of the job. He had to sacrifice family time when he attended ILEA and was away from his family. Working holidays, weekends, and birthdays are all part of the job. He believes that every Level I should have a residency requirement.

Aaron McClelland spoke to the success of Hawkeye's Level II Academy and the communication he has had with Ben Scholl over the years. Aaron commented on Ben's high level of instruction, his dedication to the process and his dedication to the students. He had constant, local communication with Ben and his staff and he has no concerns with his ability to hold a Level I Academy. Aaron also stated that it would save his agency a ton of money.

Ryan Ridout asked Ben Scholl if he has had issues in the past securing instructors to teach. Ben stated that he has not had any issues in the past with securing instructors. Ben is the only full time instructor for Hawkeye's Level II and Level I at this time and this is a concern for the Council.

Melissa Henderson asked what Hawkeye's intentions were with hosting a Level I Academy. Ben advised that Hawkeye would run a Level II in the spring of 2025, a Level I in the summer of 2025, and then a Level II again in the fall of 2025. There would not be a break in between the academies. Melissa stated that the Council approved Indian Hills to hold a Level II Academy last year, after they came in front of the Council and stated that there was a great need for a Level II in that area of the state. They only had one applicant since then that applied for their program and therefore, they haven't been able to hold a Level II, which shows there really isn't a need. Numbers are down at ILEA and they have not been at full capacity and they have not turned anyone away.

Ben advised that in order for Hawkeye to host a Level I Academy, they would need to have at least 8-10 recruits enrolled to make it sustainable. Six would be the minimum they would work with. Aaron McClelland stated that there would be a need in the next five years with the upcoming retirements.

Ben Scholl spoke to the costs of their Level I Academy. Ben stated that it would not be beneficial or cost effective for those more than an hour away to attend their Level I. Director Carney spoke about the recent legislative change to the Academy fees. Since 2023, there has been a huge push from Chiefs and Sheriffs for the funding piece for ILEA. There has been a lot of discussion within the legislature regarding funding for ILEA. There was a study committee that looked at the fee structure and training that ILEA has done in the past and what that looks like for future training. In the last legislative session, the legislature agreed that the past appropriations for ILEA training are not adequate any longer. Beginning July 1, 2024 the State will cover two-thirds of the academy costs, while agencies will only be responsible for one-third. ILEA's annual appropriation increased from 1.25 million dollars to 2.9 million dollars with FY2025 budget. This will allow ILEA to reduce its tuition. Until the basic academy is fully funded, attendance matters. ILEA is reliant on basic academy attendance. The Director's goal is to increase the appropriation every year so that the basic academy is fully funded regardless of attendance numbers. Director Carney compared ILEA with other states when it comes to POST and Training Academies and the number of recruits at ILEA impacts what ILEA is able to do. Most states have a Basic Academy that includes all of your instructors and the 16-week programs and then they have a POST agency that is in charge of your minimum hiring standards, graduation standards, in-service requirements, your certification and decertification. Those are two separate entities. ILEA is a combination of both under one roof and they are funded all as one. The vast majority of revenue depends on attendance. Director Carney stated that ILEA needs additional staff and funding to oversee the regional academies. It takes resources and funding. This year's budget is a step in the right direction.

Nathan Fulk asked Ben Scholl what Hawkeye's retention rate is with recruits and if they have had to "dismiss" any recruits during their academy training? Ben stated that in the five years he has been there, they have never "dismissed" a recruit from their academy training. Ben did state that they have had students who needed to remediate and sometimes repeat the class or a test. Nathan Fulk talked about the expectations of a Level I academy and the code of conduct that has to be in place for it to run smoothly. It's not only performance based, but it weighs heavily on conduct, demeanor, character development, training, culture and accountability. Some of these recruits are 18-years old and have no life experience dealing with others and no maturity. Ben stated that they have mirrored ILEA's expectations with relevance to their program. Ben stated that they would notify the recruit's agency regarding the issues and have a plan in place for discipline. Nathan Fulk stated that the Academy Council values the partnership ILEA and Hawkeye have.

Director Carney advised that ILEA brings in over 116 assisting instructors every year to assist with the central academy training program. In every 16-week cycle, recruits have issues and ILEA has to dismiss recruits whether it is for conduct, ethical standards, academics, physical fitness, or how they conduct themselves at night and on the weekends. There has to be

structured and regimented policies in place. Several of these recruits are not ready for law enforcement. The Academy Council has to be a part of this.

Director Carney stated that ILEA has 13-14 full time staff that are dedicated to the basic academy in order to make it run efficiently. Director Carney asked Ben Scholl if running a Level II, Level I, Level II back to back to back is feasible on account he is Hawkeye's only full time staff. Director Carney advised that it is a heavy lift running all of those programs.

Ben Scholl responded saying that Hawkeye plans on hiring at least one part-time support person to assist. Ben stated that he thinks he could do it on his own but it would be straining on him and it would be challenging long term. Srdjan Golub stated that they would give additional support to Ben during the busy times.

Director Carney stated that one of Governor Reynold's visions for the state is to have an educated workforce. The structure of a community college to hold a Level II academy makes sense. You take the high school graduate, they enroll in the criminal justice program, they graduate with a criminal justice degree, and then this process serves as a feeder system for your Level II academy. Director Carney asked Ben Scholl if he knew the number of enrollees in their Level II that come from their criminal justice program. Ben advised that it varies. They currently have two right now. The class before that they had three, and the class before that, they had seven. Ben advised that they have never had a Level II basic academy be made up of 100% of students from their criminal justice program.

Council took a break at 10:00am.

Council resumed Open Session at 10:15am.

Srdjan Golub advised that during the break, he was able to pull some numbers regarding numbers for their Level II Academy which consisted of:

Spring of 2020: 8 enrollees

Spring of 2021: 25 enrollees

Spring of 2022: 25 enrollees

Spring of 2023: 30 enrollees

Spring of 2024: 24 enrollees

The issue across the state is finding and hiring qualified people. Director Carney asked what Hawkeye does, if any, in regards to recruiting. Srdjan Golub stated that community colleges work with the K-12 system. Hawkeye has intermediaries that go into the schools, provide dual enrollment programs for other trades, but not currently for their criminal justice program. Srdjan advised that as Hawkeye grows with this program, he would like to dedicate additional resources to assist with recruitment for law enforcement enrollees. There has been some discussion about holding a youth police academy in the future.

Director Carney stated that agencies across the state have to put resources and effort into recruiting. He stated that the community colleges and the Regional Academies are perfect for that.

Director Carney advised that he and Ben attended the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), and heard their Deputy Director, Brian Grisham, speak about third party training entities and how essential it is for those academies to have a residency requirement. Agencies are loosening their parameters for candidates to get into the door and therefore, there is a huge increase in sanctions against officers. Director Carney asked Ben what Hawkeye's position is on this. Ben stated that he does not have an opinion, good or bad, regarding residency. He would like to see the data and the correlation between the officers who were sanctioned and if they attended an academy with a residency requirement or not. Hawkeye's long term goal is to create dormitories to be a replacement for the hotel option. They don't have any data that shows having a non-residential academy is bad for them. It has always worked for their Level II.

Director Carney asked how Hawkeye notifies ILEA/Academy Council when they have rule violations/sanctions because it is the Council's certification that they are handing out. Ben advised that they do not have a lot of violations. Ben stated that if they had a recruit that was caught cheating, Ben would call ILEA and report that and it would be treated as a dismissal. If a recruit is five minutes late for class, Ben would not report that to the Academy, but would have a discussion with that recruit and the recruit's agency. If that recruit had continuous violations, then Ben would call ILEA and report it for possible dismissal. Director Carney stated that when you add monetization to third party training, enrollment numbers generally correlate to graduate numbers. Those numbers look very different when you have department led agencies and state funded academies. Ben stated they haven't seen any big issues within their Level II academy. Ben stated that their program is not designed to make a lot of money. It is there to provide a service.

Jim Steinkuehler asked if Hawkeye would mirror ILEA's physical agility program in their Level I academy. Srdjan Golub responded by stating that Hawkeye's recruits run, puke, lift, cry and hurt. Ben Scholl is a certified personal trainer and conducts the physical fitness for Hawkeye's Level II. Ben stated that this last academy class had 39 hours of PT. They do have an award for the top PT scores.

Council took a break at 11:25am.
Council resumed Open Session at 11:35am.

Ric Martinez asked Ben Scholl how many outside instructors Hawkeye would have for the Level I academy if approved. Ben stated that they would have approximately 55 adjunct instructors. Ric Martinez shared his concerns regarding Ben being the sole, full time instructor, and if Ben was absent, who would be able to run the academy. Nathan Fulk shared his concerns regarding the sustainability of Hawkeye's Level II and possibly the Level I if Ben Scholl decided to retire or leave Hawkeye. Ben stated that he is confident that he has instructors out there who could fill in for him when needed with no issues. Ric Martinez inquired how long their Level I academy would be. Ben Scholl advised that they plan on it going 17 weeks.

Ben Scholl encourages oversight and working closely with ILEA with discipline issues, curriculum and training. Ben stated that the communication between ILEA and Hawkeye has gotten 100% better in the last couple of years since Sherry and Brady have been here. Ben

advised that if they have a recruit that has academic issues, he would inform the agency and ILEA that this recruit's certification needs to be placed on hold until they come back and complete the class successfully.

Ben Scholl stated that Hawkeye serves a lot of agencies and the feedback is tremendously positive.

Jim Steinkuehler stated that he does not have anything against Hawkeye or any other community college. He stressed the fact that the Academy Council's job is to look out for the entire state of Iowa, not just one region.

Ryan Ridout advised there is not a need for another Level I when looking at ILEA's attendance numbers right now. ILEA has not had to turn anyone away and is not at class capacity. The forecasting piece is difficult and what are the numbers going to look like five years from now. The agencies in that region support Hawkeye's Level I application from a budget perspective.


Aaron McClelland stated that Waterloo Police Department would love for Hawkeye to host a Level I academy from a financial standpoint. Aaron McClelland believes that Hawkeye would see class sizes ranging from 6-12 recruits in a Level I. Aaron stated that because ILEA is not properly funded, the Academy Council has to make a decision on something that they cannot control.

ILEA's capacity is 100 recruits and to forecast that number is very difficult. Director Carney stressed the importance of agencies recruiting good people and doing the hard work at the front end. Until this changes, capacity for anyone is unrealistic.

ILEA values the partnership with Hawkeye Community College and Ben Scholl has done a fantastic job with their Level II. Nathan Fulk stated that the Academy Council's goal is to evaluate law enforcement training standards and needs across the entire state of Iowa. There is not an overwhelming need for another Level I academy at the present time.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Nathan Fulk made a motion that the Council disapprove Hawkeye Community College's application to conduct a Level 1 Regional Training facility and that the Council authorize the Chair to issue a written decision consistent with the discussion previously held. Dan Jansen seconded the motion. An individual voice vote was taken. Jim Steinkuehler-Aye; McClelland-Nay; Vicky Long-Hill-Aye; Kevin Schneider-Aye; Melissa Henderson-Nay; Ric Martinez-Aye; Jana Abens-Aye; Dan Jansen-Aye; Ryan Ridout-Nay and Nathan Fulk-Aye. 7-Aye; 3-Nay. Motion approved.

Ric Martinez entertained a motion. Aaron McClelland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:55pm.



Ricardo Martinez II, Chair
Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Council



Date