THE NORTH CAROLINA SHERIFFS' EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS COMMISSION FINAL AGENCY DECISION MINUTES

DATE: June 4, 2026

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Courtyard by Marriott Charlotte Concord
7201 Scott Padgett Parkway, Concord, North Carolina 28027

SUBMITTED BY: Willliam Mitchell, Director

I. CALL TO ORDER — Sheriff Alan Norman

The North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission's Final Agency Decision meeting was called to order by Sheriff Alan Norman on Thursday, June 4, 2026.

Chair Norman welcomed everyone to Cabarrus County. Sheriff Van Shaw also spoke and welcomed everyone. Chair Norman requested a roll call from Commission members. Alex Radford recorded the following:

MEMBERS PRESENT		MEMBERS ABSENT
Sheriff Jack Smith	Sheriff Mike Roberson (Probable Cause)	Sheriff Ed McMahon
Sheriff Chip Hughes	Sheriff Shelton White (Probable Cause)	Ms. Jennifer Fisher
Sheriff Banks Hinceman	Sheriff Don Brown (Probable Cause)	
Sheriff Van Shaw	Sheriff Jeff Crisco (Probable Cause)	
Sheriff Alan Norman	Sheriff Terry Johnson	
Sheriff James McVicker	Sheriff Lowell Griffin	
Mr. Wayne Branch	Retired Sheriff BJ Barnes Jr.	
Mr. Jamie Markham		

STAFF

Joy Strickland	North Carolina Department of Justice
Steven Wilson	North Carolina Department of Justice

Ian Courts	North Carolina Department of Justice
William Mitchell	North Carolina Sheriffs' Standards Division
Alex Radford	North Carolina Sheriffs' Standards Division

Alex Radford announced that a quorum was present.

Chair Norman noted that Mr. Steven Wilson, Assistant Attorney General, would serve as the Commission Legal Counsel. Mr. Wilson read the ethics statement to the Commission members and reminded everyone that both the Petitioner and the Respondent would be limited to 30 minutes of oral argument.

Chair Norman welcomed everyone to the North Carolina Sheriffs' Training and Standards Commission meeting and asked the visitors to stand and introduce themselves**.**

VISITORS

Michael McGuinness	The McGuinness Law Firm
Archie Quintana	Washington County Sheriff's Office
Barry K. Henline	The Law offices of Barry K Henline
Richard N. Venanzi	Onslow County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Chris Thomas	Onslow County Sheriff's Office
Tommie Thomas	Onslow County Sheriff's Office
Cpt. Nathan Triche	Guilford County Sheriff's Office
Cpt. Scott Nelson	Guilford County Sheriff's Office
Archie T. Lynch	Guilford County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Arlo Norman	Washington County Sheriff's office
Ernest Brown	Lenoir County Sheriff's Office
Ricky Ovlier	Retired Yadkin County Sheriff
Eddie Caldwell	North Carolina Sheriffs' Association
Lauren Earnhardt	North Carolina Sheriffs' Association

II. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2026 FAD MINUTES — Sheriff Alan Norman

Chair Norman requested a motion to approve minutes for the March 12, 2026, Final Agency Decisions.

> A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff James McVicker to approve the minutes from the March 12, 2026, Final Agency Decision meeting; seconded by Sheriff Van Shaw. **MOTION CARRIED**

III. FINAL AGENCY DECISION — Joy Strickland / Ian Courts

*Richard N. Venanzi

Mr. Venanzi was present for the proceedings. Ms. Joy Strickland presented oral arguments regarding the case against Richard Nicholas Venanzi.

The petitioner is an applicant with the Onslow County Sheriff's Office. He received a probationary law enforcement certification in December 2021 and served as a deputy with the Pender County Sheriff's Office until his separation on March 18, 2022. After receiving an F-5 report of separation documenting the separation and substantiated concerns regarding the Petitioner's truthfulness.

The North Carolina Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission initiated an investigation. The investigation centered on February 27, 2022, an incident in which the Petitioner left an arrested suspect unattended in a K-9 patrol vehicle for approximately 30 minutes, allowing the suspect to remove his handcuffs, retrieve a seized firearm, ammunition, and narcotics from the front of the vehicle, and escape.

Internal investigators concluded that the Petitioner violated agency policies by failing to properly supervise the arrestee, improperly storing seized evidence, failing to warn responding officers that the suspect may have been armed, and making multiple untruthful or inconsistent statements during the subsequent internal affairs investigation, including admitting he violated an order not to discuss the investigation. Body-worn camera footage and testimony from supervisors supported these findings.

The District Attorney determined the Petitioner's conduct constituted Giglio material requiring disclosure in future cases, although he believed the Petitioner could generally be rehabilitated as a credible witness. At the administrative hearing, the Petitioner maintained that he was unfamiliar with the K-9 vehicle, believed Deputy Nowak had been injured and was awaiting backup on a supervisor's instruction. He denied allowing the suspect to escape, and disputed allegations that he had been untruthful. He also presented testimony from several supervisors with the Onslow County Sheriff's Office who described him as honest, trustworthy, and an effective officer, though they agreed that proper law enforcement practice required frequent monitoring of a detained suspect and communication of potential safety threats to responding officers.

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is hereby ordered that Petitioner's justice officer certification should be revoked for a period of five years for the commission of the Class B misdemeanor of willfully failing to discharge his duties and indefinitely suspend for lacking the good moral character required of a justice office until he can demonstrate through conduct, deed, and word that he has rehabilitated his moral character.

Attorney Barry Henline gave his oral argument regarding the case.

Sheriff Chris Thomas from Onslow County addressed the Commission regarding the case.

Chair Norman asked the Commission if there were any questions.

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Terry Johnson to enter closed session; seconded by Sheriff Lowell Griffin. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Banks Hinceman to enter open session; seconded by Sheriff Van Shaw. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Chip Hughes in the matter of Richard Nicholas Venanzi; Amend the proposed final agency decision by Counsel to **GRANT PROBATIONARY CERTIFICATION FOR FIVE YEARS, ADDITIONALLY, THE PETITIONER DOES NOT LACK GOOD MORAL CHARACTER**; seconded by Sheriff Terry Johnson. **MOTION CARRIED**

***Archie T. Lynch Jr.**

Chair Norman stepped away from this hearing, Vice Chair Shaw took over

Mr. Lynch was present for the proceedings. Mr. Ian Courts presented oral arguments regarding the case against Archie Thomas Lynch Jr.

The petitioner Archie Lynch is a certified detention officer with the Guilford County Sheriff's Office. He tested positive for amphetamines during a routine drug screening on June 6, 2025, and the result was confirmed by a Medical Review Officer on June 17, 2025.

The North Carolina Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission subsequently found probable cause to summarily suspend his certification for violating the Commission's drug-free standards, prompting the petitioner to request an administrative hearing. At the December 2025 hearing, the Petitioner admitted that he had taken another person's ADHD medication without a prescription while experiencing significant personal stress, including marital separation, housing changes, and sleep deprivation, and acknowledged that he should have waited until he completed the proper medical evaluation. He testified that he had since obtained a formal ADHD diagnosis and a lawful prescription for the medication. He accepted full responsibility for his actions and expressed remorse.

Respondent emphasized the Commission's zero-tolerance policy for positive drug tests, while acknowledging that the incident appeared to involve a single use and that the petitioner had since complied with the appropriate medical process. Additional testimony established that the Guilford

County Sheriff's Office would continue to subject the Petitioner to random drug testing if his certification remained active, and the petitioner submitted evidence of exemplary job performance, including commendation for saving the life of a detainee.

The Administrative Law Judge found several mitigating factors, including the Petitioner's subsequent lawful treatment, the isolated nature of the misconduct, the resolution of the personal circumstances contributing to the incident, and his genuine remorse, and recommended that the petitioner be allowed to retain his certification while remaining subject to ongoing random drug testing.

Based on the foregoing, Petitioner's certification should be revoked, reasonable period of probation should be imposed.

Mr. Lynch addressed the Commission and explained his side of the story.

Vice Chair Shaw asked the Commission if there were any questions.

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Terry Johnson to enter closed session; seconded by Sheriff Lowell Grffin. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wayne Branch to enter open session; seconded by Sheriff Terry Johnson. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Lowell Griffin in the matter of Archie Thomas Lynch Jr; Amend the proposed final agency decision by Counsel to **CERTIFICATION SHOULD NOT BE REVOKED, AND THE REQUIDITE FIVE YEAR REVOCATION SANCTION BE SUSPENDED FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS**; seconded by Sheriff James McVicker. **MOTION CARRIED**

***Archie J. Quintana**

Chair Norman returned to the meeting
Mr. Quintana was present for the proceedings. Ms. Joy Strickland presented oral arguments regarding the case against Archie Johnathon Quintana.

Petitioner Archie Quintana was appointed as a Deputy Sheriff with the Washington County Sheriff's Office in 2014 and received his general law enforcement certification in 2016. In 2018 and 2020, the Sheriffs Education and Training Standards Division opened a moral character

investigation after receiving Giglio-related letters from the Washington County District Attorney's Office concerning Quintana's credibility as a witness. The investigation centered on Quintana's handling of a 2017 home invasion investigation, specifically his decision to show the victim a single photograph of suspect on his phone, his failure to document that identification procedure in his initial report, his repeated denials to Sgt. Louis Banks that he had shown the victim a photograph, and his later supplemental report prepared only after further questioning.

The Tribunal and Commission found the testimony of the victim and Sgt. Banks to be credible, concluding that Quintana omitted material information, was not candid during the investigation, and later submitted a supplemental report containing disputed and inaccurate details. Although Quintana presented evidence of his positive reputation, professional demeanor, and strong work performance, the Tribunal found that this evidence did not outweigh the credible proof that he lacked candor and truthfulness in connection with the home invasion investigation.

The Commission therefore concluded that Quintana no longer possessed the good moral character required of a certified justice officer because his omissions, repeated denials, and subsequent explanations demonstrated a pattern of untruthfulness.

The Commission hereby revokes Petitioner's justice officer certification for lack of good moral character.

Attoenry Michael McGuinness gave his oral arguments to the Commission.

Sheriff Arlo Norman with the Washington County Sheriff's Office addressed the Commission.

Chair Norman asked the Commission if there were any questions.

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Terry Johnson to enter closed session; seconded by Commission Wayne Branch. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Terry Johnson to enter open session; seconded by Sheriff Lowell Griffin. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Retired Sheriff BJ Barnes Jr. in the matter of Archie Johnathon Quintana; Adopt the proposed final agency decision by Counsel to **REVOKE CERTIFICATION**; seconded by Sheriff Van Shaw. **MOTION CARRIED**

***Ernest L. Brown**

Mr. Brown was present for the proceedings. Ms. Joy Strickland presented oral arguments regarding the case against Ernest Levine Brown.

Petitioner Ernest Brown is an applicant for detention officer certification with the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office and has served as a detention officer since November 2021. He has since been promoted to Corporal with supervisory responsibilities.

The Administrative Law Judge found that, prior to June 28, 2001, while living in Connecticut, Petitioner engaged in a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old female when he was more than two years older, conduct that constituted second-degree sexual assault, a Class C felony under Connecticut law. Although Petitioner later pleaded guilty and ultimately received full and unconditional pardon, the Administrative Law Judge concluded that he committed the underlying felony offense. The Judge also considered allegations that Petitioner committed felony offenses by failing to comply with Connecticut's sex offender registration requirements in 2008. However, after finding Petitioner's testimony credible that he remained registered and timely submitted address verification forms, the Judge determined there was insufficient evidence to establish that he committed those alleged registration-related felonies.

In October 2020, Connecticut granted Petitioner a full, complete, absolute, and unconditional pardon for the specified offenses, though the pardon did not constitute a declaration of innocence.

The evidence in the record established that Petitioner committed a felony, a second-degree sexual assault in Connecticut and therefore the rules require a denial of certification notwithstanding the later pardon. The Probable Cause Committee's probable cause decision aligns with 12 NCAC 10B .0204(a)(1), 12 NCAC 10B .0205(1)(a), and N.C.G.S. 17E-12, and is therefore legally correct.

Accordingly, it is hereby ordered that petitioner's detention officer certification is denied for the Commission of the felony offense or second-degree assault in Connecticut.

Mr. Brown addressed the Commission regarding his case.

Chair Norman asked the Commission if there were any questions.

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Chip Hughes to enter closed session; seconded by Sheriff Van Shaw. **MOTION CARRIED**

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Chip Hughes to enter open session; seconded by Sheriff Lowell Griffin. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Terry Johnson in the matter of Ernest Levine Brown; Adopt the proposed final agency decision by Counsel to **DENY CERTIFICATION**; seconded by Sheriff James McVicker. **MOTION CARRIED**

***Jamie H. Downey**

Ms. Downey was not present for the proceedings. Mr. Ian Courts presented oral arguments regarding the case against Jamie Heather Downey.

Petitioner Jamie Downey is an applicant for detention officer certification with the Gaston County Sheriff's Office who received a probationary appointment in November 2023. She sought certification despite disclosing a 1995 felony embezzlement charge stemming from an incident when she was 17 years old.

At the administrative hearing, the Petitioner candidly admitted that, while working at Roses department store, she impulsively attempted to steal a newly released CD player she could not afford by placing it in her pocket and trying to leave the store without paying. She expressed embarrassment and remorse, explaining that the charge was deferred and ultimately dismissed. Although the Administrative Law Judge found her testimony credible, transparent, and repentant, he noted that she admitted to conduct constituting an attempted theft from her employer.

In June 2025, after the Petitioner did not attend the Probable Cause Committee meeting, she later explained that her sheriff had advised her not to attend. The Committee found probable cause to deny her certification based on the alleged commission of a felony. The Petitioner timely appealed the decision, and at November 2025 hearing the evidence showed that the offense had occurred more than 30 years earlier, after which she maintained a law-abiding life and devoted over 20 years to public service in emergency medical services before entering law enforcement.

Her qualifications and suitability for law enforcement, apart from the decades-old offense, were not disputed, and she emphasized that she had accepted responsibility for her youthful mistake, had not violated the law since, and had worked to rebuild her life and career.

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is hereby proposed that Petitioner's justice officer certification should be denied permanently.

Chair Norman asked the Commission if there were any questions.

A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff James McVicker to enter closed session; seconded by Sheriff Jack Smith. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff James McVicker to enter open session; seconded by Sheriff Banks Hinceman. **MOTION CARRIED**
A **MOTION** was made by Sheriff Van Shaw in the matter of Jamie Heather Downey; Adopt the proposed final agency decision by Counsel to **DENY CERTIFICATION**; seconded by Sheriff Terry Johnson. **MOTION CARRIED**

IV. LEGAL COUNSEL'S REPORT — Ian Courts

Mr. Ian Courts summarized the Legal Counsel's Report, and reviewed the various stages of litigation for the administrative cases as follows:

- 49 active cases.
- 6 cases closed since the March 12, 2026, meeting.
- 3 case pending judicial review
- 16 new cases have been opened since the last meeting

V. RECESS

A **MOTION** by Sheriff Jack Smith to recess the June 2026 Sheriff's Final Agency Decision meeting: Seconded by Sheriff Terry Johnson. **MOTION CARRIED**