

STATE OF NEW YORK
SECURITY GUARD ADVISORY COUNCIL
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
50TH MEETING

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

10:15AM – 1:20PM

NYS DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES (DCJS)

80 South Swan St. – Rm 118

Albany, NY 12210

Recording Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8TD0dKA1J4>

Council Members Present

Anthony Lauro, Vice Chair Macerich Security Services

U. Nicholas Michailides, Armed and Unarmed, Inc.

Bruce Hulme, Special Investigations, Inc.

Matthew Ventura, ALS Security

Nicholas Auletta, TruView BSI LLC

DCJS Staff

Michael Bonse, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Public Safety

Johanna Sullivan, Director, Office of Public Safety

Todd Murray, Administrative Programs Manager, Office of Public Safety

Matthew Griffin, Associate Training Technician (Police)

Kiley DeCastro, Criminal Justice Program Specialist (Trainee)

Julina Guo, Esq., Senior Counsel, Office of Legal Services

The meeting began at 10:15AM with the hearing concerning the revocation of Eagle Security Training Academy and instructor certification of Brepele Danagogo. Council Vice Chair Anthony Lauro presided as the hearing officer. The hearing concluded at 12:20PM when the Council went into Executive Session to deliberate.

The business meeting began at 12:35PM with a report from the Department of State, Division of Licensing Services. John Goldman, Chief of Licensing Enforcement, and Jenna Berschwinger, Deputy Chief of Licensing Enforcement, represented the Department of State. Ms. Berschwinger reported the Department of State has seen a rebound of numbers to pre-COVID levels over the past year. Currently, there are 179,629 registered security guards with 19,384 of those being registered armed security guards. On the employer side, Department of State reports there are 788 licensed Watch Guard Patrol Agencies, 2,467 licensed Private Investigators and 3,337 licensed Proprietary Employers of Security Guards spread across New York State. Ms. Berschwinger stated there are licenses guard employers in every county except Hamilton and Wyoming, with the bulk of the employers being in the New York City metro area and Long Island. Ms. Berschwinger said the Department of State is continuing with their program of standard audits of security guards and employers.

Following the Department of State report, Council member Ventura talked about some of the challenges the industry is facing in hiring and retention of armed security guards and suggested an adjustment to the prevailing wage of an armed security guard may rectify the problems facing the employers. It was determined that wages and working conditions fall outside the regulatory scope of Department of State and the Department of Labor may be a better venue to discuss that issue.

At 12:50PM Matt Griffin of the Division presented the DCJS report regarding the Security Guard Program. Mr. Griffin highlighted the overall numbers of training submissions in 2022 vs 2023 and noted the Division is seeing an upward trend year over year in the total numbers of trainings being administered across the State. Mr. Griffin also noted the number of new schools approved thus far in 2023 is greater than the number of new schools in 2022, 20 vs. 15 respectively. The largest increase the Division is seeing is in the number of general topic security guard instructor applications. In 2022 the Division approved 131 general topics instructors, while so far in 2023 the Division has approved 190 instructors. Mr. Griffin attributed the rise to an increase in the number of schools permitted to conduct the 40-hour Security Guard Instructor Development Course along with an increase in the number of school districts across the State opening proprietary security guard training schools to train district security staff.

Mr. Griffin then spoke about personnel changes coming to the Security Guard Program with the addition of a second grade 18 traineeship to augment the work performed by the current grade 18 trainee, Kiley DeCastro. Mr. Griffin stated the second grade 18 will allow the Division greater auditing abilities and will allow for more on-site inspections of security guard training schools.

Division manager Todd Murray reported on the progress of hiring contract field representatives to assist the Division in conducting site visits at security guard training schools, especially in the New York City area. Mr. Murray stated the Division would be emailing the Council members information on the contract positions and solicited their assistance in identifying quality candidates to assist with this initiative. A conversation followed with Council member Auletta inquiring about the total number of contract representatives being targeted and was advised that issue is still being discussed.

Following the report on the field representatives, Mr. Griffin spoke about the revised guidance given to schools on creating the 8-hour annual lesson plan. Mr. Griffin explained the goal of updating the directions for the annual in-service is to have security employers and schools develop lesson plans that provide the registered security guards with practical, up to date training on a variety of security topics. Mr. Griffin stated the annual in-service should not be a review of the Pre-Assignment and OJT material but should be an opportunity for security schools to address increasing the skillset and knowledge base of the security personnel across the State. To that end, Mr. Griffin reported the new directions advise the schools they may tailor the annual to their needs or to teach students on current security related subject matter. Mr. Griffin stated there are no mandated objectives in an annual, only broad mandated topic areas. Mr. Griffin gave a few examples stating verbal de-escalation techniques could be taught under Communications and Public Relations, responding to workplace violence under Emergency

Situations, and electives such as CPR/AED certification providing the instructor held the appropriate certifications. The Council expressed interest in reviewing the updated directions and the Division stated this would be emailed to the members.

Mr. Griffin then spoke briefly on requests to update the general OJT material, stating the Unit 9 Terrorism materials were from 2001/2002 and there were other areas with the curriculum that could be updated to offer more practical lessons within the OJT framework. Mr. Griffin reported the process will be lengthy and the Division will need to engage subject matter experts to include paid consultants.

Lastly, Mr. Griffin reported on conversations that have occurred regarding the operating regulations, noting the regulations were last updated in 2014 and there are additions and changes needed to address live virtual training as well as clear up confusion and address areas of concern through updated regulations. Mr. Griffin concluded by saying regulatory change is a lengthy process and would be a topic in future Council meetings. The Division report ended at 1:10PM.

Following the Division report, DCJS Senior Counsel Julina Guo presented two matters that needed Council action to approve. The first concerned a request from the attorney representing PGP Security Consultants to adjourn the hearing on their revocation to a later date. Ms. Guo requested the Council make a motion on approving or disapproving the adjournment request. Council Vice Chair Anthony Lauro made a motion to approve the adjournment request and it was seconded by Council member Bruce Hulme. The motion carried and the adjournment request was approved with discussion indicating the Council would like the hearing to occur after the holidays.

The second matter brought before the Council was the resolution to allow members to attend meetings virtually if a member was unable to appear due to extraordinary circumstances. Ms. Guo reviewed the resolution allowing for virtual attendance and the proposed procedures the Council would need to follow to be compliant with the law allowing for virtual attendance. Council Vice Chair Lauro made a motion to accept the resolution for review with a plan to vote on it at the next Council meeting and it was seconded by Council member Matthew Ventura. The motion passed and the Council will vote on the resolution at the next scheduled meeting.

At 1:19PM Council Vice Chair Anthony Lauro made a motion to close the meeting which was seconded by Council member Bruce Hulme. The motion carried and the meeting was closed at 1:20PM