

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE MERIT BOARD  
MINUTES  
4<sup>th</sup> QUARTER BOARD MEETING – October 18, 2022**

Present were Illinois State Police Merit Board Chairman Michael Clark, Board Secretary James Riley, Board Member Dr. Raymond Garcia, Board Member Tim Touhy, Executive Director Emily Fox, and Chief Legal Counsel Daniel Dykstra.

Assistant Deputy Director Isaiah Vega, Illinois State Police Division of Internal Investigation; Master Sergeant Jim Poortinga, Illinois State Police Office of Labor Relations; Master Sergeant Jim Knipper, Illinois State Police Office of Labor Relations; Captain Sean Brannon, Illinois State Police Command Council; Mr. Bruce Bialorucki, Illinois Troopers Lodge; and Mr. Jacob Gilbert, also attended the meeting in-person.

The meeting was held at the Michael A. Bilandic Building, Chicago.

Chairman Clark opened the meeting at 10:15 AM.

Chairman Clark asked the Board Members to introduce themselves.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Board Meeting minutes held on July 20, 2022.

Executive Director Emily Fox updated the Board on the Applicant Process. Cadet Class 139 – Lateral began on Saturday, October 8, with 52 cadets and currently stands at 49 cadets. Cadet Class 140 began on Sunday, October 9, with 24 cadets and all 24 remain. Cadet Class 141 and Cadet Class 142 are tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2023, with the potential for a lateral and a traditional class. PFIT and Recruitment Exam testing was held in Frankfort on July 16, and August 13. Testing was held in Springfield on July 23 and August 20. The four testing events resulted in the following: 53 PFIT fails, 194 no shows, 15 withdraws, 130 PFIT passes, and 58 written test fails. A total of 87 applicants who passed the PFIT and written test had their background initiated. Background Review is scheduled for November 3, 2022. Oral Interviews are scheduled for November 29 and 30.

Applicants are being processed for Cadet Class 143 and 144, which are tentatively scheduled to begin in June 2023. Cadet Class 143 and 144 have the potential to include a lateral and traditional class. PFIT and Recruitment Exam testing is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, in Frankfort. A total of 230 candidates have been scheduled to participate in testing on October 22. Testing will be conducted on Saturday, October 29, in Springfield. A total of 208 candidates have been scheduled to participate in applicant testing on October 29.

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Executive Director Emily Fox updated the Board on the 2022 Promotional Process. Testing for the 2022 Promotional Process to the rank of Sergeant and Master Sergeant was held in September. This was the first year an assessment center exercise portion was added to the target Sergeant rank. In the past, target Sergeant candidates were only required to participate in a standardized Job Knowledge multiple-question exam. A total of 476 candidates completed the exam and interview. A total of 172 candidates participated in the target Master Sergeant process. Testing to both ranks went very well. The target Promotional Certification Lists delivery date is December 1, 2022.

Chief Legal Counsel Daniel Dykstra provided an update on comments received regarding the proposed Administrative Rule Amendments from the Illinois State Police and the Illinois State Police Troopers Lodge.

Please see attachment containing comments from guest, Jacob Gilbert, provided below.

The Board voted unanimously to go into closed session.

Board Chairman Michael Clark, Board Secretary James Riley, Board Member Dr. Raymond Garcia, Board Member Tim Touhy, Executive Director Emily Fox, and Chief Legal Counsel Daniel Dykstra attended the closed session portion of the meeting.

The Board discussed the Dwayne Jennings 19-4 matter.

The Board discussed the Master Sergeant Macharia Fortson 22-2 matter.

The Board discussed personnel matters.

Executive Director Emily Fox updated the Board on the Discipline Report.

The Board discussed keeping the July 20, 2022, closed meeting minutes confidential.

The Board voted unanimously to go out of closed session and return to open session.

The Board voted unanimously to terminate Trooper Dwayne Jennings.

The Board voted unanimously to terminate Master Sergeant Macharia Fortson.

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The Board voted unanimously to keep the July 20, 2022, closed meeting minutes confidential.

The Board announced the 2023 quarterly Board Meeting dates:

- Quarter 1: January 19, 2023 – Chicago
- Quarter 2: April 19, 2023 – Chicago
- Quarter 3: July 19, 2023 – Chicago
- Quarter 4: October 18, 2023 – Chicago

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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James V. Riley, Secretary

# COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

10/18/2022

Good morning,

I have travelled almost 3 hours on my own time and money to address the board today. I come to you as an individual with 8 years 9 month of Marine Corps Reserve service as an infantry Marine and Marine Corps Sniper. I am also a current certified police officer with multiple years of service. I have accumulated numerous awards from both, been on a specialized Criminal interdiction team, as well as an elite K9 team.

The reason I stand here today is simple. I stand here as an individual that has been denied the opportunity to be employed with such and esteemed agency as the Illinois State Police due to eligibility. I completed the written test. Passed the physical exam and far outperformed the minimum standards in doing so. And I have already passed the background portion of the hiring process. After the background portion I was deemed in eligible and released from the hiring process.

According to the basic requirements of the IL state police an individual needs 1 of the following items to be eligible for employment.

- 1) 60 credit hours of college education.

It is interesting to me that a few years ago the Illinois State Police has lowered the standards of needing a bachelor's degrees, to simply 60 credit hours of extended education. Not even requiring the accumulation of an associates degree, simply 60 credit hours of random education.

- 2) 3 years of ACTIVE military service.

I served voluntarily more than 8 years in the Marine Corps Reserves. I challenge you to find an individual with the proficiency, awards, capability, knowledge and rank as I have with the minimum of 3 years of service required, as compared to my almost 9 years.

Although I was in the Marine reserves, all Marines are held to the same training and evaluation standards. I was more than proficient and often superseded these standards balancing a military career and civilian lifestyle. I received numerous letters of accommodation, multiple letters of appreciation, on the honor roll during the school of infantry, earned 8 "expert" marksmanship badges, and reached the rank of Sergeant (E-5) before my sixth year in the Marines.

- 3) A number of campaign medals

I started as a Private In basic training and progressed to the rank of Sergeant (E-5) in less than 6 years. I held the title of "point man", to the title of Platoon Guide. At one point I had 44 Marines plus additional attachments under my command. I served my county as numerous others have with a deployment over- sea. I sacrificed my time for the greater good of this country. I was there when Jakarta Indonesia was bombed in 2010, I was there on the Naval Ship USS Harpers Ferry ready to deploy as North Korea threatened South Korea in the same year. Our ship was on standby in the coast ready to deploy at a moment's notice.

## COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

Although I was not involved in a direct combat. I still offered my services and elected to voluntarily deployment overseas. The reason I bring this to light is the fact that I was awarded the Global War on Terrorism medal. However, mine does not have the Expeditionary attachment, Deeming me ineligible for the Illinois State Police.

Moving Forward,

After my time in the Marine Corps, I transitioned to my next calling, Law Enforcement. I knew instantly this is the next chapter of my life and the career I wish to hold. I Started as a Patrol officer with the Decatur Il Police Department and quickly set myself apart from the others. I spent time with this agency learning the craft of Law enforcement from the senior members. I received 2 accommodations letters, 1 before ending the probationary period for solving not one, but 2 residential burglaries with juveniles as the suspects, which were charged and found guilty. The other for the seizure of a firearm from a known felon through a consensual encounter and permission to search his residence.

I later resigned and relocated back to MI achieving employment with the Kalamazoo Co Sheriff Department.

While acting in the capacity of a patrol Deputy with the Sheriff's department and in the field training officer program, I routinely educated my Field training officers on recent case law, previous case law, and proactive policing procedures. I recall one specific event with a Field Training Officer. I conducted a check on an out of state license plate and subsequently performed a traffic stop on the vehicle. During the traffic stop I called upon Sgt Joe Coleman, the K9 Sgt. After establishing reasonable suspicion there was the presence of Methamphetamine in the vehicle a K9 free air sniff was conducted. This resulted in the arrest of the suspect for the possession of Methamphetamine. My field training officer was not aware of how to conduct checks of out of state license plates.

After this interaction with Sgt Coleman, he took note in my ability to conduct police work. Two days after the conclusion of field training officer program, Sgt Coleman was conducting surveillance on a residence suspected of being involved with the distribution of narcotics, specifically Methamphetamine. Sgt Coleman asked me to conduct a traffic stop on a vehicle which resulted in the seizure of a loaded .357 magnum Handgun. This traffic stop and interview later resulted in the seizure of more that a pound of methamphetamine, 2 additional firearms and 3 felony warrant arrest from the initial residence.

This resulted in Sgt Joe Coleman to ask If I was interested in the criminal interdiction team. I had been previously trained in such a manner and was looking forward to working on such a specialized team. On the second day I conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle which resulted in a seizure of \$23,000 of illegally obtained drug money. Throughout my time with the interdiction team, I accumulated more than 50 felony narcotic arrest, some of dealer amounts, 5 firearms, and countless warrant arrests. All of this before ending my probationary period.

Before the probationary period ended, I was approached By Sgt Coleman and asked If I had interest in the position of being a K9 handler. I participated in the K9 selection process and still to this day hold the highest score anyone has ever achieved. Subsequently, I was selected and was now a K9 handler.

## COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

After almost 2 years with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Dept I resigned as there was a family emergency that required my wife and son to return to the Decatur area. During that time, I applied and was selected by a federal law enforcement agency the United States Marshall Service. The only reason I am not employed with them today is due to the fact they asked me to relocate to Fargo North Dakota. I was not willing to uproot and move my family 15 hours away.

It is 2022 and the attitude around this country towards law enforcement is unfortunately poor. Officers are being shot, wounded, or killed at rates we have never seen before. Every agency around the country is desperate to find candidates, especially quality candidates. Yet here I stand on my own free will of sound mind, able bodied, and willing to put on the uniform and bring justice to those that have broken the law.

I have also brought with me 3 letters of recommendation from a few of my close peers. The first is Sgt Joe Coleman which I previously mentioned. The second is from Adam Zorn, he is a medical physician that not only practices, but teaches people to be doctors. The third is from Andrew Nielson, a current Law Enforcement officer with the Denver CO. Police department and an Afghanistan combat veteran. We served together at the start of our military careers, and although our paths went in different directions, we remained the closest of friends.

All 3 individuals have been gracious enough to express their belief of what type of person I am and recommend me for the position as an IL State Trooper.

I live 3 hours away near the City of Decatur. I took a day off from my personal job to travel here to speak with you personally. So that you may see my face and understand what I am asking.

This being said, I am asking that you take into consideration a waiver for myself so that I may be deemed qualified to hold the position of an IL State trooper. I understand this request is not one that has the potential to be answered immediately. I am also asking the board to consider the previous professional experience of other candidates. I firmly believe I would be a valuable asset to this agency and ask for you to take this into consideration.

Respectfully,



Jacob W. Gilbert

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter regarding Jacob Gilbert a hopeful candidate to be considered for a position in the Illinois State Police Department.

It has come to my knowledge that Jacob Gilbert was deemed unqualified for a position within the Illinois State Police Department due to lack of college credits. I would like to strongly encourage the hiring board to reconsider this decision. I have known Jacob Gilbert since 2006 where we met as recruits in bootcamp for the United States Marine Corps. Jacob Gilbert stood out amongst his peers from day one, showing outstanding natural leadership abilities, dedication and work ethic.

Jacob Gilbert continued to fill the desire to serve his community when he became a Police Officer in Decatur Illinois and followed opportunities back to his home state of Michigan serving as a Deputy for the Kalamazoo Sheriff's Department. Despite my best efforts in getting Jacob Gilbert to come join me and become a Denver police Officer, Gilbert's family and his love for the State of Illinois has drawn him back to living and choosing to raise his family in Illinois. Jacob Gilbert has routinely spoken with me about his want to serve his community through the Illinois State Police.

I understand requirements have been established for candidates to have several college credits. I would strongly argue that Jacob Gilberts Marine Corps, law enforcement and life experiences far surpass anyone coming fresh out of college. Jacob Gilbert would make a tremendous addition to any Law Enforcement Department in this Country.

Through my personal time within the Marines (five Years) as well as a Police Officer with Denver Police Department (eight years) working in various positions from Narcotics and Tactical Teams, I have rarely come across anyone as dedicated, empathetic, compassionate, caring and ant biased in serving their community and Country as Jacob Gilbert.

I strongly encourage the hiring board to investigate any exemptions or considerations to be made in order to allow Jacob Gilbert to join the Illinois State Police ranks to further strengthen their department.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Officer Andrew Nielsen 14076  
Andrew M Nielsen 14076

## COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

From: Adam Zorn [REDACTED]

Date: Oct 12, 2022 at 9:28:18 PM

To: Jake Gilbert [REDACTED]

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Letter of rec attached

October 12, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Jacob Gilbert. I have known Jake for nearly a decade and count him among my close friends. As avid outdoorsmen, we have shared many hours on many adventures together. He is as honest and hardworking a man as you may hope to meet, who is motivated by a deep sense of duty and the desire to protect those close to him and his community. He is always one of the first to respond to a friend in need and never fails to go the extra mile to ensure someone is looked after. His commitment to excellence in all that he does is exemplary. As a former resident in one of the communities which Jake has served previously, it is my opinion that our city was safer with Jake as officer. I believe he is exactly the type of individual this country needs more of, that he is a credit to the departments and communities he has served thus far, and that any agency or organization would be fortunate to count him among their ranks.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,



Adam P. Zorn, MD  
[REDACTED]



## COMMENTS FROM GUEST ATTACHMENT

From: Joe Coleman [REDACTED]  
Subject: Letter of Support  
Date: Oct 14, 2022 at 12:27:01 PM  
To: [REDACTED]

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Here you go bro. Good luck!

October 14, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Jake Gilbert. My name is Joe Coleman and I am a retired Sergeant from the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office in Kalamazoo, MI. I had the pleasure of being Jake's direct supervisor during his time with our agency from January of 2018 to July of 2019. Our agency at the time had 60 sworn road patrol deputies that serviced 270,000 residents.

When Jake first started with our agency in the training program I knew he was going to be special. His drive to excel in everything he did was unmatched. He came with an incredible amount of street knowledge and it was obvious that he was heads above many due to his service to our country in the United States Marines and his time at his previous police department.

I was on many calls with Jake and his Training Officer where Jake was actually teaching his training officer new things. He was sharp on the law, he was sharp with case law and he had an invaluable skill. That skill was the ability to communicate effectively with people from all walks of life. This skill in and of itself created success for Jake. Jake was constantly developing informants, ridding our communities from an out of control meth pandemic, and made countless arrests because of the street savviness he had.

When Jake got out of his field training program I knew I needed him and his skills on our Criminal Interdiction Team which I headed along with our K9 Team. Jake was placed on this interdiction team which was a joint effort with the Department of Homeland Security Investigations. He had many successes during this time ridding the streets of narcotics, bulk cash smugglers and criminals. If you have ever worked a team like this than you know success does not come without the superb ability to communicate with people, having great knowledge of the law and an unteachable thing called instincts. Within a few months Jake was also selected as a K9 Handler on our elite K9 Team.

I write all of this not to just boost Jake, but to highlight that street smarts, common sense, and drive cannot be taught in any school. These are things that people have or do not have. They are more valuable than a college degree and are a degree of education all on their own.

While I understand minimum standards and that you may have a minimum college credit standard, I also know that there is the ability to grant waivers on a case by case basis. This would and should be one of those cases that waiver is granted. Jake is an exceptional police officer and an even more exceptional person. Jake's life experience through the military and police work far outweigh any college credit or degree he could obtain.

I would like to implore you to consider Jake for a waiver into your agency. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Any questions can be directed to me at [REDACTED]

Respectfully,

Sgt. Joe Coleman (Ret.)  
Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office