

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

February 12, 2009

Corrections Board Room, Atlanta

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III
Sheriff Steve Cronin
Chief Lou Dekmar
Sheriff (Retired) Bruce Harris
Chief Jack McElfish
Chief Dwayne Orrick
Commissioner Brian Owens
Sheriff Cullen Talton
Mr. Ellis Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Wayne Abernathy
Mr. Bud Black
Mr. Dub Harper
Mr. Jerry Willis

OTHERS:

Ms. Laura Jones, Board Liaison
Mr. Joe Drolet, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Colonel Bill Hitchens, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Lieutenant Colonel Fred Snellings, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Major Mark McDonough, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Mr. Joe Hood, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Major Stewart Hicks, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Chief Mark McLeod, MCCD, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Captain Mike Fagler, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Sergeant Russell Hayes, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Ms. Jacqueline Bunn, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Mr. Dan Brown, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol
Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Dan Kirk, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Paul Heppner, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Jon Paget, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Lisa Urich, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Butch Beach, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Patrice Kerner, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Dr. Teresa Resch, Technical College Systems of Georgia
Mr. Frank V. Rotondo, Chiefs of Police Association
Ms. Carla Dolby, Office of the Attorney General
Mr. Ramon Gilbert, Hall County Sheriff's Office
Mr. Ken Vance, Georgia Peace Officer Standards & Training Council
Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Georgia Department of Corrections

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the February Board of Public Safety meeting to order. Mr. Wood then requested Sheriff Steve Cronin to open with prayer. Sheriff Cronin gave comments in regards to the current budget, he then shared Luke 12: 13-21 and also made a special mention to board member Jerry Willis who was currently at Emory Hospital undergoing medical tests after falling ill the previous night. Everyone remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Wood asked each visitor to tell who they are and where they are from.

Mr. Wood then called for approval of the January Board Minutes. Chief Dwayne Orrick made the motion, it was seconded by Sheriff Cronin and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECT REPORTS

Vice-Chairman Wood asked if it would be acceptable for Director Keenan of the GBI to brief first because he had a prior appointment that may conflict with the meeting. Mr. Keenan began his briefing by saying that his agency had gotten pretty beat up over their budget presentation during one of the legislative sessions. He then said he wanted to base his report around a piece of legislation being introduced by Representative Burke Day, Chairman of the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee. The bill regards a loophole concerning false documents/identification. Essentially, someone can purchase a driver's license which looks identical to a Georgia license except it has the word "novelty" in the bottom right hand corner. Some agencies that make and sell this type will sell you a license without the novelty stamp if the seller is familiar with the buyer and the buyer agrees to a higher fee otherwise buyers who purchase the license with the novelty stamp can easily dispose of the stamp by using acetone. (Mr. Keenan showed a prop of the novelty driver's license) With the current statute, there is an exemption for novelty driver's licenses so at this time it is not illegal to manufacture and distribute novelty driver's licenses and the proposed legislation will close this loophole. It has already passed the House; he expressed appreciation to Chairman Day for his support.

Chief Lou Dekmar, asked if this bill would include downloading programs for use in making novelty licenses and Mr. Keenan said it would. The question was also asked if this bill applies to out-of-state novelty licenses and Mr. Keenan said it should apply to any license with novelty on it.

Colonel Hitchens, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, discussed the budget and stated that they received an 8% cut this year and they expect to be decreased by 11% for FY 2010. He also said they are already feeling the budget reductions in terms of reduced manpower and have been featured in several televised stories in reference to this. He then stated that DPS has had a difficult time hiring motor carrier officers who are also POST certified which has led to their inability to man the weigh stations. To assist in rectifying this situation, they are introducing proposed legislation to assist them with filling these vacant weigh station positions using civilians. His proposal is to use retired law enforcement or retired military since this position performs an administrative function. Representative Collins will introduce this bill to the General Assembly. There is also legislation

pending for a minor modification to trailer vehicles to ensure they comply with Federal regulations or risk losing their Federal funding which is 1/3 of their budget; Representative Burns will carry this bill.

The third legislative change is to officially move the Capitol Police under DPS which actually took place about seven years ago; this includes about 200 people and Representative Chambers will introduce this bill. The Colonel then invited everyone to the state trooper graduation on next Friday, February 20 at GPSTC. The actual graduation will begin at 10:00 am and they will hold VIP seats until about 9:45. There will be a breakfast at 8:00 followed by a final troop inspection at 9:00.

There is a new law enforcement vehicle manufacturer, Carbon Motors Corporation, who at the current time had a vehicle on display near the Capitol. Some of the cars specifications include: 3.0 Diesel engine with 28-30 miles/gallon; 155 miles per hour; 6 speed automatic transmission; 0 to 60mph in 6.5 seconds; ¼ mile in 14.5 seconds at 98 mph; and his personal favorite is the equal weight distribution on both axles. It is a green vehicle and they also have a “buy back” program and it is a possibility it will be located in Georgia. The approximate cost will range from \$38,000 to \$48,000 including the lights/sirens/detectors etc. He felt the cost is comparable to what they currently pay.

Additionally, Colonel Hitchens gave an update on the communications systems and stated that all the software had been loaded and they just needed to install the computers in the vehicles. They would like to have all of the cars prepared for the next trooper school graduation. He also informed everyone that the forms used for citations and incident reports now fall under Department of Driver Services (DDS) and all using agencies’ forms need to match DDS forms exactly, with no deviations; he suggested that they get with DDS to ensure compliance.

Sheriff Cronic stated that they have quite a few volunteers in his agency and he suggested that DPS may want to solicit qualified retirees to volunteer at the weigh stations. He felt that some retirees would love to donate a day or two out of their week to help out.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked if the information concerning the disparity in the citation/incident report forms had been conveyed to the Chief’s and Sheriff’s Association. Colonel Hitchens then replied that DDS will not make an issue of the differences but would like agencies to be in compliance.

Mr. Butch Beach, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, began by stating that the information for their report is located in the notebooks so unless someone has questions he will move on to the next item. He then reported that Robert “Bob” Sanderson, Deputy Director of Training, will retire after 34 years of service effective February 28 and asked for the Board’s consideration to present him with a resolution at one of the future Board meetings. This motion was made by Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III, seconded by Sheriff Cronic and voted approved by the Board members.

Sheriff Cullen Talton asked why GPSTC had canceled some weapons training classes and per Mr. Beach, it was due to the cost of ammunition and budget cuts.

Mr. Rooney Bowen, III was concerned that since there is no longer a burn building the volunteer fire chiefs would not be able to certify. Mr. Beach relayed that they had raised enough money to build a new burn building but it would take about 18-24 months. The two pods they currently have cannot be utilized because they are attached to a building which has been condemned; therefore, construction has to be completed before they are available for use. He advised that they will conduct some Mod. 1 burns offsite and training will still get accomplished but at a slower rate.

FISCAL REPORTS

Mr. Joe Hood, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, gave the financial report with the main issue being that the funds they receive from DOT for permit fees has not been issued. Motor vehicle compliance funds are derived from three sources, the State, other funds (permit fees) and federal. He stated they normally receive the permit currency monthly but as of this fiscal year they have not received anything. They are working on this issue and hope to have it resolved by the next Board Meeting.

Ms. Lisa Ulrich, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, based her report on the Governor's recommendation for her fiscal report which is about 7% for FY 09 and they are currently on target.

Ms. Patrice Kerner, Georgia Public Safety Training Center reported that their agency's year-to-date expenses currently equal 52% of their budget. She also reiterated the Governor's recommendation to stop providing meals to state agencies. They also have eliminated some classes that would require meals. The cost for meals is \$15.50 a day.

DONATIONS

Mr. Joe Hood, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, requested approval of the following donations:

One ProLaser III	\$ 3,000.00	Hart County Board of Commissioners
One AMS Race Detail Expense Check	\$10,625.00	Atlanta Motor Speedway
Two SafCo Dispatch Chairs	\$ 850.00	Monroe County Sheriff's Office
Three Stalker DSR 2X Radars	\$ 9,630.00	McIntosh County Sheriff's Office

The motion for these donations was made by Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III, seconded by Mr. Bruce Harris and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Lisa Urich, Georgia Bureau of Investigations, requested approval of the following donations:

One 2008 Chevrolet Avalanche 4X4	\$34,750.00	Cherokee County Control Board
Testing Reagents for Toxicology Use	\$46,339.75	Macon Medical Center

Chief Dwayne Orrick made this donation approval motion; it was seconded by Chief Lou Dekmar and voted approved by the Board members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Jon Paget, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, proposed a resolution by the Board to authorize the deeding of a .33 acre parcel and structure located on the corner of Middleground Road and Mohawk Avenue in the city of Savannah, Chatham County, from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (BOR) to Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI).

The motion was made by Chief Orrick, seconded by Chief Dekmar and voted approved by the Board members.

Dr. Teresa Resch, Technical College Systems of Georgia (TCSG), briefed that the Law Enforcement project is on schedule and she was happy to report that all 6 of the academies are now POST approved to train 200 additional, culturally diverse peace officers. They were approved in December and classes began in January. The academies are fully staffed and already have waiting lists for attendees. Overall things are moving very well and according to plan.

TCSG has received a lot of support from the communities and donations in the form of time, equipment/resources and monetary contributions. The six academy sites are located at: Augusta, Coosa Valley, DeKalb, Ogeechee, Savannah and South Georgia Technical Colleges. They will continue to evaluate the success of this project and she will come back later in the year to give reports on the employment rate, students who have continued their education, the washout rate, the number of students with POST infractions and an overall success rate.

Mr. Ken Vance, Peace Officer Standards & Training Council, added that they are assisting Reinhardt College (a private college) to establish this same type of program to their Alpharetta campus. He feels that this is the direction for future recruiting/training of new law enforcement officers.

Ms. Jacqueline Bunn, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, gave an update on the low speed vehicles and passed out a current brochure for them. The brochure included a revised chart with modifications to the all terrain vehicles (atv). The chart will not be posted on the website to try to avoid confusion.

Vice-Chair Wood then discussed the dates for the next Board meetings. The March meeting will be held in the Department of Corrections Board Room, the April Meeting will be on the 16th at Mr. Wayne Dasher's in Tattnall County. This is also the date of the annual Law Enforcement BBQ at Mr. Dasher's and he encouraged the members to take some time to visit Georgia State Prison and the farm facility. This meeting will be a joint meeting with the Board of Corrections, Pardons & Parole Board, and the Board of Public Safety. It is the Governor's wishes to have joint Board meetings throughout the State and an invitation was extended to Ken Vance for POST to participate. The Department of Juvenile Justice's Board may also participate. The May meeting will be in Savannah with a possible tour of the Georgia Port Authority, July's meeting was canceled due to vacations and the summer holiday and he made a recommendation to decide the other meetings sometime within the next three meetings. Sheriff Cronin volunteered his training center to be a site for a future Board meeting.

Mr. Wood then passed out the list of committee assignments and stated that he would like for the members to as active as possible to help make a contribution without too much intrusion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Rooney L. Bowen, III
Secretary