

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

April 14, 2022

Georgia National Guard Armory
Glennville, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Captain Nicholas D. Ellis
Mr. Richard Hyde
Chief Leonard "Dee" Meadows
Commissioner Michael Nail
Mr. Samir J. Patel
Mr. Rossie J. Ross
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Bruce Carlisle
Sheriff Dane Kirby
Sheriff Joey Terrell
Chief Craig Tully

OTHERS:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General's Office
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison
Ms. Cheryl Buie, Department of Public Safety
Commissioner Christopher C. Wright, Department of Public Safety
Lt. Colonel Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Wayne Mobley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Cheryl Greathouse, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Chadd Wilson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Hal Braswell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mrs. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Judge Brian Rickman, Court of Appeals

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the April 14, 2022 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced Court of Appeals Judge Brian Rickman to the room. Judge Rickman thanked everyone in the room for their service in law enforcement.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the March 10, 2022 BPS minutes. Mr. Rossie Ross made the motion to approve the March 10, 2022 minutes. This was seconded by Commissioner Michael Nail and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, thanked the Board Members that were able to attend the 85th Anniversary Awards Ceremony on Jekyll Island, and reported the Ceremony was

successful and five former Commissioners were able to attend, along with Governor Kemp, First Lady Kemp, and two of their daughters.

Commissioner Wright reported the 111th Trooper School will graduate on April 29th with 41 new Troopers and invited Board Members to attend. Commissioner Wright noted the 112th Trooper School graduated this past Friday with 27 new Troopers. Commissioner Wright added after these graduations, the Troopers number will be 830. Commissioner Wright shared there were 907 applicants that have passed PT for the 113th Trooper School, which begins on July 13th.

Regarding the legislative session that ended on April 4th, Commissioner Wright announced for the Amended Fiscal Year budget, the legislators were very gracious and supportive and gave DPS 6.6 million dollars for furniture and equipment for the new Headquarters building; 4.8 million additional dollars to complete the Headquarters building; 2.1 million dollars to complete Post 33, Post 18, and renovate Post 8; 12 million dollars for new vehicles; and funds for additional therapy canines for the Office of Public Safety Support.

Concerning the Fiscal Year 23 budget, Commissioner Wright shared everyone is familiar with the 5-thousand-dollar cost of living adjustment, which was retroactive to the FY22 budget as well; additional funding for a 10% pay supplement for personnel working in Troop C and Region C, which is in the Metro Atlanta area. Commissioner Wright noted the Department has a really hard time recruiting and retaining personnel in the Metro Area and it is obvious why they deserve a little bit more than those in other areas, adding it was something done years ago, but it went away; however, with the environment and work DPS personnel are doing, they feel it is important to recruit and retain. Commissioner Wright shared 1/3 of the Department's pursuits occur in the Troop C area and 1/3 of the Use of Force reports occur in the same area, indicating the workload is there to justify the supplement. Commissioner Wright shared the Department was able to secure a thousand-dollar supplement for Capitol Police and Post 50 personnel that work around the Capitol; and they were able to get funds for two additional Peer Counselors and one Social Worker for the Office of Public Safety Support, indicating the Division is growing and the need is there.

Commissioner Wright also shared the Department received 750 thousand dollars for fuel; funds for 10 additional SWAT members; and a 75-member Trooper School. Commissioner Wright noted Senate Bill 343 adjusted the 401(k) employee match for employees under the GSEPS Plan, which will be beneficial to help retain personnel, explaining during the first five years of employment, the state increases its matching amount from three to five percent and after five years it goes up half a percent for each additional year of credible service and will max out at nine percent on the State's behalf. Commissioner Wright shared House Bill 1146 allows the Agency to have more slick top vehicles. Commissioner Wright explained previously, according to Georgia Law, the Department was only able to have two per patrol Post and this was taken out of the code section, and it gives the Agency the ability to expand the program, which will help in terms of fighting crime and apprehending violators. Commissioner Wright advised House Bill 1216 was one of Governor Kemp's initiatives, the Fleeing and Attempting to Elude Law, where the penalties and fines are substantially increased.

Commissioner Wright updated the Board on construction projects, indicating the new Headquarters project is moving forward and January 17th is still on track as the completion date. Commissioner Wright reported Post 16-Hazlehurst is now complete and the plan is to move in the first week of May; Post 33-Milledgeville is under construction and completely dried in, with a completion date of July; Post 18-Reidsville is in the final design phase and should go out to bid in the next couple of weeks; the Jekyll Island Authority received funds through legislators this year to build a new public safety complex, which will be a joint facility between DPS and Jekyll Island Fire/EMS.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Commissioner Wright where the Jekyll Island facility will be located, to which Commissioner Wright explained it will be behind the miniature golf on the beach side and the land is already being cleared. Mr. Sikes asked, in regard to the slick tops, since there are no lights on top, would they still be lit up and visible. Commissioner Wright explained they will be, and the push bumper will have an agency identifier that will say "State Patrol", noting lights, siren, and equipment now is more advanced than it used to be and it is very bright. Mr. Willie Bolton asked if the numbers on top of the cars will still be visible, to which Commissioner Wright confirmed it will be and there are new decals now that are more reflective. Mr. Willie Bolton asked about the status of the memorial for the old Georgia Police Academy that was where DPS Headquarters currently stands. Commissioner Wright advised it is in progress and designs have been drafted and presented.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, advised the Board the Bureau had a great legislative session, which will allow them to grow personnel in the Lab. Director Reynolds noted since the single source drug cases and DNA cases have been outsourced, its backlog is going down, but the ballistics backlog that affects the more serious cases is high and the Bureau will be able to add six new ballistic scientists. Director Reynolds added legislators provided funds for the Agency to conduct more in-house training to bring in ballistics experts to train the new scientists.

Director Reynolds announced the Cold Case Unit is working well and a case in Chattahoochee County was solved, which is a 40-year old murder case where a 23-year old Army private was murdered in 1982. Director Reynolds shared the individual arrested in this case is also a suspect in three more murders. Director Reynolds also noted the Cold Case Unit is very close to solving a case in Athens and pretty close to one in the South Georgia area. Director Reynolds anticipates good results from this Unit.

Director Reynolds advised there will be a grand opening of the Region 7 office in East Georgia in late Spring or early Summer.

Director Reynolds shared he has expectations the Chief Medical Examiner and the incoming Assistant Medical Examiner, who will be leading up a fellowship program, will have the GBI Medical Examiner's Office as the premiere training facility for Forensic Pathologists in the country within the next four to six years. Director Reynolds stated this will help with retaining employees.

Director Reynolds acknowledged Commissioner Wright and the working relationship the GBI has with DPS, stating the DPS is a premiere agency, and he is humbled to stand with them.

Mr. Samir Patel thanked Director Reynolds for participating in a Back the Blue event in Bartow County that was very well received. Mr. Patel asked if there has been any negative pushback with outsourcing lab tests, to which Director Reynolds replied he thought there might be, particularly with drug identification and getting expert witnesses to trial, but he stated they have not had that issue yet.

Mr. Rossie Ross stated the Bureau did a great job with the Cold Case in Chattahoochee County.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Director Reynolds how many Medical Examiners the Bureau has now, to which Director Reynolds stated they are budgeted for 18 and currently have openings in Macon and Pooler. Director Reynolds further stated the Governor and legislators gave funding to fill those openings and an additional three, which will give them twenty-three.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked if DNA plays a big part in assisting the Cold Case Unit. Director Reynolds explained it does and the process is to triage the cases and the ones that have evidentiary bags left are the ones that are focused on.

Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, shared during the month of February, the Training Center had over 20,000 students and just under 206,000 students year-to-date, indicating the Center is ramping back up to the point where a main project is repaving of the parking lots to accommodate more parking space.

Deputy Director Greathouse introduced Mr. Hal Braswell to the Board as the new Division Director for Instructional Services, which is her old position, and the Training Center is excited to have him in this position taking on the special projects of that job.

Deputy Director Greathouse updated the Board on the kitchen remodel at the Center stating the project is progressing and there have been no problems or issues with serving students or personnel and hope the project will complete in late April or early May. Deputy Director Greathouse thanked the Alma and Bacon County Board of Commissioners for loaning their mobile kitchen to utilize while the remodel is being completed.

Deputy Director Greathouse shared the Center is in the process of a low-light shoot house project, explaining the concrete has been poured and they are waiting on the metal building, which is expected to arrive in late April.

In regard to Bond Requests, Deputy Director Greathouse shared this year, the legislators cash funded the Training Center's Bond Request in the FY22 budget which will include additional HVAC work, paving of the parking lots, perimeter road, and general maintenance and repairs.

Deputy Director Greathouse updated the Board on the program with Georgia Southern University to implement a tactical athlete program as part of the basic mandate training program, which will be a functional fitness program where a candidate will begin with a physical abilities test and once in the

program, the candidate will go through functional fitness training throughout the program. Deputy Director Greathouse explained the Training Center will be working with GSU and their program to collect data for a year. Deputy Director Greathouse shared last week, GPSTC instructors were at GSU to complete some instructor training for personnel teaching the program, and representatives from Arizona POST were there to talk with them about the basic mandate curriculum and were interested in the tactical athlete program as well, and the Center has recently learned the Department of Justice is also interested in talking with GPSTC. Mr. Chadd Wilson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, thanked Commissioner Wright for Sergeant Ian Moreman's assistance with the GSU instructor class.

Deputy Director Greathouse advised the Training Center's Fire Services has been working on a pipeline initiative and recently had an event where the pipeline initiative and Atlanta Gas Light Company put together an advanced training program on air monitoring. Deputy Director Greathouse explained there were simulations where certain products were released in the air, which was tested and monitored to see what the levels were, and firefighting personnel were shown how to measure with their air monitoring equipment.

Regarding the legislative session, Deputy Director Greathouse advised the Board one of the things the Center was able to get as part of the legislative session is 10 new positions for use of force instructor. Deputy Director Greathouse explained the program is to have a dedicated set of instructors reach out to local agencies to use simulators and scenario-based training across the state, specifically the rural areas that do not have access to the training. Deputy Director Greathouse advised the Center has the positions and funding for the protective equipment, but they do not have funding right now for how to move the simulators and equipment around the state; however, the instructors are being hired and trained. Deputy Director Greathouse expressed she is hopeful on getting the funding to transport the equipment.

Deputy Director Greathouse shared Senate Bill 505 mandated several training programs for 911 Communications personnel, but it did not include a fiscal date; therefore, the Center did not get funding or positions for it. Deputy Director Greathouse explained the date was pushed out to January 1, 2024 to give them time to get funding and positions for that training. Deputy Director Greathouse advised the program is going to require in-service training, which currently is not required for 911 Communications personnel and has not been required since 1995. Deputy Director Greathouse noted Communications personnel have perishable skills just like law enforcement officers do, and added in-service training requirements will be annually, as well as training for 911 Directors.

DONATIONS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of the following donation:

Two (2) DSR 2X Radar Units, Two (2) Stalker RLR Lidar Units, Four (4) Vizio 40-inch Smart TVs, Four (4) Extended TB Wall Mounts, and Four (4) Atlantic Single Adjustable Component Shelf Mounts	\$12,810.96	Bartow County Commissioner's Office
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Mr. Rossie Ross, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Director Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval of a Resolution to authorize the State Properties Commission to transfer custody of approximately 3.572 acres from the Department of Public Health and Development Disabilities (DBHDD) to the custody of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) for expansion of the current Investigative Division Regional Office (Facility) located on approximately 1.92 acres in the City of Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia.

The motion to approve this Resolution was made by Captain Nick Ellis, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Major Wayne Mobley, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested approval and final adoption of the Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff for Carriers of Household Goods in Intrastate Transportation to be effective April 18, 2022.

The motion to approve the final adoption was made by Mr. Rossie Ross, which was seconded by Commissioner Michael Nail and voted approved by the Board members.

Chief Stacey Cotton made a motion for the Board to make an appropriate comment supporting the Department of Public Safety, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. This motion was seconded by Captain Nick Ellis and approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary