

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
December 8, 2022
Georgia Department of Public Safety
Atlanta, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Captain Nicholas D. Ellis
Mr. Richard Hyde
Commissioner Michael Nail
Mr. Samir Patel
Mr. Rossie Ross
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Sheriff Joey Terrell
Chief Craig Tully
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Bruce Carlisle
Sheriff Dane Kirby
Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows

OTHERS:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison
Commissioner Christopher C. Wright, Department of Public Safety
Lt. Colonel Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Wayne Mobley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Captain Rusty Harrelson, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Captain David Bryant, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Ms. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety
Director Michael Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Assistant Director John Melvin, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Ara Baronian, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Captain Mark Jones, Covington Police Department

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the December 8, 2022 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Captain Rusty Harrelson gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked for recognition of any guests in the room. Chief Stacey Cotton introduced his guest, Captain of Investigations, Mark Jones. Director Michael Register recognized Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, GCIC Director.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the October 13, 2022 minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the October 13, 2022 minutes. This was seconded by Chief Stacey Cotton and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 113th Trooper School finished training on Friday and will start field training on Monday with 33 cadets remaining. Commissioner Wright added the Motor Carrier School is in its 10th week of training with 15 cadets.

Commissioner Wright reported DPS members assisted with the funeral of Speaker Ralston, being involved at the Speaker and his wife's request.

Commissioner Wright shared the Department recently hosted the 20th Delegation of Israel Police at Headquarters as part of the GILEE program. Commissioner Wright stated they provided participants an overview of the agency and operations.

Commissioner Wright announced the Department has taken delivery of two new mobile command buses. Commissioner Wright also shared the Department is participating with Clark's Christmas Kids program to purchase gifts for 47 children in foster care around the state.

Commissioner Wright shared the Department is working on the Governor's Inauguration, which is taking place January 12th, adding the legislative session begins on January 9th.

Concerning construction projects, Commissioner Wright reported the Headquarters project is on track to be completed the first of February, tentatively. Commissioner Wright advised the EPA study for Post 18, Reidsville has been completed and submitted to SPC to be added to their next Board meeting and once approved, the project will go out for bid. Regarding Post 40, Sylvester, Commissioner Wright shared the architect has finished the floor plans and they have been given to Worth County; and regarding Post 33, Milledgeville, Commissioner Wright stated the flooring is complete and furniture is being delivered. Commissioner Wright noted there is 50-50 chance personnel will be able to move in by Christmas, upon the fire marshal completing the inspection and issuing a certificate of occupancy. Commissioner Wright shared workers have been trying to stop the water intrusion at Post 8, Madison and it looks like they have been successful, and that restoration project can begin.

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported the Bureau continues to look at various ways to recruit scientific personnel, specifically for the Forensic Science and Medical Examiner's office. Director Register did report there is some good news with the ME's office by stating they have a Medical Examiner accept employment to begin in July. Director Register also reported he expects the two doctors currently in the Bureau's fellowship program to sign on with the Agency.

Regarding vacancies in Forensics Science, Director Register noted they have 28 applicants currently in the "pipeline" and 42 vacancies in the Investigative Division with 22 in the "pipeline"; and 11 job

offers out for Special Agents for the school that starts December 16, with a projection for the next class that starts March 26th with possibly 18 people.

Concerning the backlog chart, Director Register advised the over 30 days old backlog in chemistry is at 30,982 cases and if they stop right now and do not take another case and do not hire additional personnel, it will take about 10 months to get the backlog cleared. Director Register noted the issue is the same with firearms, with it being such a unique field, has a backlog of 2,967 and if they stop taking requests, it will take 10 months with the current personnel to get the backlog cleared. Director Register shared there are two individuals right now in the hiring process.

Director Register reported the Open Records Unit has over 2,000 requests for this fiscal year. Director Register stated the Agency is looking at technology that will help with requests.

Director Register announced Chris Hosey, Deputy Director of Investigations, has been promoted to Assistant Director of the Bureau and Chris Hosey's position was filled by Cynthia Adkins. Director Register stated Director Adkins is the first female to hold that position and was an Inspector in Region 10 and did a great job in that position. Director Register shared the Agency has created an assessment process for promotions and the Director no longer picks deputy directors and inspectors. Director Register explained he and the Command Staff developed an internal assessment program where inspectors are able to compete through the assessment. Director Register also noted the assessment will be used to fill the inspector position left vacant by Ms. Adkins.

Director Register noted GISAC is still monitoring any and all threats relating to the Governor's Inauguration.

Regarding some cases the Bureau is working on, include working with Cobb County to try and locate Deputy Commissioner Victor Roberts. Director Register shared as of this morning they still had not made contact with him and are using all the resources they can to try and locate him. Director Register also shared the Bureau assisted the United States Secret Service and Department of Homeland Security with a search warrant in Dooly County where a business had defrauded the Georgia Unemployment Trust Fund for about 43 million dollars and two suspects were arrested. Additionally, Director Register reported Clayton County had an in-custody death that was a very emotional news story, and the Bureau facilitated the autopsy to quickly get results for the cause of death. Director Register also reported the APD training site continues to be a very complex situation where domestic terrorists are burning vehicles, attacking people and workers, booby-trapping areas, etc. Director Register stated they are working with local partners and the Attorney General's office to try and attack the situation and collect evidence and protect people in order to prepare the site for construction. Director Register stated the Bureau is at 108 officer involved shootings for the year, and compared to 12 months last year, the total was at 100. Director Register also noted the Medical Examiner's office was up about 4% on autopsies a few months ago, and now the number is down, noting most autopsies, over a third, are gunshot wounds and drug overdoses.

Director Register shared a couple of projects the Bureau is working on. Director Register reported the Macon lab, which includes a medical and scientific lab, has a committee that is looking at what can be done to make it better, to include future construction. Director Register explained there was discussion about possibly looking for other areas nearby to move the lab but are leaning toward staying and modernizing the lab. Director Register shared Conyers is the busiest region and they have had site surveys and there are short term projects they want to do, including a building site.

Director Register announced the gang data base is being rolled out and training is being conducted with state partners and district attorneys throughout the state.

Sheriff Joey Terrell thanked Director Register and the Bureau for assistance with a case in his county that ended up going nationwide as well as an unrelated officer involved shooting that occurred after that incident.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked for the status of the cold cases, particularly an Athens cold case being investigated, to which Director Register replied the Agency does not close any cases, they keep looking at them, so they do not actually go "cold". Director Register gave an example of their Region 9 office having a 3 year old case where the investigators followed up and received more information, and was able to make an arrest. Director Register explained the investigators are trying to get a more standardized cold case protocol where they have the ability and capacity to have personnel dedicated to working cold cases. Mr. Willie Bolton stated there are some 10 year old murder cases in Athens-Clarke County and he was under the understanding that some retirees were brought back to investigate them, and Director Register stated they do have retired Agents looking at cases. Director Register stated what he would like to do is have a cold case unit that is a little more robust than what they have right now.

Mr. Samir Patel thanked Director Register for their relationship with his office with requests for assistance and corroboration in getting cases handled.

Captain Nick Ellis commended Director Register for the work he has done since taking over as Director and implementing the assessment process.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the School Resource Officer (SRO) training program has been expanded more toward school safety as a whole to include public and private schools. Director Wigginton noted there are a couple of Board Members, Captain Nick Ellis and Sheriff Joey Terrell, who are very supportive due to their roles as BPS members and their professional roles. Director Wigginton shared the Center presented last week at the Superintendents and School Administrators Conference. Director Wigginton explained he is trying to get buy-in from the superintendents and principals, as well as cafeteria workers, and custodians. Director Wigginton noted custodians know everything that happens on a school campus and if the custodian is not involved in the school safety plan, you can miss out on a lot. Director Wigginton stated superintendents have been impressed with the program and are welcoming an expansion of the program statewide.

Director Wigginton shared the Training Center worked with Atlanta PD to train their officers in the PIT maneuver, and it has been approved by the mayor. Director Wigginton advised some of the Police Department's legal team was unaware of how the PIT maneuver is performed and how it was taught, so Director Wigginton stated they held a half a day classroom legal portion then went to the track and let them see the maneuvers being performed. Director Wigginton stated it was well received.

Director Wigginton advised this week, the Center will be teaching an executive protection class that is full of students from across the country.

Director Wigginton announced the Center conducted an active shooter expo that focused on active shooters in any building and environment, and it was we held over four days, broken down in four-hour blocks, offering eight different topics. Director Wigginton advised the expo was very successful and will be expanded to the fire side.

Director Wigginton shared they have partnered with Association of County Commissioners (ACCG) about a driver safety program required by insurance companies and look forward to a great partnership with them.

Chief Craig Tully commended Director Wigginton and the Training Center for bridging the gap between the career fire services and volunteers by the training they offer.

Vice-Chairman Wood commended Director Wigginton for always working on developing a program, or refining a program, and being proactive with trainings.

Mr. Willie Bolton complimented Director Wigginton and Commissioner Ward, Department of Corrections, on the young lady who works the entry at the Training Center for always being pleasant and helpful. Mr. Bolton noted she always makes you feel welcomed.

Captain Nick Ellis thanked Director Wigginton for allowing him to recently visit with his staff and observe.

DONATIONS

Ms. Lorri Smith, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of the following donations:

One (1) Stalker Patrol Radar Unit	\$3,350.00	Loganville Police Department
Monetary Donation	\$6,420.00	Paulding County Sheriff's Department

The motion to accept these donations was made by Mr. Rossie Ross, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Major Wayne Mobley, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested approval for the final adoption of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff No. 4 for carriers of household goods in intrastate transportation. Major Mobley explained the public hearing has been completed with no opposition.

Captain Nick Ellis made the motion to approve the final adoption of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff No. 4, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Major Wayne Mobley, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested approval an Administrative Order extending the temporary hours of service variance adopted by the Georgia Department of Public Safety through section 395.341 of Chapter 1 of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Transportation Rulebook for a period expiring on December 31, 2023.

Mr. Rossie Ross made the motion to approve the issuance of an Administrative Order extending the temporary hours of service variance. This motion was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary