

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

February 9, 2023
Virtual and Call-in Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Mr. Roy H. Fickling
Mr. Richard Hyde
Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows
Chief Janet L. Moon
Commissioner Michael Nail
Mr. Billy New
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver
Mr. Samir J. Patel
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Sheriff Joey Terrell
Chief Craig Tully
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheriff Dane Kirby

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 Thomas Kustra, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Captain Chris Rodewolt, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Captain Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Lt. Auston Allen, Georgia Department of Public Safety/GSP
Lt. Maurice Raines, Georgia Department of Public Safety/GSP
Lt. Chris Nease, Department of Public Safety/GSP
SFC Richard Sikes, Department of Public Safety/GSP
SFC Kevin Harkleroad, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Sgt. Adam Marlowe, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
MCO Randy Schofill, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Ms. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Joan Crumpler, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Kelly Ward, Department of Public Safety
Director Michael Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. John Melvin, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
SAC Chris DeMarco, Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Bill Burns

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the February 9, 2023 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Sergeant First Class Richard Sikes gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced new Board of Public Safety members: Commissioner Tyrone Oliver, Peachtree City Police Chief Janet Moon, Mr. Roy Fickling, and Mr. Billy New. Vice-Chairman Wood asked other Board members to introduce themselves to the new members.

Vice-Chairman Wood recognized other special guests in the room: Captain Chris Rodewolt, Lt. Chris Nease, SFC Richard Sikes, and Georgia Bureau of Investigation Region 5 Special Agent in Charge, Chris DeMarco.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for a motion to appoint Mr. Billy New to the vacant Board Seat #6. Chief Craig Tully made the motion to appoint Mr. Billy New to the Board Seat #6. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Chief Craig Tully administered the Oath of Public Office to Mr. Roy Fickling, Chief Janet Moon, and Mr. Billy New.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the December 8, 2022 BPS minutes. Mr. Charles Sikes made the motion to approve the December 8, 2022 minutes. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood made a statement regarding correspondence received by Board Members from employees of the Department of Public Safety's Motor Carrier Compliance Division. Vice-Chairman Wood indicated the matters relayed in the correspondence do not fall under the purview of the Board, and rather the issues are employment-related issues that should be addressed through DPS and will not be addressed through this public forum. Vice-Chairman Wood encourages anyone that has questions, comments, or concerns to seek out Colonel Wright individually.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the Trooper who was shot during an operation to clear the trespassers from the forest where the new Atlanta Public Safety Complex will be built was released from Grady Hospital yesterday and is resting at home.

Commissioner Wright stated there was a protest the following Saturday after the shooting, and Troopers and the Atlanta Police Department worked closely together to bring the situation under control. Commissioner Wright shared 6 agitators were arrested for breaking windows at the Atlanta Police Foundation building and burning an APD vehicle. Commissioner Wight also shared from the

time the protestors started marching from Underground Atlanta toward the Atlanta Police Foundation to the time they were arrested, was exactly 44 minutes, explaining the situation was brought under control very quickly and there have been no other issues in the City.

Commissioner Wright reported the 113th Trooper School is in field training with 33 cadets, with graduation being March 10th at GPSTC. Commissioner Wright also reported the 114th Trooper School started on January 15th with 55 cadets and there are 46 cadets remaining. Commissioner Wright also reported the 9th Motor Carrier School is in field training with 14 cadets and that graduation will be March 31st at GPSTC.

Commissioner Wright noted the Department has started transitioning to a new weapon system utilizing a red dot sight. Commissioner Wright stated the handgun is Glock Model 45 9 mm and the sight is Trijicon SRO. Commissioner Wright explained the new sighting system will improve accuracy on the firing range.

Commissioner Wright reported the Department participated in the ceremonial activities for Governor Kemp's inauguration in January by providing escorts and security for all the events and well as participating in the pass and review of the troops.

Commissioner Wright noted the Legislative Session began on January 9th and the Sine Die day has been set for March 29th.

Commissioner Wright also noted DPS personnel participated in the Law Enforcement Appreciation Day at the Capitol the previous day, mentioning SFC Richard Sikes delivered the devotion of the day to the House of Representatives and stated it was an honor for him and an honor to have him represent the Department.

Regarding construction projects, Commissioner Wright advised the new headquarters project is on task to be completed in March; the property for Post 18 Reidsville has been fully conveyed to the state and should go out for bid next week; the county is completing the road and grading work for Post 40 Sylvester; personnel have moved in to Post 33 Milledgeville and the ribbon cutting ceremony is set for March 31st; the waterproofing for Post 8 Madison has been completed and the Department is in discussion with the Georgia Building Authority concerning renovation. Concerning the Aviation hangar in Tifton, Commissioner Wright reported the Department is still working through a property issue in Tift County, explaining the City of Tifton and Tift County jointly own 1.6 acres that needs to be transferred to the Tift County Airport Authority and once completed the project will go out for bid.

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported on some noteworthy cases, first noting on January 11th the GBI held a news conference in Brunswick where 76 defendants were charged with various drug trafficking crimes for methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin. Director Register noted there is an increase in fentanyl in the state of Georgia, based on autopsies, sharing there has been a 215% increase in fentanyl-related drug overdoses.

Director Register reported Region 5 is continuing to work with the Department of Corrections to investigate some issues at Smith State Prison.

Director Register shared there have been 9 officer involved shootings since January 1st.

Director Register advised the Legal Division is working with agencies throughout the state providing training on the gang database.

Director Register shared the Agriculture Labor Trafficking Special Prosecutor gave a joint presentation at the PAC conference with the Assistant US Attorney for the Southern District.

Director Register reported Executive Director John Melvin assisted the Attorney General's Office, Rabun County District Attorney's Office, and the Cherokee County District Attorney's Office with RICO indictments and motions.

Regarding the incident with the Atlanta Public Safety Complex, Director Register stated several protestors have been charged with domestic terrorism and the Bureau believes the charge of domestic terrorism is an appropriate charge for the criminal behavior that was transpiring there, but with working with the Attorney General's Office, more charges will follow with RICO indictments. Director Register stated as of last week, 62 individuals have been named in a RICO indictment, which Director Register believes will enhance the safety of not only Georgia and the Atlanta area, but other areas as well due to the fact some of the actors involved in the criminal behavior are from out of state.

Director Register shared the Division of Forensic Sciences Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Fellowship site visit was held on January 17th. Director Register noted there has been a lot of interest and for this upcoming year, there have been 12 applicants.

Director Register advised a Vanderbilt Medical student won the College of American Pathologist Advanced Training Grant and chose the GBI ME's Office over all other programs in the country to attend.

Director Register noted he provided testimony to the Joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee and the House Subcommittee for Public Safety, and also shared Executive Director John Melvin attended the Joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee regarding the Criminal Data Exchange.

Director Register reported GCIC is working to migrate the Georgia Applicant Print System (GAPS) Thales to Fieldprint.

Director Register announced there were 8 new agent assessments this past Saturday with 120 applicants and Director Register stated he feels the Bureau is doing very well with recruiting.

Director Register shared Inspector Mitchell Posey is attending the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Director Register also shared Ryan Carmichael has been promoted to Inspector.

Regarding facilities updates, Director Register shared the Bureau is working to create a state strategic plan and setting priorities for the next 3-7 years on facilities.

Concerning investigations and gangs and the Agency's pursuit in handling gang investigations, Director Register reported the 2022 calendar numbers show 367 investigations, which is up 17% from 2021, and involves 83 counties and over 400 gang-related arrests, which is up 22% from 2021. Director Register indicated over 100 individuals will be charged with the Gang Act.

Director Register reported the case load for the Medical Examiners is expanding and this past year, on the average, Medical Examiners each conducted 458 exams. Director Register noted out of the 19 authorized Medical Examiner positions, there are 9 filled, and are expecting 3 to come on board in July. Director Register advised the Agency is looking at innovated ways to look for talent outside the United States. Director Register stated Mercer University announced a pathology track at their medical school.

Director Register advised the Bureau is working hard to address back logs in the labs, noting when you look at the tests being requested, about 93% of the tests fall in the category of chemistry, biology, or firearms. Director Register shared in order to address the backlog, the Agency has been outsourcing the biology and firearms tests.

Regarding ongoing projects, Director Register reported the Agency is working with the FBI on the Rap Back project on a test, engaging with the Department of Community Supervision, to obtain fingerprints and send to the FBI and if that person is arrested or has significant law enforcement contact there will be an immediate notification.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the volunteer firefighter program continues to grow as it is being regionalized around the state to get volunteers trained.

Director Wigginton also reported the Center is holding two conferences in the near future; a use of force summit and an international driving instructor conference.

Regarding the legislative session, Director Wigginton shared the role of the Training Center is a little different, and after the acts that took place in Memphis recently, they started receiving calls to provide training and the legislators are very impressed with what the Center does and for being ahead of the curve. Director Wigginton advised one of the phone calls was about dropping a piece of legislation to require scenario-based training in the Academy and as continuing education, to which Director Wigginton stated the training is already being offered and it will not be a problem to meet their requirements.

Director Wigginton also noted they are getting funding for 10 different projects from the legislators for renovations for the Forsyth campus, and the Athens and Savannah academies.

Chief Tully commended Director Wigginton for his efforts in getting the volunteer firefighting training program throughout the state, reminding everyone how important this training is to rural areas and smaller communities.

DONATIONS

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

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| Two (2) DragonEye Compact Lidars | \$3,190.00 | City of Dahlonega |
| One (1) Kustom ProLaser 4 Lidar | \$2,600.00 | Towns County Sheriff's Office |
| Thirteen (13) Canon Rebel T100 Cameras | \$3,887.00 | GBI West Metro Regional Drug Enforcement Office |
| One (1) DSR 2X Radar with Instant On Remote | \$3,377.50 | City of Dahlonega |
| Thirteen (13) Canon Rebel T100 Cameras | \$3,887.00 | GBI West Metro Regional Drug Enforcement Office |

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

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval for the following donations:

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| One (1) HP 17.3" HD+ Screen Laptop | \$1,039.99 | Brunswick Judicial Circuit DA's Office |
| Desk and Conference Room Chairs | \$15,717.84 | Brunswick Judicial Circuit DA's Office |

The motion to accept these donations was made by Chief Dee Meadows, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, requested approval of the following donations:

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| 2004 Ford Crown Victoria | \$999.00 | Carrollton Police Department |
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| 2016 Ford Interceptor | \$900.00 | City of Perry |
| Rogue Infinity Rig | \$2,200.00 | CrossFit GroundSpeed |

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

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Director Wigginton presented the names for the Georgia Public Safety Line of Duty Deaths Memorial for approval by the Board of Public Safety.

The motion to accept the names was made by Chief Craig Tully, which was seconded by Chief Dee Meadows and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked for a motion for Thank You Resolutions to be presented to former Board members Chief Bruce Carlisle, Commissioner Timothy Ward, Captain Nick Ellis, and Mr. Rossie Ross. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to present these Resolutions, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Sheriff Joey Terrell and Mr. Charles Sikes to serve as a nominating committee for the election of Officers at the April BPS meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary