

## **BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

March 10, 2022

Virtual and Call-in Meeting

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Willie C. Bolton  
Chief Bruce Carlisle  
Chief Stacey Cotton  
Captain Nicholas D. Ellis  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows  
Commissioner Michael Nail  
Mr. Rossie Ross  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Sheriff Joey Terrell  
Chief Craig Tully  
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward  
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Sheriff Dane Kirby  
Mr. Samir J. Patel

### **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  
Lt. Colonel Stephanie Stallings, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Steve Harrison, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Dean Allen, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Clay Kicklighter, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Ms. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Kaycee Larson, Department of Public Safety  
Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Mr. John Melvin, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the March 10, 2022 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation provided an update on Assistant Director John Melvin’s recovery from a collision two weeks ago in Henry County.

Captain Clay Kicklighter gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the February 10, 2022 BPS minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the February 10, 2022 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross and voted approved by the Board members.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 111<sup>th</sup> Trooper School is in field training with 41 cadets and will be graduating April 29<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wright also reported the 112<sup>th</sup> Trooper School is in the 9<sup>th</sup> week of training with 27 cadets and will be graduating April 8<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wright advised the application period for the 113<sup>th</sup> Trooper School closes on March 13<sup>th</sup> and there has been 873 applicants to date; 208 have participated in the PT assessments; and of those, 162 have passed.

Concerning the rising fuel prices, Commissioner Wright shared sworn members have been asked to be mindful and conserve, when practical, and the Department is also looking into implementing a rotating teleworking schedule for Headquarters civilian personnel.

Commissioner Wright reminded Board members the DPS Awards Ceremony will be next weekend on Jekyll Island. Commissioner Wright praised the Public Information Office and Historical Society for their hard work to put the ceremony together.

Regarding the legislative session, Commissioner Wright stated it has been going very well and crossover day is next Tuesday, and the final day of the session is scheduled to be April 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Commissioner Wright if there was an approximate figure on the starting number of Cadets for the 113<sup>th</sup> Trooper School, to which Commissioner Wright stated they would love to fill it with 100 people; however, the recruiting has been down. Commissioner Wright noted there is another PT assessment scheduled and they are hopeful there will be a higher number of candidates before it closes.

Mr. Sikes asked Commissioner Wright what the maximum number of budgeted Troopers is for the Department, to which Commissioner Wright advised it fluctuates and there is not a set number budgeted, but 860 has been an undesignated number in the past.

Vice-Chairman Wood noted the uptick in staffing numbers between August and September, which can be contributed to a graduating class, but since then there has been a decline in the number of Troopers and inquired if this is from normal attrition. Commissioner Wright confirmed this, noting there have been retirements recently.

Sheriff Joey Terrell addressed Commissioner Wright regarding the fuel prices and encouraged him to have his blue and gray cars get out and work, indicating being visible deters people from doing what they aren't supposed to be doing. Commissioner Wright stated there have been no restrictions

implemented, but are encouraging personnel to be mindful, conduct road checks, and have a little one on one contact with the public, but to keep doing their jobs.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked Commissioner Wright if the Department of Public Safety buys fuel at a discounted price or if the Department pays consumer price, to which Commissioner Wright stated the Department does not pay consumer price.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, advised the Board the Bureau worked its 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> officer involved shooting for the year last night, one in Cobb County and one in Lawrenceville. Director Reynolds indicated that it does not look like the officer involved shootings will be lower than last year, which is what he had hoped for. Director Reynolds noted about 40% of officer involved shootings are in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Director Reynolds announced the Bureau has hired a Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Geoffrey Smith, who will be starting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Director Reynolds noted Dr. Smith was one of the first Medical Examiners at the ME's Office at the Bureau. Director Reynolds also shared the Bureau was able to secure the services of an Assistant Medical Examiner, Dr. Rachel Geller, who is starting work on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Director Reynolds advised Dr. Gellar is extremely talented and is going to be running the fellowship program through the ME's Office. Director Reynolds shared his goal is to grow the Medical Examiner's program over the years. Director Reynolds stated he is convinced the only way to hire and retain medical examiners is through a fellowship program and Dr. Gellar will be responsible for running the program.

Regarding the legislative session, Director Reynolds noted it is going well, particularly for law enforcement agencies, and Director Reynolds stated he anticipates the Bureau will benefit from this session through a number of new employees as a result of what legislators are doing and what the Governor is recommending, to include a bump in the number of scientists and agents. Director Reynolds shared he anticipates before the session is over, the Bureau will receive some form of authority under original jurisdiction to investigate election fraud cases, and he anticipates some hiring or transferring of personnel from other agencies to fill those positions.

Concerning the Cold Case Unit, Director Reynolds shared he expects a big indictment returned on multiple sets of cold cases in a particular area of the state in the next few weeks.

Director Reynolds advised the Bureau has a number of new hires in progress on the lab side as a result of the anticipated amended FY22 and new FY23 budgets. Director Reynolds stated he is optimistic this will assist tremendously in bringing their back log cases down, particularly in the ballistics cases.

Mr. Charles Sikes remarked on the Georgia Crime Information Center and how important they are to the criminal justice agencies in the State. In particular, looking at the number of submissions of fingerprints and palms, Mr. Sikes stated the submission of the disposition of cases for those offenses is crucial. In reference to the Board report and statics submitted, Mr. Sikes inquired what the "RISC"

stood for in the FBI RISC hits. Assistant Director Melvin indicated that RISC stands for “Repository of Individuals of Special Concern” and it is a subsidiary of the fingerprint database.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported in January 60,000 sworn members throughout the state of Georgia, including Corrections, have received training from the Training Center.

Director Wigginton updated the Board on the program with Georgia Southern University and their Kinesiology Department led by Dr. Bridget Melton. Director Wigginton stated in basic training and advanced training, there is a physical component that is supported with the Coopers Clinic study on physical type training but is never really geared toward public safety. The partnership with the Kinesiology Department at GSU has been looking at the Savannah and Tifton Academies and are in the process of developing two programs: one, a tactical athlete program which will be throughout basic training that will hopefully continue through their career; and the second is “from the couch to the academy”, which is a program given to applicants to prepare them for the academy in order successfully complete it.

Director Wigginton shared the Police Academy Division is working with GIRMA and ACCG to develop an online class for driver training which will represent counties and cities, and the course will help with the reduction of insurance rates by using an online platform and partnership.

Director Wigginton updated the Board on the expansion at the Fire Academy, noting it is a little over 90% complete which will add two classrooms with a 45-student capacity, two additional offices, and two restrooms.

### **DONATIONS**

Director Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, requested approval of the following donation:

One (1) 2001 International School Bus	\$998.00	Jasper County Sheriff’s Office
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Mr. Rossie Ross, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

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

One (1) Stalker RLR Lidar Unit	\$2,790.00	Blackshear Police Department
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Lodging for Ten (10) Personnel and Jet Fuel for the 2022 Vidalia Onion Festival Air Show	\$4,800.00	Vidalia Airport
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The motion to accept these donations was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution to authorize the Georgia Department of Public Safety to transfer a Revocable License and Permanent Non-Standard Easement of improved land to Georgia Power for relocation of overhead power distribution poles and lines that serve the Department of Public Safety campus at 959 United Avenue SE, Atlanta, GA.

The motion to accept this Resolution was made by Mr. Willie Bolton, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members. Mr. Richard Hyde abstained from the vote.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Commissioner Ward, Georgia Department of Corrections, for any updates from Corrections he would like to share. Commissioner Ward shared that in his 30 plus years in Corrections, this year the DOC has one of the most favorable budgets he has seen thanks to the legislators. Commissioner Ward indicated they have almost \$600 million for new construction. Commissioner Ward also stated the Department has decommissioned Georgia State Prison in Reidsville. Commissioner Ward explained there are no offenders in Reidsville and all the staff has been relocated to surrounding facilities, and noted the goal is to build another state-of-the-art facility with the latest technology. Commissioner Ward stated he recognizes the historical side of Georgia State Prison and plans are to re-purpose the facility for tours, movies, etc. Commissioner Ward shared Corrections Officers have received a base pay increase of \$7,000, which will push all Corrections Officers to over \$40,000 a year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary