

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
March 9, 2023
Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Forsyth, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Mr. Roy H. Fickling
Mr. Richard Hyde
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
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
Lt. Colonel Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Kendrick Lowe, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Steve Harrison, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Rusty Harrelson, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Thornell L. King, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Captain Brandon Dawson, Georgia Department of Public Safety/GSP
SFC Brad Walker, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Sgt. Billy Schwab, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Director Michael Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Asst. Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Asst. Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Ara Baronian, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Hal Braswell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Ike McConnell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Jason McDaniel, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Beverly Walker, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Chris Whitehead, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Mr. Adam Ham, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

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

Mr. Adam Ham gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the February 9, 2023 and February 14, 2023 BPS minutes, with two corrections: one to change Tif County to Tift County on Page 3, Paragraph 6; and one to change stereo based training to scenario-based training on Page 5, Paragraph 9. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the minutes with the corrections. This was seconded by Chief Janet Moon and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, updated the Board on some recent personnel changes, indicating Lt. Colonel Stallings announced her upcoming retirement and Major Josh Lamb was promoted to Lt. Colonel, overseeing her duties, as well as his regular duties; and Major Wayne Mobley announced his retirement and Captain Andrew Montgomery was promoted to Major to oversee the Motor Carrier Operations.

Commissioner Wright reported tomorrow morning will be the 113th Trooper School graduation and the Department is looking forward to having 33 new Troopers join the workforce.

Commissioner Wright also shared Saturday night will be the Department's Annual Awards Ceremony in Macon to celebrate the accomplishments of DPS employees.

Commissioner Wright advised the Board the Trooper who was shot during an operation to clear the trespassers from the forest where the new Atlanta Public Safety Complex is being built is at home recovering quite well and he and his wife will be attending the Awards Ceremony Saturday night.

Commissioner Wright also shared this past Sunday, March 5th at 5:00 p.m., GSP and Motor Carrier Compliance personnel were requested by the Atlanta Police Department to assist with a group of criminal trespassers in the area of Key Road and Bouldercrest Road near the vicinity of the APD training center. Commissioner Wright reported as Troopers responded to the area, rocks and improvised explosive devices were thrown at their patrol cars and the group set up roadblocks and barricades on Key Road and even started a brush fire. Commissioner Wright reported the group fled to a wooded area where they began shooting fireworks at Troopers and Officers on scene and shining green lasers lights in their eyes trying to blind them. Commissioner Wright explained a team of Troopers maintained a perimeter on Constitution Road at West Side Place while other Troopers and Officers entered the wooded area utilizing less lethal systems. Troopers and Officers took 31 people into custody, and 29 of those were turned over the Dekalb County and Atlanta Police Departments. Of

those arrested, 17 were charged with domestic terrorism and 14 were charged with criminal trespassing.

Commissioner Wright reported the 114th Trooper School, which started on January 15th currently has 39 cadets and is in week 8. Commissioner Wright also noted the 9th Motor Carrier School remains in Field Training, with graduation on March 31st.

Commissioner Wright announced, with the help of Director Wigginton and his staff, an additional Trooper School has been added for this calendar year, stating the 115th Trooper School will start in July, the 116th Trooper School, an accelerated school, will start in September, followed by the 117th, which will start in January 2024.

Commissioner Wright updated the Board on the Red Dot weapons system, sharing it is going very well and only one cadet from the 114th school was lost during the firearms portion, when normally 5 or 6 fail.

Commissioner Wright noted the legislative session continues, with today being day 31 and Sine Die being March 29th. Commissioner Wright reported in the amended budget, the Department will get \$30 million for a new state-wide radio system, and half a million dollars for 10 additional K-9s, noting the Department has about 40 K-9s across the state now.

Regarding construction projects, Commissioner Wright reported the State Fire Marshall issued the CO on February 27th for the new Headquarters; and currently furniture and appliances are being delivered and material completion is scheduled for March 14th, so tentatively there is a May 16th date for the building to be occupied. Additionally, regarding the new Headquarters, Commissioner Wright shared the sign dedicating the location of the original police academy has been planned and designed and will be constructed once the initial contract agreements have been completed. Furthermore, Commissioner Wright noted an artist has been commissioned to create a bronze statue of a Trooper and a K-9 to be placed in front of the new Headquarters, and the Department has also commissioned Steve Penley to create an artwork for the lobby. Commissioner Wright advised Post 18 Reidsville has been put out for bid, which will close out on March 27th; the site and road work for Post 40 Sylvester is continuing and should be completed by the end of the month; personnel have moved in to Post 33 Milledgeville and a ribbon cutting ceremony has been set for March 31st; and 1.6 acres was transferred to the Tifton Aviation Authority on February 28th for the Tifton hanger.

Concerning the monthly activity report, Commissioner Wright noted the Crime Suppression Unit in Atlanta, as of today has had 972 pursuits, has apprehended 710 wanted people, and Troopers/Officers have recovered 565 stolen weapons and 575 stolen vehicles, with values running at \$12 million. Commissioner Wright also stated during the month of February, there was a Crime Suppression detail in Albany where Troopers/Officers stopped 191 vehicles, arresting 29 DUI offenders and apprehending 3 wanted people; adding there was also a Crime Suppression detail in Savannah where 212 vehicles were stopped, 26 DUI offenders were arrested, along with 7 wanted people. Commissioner Wright added, from each division of the Department in February, Troopers stopped

over 45,000 vehicles, arrested 1,163 DUI offenders; on the Motor Carrier side, Officers stopped 2,718 vehicles and made 361 citations for speeding, 378 warnings for speeding; and on the Capitol Police side, Officers logged 1,900 area checks during the month of February and conducted over 8,000 mail screenings.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked if bricks from the old police academy will be used to make the new memorial, to which Commissioner Wright advised brick that was salvaged from the old police academy will be used.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked if DPS will be providing an entry in the St. Patrick's Parade in Savannah, in which Commissioner Wright stated the Department will be providing assistance to Savannah PD to secure the parade and there will be an entry as well.

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported Region 10 has been working with the District Attorney in Douglas County in reference to contract irregularities; Region 10 was also requested by Newton County Sheriff's Office on February 19th in reference to a subject being shot in a driveway, stating when officers arrived the subject pointed a weapon at officers, and he was shot.

Director Register advised the CEACC (Child Exploitation and Computer Crimes) Unit held a chat operation in Bainbridge, to go online and try to get child predators, and so far, there have been 4 subjects arrested.

Director Register shared the Columbus Police Department reached out to the Bureau after an officer committed suicide earlier this week, stating the Bureau is working with the Police Chief and ensuring due diligence is done and respect is given to the officer's body.

Regarding the Inspector position, Director Register noted the GBI traditionally has 5 positions and a few years back one was frozen; however, due to the workload increase Director Register explained there is a need for 5 Inspectors and this position has been reinstated to share the workload and to prepare the GBI for the increased responsibilities.

Director Register reported there had been 15 Officer Involved Shootings as of February 27th, when the Board report was printed, but since then there have been 4 more, making it 19 as of today.

Concerning the Legal Division, Director Register stated they continue to work with the AG's office and the Dekalb County DA's office with the protestors at the APD training center, reporting they are expecting a RICO indictment on those individuals involved, with approximately 62 individuals named. Director Register reported there is another demonstration planned tonight and there is intelligence there could be violence or intended violence.

In reference to the incident at the APD training center last Sunday night, Director Register shared there is a Georgia Power easement and power line in the area, and the officers who were guarding that looked down the power line and saw approximately 150 people walking up the lane, and when

observed, the individuals charged the officers. Director Register explained the subjects had protective clothing on and some had shields made out of 55 gallon drums. The officers had to retreat across the roadway to a fenced in area and into another fenced in area to lock themselves in. The subjects came into the construction site and were using fireworks to shoot at the officers and throwing objects, such as rocks, at the officers. While a portion of the subjects was doing this, the other individuals went to various pieces of equipment and burned two four-wheelers and a front-end loader, a trailer, as well as the cameras that caught the assault. Director Register reported, along with the AG's office and DA's office, 23 people were arrested. Director Register shared of the 23 arrested that night, only two were from the state of Georgia; 21 were from out of state and out of those, 2 were from out of country – Canada and France. Director Register stated the Bureau worked with its federal partners, as well as the State Department to contact their counterparts in Canada and France on these two individuals to dig a little deeper on them.

Regarding the Division of Forensic Sciences, Director Register stated they continue to recruit, and they now have four confirmed medical examiners starting between April and September.

Director Register recognized recently promoted personnel, reporting Jeff Roesler was promoted to Investigative Division Inspector; Ryan Carmichael promoted to Investigative Division Inspector; Elizabeth Andrews promoted to Director of the Child Victims Unit within the Medical Examiner's Office; Rocky Bigham being promoted to Special Agent in Charge of the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center; Consuela Calhoun promoted to Criminal Justice Training Supervisor with GCIC; Elizabeth Fisher to Assistant Manager of the DOFS in Pooler; Ryan Hilton promoted to Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit; Mark Lavender to Special Agent in Charge in Region 10; Brittany Scott to Assistant Manager of the DOFS Chemistry Section; Lindsey Shelton to Assistant Manager of the DOFS Impressions Section; and Gretchen Weiss to Assistant Manager of the DOFS Forensic Biology Section.

Concerning facilities updates, Director Register shared a mausoleum will be located on the grounds of the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, explaining the idea was started a couple of years ago and fell by the wayside, but Director Wigginton and the Bureau's Medical Examiners Office picked it back up, noting the purpose of the mausoleum is to have a final resting place for unidentified remains.

Director Register noted the Agency continues to struggle with employment numbers in their non-sworn positions but regarding their sworn positions, there are a lot of people who want to come and work with the GBI. Director Register credits the reputation of the GBI as the best recruiting tool.

Director Register reported on some statics, sharing Open Records has had 3,450 requests year-to-date, and concerning investigative hours, Director Register noted crimes against persons continues to be the largest area for investigations; and medical examiners have managed 3,235 exams, compared to about 6,000 last year. Director Register advised he has talked with Dr. Smith about a wellness program for the medical examiners to make sure they are doing ok, not only because of the tremendous workload but the job they do is taxing both physically and emotionally.

Regarding report turnaround times, Director Register noted Headquarters, Macon, Augusta, and Moultrie have had some equipment difficulties causing their turnaround times to be high.

Director Register stated the NCIC system uptime service is 100%, noting the Bureau has a zero percent rejection rate from courts and clerk offices when uploading dispositions using the Bureau's system.

Director Register shared the timeline for the Calhoun office to be up and running is October 2024.

Mr. Samir Patel asked if the House Bill for student loan repayment for medical examiners is passing through legislature, to which Director Register stated he hopes it will, as it will be a great recruiting tool, and explained it will be repaid in increments over a 5-year period.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the Department of Community Supervision has been at the Training Center this week getting their mobile field force teams prepared for potential riots in Atlanta.

Director Wigginton shared the Training Center has released a use of force incentive for local agencies, teaching application, legal aspect, de-escalation, verbalization, etc. Director Wigginton explained this instruction will be taken to communities where requested. Director Wigginton advised their staff will provide all the tools and training aids free of charge.

Director Wigginton also shared, on the fire side, the volunteer fire fighting training is in the field and is being delivered to communities on their schedule, after hours and on weekends.

Regarding the legislative session, Director Wigginton shared they are in good shape from bills dropped last year to implement telephone CPR (TCPR) and continuing education for dispatchers.

Director Wigginton noted the fire hydrants at the Forsyth campus are being updated and the dorm rooms are being renovated.

Commissioner Michael Nail thanked Director Wigginton for his help in getting the crowd control training for DCS employees.

Mr. Willie Bolton commended Director Wigginton for monitoring the local academies and making changes when needed.

Chief Tully acknowledged how beneficial the volunteer fire fighting training has been and how great the training classes are.

DONATIONS

Lt. Colonel Josh Lamb, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of the following donations:

One (1) DragonEye Laser	\$2,100.00	Jackson County Sheriff's Office
Three (3) Stalker Lidar RLR Units	\$7,500.00	Walton County Sheriff's Office
Ten (10) Alcosensor FST	\$4,250.00	Effingham County Sheriff's Office

The motion to accept these donations was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary