

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

October 13, 2022

Virtual and Call-in Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Stacey Cotton
Sheriff Dane Kirby
Mr. Samir J. Patel
Sheriff Joey Terrell

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 Stalling, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Kendrick Lowe, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Wayne Mobley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Lt. Michael Burns, Department of Public Safety/GSP
SFC Shange’ Hodo, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Ms. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Joan Crumpler, Department of Public Safety
Mr. Jacob Taylor, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Kelly Ward, Department of Public Safety
Director Michael Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
SAC Chris DeMarco, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the October 13, 2022 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Chief Craig Tully gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood recognized the special guest in the room: Georgia Bureau of Investigation Region 5 Special Agent in Charge, Chris DeMarco.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the September 8, 2022 minutes. Mr. Charles Sikes made the motion to approve the September 8, 2022 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 113th Trooper School is in its 13th week with 34 cadets remaining. Commissioner Wright remembered Cadet Patrick Dupree, who collapsed on September 8th after completing the shotgun stress course. Commissioner Wright stated his death has been classified as a line of duty death and noted the Department continues to assist Cadet Dupree's wife and children as they navigate their situation and asked everyone to continue to remember Cadet Dupree's family in their prayers. Commissioner Wright also stated the Department is mourning the loss of its K-9 Figo. K-9 Figo was shot and killed on Oct. 7th as Troopers and Clayton County Deputies attempted to arrest a murder suspect. Commissioner Wright added K-9 Figo was assigned to the Crime Suppression Unit and was partnered with TFC Keith Kammeraad and asked that everyone keep TFC Kammeraad in their prayers as well.

Commissioner Wright announced the 8th Motor Carrier School graduated on September 30th with 16 new Officers, and the 9th Motor Carrier School began on October 2nd with 18 Cadets and currently has 15 Cadets remaining.

Commissioner Wright shared the Grand Opening for Post 16, Hazlehurst was held on September 23rd and the Post is officially open and operational.

Commissioner Wright reported the Department continues to schedule crime suppression details in Metro Atlanta, Savannah, Macon, and Columbus. Commissioner Wright shared the Crime Suppression Unit, along with Aviation and the Bibb County Sheriff's Office conducted an operation this past weekend to combat street racing and driving in and around Central Park in the City of Macon on Sunday. Commissioner Wright noted the entrances to the park were blocked and personnel were able to tow over 40 vehicles and the drivers were cited for unlawful assembly and stunt driving and were transported to jail. Commissioner Wright stated the operation was very successful. Over the course of the weekend, Troopers stopped 496 vehicles, made 23 DUI arrests, issued over 425 citations and over 300 warnings, and apprehended 20 wanted people. Commissioner Wright also highlighted some numbers from the Atlanta crime suppression detail since its beginning: over 35,000 vehicle stops, over 800 pursuits, over 1,800 vehicles impounded, and 465 vehicles recovered, advising the total value of recovered vehicles is over \$10 million dollars. Commissioner Wright also noted 31 murder suspects have been apprehended.

Commissioner Wright shared that he, Lieutenant Colonel Hitchens, and Major Lamb presented at the House Study Committee on law enforcement salaries in Americus on September 22nd and Major Lamb and Lt. Mooney also attended a second meeting on October 6th. Commissioner Wright explained this

committee was established by Speaker Ralston to discuss retirement and retention challenges in the law enforcement profession in Georgia. Commissioner Wright added Representative Mike Cheokas was selected to serve as the Chairman and there will be one more meeting scheduled for November.

Commissioner Wright invited Board Members to DPS Headquarters on December 8th for a Holiday Lunch.

Concerning construction projects, Commissioner Wright reported the Headquarters project is still on schedule to be completed on January 31st, noting some concerns with receiving some electrical panels for power boxes with no ship date yet from the power company. Commissioner Wright stated this has also been an issue for the Milledgeville Post. Commissioner Wright advised the Department is still waiting on the EPA study for Post 18, Reidsville to be completed and once completed, the property can be deeded over to DPS to be put out for bid. Commissioner Wright added they are waiting on a mechanical engineer update for Post 40, Sylvester due to changes to the floor plan, with hopes the new floor plans will be sent to Worth County by the end of the month. Commissioner Wright reported the Milledgeville Post is about 90% complete; and Post 35, Jekyll Island has been postponed until November 10th while trying to select a new general contractor. Commissioner Wright also noted for Post 8, Madison workers have started trying to remedy the water intrusion in order to begin refurbishment. Commissioner Wright reported Tift County has expressed a desire to construct a new hanger for Aviation in South Georgia, and once the decision is made to move forward it will be brought before the Board for approval to proceed with discussions. Commissioner Wright added if this takes place, the plan is to move from the hanger in Albany to the hanger in Tifton.

Commissioner Wright shared recent actions from the Department's SWAT unit, reporting on Monday night, the unit assisted Murray County with a hostage situation, where a father was threatening his 18-year-old son, and the SWAT Team conducted a successful rescue operation and took the father in to custody without injuries. Commissioner Wright stated SWAT does a great job.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked how many Officers were lost in the most recent Motor Carrier Graduation, to which Major Mobley advised the class started with 24 and graduated 18. Mr. Bolton asked if that is normal, to which Colonel Wright responded it depends on the class, explaining that some have a higher attrition rate than others and stating this last class can be considered a very successful class.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked how many weeks are left in the current Trooper School, when will the 114th School start, and when will the next Motor Carrier class start. Mr. Sikes also asked how many Troopers and Motor Carrier Officers the Department can have. Colonel Wright stated the 9th Motor Carrier School started on Sunday, October 2nd, which was immediately after the recent Motor Carrier graduation. Colonel Wright advised the 114th Trooper School starts on January 9th, the first week in January. Colonel Wright also noted there is no number the Department works off of for staffing to be full-strength, but they always try to get to 1,000 and are budgeted for 953, and Colonel Wright stated the Motor Carrier target number is 300.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Colonel Wright how the Department prepared for the operation at Central Park in Macon, to which Colonel Wright shared the Sheriff in Bibb County had been dealing with the issue for quite some time, indicating the group meets at the Park on Sundays where they have stunt driving and street racing. Colonel Wright advised Macon and Bibb County is a consolidated government and their personnel numbers are down significantly, and DPS has been helping at the request of the Sheriff, who put a plan together. Colonel Wright shared the Sheriff feels like in another month or so, the group may try to come back again, and he feels with another operation, it would be stopped. Vice-Chairman Wood asked if it was a night operation, to which Colonel Wright responded it was a daytime, afternoon operation.

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported the Bureau is in the 3rd week of the new agent class, with 30 agents at this time.

Regarding personnel staffing, Director Register advised there are currently 28 vacant sworn positions, and he believes recruitment is very successful, but it is a long hiring process and the Bureau is looking to see if there are ways to shorten that timeframe. Director Register stated the greatest challenge in getting vacancies filled is in the Medical Examiner's Office, where they continue to struggle, not just with the Bureau but across the nation, noting across the United States there are about 1,500 vacant medical examiner positions but less than 1,000 certified medical examiners. Director Register advised the Bureau is looking at innovative ways to address that issue. Regarding the backlog in the Medical Examiner's Office, Director Register shared they are exploring technology, such as CT scanners, to help with the more routine exams, and looking at different operational methodology such as physician assistants with a pathology background. Director Register noted they are currently putting together an advertisement for a PA with a pathology background to see if it will work, indicating they have reached out to other ME offices throughout the United States and have found a few that have been successful.

Director Register stated if you look at the number of exams being conducted, almost 5,000 last year, 30% of them are drug related. Director Register also noted the ME office's accreditation stipulates medical examiners will only conduct 250 examinations per year or less but now the average is 343 due to shortages.

Regarding the Division of Forensics, Director Register shared the Agency is looking at innovative ways to recruit scientists. Director Register advised Forensics receives almost 110,000 requests per year from internal and local agencies. Director Register stated they have tried different ways, such as outsourcing, to help with the backlog, which has helped but they have found it is more expensive to outsource than it is to hire, so they are aggressively trying to fill vacancies, adding the backlog of over 30 days is around 39,000.

Concerning investigations, Director Register stated in FY22 the GBI was involved in 7,230 active investigations and it looks like they are on course to exceed that this fiscal year. Director Register advised last year, there were 319 death investigations, 259 drug related investigations, 137 use of force investigations, with 100 of those being officer involved shooting. Director Register noted as of today,

they are at 96 OIS investigations throughout the state. Director Register shared investigating officer involved shootings takes 195 investigative hours, on average; therefore, it takes a lot of time but when a local chief or sheriff asks for the Bureau to come in and investigate, it will be done because the Bureau is an impartial investigation agency and it is such an emotional event for the community and at times it does not look good for the local agency to investigate their own shooting.

Director Register shared one of the big investigations the Agency is involved in right now is being the lead agency with the Atlanta Police Department Training Center. Director Register explained there has been a lot of controversy surrounding it, indicating the Center has had “eco-terrorists” or environmentalists come in and attack individuals around the site and damaging property.

Director Register also stated as of August, the Bureau has spent over 37,000 investigative hours on crimes against persons and officer involved shootings. Director Register also advised, year to date, the Agency is at almost at 80,000 investigative hours.

Director Register advised Open Records was met with over 5,000 requests last fiscal year and it appears that will be exceeded this year. Director Register noted they are looking at technology to assist with the open records process to make it more streamlined and efficient. Also, the Agency is looking at technology to assist with some challenges with GCIC.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked if there is a high turnover with scientists leaving after they become employed with the GBI, to which Director Register responded after some analysis they have conducted, they are finding more people are leaving the Bureau in the 1-5 year range to go to other agencies or the private sector. Director Register noted they are looking at initiatives they can use from a retention standpoint to lower the voluntary separations, adding the 1-5 year range does not include sworn, but forensic personnel and scientists.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked what Director Register attributes the successful retention of Special Agents could be, to which Director Register stated it is the Agency’s reputation and how the applicants are treated.

Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the Training Center is busy with basic training academies and had 1,200 students for the month of August. Deputy Director Greathouse added there were 5,338 non-basic students; 13,760 on-line students; and a total of 20,298 students for the month of August, noting it brings the total to over 40,000 year-to-date and if the Center stays on that pace, it will end near the 300,000 students per year range they are building towards.

Deputy Director Greathouse shared it appears the Training Center is back to full capacity on most days. Deputy Director Greathouse advised the Center is in the middle of a major paving project to take out the islands to increase parking spaces to accommodate the increase of students.

Regarding special projects the Center is involved in, Deputy Director Greathouse reported the School Resource Officer program, as of the end of November, will have trained over 1,000 School Resource Officers across the state since its inception in 2018, noting the program is to be expanded. Deputy Director Greathouse thanked Habersham County Sheriff Joey Terrell and Colonel Murray Kogod, who is the president of G.A.S.R.O.E. (Georgia Alliance of School Resource Officers and Educators Association). Deputy Director Greathouse noted this week they have a program taking place with Atlanta Public Schools and G.A.S.R.O.E., and CBS News is on site looking at the approach to Resources Officers that Georgia is taking, with the story airing in November. Deputy Director Greathouse added this will be a great opportunity to bring a spotlight on Georgia's program and the partnerships developed with G.A.S.R.O.E. and school administrators across the state.

Deputy Director Greathouse announced GA POST has approved a new School Resource Officer certification and the Training Center is in the process of introducing six new courses which will serve as continuing education and advanced training for SROs in addition to the basic training. Deputy Director Greathouse also noted funding has been provided for a new building to house the staffing and classroom for the program, which is expected to be completed in the summer of 2023.

Deputy Director Greathouse also reported during the week of October 24th through 27th, the Center will be hosting an active shooter expo with invites to School Resource Officers, school administrators, school safety directors, and law enforcement, adding as of yesterday had 220 students signed up.

Deputy Director Greathouse noted the Georgia Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ceremony will be held Friday at 11:00 A.M. and will be honoring 16 firefighters who were line of duty deaths.

Chief Bruce Carlisle asked if a new manager has been named at GPSTC Athens, to which Deputy Director Greathouse shared there had been a personnel change and the manager was moved from manager to instructor prior to his upcoming retirement.

Deputy Director Greathouse added Mr. Ara Baronian has been promoted to Division Director of the Basic Training Division.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked if the fire service training is on campus or off campus, to which Deputy Director Greathouse responded since a high percentage of firefighters across the state are volunteer, traditionally a majority of training each year, approximately 60% or more, is delivered in the field.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked if the GPSTC Athens advisory board is still intact. Deputy Director Greathouse advised it is still active.

DONATIONS

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

Two Hundred (200) Gallons of Jet Fuel	\$1,000.00	The Wings Over North Georgia Air Show
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Six (6) Dragon Eye Lasers	\$12,468.00	Monroe County Commissioners
One (1) Stalker RLR Lidar and Four (4) Tint Meter Enforcers	\$4,441.50	Tybee Island Police Department
Five (5) Stalker DSR 2X Radar Units	\$16,125.00	Perry Police Department
Three (3) Stalker Dual Radar Units, Five (5) Stalker DSR 2X Radar Units, and Twelve (12) Pro-Laser III Lidar Units	\$24,000.00	Conyers Police Department
Three (3) Stalker DSR 2X Radar Units	\$18,900.00	Lanier County Sheriff's Office
Twelve (12) Streamlight Strion Flashlights	\$1,800.00	Habersham County Sheriff's Office

The motion to accept these donations was made by Chief Bruce Carlisle, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton.

Mr. Rossie Ross asked about the value of three donated items, indicating a value discrepancy of the five Stalker radars donated by the Perry Police Department for \$16,000.00 and only three of the same type radars donated by Lanier County Sheriff's Office for \$18,000.00, and also the value of the flashlights donated by Habersham County Sheriff's Office, which shows \$21,600.00 on the Board report.

Major Robert Balkcom advised the donation from Habersham County was questioned and sent back for clarification due to it being nearly twice what is normally paid for those brands of radars. Vice-Chairman Wood advised the value based on the Board report for the flashlights was an error, noting the paperwork from the Sheriff indicated \$1,800.00.

Mr. Willie Bolton inquired if his second motion could be rescinded due to the discrepancies until more information is received.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Board Attorney Tina Piper for advice on how the donations can be approved. Ms. Piper advised the second motion can be withdrawn and not take a vote on all of the donations and then make a motion to vote for all except for the ones in question, and that would need to be a second vote.

Ms. Lorri Smith advised the donation sheet can be revised to reflect the value of the flashlights being \$1,800.00 instead of the \$21,600.00. Ms. Piper explained the vote can be made with that amendment if the Board chooses.

Vice-Chairman Wood explained if the vote moves forward for approval, it would be with Major Balkcom gaining more information on the price difference. Additionally, the vote would be for approval of the amended flashlight value of \$1,800.00.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for a motion to remove the second motion made by Mr. Willie Bolton. The motion to remove the original second motion was made by Chief Bruce Carlisle, which was seconded by Chief Dee Meadows and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for a motion to approve the donations as presented by Ms. Lorri Smith with the amended value on the flashlight donation, and with further information from Major Balkcom on the discrepancy on prices, but the vote would be as presented.

Chief Craig Tully made the motion to approve the donations as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

SFC Shange Hodo, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested consideration for an initial adoption of Household Goods Tariff No. 4. SFC Hodo advised the Board approved Tariff No. 3 in April which provided a significant increase across the board and became effective April 18, 2022. SFC Hodo explained the reason the Department is returning to the Board with a new Tariff is to adjust Section 4 Subsection D Number 5, which includes additional containers that were not present in Tariff No. 3 and to adjust the charges of those containers by 10% to be in line with those already in Tariff No. 3. In addition, SFC Hodo stated the sample forms at the end of the Tariff have been reverted to the ones in Tariff No. 1 after movers expressed that Tariff No. 3 changes were requiring significant and unintended changes to their standard forms. SFC Hodo noted the Department did work with the Georgia Movers Association on these changes. SFC Hodo advised notice of the public hearing on Tariff No. 4 will be posted on the DPS website by the end of this week to comply with the 30-day requirement per DPS rules, pending the Board's approval. SFC Hodo added Sgt. Dustin Jones will be receiving comments from the public and an in-person public hearing will be held on November 16th at 10:00 A.M. If approved today, SFC Hodo stated the adjustment would be presented before the Board for final approval on December 8th.

The motion to preliminarily approve the expansion and charge adjustment on Tariff No. 4 was made by Mr. Willie Bolton, which was seconded by Chief Bruce Carlisle and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary