

## **BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

April 11, 2024

Virtual and Call-In Meeting

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Willie Bolton  
Mr. Stacey Cotton  
Mr. Roy H. Fickling  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie  
Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows  
Chief Janet L. Moon  
Commissioner Michael Nail  
Mr. Billy New  
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Sheriff Joey Terrell  
Ms. Susan K. Treadaway  
Chief Craig Tully  
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

### **OTHERS:**

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office  
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison  
Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety  
Lt. Colonel Kendrick Lowe, Department of Public Safety  
Lt. Colonel Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety  
Major Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Doug Wilson, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Rusty Harrelson, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major David Bryant, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Gary Langford, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police  
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Captain Chris Rodewolt, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain J.K. Crews, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Jonathan Huff, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Lieutenant Richard Sikes, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Deputy Director Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation/GCIC  
Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Ara Baronian, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Lorri Smith, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Kelly Ward, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Sara Letson, Office of Planning and Budget

Chief Deputy Robin Krockum, Habersham County Sheriff's Office  
Mr. Bill T. Akers

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the April 11, 2024 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Lieutenant Richard Sikes gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the February 8, 2024 BPS minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the February 8, 2024 minutes. This was seconded by Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced the guest in the room, retired Georgia Bureau of Investigation employee Bill T. Akers. Sheriff Joey Terrell introduced his guest, Chief Deputy Robin Krockum.

Regarding election of officers, Vice-Chairman Wood announced the Chairman of Public Safety has made a motion that Chief Craig Tully be re-elected as Secretary. This motion was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members.

Secretary Tully announced the Chairman of Public Safety has made a motion that Mr. Ellis Wood continue to serve as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Public Safety. This was seconded by Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie and voted approved by the Board members.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Georgia Department of Public Safety, congratulated Vice-Chairman Wood and Secretary Tully on their re-elections and thanked them for their leadership on the Board of Public Safety. Commissioner Hitchens also congratulated Mr. Akers on his retirement and noted DPS will be forever grateful for all the work he has done.

Commissioner Hitchens reported the legislative session has ended and the 8 uniformed Troopers and Motor Carrier Officers who were detached have returned to regular duties. Commissioner Hitchens stated DPS fared very well during the session as far as budget. Commissioner Hitchens added there were a lot of protestors during the session, but everything worked out well with no real issues.

Commissioner Hitchens reported the Department's 2024 awards ceremony was held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> in Macon and there was a great turnout with approximately 178 awards being presented.

Commissioner Hitchens reported the 115<sup>th</sup> Trooper School graduated on March 8<sup>th</sup> with 30 new Troopers, and the 117<sup>th</sup> still has 43 active candidates and will graduate on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hitchens stated recruiting for the 118<sup>th</sup> is ongoing and that school will begin on July 21<sup>st</sup> and the Motor Carrier School currently has 7 cadets and it will graduate April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Hitchens stated at the last meeting, he spoke about the partnership with the GBI regarding a Gang Task Force in the Middle Georgia/Macon area and announced the Troopers are now detached and it appears the team has hit the ground running.

Commissioner Hitchens updated the Board on activity on a couple of the specialty units so far in 2024, indicating Aviation has conducted 87 searches, which has resulted in 40 individuals being found; the SWAT team has answered 33 calls for service, one being a hostage rescue, 9 murder suspects being arrested, 23 calls for high risk warrants for various violent crimes against person and drug related activities; the Dive team has handled 4 calls for service which has resulted in 2 body recoveries; CIU has assisted other agencies that has resulted in the seizure of 4 kilos of marijuana, 111 kilos of cocaine, and 136 kilos of meth; CSU has recovered 43 stolen vehicles, recovered 25 stolen weapons, arrested 2 murder suspects, and has been involved in 34 vehicle pursuits.

Commissioner Hitchens shared the radio transition throughout the state is continuing and reports are still positive.

Regarding construction projects, Commissioner Hitchens reported Post 8, Madison's renovation and Post 9, the Mansion Post, and the Headquarters hangar should all begin very soon; Post 18, Reidsville, Post 35, Jekyll Island, and Post 40 in Worth County are all moving forward with their building progress and should be completed within this year; and DPS is coordinating with GBI and DDS on the Oconee property to try and make it work so all three agencies can have a footprint there.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked for more details on Post 32, Oconee to which Commissioner Hitchens stated the design is already complete and the exact number of acres is being worked out on what can be shared with each agency so all three agencies can build on that property.

Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, thanked Vice-Chairman Wood for his guidance and leadership and for agreeing to serve as vice-chairman, and thanked the entire Board for their guidance. Director Hosey also congratulated Mr. Bill Akers for his friendship and thanked him for his service to the Bureau.

Director Hosey noted Colonel Hitchens mentioned the partnership with the Gang Task Force in Macon and again thanked the Commissioner, noting the team has hit the ground running and are doing good things, making good cases, and is a much-needed resource.

Director Hosey updated the Board on some cases mentioning back in February there was the murder of the UGA student on the UGA campus, and just a few weeks later in the same area there was a gang involved drive by shooting where a three-year was shot and killed and a nine-year old was shot and injured. Director Hosey shared there were three arrests made in the case, explaining the shooting was gang related, and the target was two rival gang members who were sitting on the porch at the residence where the shooting took place. Director Hosey noted great investigative work was conducted by the Athens GBI office, along with partnerships with UGA Police Department, Athens-Clark County Police Department, GSP, Department of Corrections, Department of Community Supervision, and others.

Director Hosey noted every resource that was reached out to responded, and that teamwork led to success.

Director Hosey reported the Cold Case Unit has 24 cold cases under review, with 7 of those stemming from designated family members who fit the protocol of the Coleman-Baker Act and 17 being initiated by the GBI.

Director Hosey advised between January 1<sup>st</sup> and the end of March, there have been 17 officer involved shooting cases.

Director Hosey shared on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the House recognized GBI's work to combat gangs with House Resolution 1442.

Director Hosey noted the change of format on the board report was made to be a little more informative to show actual vacancies, and additional information was added as well.

Director Hosey reported there are currently 39 Special Agents going through the selection process for the next academy which will be this Fall.

Director Hosey also reported 7 Special Agents graduated mandate academy on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Academy started on March 24<sup>th</sup> with a total of 14 going to the field in June.

Regarding the Crime Lab, Director Hosey shared from July 2023 until February 2024 there was a 15.4 % reduction in the back log, which can be attributed to the dedication and hard work of the Crime Lab staff, management, and supervision, and also the additional personnel.

Director Hosey noted there are 17 Crime Lab scientists in training right now and efforts continue to work to fill open positions.

Concerning the Medical Examiners program, Director Hosey stated they are very pleased with the progress being made with hiring and recruitment, and the fellowship program is doing well. Director Hosey noted there are 2 fellows that will be completing the program and taking their board certification test by the Summer with plans to come on full-time by August; and there is also one from Texas who begins in June. Director Hosey stated the MEs office has been doing a great job working on a rotation basis to ensure doctors are rotating back and forth from Atlanta to Pooler to Macon in order to ensure autopsies are being completed in a timely fashion and they are sharing the workload.

On March 27<sup>th</sup> ME Doctor Rachel Gellar hosted 4 Mercer University School of Medicine students who are interested in becoming Forensic Pathologists in the Macon Medical Examiner's office.

Director Hosey reported there have been over 702 million CJIS transactions processed for FY2024.

Regarding facilities, Director Hosey shared the renovation of the Eastern Lab in Augusta was completed in March 2024; the design services for the Headquarters Medical Examiners Office expansion is scheduled for completion in December 2024; and the Region 1 office in Calhoun is scheduled for completion in January 2025; and there is also the plan for the Oconee County spot.

Mr. Roy Fickling asked how value is determined on seized contraband, to which Director Hosey gave an example of narcotics, explaining the number utilized is based on the price value received from DEA and the varying values seen in North Georgia vs South Georgia. Director Hosey added the Bureau has drug values that each office works under and if a kilo of cocaine has a certain drug value attached to it, and if 20 kilos is seized then it is multiplied by what that single value of kilo is.

Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, congratulated Vice-Chairman Wood and Secretary Tully on their re-election and stated the Training Center staff appreciates their leadership and friendship over the years.

Deputy Director Greathouse reported the Training Center continues to see increases in not only training course offerings but student population across the state, which can be attributed to new programs such as use of force training, regional fire field training delivery, and regional 911 training delivery. Deputy Director Greathouse stated last year, the year ended at 312,000 students, and as a comparison, when Director Wigginton began in 2014, there was about 70,000 students a year.

Regarding construction projects, Deputy Director Greathouse, reported restrooms are being remodeled in both the conference center and in the main lobby, which will be followed by the restrooms in the office areas, adding this is the first major reconstruction of the restrooms since 1987. Deputy Director Greathouse also stated renovations of two projects in the barracks are taking place, to include restrooms and the walkways outside the dorm rooms.

Deputy Director Greathouse thanked the Governor and General Assembly for the increase in funding for FY2026.

Deputy Director Greathouse notified everyone the Public Safety Memorial will be May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Deputy Director Greathouse noted the new mandate classes started across the state in early April with 301 cadets and 27 cadets were already in progress at the Coastal Academy and Bainbridge Academy.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked if the mausoleum has been completed for unidentified remains to be buried, to which Deputy Director Greathouse responded that it has been completed, after further modifications. Director Hosey noted the ME's office is determining which remains will be moved into the building.

### **DONATIONS**

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

Thirteen (13) Ryobi One 18V Cordless Impact Drills with Lithium Batteries	\$2,716.61	The City of Dawsonville
Thirteen (13) Ryobi One 18V 120-Watt 12V Automotive Power Inverters	\$649.61	The City of Dawsonville
Sixteen (16) Blauer Frisk Gloves	\$325.46	The City of Dawsonville
One (1) Dragon Eye LIDAR Device	\$2,100.00	The City of Monroe Police Department
One (1) Stalker RLR LIDAR Device	\$2,521.50	The Blue Ridge Police Department
One (1) Stalker RLR LIDAR Device	\$2,521.50	The Fannin County Commissioners Office
Two (2) Stalker RLR LIDAR Devices	\$5,043.00	The McCaysville Police Department
One (1) Stalker RLR LIDAR Device	\$2,521.50	The Towns County Sheriff's Office

The motion to accept items 1-3 was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Dee Meadows and voted approved by the Board members.

The motion to accept items 4-8 was made by Chief Janet Moon, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution for the Georgia Department of Public Safety to authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to accept transfer of custody of the state-owned communications tower located at 427 North Expressway, Griffin, Georgia, and its radio equipment shelter from the Technical College System of Georgia.

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

Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution for the Georgia Department of Public Safety to authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to enter into negotiations, agreements, and supporting documents as necessary to execute a five-year lease amendment for the Kennesaw Hangar.

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

Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution for the Georgia Department of Public Safety to authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to enter into negotiations with the Jekyll Island State Park Authority, and to execute all contracts and supporting documents as necessary to acquire from the Authority a long-term lease of the facilities, barracks, and headquarters of Post 35, Jekyll Island.

The motion to accept this Resolution was made by Chief Dee Meadows, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members.

Major Andrew Montgomery, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested preliminary approval of a 30% increase to the Maximum Rate Tariff for Nonconsensual Towing in Intrastate Transportation with the final adoption on June 13, 2024 after a public hearing on May 15, 2024.

Chief Dee Meadows made the motion to accept the Maximum Rate Tariff increase with final adoption of June 13, 2024 after a public hearing on May 15, 2024. This motion was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary