

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

August 14, 2025

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Atlanta, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie Bolton
Mr. Roy H. Fickling
Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie
Chief Janet L. Moon
Commissioner Michael Nail
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Ms. Susan K. Treadaway
Chief Craig Tully
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Stacey Cotton
Mr. Richard Hyde
Sheriff E. Neal Jump
Chief Leonard "Dee" Meadows
Mr. Billy New

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 Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety
Major Chris Rodewolt, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major David Bryant, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Doug Wilson, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Gary Langford, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/CVE
Captain Thomas Kustra, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Captain Jonathon Huff, Department of Public Safety/CVE
SFC Billy Schwab, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Chief Dispatcher Delmas Boyett, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Lorri Smith, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Assistant Director Scott Dutton, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Division Director Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation/GCIC
Ms. Laura McDonald, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Connie Buck, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Jacob Harmon, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Philip Curtis, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Sara Lue, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Training Bureau Director Ike McConnell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Operations Bureau Director Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Ms. Meaghan Carver, Office of Planning & Budget
Mr. James Bergman, Department of Community Supervision
Ms. Angela Batey, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Machel Jones, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Joy Moore, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Denise Hickman, Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the August 14, 2025 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 called for approval of the July 10, 2025 BPS minutes. Mr. Roy Fickling made the motion to approve the July 10, 2025 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 119th Trooper School will graduate on September 5th with 30 Cadets; the 120th Trooper School started on July 13th and currently has 34 Cadets, noting 8 Cadets were lost in driving. Commissioner Hitchens shared they are looking at the driving program to see if there are ways to try and reduce that number. Commissioner Hitchens advised the 13th CVO School graduated 7 Cadets and right behind it the 14th CVO School started on July 20th with 9 Cadets and all 9 are still there. Commissioner Hitchens shared they are planning on graduating December 12th and with the new mandate hours, the CVO School has been revamped and it will be scaled back to 7 weeks of being on campus. Commissioner Hitchens stated DPS is very appreciative of the Governor and legislature in giving the money to continue doing schools. Commissioner Hitchens explained one of the sheets being passed around to Board members is a data sheet that shows the activity in metrics and almost every category is going the right way. Commissioner Hitchens noted one of the things tracked is Trooper numbers and fatalities, sharing when Trooper numbers go up, the fatalities go down; when the Trooper numbers go down, the fatalities go up. Is that telling you the Troopers are the only ones making the difference? Commissioner Hitchens stated it does not, but we are the agency who puts our main focus on that.

Commissioner Hitchens shared on July 24th there was a bridge dedication ceremony for Trooper Jimmy Cenescar. Commissioner Hitchens advised Representative Sandy Donatucci, Majority Leader Chuck Efration, and SFC Billy Schwab played a pivotal role in making that dedication happen with about 15 members of Trooper Cenescar's family attending. Commissioner Hitchens added the ceremony was held at Post 51, Gwinnett and the bridge is located on Georgia 324 at I-85.

Reporting on stats, Commissioner Hitchens shared the Aviation Unit had 119 flights, conducted 28 searches, and located 18 subjects; they also provided aerial support for the Peachtree Road Race, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game and Home Run Derby, and the World Cup match in Atlanta during some of those games; and the Middle Georgia Gang Task Force that partners with the GBI, so far this year the two Troopers assigned to the Team have apprehended 16 wanted persons, arrested 14

gang members, recovered 17 guns, made 6 felony arrests, and recovered 2 stolen vehicles. Commissioner Hitchens also reported the K9 Unit is at 52 dogs and has had 128 people either found or arrested, and 24 bite apprehensions; the SWAT Team has had about 61 calls so far this year. Commissioner Hitchens advised the number is down a little bit but it is down on purpose to give them a break as they were running constantly and this gives them time to train but they are still very busy and they are handling any calls that need our SWAT; the Dive Team has had 17 calls for service this year, which is up; and the Crime Suppression Unit for 2025 has recovered 127 stolen vehicles, the monetary value of that is 4.4 million, they have also found 23 either flipped or fraudulent VIN vehicles, and they are doing a very good job of researching and figuring out how to find where all VINs are, have recovered 18 stolen firearms, 84 wanted suspects, and have had 180 felony charges.

Commissioner Hitchens shared Sergeant T.J. Hamilton, with HSI has been staying very busy since being put over the Unit on June 1st. Commissioner Hitchens stated Sgt. Hamilton was part of a notable arrest on July 29th when the Gang Unit, which he is part of, apprehended a subject wanted for war crimes out of Africa; the subject was transported to ERO for deportation back to Africa for his warrants.

Concerning Fleet, Commissioner Hitchens reported 10 of the 13 2025 Ford Mustangs are out on the road and the other 3 have not been received yet. Commissioner Hitchens noted those are the only sedans that we can buy right now so we will buy some more of those in the future; 18 Chevrolet Silverados have been received and they are in the process of being upfitted and put out to CVE Regions, adding there have been some issues with the Tahoes so we are moving more to a pickup truck that is based off of Florida using it and they have held up well. Commissioner Hitchens also mentioned the procurement process and contracts have been signed for the mobile spikes, adding 10 are going to be purchased and issued to high pursuit areas.

Commissioner Hitchens also shared the quote has been received to complete an outside inventory audit on the fleet uniform warehouse to keep up with supply and tell you when to reorder, and it also tells you what is being used so you are not buying 15 size 6 shoes when you only have 1 person that wears a size 6. Commissioner Hitchens added that is expected to be complete by October.

Regarding Facilities, Commissioner Hitchens advised Post 19, Swainsboro is developing a conceptual design for the building placement on the property and DPS is talking with the Airport Authority regarding a long-term lease; the preliminary civil drawing for Post 21, Sylvania, has been received and it is going out for bid soon; and personnel are moving into Post 40, Worth next week.

Commissioner Hitchens updated the Board on the Lenovo computers, noting DOAS has confirmed the computers purchased for the 9 Communications Centers and Patrol Posts can be kept for the life of the computer, but once they are done, we will not be able to buy another Lenovo. Commissioner Hitchens shared the new computers will allow the computer refresh in the field and in the Communications Centers to be completed.

Commissioner Hitchens reported there are pictures being passed around of the monument at DPS Headquarters that honors the old Headquarters and the original Police Academy building, noting the original brick of the original Police Academy was used and the wording is from our friend J.B. Edwards.

Mr. Willie Bolton commented on the number of Cadets lost in Trooper School, about half, and Commissioner Hitchens advised a lot leave the first day and we do not know how to fix that, and some do not make it to breakfast the next day, determining this is not for them or they were not prepared. Mr. Willie Bolton asked if Cadets are lost in firearms, to which Commissioner Hitchens stated only 1 has been lost to firearms since switching to the red dot, and driving is where we are losing them besides them walking out the door. Commissioner Hitchens shared we have them fill out a form every time someone leaves, and he would venture to say that 95% say they were not mentally or physically prepared or they did not know what they were getting into.

Chief Janet Moon asked what skill seems to be lacking in the driving program to which Commissioner Hitchens responded a lot of the Cadets did not get their license at 16 and so there have been people in Trooper School who have had their license for only 1 year and they are not getting that driving experience.

Ms. Susan Treadaway asked if there are any physical standards established in the application process to which Commissioner Hitchens stated you have to pass a PT test and applicants are given a workout schedule that is day-by-day, and you should be able to do this when you show up and we do not even do that on the first day.

Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie thanked Commissioner Hitchens for Troopers who responded to assist his deputies with a barricaded gunman. Sheriff McDuffie stated they were listening to their radio channel and heard what was going on and responded to assist without having to be asked.

Chief Janet Moon thanked Commissioner Hitchens in advance for assistance from Aviation for the Air Show in Peachtree City in October.

Mr. Charles Sikes thanked Commissioner Hitchens on the monument for the old Police Academy and for honoring the history of the Department.

Director Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, expressed thoughts and prayers for Officer Rose of the DeKalb County Police Department who lost his life almost a week ago, and he thanked those who assisted with the investigation and with the response.

Director Hosey reported back in July, the Middle Georgia Gang Task Force, along with Warner Robins PD, Bib County SO, Georgia State Patrol, Department of Community Supervision, and Georgia Department of Corrections executed a search warrant in Macon and the result of the month-long investigation was over 700 grams of powder cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy/MDMA, marijuana, methamphetamine. Director Hosey stated that is just one example of great partnerships.

Director Hosey shared on July 11th, the GBI was requested by the Decatur County Sheriff's Office to assist in a death investigation involving an 8 year old child. It was determined during that investigation, the child was shot and killed by a 13 year old in the house, and the 13 year old was charged as a juvenile, but also an adult was charged as an adult.

On July 11th through 13th, Director Hosey stated "Operation Phantom Whisper", a 3-day proactive online undercover investigation coordinated by the ICAC Task Force, GBI, and Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, resulted in the arrest of 12 people ranging in age of 22-49 on various felony charges. Director Hosey noted this operation focused on identifying and apprehending child predators, and 11 of the 12 suspects taken into custody had traveled to meet with someone they believed to be a 14 year old girl with the intent of engaging in sexual activity with the 14 year old.

Director Hosey shared the Office of Special Investigations Cold Case Unit is currently reviewing or reinvestigating 41 cold cases, adding 13 cold cases have been opened involving unidentified remains in hopes of identifying the victims and 4 of those unidentified remains have been identified through Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy.

Director Hosey reported from January 1st through July 31st there have been 39 officer involved shootings investigated in the state.

Director Hosey advised earlier this week, the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC) conducted a threat assessment briefing for legislators in the state to give them a thumbnail view of what the threat picture looks like in the state, both in the domestic and international picture, as well as informing and educating them on the Strategic Threat Operation Assessment Group which is now part of GISAC that is focusing on special events but also threats against public officials in the state.

Director Hosey also mentioned members of the House and Senate recently toured the Cold Case Unit and was briefed on what the Cold Case Unit is doing.

Director Hosey announced Ms. Sara Lou has been appointed as Director of Public and Governmental Affairs for the GBI.

Currently in the Investigative Division for the month of June, Director Hosey advised 497 cases have been investigated and the Division is well over 6,000 for the fiscal year, and most of those cases continue to be Crimes Against Persons and Other Crimes.

Director Hosey reported GISAC had over 1,700 requests for information; 811 came through the "See Send App".

Director Hosey shared on August 2nd, the first round of interviews for the next hiring process was held for an Agent class beginning in January and the Agent class for those recently hired begins August 18th and will graduate on November 18th.

Director Hosey reported there was a slight decrease in the backlog in the Crime Lab for the month of June and provided an update on the preliminary testing of drug evidence that started back in March. Director Hosey shared as of August 8th the backlog has been eliminated from the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit and is being maintained by testing all new submissions; 90% of the cases from the Douglas County Judicial Circuit have been completed and they anticipate being in maintenance stage by September 1st, that would be taking in new submissions as well; testing of cases from the Rome Judicial Circuit has begun; the Carroll County District Attorney's Office cancelled services on older cases no longer active in their office, reducing the backlog in the West Georgia Judicial Circuit by approximately 200 cases, that is important because working on the backlog in drug chemistry is a multi-pronged test and part of that is encouraging our prosecutors to dismiss or let us know of cases they no longer need so we did not do the testing on it in the lab. Director Hosey also noted preliminary testing began on cases from the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit in the Central Lab out of Macon on July 22nd, adding they have completed cases up to this point and reducing the backlog in that Circuit by about 6%; preliminary testing began on cases from the Northeastern Judicial Circuit from the Northeast Regional Lab on August 4th; and we are currently discussing with the staff at the Coastal Lab to begin preliminary testing by September 1st.

Director Hosey advised the Crime Lab has 22 Scientists in training within their respective disciplines; there was a 4.6% decrease in reports pending for ME's office; autopsies were down to 338 for the month as opposed to 454 in May; there was a .8% increase in the reports released within 90 days within the ME's office; and Associate Medical Examiner Doctor Michael Reno began employment July 1st which keeps us at 15 Medical Examiners due to a retirement.

Director Hosey shared the FY26 Medical Examiner Fellowship Program began on July 1st and there are 2 in the program beginning their training and they just finished up 2 lectures on firearm related injuries.

Director Hosey reported GCIC had over 66 million CJIS transactions processed for the month of June and the percentage of electronically received fingerprint cards versus mailed/manual fingerprint cards was at 99.5%. They are also preparing for their symposium being held on Jekyll Island in October.

Regarding Facilities, Director Hosey advised the GBI Headquarters Medical Examiner's Office new construction is scheduled to begin in September; the design phase for the new Central Medical Examiner's Building in Macon began this month; and Friday, September 5th will be the building dedication for the Region 1 Field Office in Calhoun, and that building is being named in honor of retired Director Vernon Kennan.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked the status of Firearms Examiners within the Bureau to which Director Hosey stated he is not sure exactly where the vacancies are, but throughout the different disciplines for every vacancy, whether it is firearms, DNA, drug chemistry, etc. someone is in the process of filling that position. Director Hosey added there is a two-year minimum training to be fully training as a Firearms Examiner.

Director Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported some record numbers were set at the Training Center for the last fiscal year, noting the number of students in-person, basic, and on-line show 412,000 students. Director Wigginton added 10 years ago, the Center was recording about 75,000 annually, stating it is a great place to be but it has created some problems with scheduling and driver training.

Director Wigginton reported the new Basic Mandate program has completed 1 course with great results and great comments, and they are working with POST to modify some of the topics that are offered within the program.

Director Wigginton stated one thing he found interesting with the basic number of students if you include Corrections is the Center runs about 50,000 officers in the state of Georgia, and we are training just shy of 9,000 so that tells you there is a little more than a 20% turnover rate annually in public safety. Director Wigginton noted this is not a recruiting issue it is a retention issue.

Director Wigginton announced on August 26th and 27th we are working with the major car manufacturers to have a fleet day at the Center so Dodge, Chevrolet, Ford, Tesla, Nissan, Polaris, and others are going to be showcasing their new '26 and '27 model cars and hopefully we can have some conversation about delivery dates.

Regarding Facilities, Director Wigginton reported the water line construction inside the main building is getting close to completion; the mock village is making headway; construction on some of the buildings around campus will start soon; and then we are excited the new DPS training building, our basic training building, should start construction very soon.

Chief Janet Moon asked if there are any plans on building a secondary course for driver training because there is a lot of land. Director Wigginton responded there is a meeting planned with OPB on Monday to talk about some potential plans and it boils down to funding but there is a plan in place to make a recommendation.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked what acreage the Training Center started with to which Director Wigginton stated it started with 600 acres and is now at 1,000 acres, but there is about 300 acres that is undeveloped, and that is deceiving because there is about 120 acres that can never be developed because of the wastewater treatment plant and spray fields, along with some wetland on campus cannot be built on.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked for an update on the mausoleum. Director Wigginton advised it is fully operational.

DONATIONS

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

One (1) Stalker RLR Lidar Unit	\$2,494.00	City of Brunswick
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One (1) 10'x12' Wood Utility Shed	\$3,670.38	Four Seasons Portable Buildings of Summerville and the City of Summerville
Fuel and Hotel Rooms for the Air Dot Show, Atlanta – October 11-12, 2025	\$4,500.00	Atlanta Air Show (Peachtree City)
200-300 Gallons of Jet A Fuel	\$2,000.00	Wings Over North Georgia
Fuel and Hotel Rooms for the Vidalia Air Show, April 2026	\$4,000.00	Vidalia Air Show

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

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

Furniture and Miscellaneous Household Items	\$1,000.00	Circle of Care
Two (2) Kawasaki Motorcycles	\$2,160.00	Paulding County Sheriff's Office
Nine (9) Range Instructor Ballistic Vests with Red Carriers	\$9,000.00	Slate Solutions

The motion to accept these items was made by Mr. Roy Fickling, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution to authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to seek an Executive Order approving the demolition of the existing DDS Rome Customer Service Center located at 3390 Martha Berry Highway NE, Rome, Georgia.

The motion to accept this Resolution was made by Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie, which was seconded by Commissioner Tyrone Oliver and voted approved by the Board members.

Major Andrew Montgomery, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested approval for the final adoption of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff No. 6 for Intrastate Rates and Charges for Household Goods with an effective

date of August 18, 2025. Major Montgomery reported the public hearing has been completed with no opposition.

Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie made the motion to approve the final adoption of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff No. 6, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval of a Resolution to transfer custody of approximately 1.35 acres of real property in Decatur, Dekalb County from the Georgia Correctional Industries Administration to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation for its use in the expansion of the GBI Medical Examiner Building and new Headquarters main entrance; and to request the Law Department and State Properties Commission to prepare and process appropriate documents reflecting this deed.

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

Chief Craig Tully made a motion to adjourn the Board of Public Safety meeting and go into the Georgia Crime Information Center Council, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members.

GEORGIA CRIME INFORMATION CENTER COUNCIL

Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, GCIC Division Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, presented the FY2025 CJIS Security Policy Violations report for the Georgia Crime Information Center, which involves unauthorized access and dissemination of criminal justice information. Ms. Westbrook reported there were violations for 21 agencies reported during FY2025. Ms. Westbrook presented the request for approval of actions taken to resolve security policy violations for FY2025 to the BPS members for their approval.

Chief Craig Tully made the motion to accept the GCIC's recommendations for the FY2025 GCIC Security Policy Violations, which was seconded by Mr. Roy Fickling and voted approved by the Board members.

Mr. Willie Bolton made a motion to adjourn the GCIC Council and return to the Board of Public Safety meeting, 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