

**BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
December 12, 2024  
Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Atlanta, Georgia

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Stacey Cotton  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows  
Chief Janet L. Moon  
Mr. Billy New  
Sheriff Joey Terrell  
Ms. Susan K. Treadaway  
Chief Craig Tully  
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Willie Bolton  
Mr. Roy H. Fickling  
Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie  
Commissioner Michael Nail  
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes

**OTHERS:**

Ms. Deborah Gore, Attorney General’s Office  
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison  
Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety  
Lt. Colonel Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety  
Major Rusty Harrelson, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Captain Chris Rodewolt, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Jonathan Huff, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Lieutenant Richard Sikes, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
SFC Billy Schwab, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Assistant Director Scott Dutton, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Ray Ham, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Joan Crumpler, Department of Public Safety  
Mrs. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Sarah Letson, Office of Planning and Budget

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the December 12, 2024 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Major Rusty Harrelson gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the October 10, 2024 BPS minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the October 10, 2024 minutes. This was seconded by Ms. Susan Treadaway and voted approved by the Board members.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Georgia Department of Public Safety, updated the Board on Trooper Schools, reporting the 118<sup>th</sup> Trooper School is in its 21<sup>st</sup> week with 23 Cadets graduating on March 14<sup>th</sup> and the 119<sup>th</sup> Trooper School will begin January 12, 2025 with about 65 cadets. Commissioner Hitchens added the 12<sup>th</sup> MCO School graduated 8 cadets on November 8, 2024.

During the month of November, Commissioner Hitchens reported the Thanksgiving holiday patrol began on Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> and ended Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at midnight. Commissioner Hitchens stated AAA expected about 2.1 million people to travel on Georgia roadways, so DPS made sure Troopers and Officers were out in full force trying to reduce traffic crashes. Commissioner Hitchens stated after reviewing the numbers, it is apparent the efforts were a success. Commissioner Hitchens noted during the travel period, GSP stopped 32,495 vehicles; issued 17,291 citations; issued 24,140 warnings; investigated 665 crashes, and 9 of those were fatalities; and removed 479 impaired drivers off the roadway. Commissioner Hitchens shared the overall fatalities for the state was 17, which was 6 less than the Thanksgiving holiday period last year so we are moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Hitchens advised DPS partnered with GOHS and devised statewide concentrated patrols and the first of this fiscal year was conducted on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hitchens reported the one-day detail produced 5,317 citations; 7,682 warnings; 83 DUI arrests; 133 crashes; and the most important number that day was zero fatalities statewide. Commissioner Hitchens stated it was a very positive event and there will be 4 more this year and it is something our employees enjoy doing.

Commissioner Hitchens reported on November 4<sup>th</sup>, Post 44 Forsyth Troopers were given a lookout on a white Nissan Rogue that was involved in a child abduction, adding it was reported the mother pepper sprayed the foster parents in Florida and took 2 children. Commissioner Hitchens stated 4 Troopers located the vehicle and were able to conduct a successful box-in maneuver and stop the vehicle to minimize the risk of the children. Commissioner Hitchens noted the mother was taken into custody and the children were released to Bibb County Children Services.

Commissioner Hitchens shared DPS continues to work with partners at the GBI and Middle Georgia Gang Task Force, adding he wants to thank Director Hosey for his leadership on that and DPS folks are having a good time and are producing good numbers.

Commissioner Hitchens noted on November 19<sup>th</sup>, the State of Georgia Dive Team was requested by GBI to locate a vehicle possibly in the Ocmulgee River relating to the death investigation of Devin Jeter who failed to return to duty at the Naval Station in Jacksonville, Florida. Commissioner Hitchens reported the Dive Team utilized the Department's underwater remote operated vehicle system for the first time, and within an hour, the vehicle was located approximately 100 feet downstream. Commissioner Hitchens added we are very optimistic about what the robot will do, noting it is unmanned and it will not take very long to search water.

Commissioner Hitchens shared on November 30<sup>th</sup>, TFC Julian Mapes and his Cadet Logan South were working on I-20 in Rockdale County when they attempted to catch up to 2 vehicles who were racing and driving recklessly. Commissioner Hitchens noted both vehicles exited and 1 pulled into a convenience store, and upon TFC Mapes and Cadet South entering the store parking lot, there was gunfire exchanged and 1 suspect was struck. Commissioner Hitchens reported our Trooper was struck in the baton but did not know it. Both are doing well and are back at work.

Commissioner Hitchens advised on November 21<sup>st</sup>, MCCC partnered with our federal partners and conducted a Fall Port check in Savannah, reporting it was a very productive detail with 382 inspections; 229 citations; 401 traffic enforcement violations; and 456 driver violations.

Reporting on specialty units, Commissioner Hitchens shared the K-9 Unit is still at 53 dogs and they continue to do a good job, adding 274 people were found or arrested this year and 51 of those were bite apprehensions; the SWAT Team has had 141 calls for service this year, and the Dive Team has had 20 calls for service.

Regarding projects, Commissioner Hitchens noted the statewide CAD/radio system is in its final stages and configurations are being finalized; the Historical Post is nearing completion; Post 35 is still not occupied but is close; the Mansion Post is supposed to be completed in December; and the completion date for the Headquarters Hangar is March 2025.

Commissioner Hitchens thanked the Board for their support, guidance, and leadership in his first year as Colonel.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Commissioner Hitchens on the holiday patrol days, about how many of the 890 Troopers will be on the road, to which Commissioner Hitchens responded at least 75% of those work the first day and the last day, then any day in between 50% is working.

Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported on recent activity for the month of October indicating the newly formed West Georgia Gang Task Force in Columbus conducted an investigation with multi agencies, including Muscogee County Sheriff's Office, Columbus Police Department, FBI, and several other Sheriff's offices in Georgia and Alabama where over \$2 million in drugs, firearms, and cash were seized. This led to 4 arrests and 2 of the individuals are known to have gang ties with the Bloods and Gangster Disciples in Columbus.

Director Hosey shared the HEAT (Human Exploitation and Trafficking) Unit just finished an on-line multi agency undercover investigation that targeted sex traffickers and commercial sex buyers in the Macon area. Director Hosey explained the goal of the operation was to reduce the demand for commercial sex by identifying and drawing commercial sex buyers, and those that were arrested were not just from Macon, they were from all parts of Central/South Georgia.

Regarding the Gang Task Force in Macon, Director Hosey reported they just completed a 10-month investigation working with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and made arrests concerning cocaine distribution.

Concerning the Office of Special Investigations, specifically the Cold Case Unit, Director Hosey reported they currently have 36 cold cases being reviewed and 13 of those were requests by designated family members through the Coleman-Baker Act and 23 have been self-initiated GBI cold cases. Also, 12 cold cases involving unidentified remains have been opened to work through forensics investigative genetic genealogy to get those remains identified.

Director Hosey advised the mausoleum at the Public Safety Training Center is complete and the remains are in the process of being stored properly, and a ribbon cutting or memorial, will be scheduled.

As of November 30<sup>th</sup>, Director Hosey noted there have been 79 officer involved shooting cases investigated, which is down from 94 from this time last year.

Director Hosey advised vacancies continue to come down in all areas of the Agency while working at hiring in all divisions, as well as getting new employees trained, and balancing those with resignations received.

Director Hosey shared the 54<sup>th</sup> Basic Agent Academy will graduate next Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> and will consist of 19 new Special Agents, adding there are 17 conditional offers out right now for the upcoming Special Agent school in the Spring of next year. Director Hosey added testing was just completed for Special Agent positions for a Fall Basic Agent class next year.

Director Hosey reported the investigative cases for October included 597 cases opened, which consist of 110 Crimes Against Person, 24 Drug Investigations, and 463 Other Investigations. Also, over \$2.3 million in contraband was seized, which includes the case in Columbus.

Director Hosey shared the GISAC Unit processed over 1,800 requests for information in the month of October that included Threats to Life, See Send App Tips, and Suspicious Activity.

Regarding the Crime Lab, Director Hosey stated there was a 19% increase in services completed and a 12% reduction in services requested. Director Hosey added the Crime Lab is doing an excellent job in getting priority cases pushed out in a timely manner.

Director Hosey announced there are 26 Scientists currently in training within their respective disciplines.

Director Hosey shared last month, the ME's office performed 362 autopsies, which is up from 247 the previous month and the Agency is in the process of bringing a Forensic Anthropologist back to the GBI.

Director Hosey advised GCIC processed over 63 million CJIS transactions in the month of October.

Director Hosey also advised they were notified effective January 1, 2025, the FBI user fee for fingerprint based criminal history records checks will decrease by \$1.25.

Regarding construction projects, Director Hosey reported the storage building at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center is scheduled for completion in December; Headquarters MEO expansion design services is scheduled for completion in December; and the Region 1, Calhoun office new construction is scheduled for completion in January 2025.

Director Hosey noted last week, Atlanta Police Department Chief Darin Schierbaum came by GBI Headquarters to personally thank GCIC and the Crime Lab for assisting APD in a variety of different ways, bringing to light two cases the Crime Lab assisted with regarding DNA evidence.

Director Hosey shared last month, him, Assistant Director Dutton, and the Accreditation Team traveled to Jacksonville, Florida and appeared before the CALEA re-accreditation review committee and the committee voted unanimously to re-accredit the GBI. Director Hosey stated this will be the 9<sup>th</sup> accreditation and 8<sup>th</sup> re-accreditation for the Agency.

Director Hosey advised last month, a conviction was obtained in the Laken Riley murder investigation in Athens and stated he is extremely proud of the work by everyone involved.

Mr. Richard Hyde remarked on the Crime Scene Specialist who testified in the Laken Riley trial, noting she did an exceptional job.

Ms. Susan Treadaway commented the GBI also shined in two cases her office prosecuted that were televised.

Sheriff Joey Terrell noted they had the same experience in Habersham County regarding a murder case, where GBI assisted, and the suspect was identified in just a matter of days.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the Governor's Public Safety Awards ceremony was held at the Training Center where 17 individuals were recognized for going above and beyond the call of service.

Regarding projects, Director Wigginton advised the driver training high speed track paving is being finished this week; a new mock village will be out for bid after the first of the year; and the water line project inside the main building will start after the first of the year.

Director Wigginton praised the Fire Academy, sharing they had two calls in the past week, which were trench rescues performed around the state; one was successful and the firefighters who went to that call had recently completed the trench rescue course at the Training Center; the other was a body rescue.

Director Wigginton noted he rode by the Fire Academy the previous day and there was not an empty parking space, and every training prop was being used.

Concerning upcoming events, Director Wigginton reported there is a Gang Investigators Conference in February consisting of several partners.

Mr. Richard Hyde asked if POST approved the classes for next year's expansion of the Basic Academy to which Director Wigginton responded yes and no. Some have been completed and some are not completed yet.

Chief Janet Moon asked if the curriculum will be ready for the January start date. Director Wigginton advised there will be a follow-up call next week and they have been advised the remainder of the curriculum will be completed and ready.

Mr. Richard Hyde asked what the first day of the class would be and Director Wigginton responded it will be January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Chief Craig Tully remarked the Fire Academy has reached more Firefighters in the state of Georgia than it ever has and advised to keep up the good work.

Chief Janet Moon thanked Director Wigginton and his staff for allowing her Driving Instructors to attend training at the Training Center.

### **DONATIONS**

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

Two (2) Stalker RLR Lidars	\$5,142.00	Pooler Police Department
Four (4) Evolution Rapid ID Fingerprint Scanners	\$11,776.00	Bibb County Sheriff's Office
Explosive Breaching Supplies, to include approximately 1,830 feet of explosive Det. Cord, less than 1 pound of C2 sheet explosive, 39 blasting caps, 27 individual pre-made chargers, and 3 storage magazines	\$7,588.51	Newnan Police Department

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

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

Nine (9) Police Sedans	\$9,000.00	Hapeville Police Department
Code Red Guard Classroom Shield	\$695.00	Code Red Guard

The motion to accept this item was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Janet Moon and voted approved by the Board members.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

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 10% increase to the Maximum Rate Tariff No. 5 pertaining to Intrastate Rates and Charges for Non-Consensual Towing with an effective date of December 16, 2024. Major Montgomery reported the public hearing has been completed with no opposition.

Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the final adoption of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Maximum Rate Tariff No. 5, which was seconded by Mr. Stacey Cotton and voted approved by the Board members.

Major Andrew Montgomery, Georgia Department of Public Safety Motor Carrier Compliance Division, requested approval of the issuance of an Administrative Order extending the temporary hours of service variance adopted by the Georgia Department of Public Safety through section 395.341 of Chapter 1 of the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Transportation Rulebook for a period expiring on December 31, 2025.

Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the issuance of an Administrative Order extending the temporary hours of service variance. This motion was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Joan Crumpler, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of a Resolution for the Department of Public Safety to authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to request that the Georgia State Properties Commission issue a Revocable License and that the Governor and Georgia Legislature issue a Permanent Non-Exclusive Easement on 0.13 acres for the purpose of installing a Georgia Power distribution line and facilities to provide electricity to the Georgia State Patrol Aviation Hangar located at 959 United Avenue SE, Atlanta, Georgia.

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

Chief Craig Tully presented a gift to Sheriff Joey Terrell for his service to the Board of Public Safety, with this being his last meeting. Sheriff Joey Terrell stated he will miss the Board members, noting the friendships and camaraderie will be missed and it means a lot to be able to serve the citizens of Georgia.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary