

**BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
December 9, 2021  
Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Forsyth, Georgia

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Willie C. Bolton  
Chief Bruce Carlisle  
Chief Stacey Cotton  
Chief Leonard "Dee" Meadows  
Commissioner Michael Nail  
Mr. Rossie Ross  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Sheriff Joey Terrell  
Chief Craig Tully  
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward  
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Captain Nicholas D. Ellis  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
Sheriff Dane Kirby  
Mr. Samir J. Patel

**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  
Major Kendrick Lowe, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Thornell L. King, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police  
Major Wayne Mobley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Captain Clay Kicklighter, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Garrett Fiveash, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Brandon Dawson, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Ms. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety  
Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Mr. John Melvin, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Tony Hightower, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Bruce Stanford, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Ike McConnell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Chadd Wilson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Ara Baronian, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Adam Ham, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Judy Couch, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the December 9, 2021 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 October 28, 2021 BPS minutes. Mr. Rossie Ross made the motion to approve the October 28, 2021 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Mr. Charles Sikes addressed the room on World Word II and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Mr. Sikes recalled heroes who saved lives and lost their lives on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. Mr. Sikes stated around two thousand people were killed and over a thousand people were wounded, which overwhelmed the medical system as people came into the medical facilities; almost 200 aircraft were demolished.

Mr. Sikes mentioned during this time period, America's strength was battleships, and they were named after states, but unfortunately a vast majority of the battleships were at Pearl Harbor, and more than a dozen ships were damaged or destroyed during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Mr. Sikes noted the USS Arizona remains harbored as a memorial to those who lost their lives.

Mr. Sikes told stories of some individuals at Pearl Harbor he has read about:

Lieutenant Phil Ramsey was one of four pilots who were able to get airborne and engaged the Japanese forces by shooting down one of their planes, then he was shot down himself.

Doris Miller, who was a male, was a navy cook and ship hand, who took to machine guns, with no training, to fight and he received a Naval Cross, which is equivalent to the Silver on the army/marine side, one below the Medal of Honor. He was also the first African American to receive a Medal of Honor for the steps he took during the attack.

Chief Postman Edward Peal was on the USS Nevada. He was killed and awarded the Medal of Honor, but he saved many by directing them to take cover behind the gun turret until they could have an opportunity to man them and fire back.

Herbert Jones was on the USS California and received a Medal of Honor when he was injured in the internal parts of the ship when it was hit. His comrades would not leave him; the marines assigned to the ship were bringing him up and he told them to leave him and get off the ship before the magazines exploded.

First Lieutenant Annie Fox was a head nurse, and the first US servicewoman to receive the Purple Heart, normally reserved for people who were wounded, but she wasn't wounded, so it was later converted to a Bronze Star for valor; and she retired from the miliary.

George Woodruff was a civilian crane operator on one of the battle ships and he would direct the crane to cover men so they could get to the gun turrets to return fire.

Commander Cason Young was blown overboard from the USS San Francisco, which was a service ship. He came out of the water, which was on fire from oil, climbed back on the ship after the Lieutenant Commander had ordered all to abandon ship. Commander Young climbed back on board and ordered the ship out of port. He was later killed during the Guatemala Canal Campaign.

Mr. Sikes stated he is often reminded of the words of the President during that era who said, "Speak softly and carry a big damn stick". Mr. Sikes noted you have got to be aware and always cautious, and this line of work is relative to that; you have got to speak softly and carry a big stick.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 111<sup>th</sup> Trooper School is in session, in week 15 and with 41 cadets. The 7<sup>th</sup> Motor Carrier School is still in field training and will be graduating on December 30<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding the new headquarters project, Commissioner Wright reported it is continuing to move forward, noting the basement walls are standing, and the slab will be poured on Monday with the structural steel also arriving on Monday. Commissioner Wright stated the parking garage is being poured off-site and will be delivered prefabricated and the garage is scheduled to be ready for use in March of 2022, adding the building is on schedule to be completed by January 17, 2023.

Commissioner Wright shared the Department has been working with Georgia Building Authority and the State Property Commission to renovate Post 8-Madison, which has been vacant for several years and it is the oldest and only historically significant Post left, stating it is anticipated to start moving on the project next year.

Commissioner Wright noted as the Department closes out the end of the year, he wanted to share a short list of items on accomplishments made by the Department, indicating when he says "us", it is as an agency, not just the Command Staff but a team effort of everyone working together to make things happen. Commissioner Wright noted when you look at the list, it shows how working together as a team makes things better for both employees and agency:

10% pay increase for Communications Equipment Officers; a new pay scale for secretaries was implemented to provide a clear career path; a new headquarters facility; creation of Troops J & K to give those employees a clear career path; a new hiring process for civilians to make it faster and more efficient; implementation of a dual-purpose K-9 program. Commissioner Wright shared once completed, the Department will have about 30 K-9's across the state. Implementation of the accelerated trooper school; ability to reinstate the senior and master trooper/officer program with pay increases to help those employees who choose not to participate in the competitive process; focus on crime reduction in the city of Atlanta. Commissioner Wright reported since starting this project in April, DPS, DOC, DCS, GBI, DNR, and other agencies have conducted almost 17,000 traffic stops; have made 419 DUI arrests; have issued 11,500 citations; 13,000 warnings have been issued; 313

wanted people have been apprehended, 22 of those have been murder suspects; have recovered 214 stolen guns and 221 stolen vehicles, valued at 4.3 million dollars. Commissioner Wright stated this has been a significant and huge impact to the city of Atlanta over the past few months and without a doubt has made the streets of Atlanta a lot safer. Commissioner Wright shared as a result of this activity and at the request of the Governor, the Department has created a permanent Crime Suppression Unit in Atlanta.

Continuing with the list, Commissioner Wright stated the Department now allows Motor Carrier the ability to work off-duty escorts; purchased AEDs for every patrol vehicle across the state to put life-saving equipment in everybody's vehicle and at their fingertips. Commissioner Wright noted while that may not seem significant in some of the more urban areas, to think about the rural areas when a trooper or officer hears a call, he/she can beat the ambulance there and start the process.

Commissioner Wright shared the Department has purchased new Haven/riot control gear, replacing the old outdated equipment that has been used since G-8; purchased 15 Camaros and 15 Challengers to add to the fleet; purchased Dodge Durangos; purchased new computers for every patrol car; purchased a tractor trailer which will have six simulators to instruct and show citizens how to maneuver and interact with commercial motor vehicles. Commissioner Wright stated the Department will travel around the state so every citizen will have the opportunity to see it. The Department has purchased body cameras for the Capitol Police Division, and Post 35-Jekyll Island. Commissioner Wright stated, "just to sum it up, we have been very focused on being employee driven in our agency". Commissioner Wright thanked DPS employees for their work.

Commissioner Wright shared as part of the Board's packet this month, there are three maps showing the current boundaries and areas of responsibility for GSP Troops and Motor Carrier Regions, adding one map has the areas combined. Commissioner Wright advised this was something the Department started discussing a year ago and after travelling around the state meeting with employees, the Command Staff started the conversation with employees to see how they feel about combining the Troops and Regions. Commissioner Wright noted an overwhelming majority of it was positive. Commissioner Wright explained the biggest impact is that it will enhance communications and collaboration between the two divisions. Commissioner Wright noted the Communications Centers are located within the Troops and as Motor Carrier Officers patrol in their assigned regions, they travel across different Troops during their shift, and it makes it difficult for them to have to change what CAD they are on and start communicating with a different Communications Center, which results in an officer safety issue. Commissioner Wright explained this change will allow GSP and MCCD Captains and Troop Commands to work closer together, especially on enforcement initiatives and enforcement details. Commissioner Wright added the biggest change is within the Motor Carrier Division as it will align them with the GSP Troops, resulting in each Region becoming Region A, Region B, Region C, etc. to coincide with Troop A, Troop B, Troop C, etc. Commissioner Wright noted the changes on the GSP side are mainly in Troops F and I, adding it is important to try and have a weigh station in each respective Troop for Motor Carrier operation, so in order to do that, Post 42-Rincon and the Nighthawks South Unit, which operates in Chatham and Bulloch Counties, will be moved to Troop F and Post 16-Helena and Post 18-Reidsville will be moved to Troop I. Commissioner Wright stated this will allow a weigh station to be in every Troop with the exception of Troop C, metro Atlanta, who will

not have a weigh station and with everything that goes on in Atlanta, Commissioner Wright stated the Department can do without having a weigh station in that particular Troop.

Commissioner Wright asked for favorable consideration in making the changes in order to make communications and operations much more effective and if approved, to implement on January 1<sup>st</sup> to start the calendar year.

The motion to accept the reorganized Troops/Regions was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, thanked the Board of Public Safety for its support the past year.

Director Reynolds spoke of the Arbery Murder Trail in Brunswick and how proud he is of the agents and scientists that worked the case. Director Reynolds stated he conducted an interview afterwards with a television news station and stated what he wanted to convey it is part of what law enforcement agencies do every day, and he hopes there is some positive signs toward law enforcement on how the case was handled and the verdict.

Director Reynolds updated the Board on the Cold Case Unit and anticipates that during the first quarter of 2022, the Unit will probably be moving on a major quadruple homicide from west Georgia from 1982-1985 and they are very close to seeking an indictment hopefully by March of 2022, indicating the case will be solved. Director Reynolds stated he is very pleased with the work the Unit is doing, and it is very humbling to watch them work.

Director Reynolds commended GBI Assistant Director John Melvin for recently returning from Israel from a GILEE trip where he baptized around 14 people in the River Jordan.

Director Reynolds informed the Board the Agency is struggling to keep the Crime Labs fully staffed but they are doing better than they were. Director Reynolds noted he updated the Governor and Legislators the majority of their backlog is in three areas: drug identification, forensic pathology, and ballistics. Director Reynolds stated they are trying to put scientists in those disciplines, specifically ballistics since that is the most serious cases. Director Reynolds indicated the Agency has developed a close working relationship with Mercer University Medical School to have a pipeline for young scientists to come to work. Director Reynolds stated he feels they are pushing in a good direction. Director Reynolds shared the Agency's Chief Medical Examiner has decided to leave the Agency.

Director Reynolds announced Jaret Usher, Director of Legal Services, has been appointed to the Cobb County State Court Division II seat effective January 1<sup>st</sup> and stated she will be greatly missed, but in her place the Agency has hired Laura McDonald, who was previously with the attorney general's office and will be a great asset.

Director Reynolds also announced an Agent Class will be graduating next Friday and invited the Board members to attend and thanked Director Wigginton and his staff for allowing the ceremony to be held at the Training Center. Director Reynolds stated he would like to have at least one more class in 2022, maybe two.

Mr. Charles Sikes complimented Director Reynolds, a Georgia Southern graduate, for usually being one of the primary speakers at GSU graduation ceremonies and it speaks well of not only him and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, but also for Georgia Southern for making a great choice. Mr. Sikes stated it is good to have Director Reynolds speaking out front with young students and their parents to address the peace officer's side of stories.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, informed the Board the Training Center just graduated a Basic Academy and after Christmas the remainder of the candidates will graduate. Director Wigginton noted the graduates involve 48 individuals that represent city police departments, county sheriff's departments, marshal services, arson investigators with fire departments, capitol police officers, and Director Wigginton stated he would be remiss if he didn't think about the four officers who have lost their lives in the past few months in the State of Georgia as well as the ones that have been shot and attacked in the line of duty. Director Wigginton stated looking at the graduating groups is an accomplishment, and we are happy for them to start their career, but also, he looks at each one of them and wonder how their next 20-30 years is going to develop in how their lives will be affected. Director Wigginton stated the Training Center is very passionate about what they do because at the end of the day a simple mistake can lead to a funeral.

Director Wigginton announced the Training Center staff has partnered with the Georgia Public Broadcast (GPB) and Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) to air a series of commercials during the High School Football Championship Games. Director Wigginton explained the GOHS came to the Center and asked for assistance to have a buckle up / distracted driving campaign for teen drivers. Director Wigginton stated they put an Accident Reconstruction group together and after a few attempts were able to successfully roll a vehicle. Director Wigginton further stated there were cameras placed inside and outside the vehicle, which will be taken all over the state and used as a simulator to show what happens during a rollover crash. Director Wigginton is hopeful a teen driver who gets in the simulator will put their phone down and buckle up.

Director Wigginton shared the Training Center is working with Georgia Southern University to run a dual-purpose basic training academy, which will be strongly academic and physical to include health and wellness, and with the help of a kinesiologist will evaluate the classes. The University will put together a 12-week program, so students will know on day one until the day they graduate what expectations and milestones will be asked of them throughout the entire academy, to make sure they are prepared to do the job mentally and physically.

Regarding class and student numbers, Director Wigginton stated the numbers are staying steady and some are starting to rise; therefore, the Center is back to having to schedule cafeteria times.

Director Wigginton recognized Deputy Director Tony Hightower and congratulated him on his retirement on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Director Wigginton announced Ms. Cheryl Greathouse, Instructional Services Division Director, will be taking Deputy Director Hightower's place on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Greathouse stated to the Board she has been at the Training Center for 32 years and has spent a lot of years working on major training projects and is looking forward to the opportunity and is also looking forward to getting to know everyone and continuing to serve the citizens of the State of Georgia and working with Director Wigginton to following the mission of the Training Center.

Director Wigginton also recognized Ms. Sharla Shockley, Executive Assistant, for her hard work on the Public Safety Awards Ceremonies and Memorial Ceremonies, which consists of meeting with the Committees, preparing documents, getting documentation, notifying the recipients and families, among other things. Director Wigginton thanked her for her hard work.

Mr. Charles Sikes complimented Director Wigginton and the staff at the Training Center on their facility specifically dedicated to public safety as compared to what was taught prior to the Training Center. Mr. Willie Bolton added before the Georgia Police Academy there was no training and then there were regional academies, noting he graduated from the first regional academy, the Northeast Georgia Police Academy in Athens.

### **DONATIONS**

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

One (1) Eagle 3 Radar Unit	\$2,750.00	City of Blackshear Police Dept.
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Bruce Carlisle and voted approved by the Board members.

Five (5) Dragon Eye Laser Units and Two (2) Stalker DSR 2X Radar Units	\$16,900.00	Gordon County Board of Commissioners
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross and voted approved by the Board members.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval of the following donation:

One (1) 2018 Dodge Ram 2500	\$40,000.00	Hall County District Attorney
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Mr. Rossie Ross, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Chief Craig Tully to make a special presentation on behalf of the Board. Chief Tully presented Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison, with a token of appreciation.

Chief Stacey Cotton thanked the Department of Public Safety's Post 46-Monroe for Troopers volunteering their time for the local Shop With a Cop event. Chief Cotton stated Troopers participate every year and he appreciates them doing so.

Chief Bruce Carlisle provided an update on his daughter's recovery.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary