

## **BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

January 8, 2026

Virtual and Call-In Meeting

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Willie Bolton  
Mr. Roy H. Fickling  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
Sheriff E. Neal Jump  
Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie  
Chief Leonard "Dee" Meadows  
Chief Janet L. Moon  
Commissioner Michael Nail  
Mr. Billy New  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Ms. Susan K. Treadaway  
Chief Craig Tully  
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Stacey Cotton  
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver

### **OTHERS:**

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General's Office  
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Board Liaison  
Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety  
Major Walter Christian, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Chris Rodewolt, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/CVE  
Captain J.K. Crews, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Crystal Zion, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Jonathon Huff, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Lieutenant Billy Schwab, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Mrs. Lorri Smith, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Shana Brown, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Sharon Gibbons, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Kristy Walker, Georgia Department of Public Safety  
Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Assistant Director Scott Dutton, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Ms. Rhonda Westbrook, GCIC Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
SAC Lindsey Smith, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
ASAC Danielle O'Conner, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Deputy Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Cindy Jones, Operations Bureau Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Mark Bowen, Georgia Coroners Training Council

Mrs. Janice Brown, Georgia Coroners Training Council  
Mr. Mark Cox, Georgia Coroners Training Council  
Mr. Michael Fowler, Georgia Coroners Training Council  
Mr. Richard Stanley, Georgia Coroners Training Council  
Sheriff Noell Brown, Bulloch County Sheriff's Office  
Mr. Bill T. Akers, Georgia Bureau of Investigation (Ret.)  
Mrs. Jennifer Bowen  
Mr. Larry Brown

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the January 8, 2026 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

SFC Robbie Scott gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Charles Sikes introduced his guests, GBI Special Agent in Charge of the Statesboro Field Office Lindsey Smith, Assistant Special Agent in Charge Danielle O'Conner, and GBI Retiree Bill T. Akers.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced Bulloch County Sheriff Noell Brown.

Colonel Billy Hitchens introduced GSP guests, Major Chris Rodewolt, Captain J.K. Crews and Lt. Billy Schwab.

Coroner Michael Fowler introduced the Georgia Coroners Training Council members: Mr. Richard Stanley, Mrs. Janet Brown, Mr. Mark Bowen, Mr. Mark Cox, and himself.

Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety, introduced her guests, Ms. Sharon Gibbons and Ms. Kristy Walker as new Legal Assistants with the Department.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for a motion on the reappointment of Mr. Billy New. Mr. Charles Sikes made the motion to reappoint Mr. Billy New to the Member-at-Large #6 Seat. This motion was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

Mr. Mark Bowen, Mrs. Janice Brown, Mr. Michael Fowler, and Mr. Richard Stanley were reappointed and sworn in by Secretary Craig Tully as members of the Georgia Coroners Training Council. Mr. Mark Cox was appointed and sworn in as a new member of the Georgia Coroners Training Council.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the December 11, 2025 BPS minutes. Mr. Willie Bolton made the motion to approve the December 11, 2025 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Sheriff Neal Jump and voted approved by the Board members.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Georgia Department of Public Safety, reported the 120<sup>th</sup> Trooper School is in its 27<sup>th</sup> week and will graduate on March 6<sup>th</sup>, adding the prior sworn will report to Headquarters

on January 14<sup>th</sup> to be sworn in and pick up their vehicles; the 121<sup>st</sup> Trooper School will begin on January 11<sup>th</sup> with about 71 Cadets; and the 15<sup>th</sup> CVE School will begin on January 18<sup>th</sup> and will begin with 7 Cadets.

Commissioner Hitchens shared there were 2 102-hour holiday patrols in December, with Christmas beginning on December 24<sup>th</sup> and ending December 28<sup>th</sup> and New Years beginning on December 31<sup>st</sup> and ending on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hitchens stated AAA projected over 3.8 million Georgians would travel at least 50 miles from their house during these holiday periods, which was a 2.1% increase. Commissioner Hitchens noted all available Troopers and Officers were out in full force to help reduce traffic crashes and encourage voluntary compliance. Commissioner Hitchens reported during the Christmas travel period GSP and CVE stopped over 25,000 vehicles, issued 12,000 citations, 20,000 warnings, investigated 418 crashes, and took 315 impaired drivers off the roadway; and during New Year's personnel stopped over 22,000 vehicles, issued 11,000 citations, 17,000 warnings, investigated 401 crashes, and took 432 impaired drivers off the roadway.

Commissioner Hitchens shared on December 16<sup>th</sup> an intersection dedication ceremony was held for TFC2 Chase Redner at the University of North Georgia. The intersection at GA 400 and Whelchel Road/Burnt Stand Road in Dawsonville has been named after the fallen Trooper. Commissioner Hitchens added on December 19<sup>th</sup> a wreath laying ceremony was held in Macon for Sgt. William Frederick Black who was the first Trooper killed in the line of duty.

Commissioner Hitchens noted on December 19<sup>th</sup> TFC Mullen from CIU was working eastbound on I-20 in Harrelson County and stopped a Jeep Wagoneer for following too close and smelled marijuana. TFC Mullen was able to conduct a probable cause search and found 5,100 jars of marijuana, 3 boxes of bulk marijuana, and the total was 150 pounds.

Commissioner Hitchens stated the planning for FIFA is underway and DPS is meeting consistently with them and federal and local partners in the Atlanta area trying to nail down exactly what everyone is going to be doing. The event starts June 13<sup>th</sup> and ends July 17<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hitchens noted what is known is DPS will be involved in escorting the team and VIP personnel, and SWAT and Aviation will be utilized.

Commissioner Hitchens reported there have been several successful tests conducted using Starlink as a backup network in case something happens like a hurricane, and we have to utilize Starlink. Commissioner Hitchens stated we learned a pretty good lesson during Hurricane Helene and using Starlink will give us an opportunity to get back up and running quickly.

Commissioner Hitchens shared the mobile spikes delivery was delayed and as soon as they arrive, they will be installed on some vehicles to see how they work.

Commissioner Hitchens advised new patchwork is being placed on CVE vehicles that will just have "CVE" on it to look a little classier.

Commissioner Hitchens shared DPS is watching the protests out of the Minneapolis shooting, adding there was a protest last night in Atlanta that stayed peaceful, and a big protest is scheduled for today at the Capitol.

Commissioner Hitchens noted the legislative session is coming up and personnel are already detached and ready to report on Monday.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked about St. Patrick's Parade participation, to which Colonel Hitchens stated DPS will be participating in the parade with about 80 personnel detached for parade security.

Vice-Chairman Wood commended the men and women of DPS on their traffic stops during December.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked how the current Trooper School held its numbers, to which Colonel Hitchens stated they started with 64 and currently has 30, so there was a very high dropout rate, but most of those were not failure, it was them deciding to leave.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported as the Training Center moves into 2026, this week they started all the Basic Academies around the state to include Fire Mandate, and several advanced and specialized classes. Director Wigginton advised a new class that was legislatively approved last year for educators has been launched and it is an online class that deals with SROs and drugs, narcotics, and gangs in school. Director Wigginton noted it has been released across the state.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked for an update on the renovations at GPSTC, to which Director Wigginton stated the water line project has been completed and there is some renovation going on in the dorm rooms.

Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reported early in December the West Georgia Gang Task Force in Macon worked with the Pike County Sheriff's Office, the Upson County Narcotics Task Force, Clayton County Police Department, Georgia State Patrol, and the Georgia Department of Corrections to conduct an operation that involved search warrants in multiple locations in Pike, Upson, and Clayton Counties and during that operation they seized over 1,3000 grams of suspected methamphetamine, 198 grams of suspected cocaine, several firearms, 923 grams of MDMA, approximately 400 grams of marijuana, and around \$38,000 in cash.

Director Hosey shared the Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office in Cleveland, working with the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office Multi-Agency Narcotics Squad, Sandy Springs Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives executed 2 search warrants in the Atlanta and Sandy Springs area where they seized approximately 400 pounds of marijuana, 6 ounces of suspected alprazolam, and 6 firearms.

Director Hosey also shared the Northwest Georgia Drug Task Force executed arrest warrants and charged 10 people following a joint drug investigation with FBI's Atlanta and Cartersville offices

where they seized approximately 8.2 kilos of fentanyl, 3 ounces of suspected heroin, over 3 ounces of cocaine, 10,000 suspected Schedule I and Schedule II pills, 71 firearms, a live hand grenade, and approximately \$250,000 in cash.

Director Hosey reported the Cold Case Unit has 50 cold cases currently being reviewed or reinvestigated at this time. Four unidentified remains cases have now been identified.

Director Hosey noted from January 1 through December 31, 2025 GBI investigated 83 Officer Involved Shootings.

Director Hosey announced in December, Jessica Hamilton was promoted to Special Agent in Charge at the Region 4 Investigative Office.

Director Hosey advised there are currently 331 Agent positions filled, adding 9 Agents started January 1<sup>st</sup> and will begin the 56<sup>th</sup> Special Agent Academy on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding the Crime Lab, Director Hosey shared 12 Scientists are in the process of being hired.

In the Investigative Division, Director Hosey stated there were 726 cases opened for the month of November (114 Crimes Against Persons, 64 Drug Investigations, and 548 Other Investigations).

Director Hosey reported GISAC processed 1,186 requests for information, 12 Threats to Life, 1,189 See Send App Tips, and 2 Suspicious Activity. Director Hosey added partners across the area are closely monitoring the Minneapolis events to see how it unfolds and how it affects us in Georgia.

Concerning the Crime Lab, Director Hosey advised there is a 15% decrease in the number of submissions for the month of November and Chemistry is still the highest backlog with 73% although it is down from 75% and 78% in previous months. Director Hosey shared the Crime Lab has 14 Scientists currently in training in their respective disciplines.

Director Hosey shared the Medical Examiner's Office is still at 15 Medical Examiners, and the Forensic Anthropologist is now on board full time. Director Hosey noted the autopsies' numbers are down a little bit for November compared to October but are significantly lower than what the average has been for the month of October in previous years. Director Hosey also noted interviews are being scheduled for the 2027-2028 Fellowship applicants.

Director Hosey advised GCIC processed over 60 million transactions for the month of November.

Regarding Facilities, Director Hosey shared the Headquarters Medical Examiner's office construction is in the grading and underground utility installation phase; the new Central Medical Examiner's building in Macon is currently in the schematic design phase; the new Region 11 Investigative Office in Oconee County is in the design development phase; the solicitation process for the new Region 10 investigation office design and construction management firms is complete.

**DONATIONS**

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

Ten (10) Safariland Holsters	\$1,200.00	Norfolk Southern Railway
One (1) MCI D4500 45 ft. Bus	\$8,815.00	Gwinnett County Government
Furniture and Household Items	\$1,500.00	Circle of Care

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

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Billy Hitchens, Georgia Department of Public Safety, requested approval of DPS Organizational Chart changes (page 7 and page 9).

The motion to accept these changes was made by Sheriff Neal Jump, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and approved by the Board members.

Major Andrew Montgomery, Georgia Department of Public Safety Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, requested final adoption of DPS Household Goods Maximum Rate Tariff No. 7 for Intrastate Rates and Charges to be effective January 13, 2026.

Mr. Willie Bolton made the motion to approve the final adoption of Household Goods Maximum Rate Tariff No. 7 to be effective January 13, 2026. This motion was seconded by Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary