

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
July 13, 2023
Georgia Department of Public Safety
Atlanta, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Mr. Roy H. Fickling
Mr. Richard Hyde
Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie
Chief Janet L. Moon
Mr. Billy New
Commissioner Tyrone Oliver
Mr. Samir J. Patel
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Chief Craig Tully
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Leonard “Dee” Meadows
Commissioner Michael Nail
Sheriff Joey Terrell

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 Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Steve Harrison, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Rusty Harrelson, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Thornell King, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police
Major Andrew Montgomery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Lieutenant Jonathon Huff, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Sergeant Billy Schwab, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Director Michael Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Asst. Director Chris Hosey, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Dep. Director Rhonda Westbrook, Georgia Bureau of Investigation/GCIC
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Dep. Director Cheryl Greathouse, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Ms. Lorri Smith, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Ms. Clare McGuire, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Ms. Shanna Lewallen, Georgia Department of Public Safety
Ms. Nelly Miles, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Ms. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Garrett Dinkins, Office of Planning and Budget
Ms. Sarah Letson, Office of Planning and Budget

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the July 13, 2023 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 May 11, 2023 BPS minutes. Mr. Willie Bolton made the motion to approve the May 11, 2023 minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members. Chief Janet Moon abstained from the vote.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Christopher Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, shared 12 K-9s graduated from a graduation ceremony this morning at the Mansion, hosted by First Lady Kemp. This graduation has increased the Department's K-9 number to 32 across the state.

Commissioner Wright thanked the Board Members for attending the DPS grand opening ceremony on June 26th.

Commissioner Wright noted the demolition of the old Headquarters has started and will be taking place over the next three weeks and a new entranceway and security fence will be put in place to help secure the property.

Commissioner Wright shared there was a groundbreaking for Post 18, Reidsville on Tuesday.

Regarding the 114th Trooper School, Commissioner Wright reported the cadets are in field training and the 12 that were in the accelerated program will be sworn in tomorrow and they will pick up their equipment and begin patrolling. Commissioner Wright added the remaining 26 will continue their field training and everyone will return to GPSTC for graduation on September 8th.

Commissioner Wright announced the 115th Trooper School starts this coming Sunday with 66 cadets. Commissioner Wright also advised right behind this class, the 116th Trooper School, which will be an accelerated only school, has 19 cadets to start. Commissioner Wright shared the 10th Motor Carrier School is in week 13 of training with all 10 cadets.

Commissioner Wright reported DPS has purchased a Bell 412 helicopter and a Bell 407 helicopter, and the Department will be taking possession of them in the next few months, adding there is one more Bell 407 aircraft still to be purchased.

Mr. Charles Sikes inquired if the accelerated school consists of individuals already POST certified, to which Commissioner Wright stated it is.

Director Mike Register, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, thanked the Board for the support and friendship over the past year as he leaves his position. Director Register stated Georgia has a great public safety apparatus and a great team, especially among local partners and he is thankful for the

relationship he has developed with Commissioner Wright and Commissioner Oliver over the past year. Director Register shared the Director Report will be given by Assistant Director Chris Hosey.

Assistant Director Hosey thanked Director Register for what he has brought to the Agency while he was there, along with being a great mentor and friend, sharing there are some things Director Register started that will be continued in order to push the Agency forward.

Assistant Director Hosey reported the Atlanta City Council voted to approve the training center funding so that is off the ground and running. Assistant Director Hosey noted there was a “week of action” that took place afterwards that had some trouble around the area and the Agency is working closely with state and local partners to see if there is anything that could be connected to the current investigation.

Assistant Director Hosey shared the Region 7 office made a significant armed robbery arrest in June. Assistant Director Hosey explained the significance of it is not just the armed robbery but the two individuals arrested are connected to about 14 other armed robberies in the Southeast and Middle Georgia areas.

Assistant Director Hosey noted at the time the board report was published, there had been 48 officer involved shootings and there have been 3 more since then, putting the current number at 51.

Regarding the fellowship program in the Medical Examiner’s Office, Assistant Director Hosey shared two recently graduated doctors will be joining the Agency and another one will be hired in October, putting the ME numbers at 12, and two additional doctors started the fellowship program July 3rd. Assistant Director Hosey stated the hope is the program will attract them to stay in order to continue to build up the doctors at the ME’s office.

In reference to the Crime Lab, Assistant Director Hosey advised the crime lab managers are setting internal goals each month in order to bring the backlog down and get the reports out accurately, and Assistant Director Hosey stated through monthly reports, those goals are being met.

Assistant Director Hosey stated facility hardening is continuing around Headquarters and around the state, and groundbreaking is expected in September for the Region 1 field office in Calhoun.

Assistant Director Hosey advised two ASAC positions have been added to the Office of Special Investigations, which encompasses political corruption and the Cold Case Unit. Assistant Director Hosey noted a SAC has been added to the Middle Georgia Gang Unit, which will be a standalone unit located in Macon.

Assistant Director Hosey reported 25 Special Agents were recently hired who will start school in September, with some in mandate and the others being at their work units at this time.

Regarding training, Assistant Director Hosey shared next week will be the first leadership academy within the GBI. Assistant Director Hosey explained this is a training program established to develop leaders inside the Agency. Assistant Director Hosey stated the pilot program received good reviews.

Assistant Director Hosey also shared the resiliency program that was started in 2021 is being expanded, and everyone from the Division Director and on down is required to attend. Additionally, Assistant Director Hosey stated in August and October there will be two train-the-trainer classes for leadership within the Crime Lab to develop their instructional team.

Assistant Director Hosey mentioned at the upcoming Georgia Chief's Conference, Special Agent Christian Johnson from the Region 5 Statesboro Office is one of the finalists for Officer of the Year, and the GBI is a finalist for the Curtis McClung Award for the resiliency program.

Mr. Samir Patel thanked the Crime Lab for assisting his office, and other DAs, with time sensitive special requests, noting they always come through for them. Mr. Patel asked if the out of state lab testing is still being maintained, to which Assistant Director Hosey responded it is still being utilized.

Vice-Chairman Wood thanked Director Register for his service to the State and all he has done for our communities.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported the Training Center has hosted over 300,000 students this past year, which is a substantial increase from an average of 70,000 10 years ago.

Director Wigginton shared the new SRO building is being finalized and a ribbon cutting will be planned soon. Director Wigginton stated the SRO program will be similar to the Use of Force program that was kicked off last year, in that it goes out to local communities, such as school systems, school boards, sheriff's departments, police departments, and those that currently control the School Resource Officer program in their communities.

Director Wigginton announced a new program starting in September is in reference to extending basic mandate. Director Wigginton stated Georgia currently ranks 50th in the United States for the amount of time recruits get, as far as the minimal standard. Director Wigginton reported the pilot program in September will be 6 weeks long and will consist of 7 weeks of training in those 6 weeks. Director Wigginton explained there will be online and weekend training, in addition to high-speed driving training, resiliency training, de-escalation, additional use of force, and mental health training, among others. Director Wigginton further stated the pilot program will consist of 50 personnel to begin and is 100 percent voluntary. Director Wigginton noted the student will get class credit for each class they successfully complete.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked if legislators are aware of the basic mandate expansion program, to which Director Wigginton stated they are and there has been discussion over the past years.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Clare McGuire of DPS Legal Services presented a Resolution requesting the Board of Public Safety to authorize the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety to request that the State Properties Commission issue a Revocable License and that the Governor and Georgia Legislature issue a Permanent Non-Exclusive Easement on 0.04 acres for conversion of the DPS main entrance and 0.02 acres for service to the DPS Guard House, to be followed by an as-built survey, for purposes of serving the new DPS Headquarters and the Guard House located on the 959 United Avenue SE, campus in Fulton County, Georgia.

The motion to accept this Resolution was made by Mr. Willie Bolton, which was seconded by Commissioner Tyrone Oliver and voted approved by the Board members.

DONATIONS

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

One (1) Pepperball VKS Launcher	\$1,315.00	Alma Police Department
One (1) Samsung 85" Smart TV And Wall Mount	\$4,119.98	Glynn County Police Department
One (1) Samsung 65" Smart TV And Wall Mount	\$579.98	Glynn County Police Department
Seven (7) Supersonic 32" Smart TVs And Wall Mounts	\$1,665.86	Glynn County Police Department
Twelve (12) 5.11 Tactical Wingman Car Seat Organizers	\$881.52	Glynn County Police Department
Twelve (12) Nightfox 110R Handheld Night Vision Binoculars	\$1,199.88	Glynn County Police Department
Twelve (12) SoundAsleep Full Size Air Mattresses	\$1,666.20	Glynn County Police Department
Eleven (11) Teton Queen Mammoth Sleeping Bags	\$1,429.89	Glynn County Police Department
Twelve (12) Rigid TQ Cases for C-A-T Tourniquets	\$455.88	Glynn County Police Department
One (1) FLIR EX Series Handheld Device	\$1,624.93	Glynn County Police Department

Eight (8) DeWalt Power Station Jump Boxes	\$1,591.44	Glynn County Police Department
Attendance for Two (2) at the 104 th American Legion National Convention	\$3,200.00	The American Legion Department of Georgia
Six (6) 55" TVs, One (1) 43" TV, One (1) 32" TV, and Eight (8) Wall Mounts	\$2,073.00	Ocmulgee Regional Drug Task Force
One (1) RecTeq RT-1250 Grill	\$1,844.00	Ocmulgee Regional Drug Task Force
Eight (8) Laser Labs Enforcer II Window Tint Meters	\$712.00	Franklin County Board of Commissioners

The motion to accept these donations was made by Mr. Roy Fickling, which was seconded by Mr. Samir Patel and voted approved by the Board members.

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

One (1) 2014 Ford Explorer	\$1,000.00	Long County Board of Commissioners
One (1) 2016 Ford Taurus	\$1,000.00	Long County Board of Commissioners
One (1) 2015 Ford Explorer	\$1,000.00	Long County Board of Commissioners
One (1) 2014 Ford Explorer	\$1,000.00	Long County Board of Commissioners

The motion to accept these donations was made by Commissioner Tyrone Oliver, which was seconded by Mr. Billy New and voted approved by the Board members.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Charles Sikes made the motion to enter into Executive Session, which was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

Upon the conclusion of Executive Session, Vice-Chairman Wood asked for a motion to approve returning to Open Session to approve the compensation for the Administrator of the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.

Mr. Charles Sikes made the motion to return to Open Session, which was seconded by Chief Janet Moon and voted approved by the Board members.

Mr. Richard Hyde made the motion to establish the compensation of the Administrator of the Georgia Public Safety Training Center at \$155,000 per year. This motion was seconded by Mr. Willie Bolton and voted approved by the Board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary