

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
March 12, 2020
Georgia Department of Public Safety
Atlanta, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chief Bruce Carlisle
Mr. Kacy K. Cronan
Mr. George Hartwig
Mr. Richard Hyde
Governor Brian Kemp-via phone
Commissioner Michael Nail
Mr. Mark Revenew
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Sheriff Joey Terrell
Chief Craig Tully-via phone
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Stacey Cotton
Sheriff Dane Kirby
Mr. Rossie Ross

OTHERS:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Cheryl Buie, Board Liaison
Commissioner Gary Vowell, Department of Public Safety
Lt. Colonel Christopher C. Wright, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
Major Kevin Rexroat, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Mark Perry, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Billy Hitchens, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Mark Lambert, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Jeremy Vickery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Major Billy Boulware, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Captain Wayne Mobley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Captain Al Whitworth, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Lieutenant Stephanie Stallings, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Miss Kaycee Larson, Department of Public Safety
Mr. Dan Kirk, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Tony Hightower, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mrs. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. John Hutcheson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Bruce Stanford, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Marty Smith, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Hal Braswell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Chadd Wilson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. John Weissgerber, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Mr. Mike Ayers, Executive Director, GA POST Council
Miss Jessica Hehs

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the March 12, 2020 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Retired DPS Sgt. Anthony Hughes led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Governor Brian Kemp thanked Vice-Chairman Wood for his leadership and long dedication to the Board of Public Safety and to the state and added this goes for all the Board members. Governor Kemp thanked all the agency staff and support people for all they do everyday in their own state government. Governor Kemp acknowledged there have been some difficult and challenging times in recent weeks and thanked the Board for their leadership in supporting Colonel Gary Vowell as the DPS Commissioner. Governor Kemp thanked the Board for their further action in confirming the DPS Deputy Commissioner and knows he will serve with distinction. Governor Kemp also acknowledged there will be some challenging times ahead, but as DPS moves past the events in the past, he knows the BPS is of high integrity, high ethics as Commissioner Vowell is and the Deputy Commissioner will be as well, and will continue to do the right thing when no one is watching and follow the truth and the facts and act accordingly, and thinks the Georgia citizens will have great appreciation and respect for this.

Chief Bruce Carlisle made the motion to confirm the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Christopher C. Wright as the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Public Safety. This was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board members.

Retired DPS Sergeant Anthony Hughes gave the Invocation.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the January 9th, February 13th, and the February 19th BPS minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the January 9th, February 13th, and the February 19th BPS minutes. This was seconded by Chief Bruce Carlisle and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Gary Vowell, Department of Public Safety thanked the BPS for their dedication in overseeing the agencies represented and could not do their job without their backing, their support and their leadership and are greatly appreciative of all of them. Commissioner Vowell thanked the BPS for confirming his appointment several weeks ago and shared he is honored and promises to serve with dignity and leadership and will move forward with this agency and will be one the Board will continue to be proud of in the future. Commissioner Vowell thanked Commissioner McDonough for his many years of service to the DPS that was dear to him and wish his well in his retirement. Commissioner Vowell thanked the Board for their confirmation of Lt. Colonel Chris Wright and noted it was not hard to pick a number 2 man as he has known Lt. Colonel Wright for a number of years and knows his dedication and his love for the DPS. Commissioner Vowell added Lt. Colonel Wright is highly intelligent and told Lt. Colonel Wright that he appreciates his dedication and his loyalty to the DPS and

is glad to have him by his side and shoulder to shoulder as they lead the men and women in the days to come. Commissioner Vowell introduced Major Billy Hitchens, South Adjutant Major, which is a great move. Commissioner Vowell advised Major Kevin Rexroat will serve as his Executive Officer.

Commissioner Vowell stated on March 4th, 2020, the Command Staff met and decided on the GSP training staff. Commissioner Vowell shared 14 people at the GSP Training Division were removed from their positions and reassigned back into the field, no one suffered a pay loss or any demotion in rank. Commissioner Vowell advised Captain Garrett Fiveash will be leading the GSP Training Division and assisting him will be Lt. Crystal Zion and will do a fine job at rebuilding the staff at the GSP Training Division. Commissioner Vowell thanked GPSTC Director Chris Wigginton for his assistance in getting the current troopers through their training and noted five of Director Wigginton's instructors are former troopers and feel confident in their training.

Commissioner Vowell advised the Board that POST Council Director Mike Ayers will update the Board in Executive Session regarding the 106th trooper school cheating scandal. Commissioner Vowell shared he attended his first POST Council meeting yesterday, and the group made him feel that he had been part of that group for a long time and thanked Director Ayers for helping DPS get through these trying times.

Commissioner Vowell stated after he was appointed, he was placed on the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force and that has been his main objective. Commissioner Vowell advised DPS is involved in a lot of actions and details concerning the coronavirus than what a lot of the public knows. Commissioner Vowell advised DPS is responsible for the security at the Hard Labor Creek State Park, responsible for setting up logistics for security as there is one patient quarantined and are expecting more. Commissioner Vowell stated the Command Staff rode up there yesterday and toured what DPS has done and they have done a phenomenal job, setting up security, coordinating medical personnel and supplies in and out, keeping the media and public out and keeping them advised of the situation. Commissioner Vowell thanked the Command Staff for the people that have been put in place at Hard Labor State Creek State Park. Commissioner Vowell stated there is a detail of CIU troopers who are assisting Cobb County around Dobbins Air Force Base with main mission of transporting equipment and supplies. In the next few days, Commissioner Vowell stated GA DHP will call on DPS to start delivering the national stockpile of masks, gloves, and medical supplies all over the state as there is a shortage of these supplies and will play a major role in getting the supplies out to the health departments. Commissioner Vowell stated Governor Kemp will have a press conference later today, releasing further plans and instructions for DPS and their role in his next plan of action. Commissioner Vowell declared DPS will be taxed and spread thin and asked for the Board's prayer and guidance during this time. Commissioner Vowell added the Command Staff had a meeting this morning discussing how many employees can work from home and asked Lt. Colonel Wright to explain DPS's plan of action and noted DPS is working very close with GEMA, GA DPH, the governor's staff, the National Guard and everyone involved in this endeavor to keep the citizens safe.

Lt. Colonel Chris Wright, Deputy Commissioner thanked Vice-Chairman Wood and the BPS for this opportunity as it is tremendous honor for him and stands before the Board very humbled. Lt. Colonel

Wright shared for someone who grew up in SW Georgia on a farm, from very poor beginnings, he is very honored to serve this state and always has been and looks forward to this opportunity and the challenge. Lt. Colonel Wright stated DPS has some great employees and will continue to push forward, have a lot of issues, some big that are being worked on at the moment, will continue to push forward and the people of DPS are really some of the best there are in our business, always meet the challenge and rise to the occasion.

Regarding the coronavirus, Lt. Colonel Wright stated one of the things he said to everybody in the meeting, while it sounds scary, sounds like a huge insurmountable problem, the truth of the matter is DPS have dealt with issues in this state year after year over the last few years, hurricane after hurricane, ice storms, snow storms, this is just one more thing that has to be dealt with. Lt. Colonel Wright acknowledged there is absolutely no reason why DPS will not meet this challenge and want face it head on, and will defeat it and wanted the DPS staff to keep in mind with how we are going to attack this thing and deal with all of these challenges.

Regarding the DPS staff, Lt. Colonel Wright stated they want to keep them safe and have no one get contaminated, with DPS following the CDC Guidelines to make sure this does not happen and have already had discussions about tele-working and have a plan in place to do this, so operations can keep moving in the right direction and stay on top of our day to day business. Lt. Colonel Wright shared that the question has come up, what if someone does get contaminated, and will do our very best to keep this from happening. Lt. Colonel Wright noted if this does happen, there have been several meetings and might would have to bring in a potential site until a place is decontaminated and sanitized. Lt. Colonel Wright advised the Communication Centers are being asked to continuously, hoping not to bring in the virus and are asking the troopers on the road to limit their contact with the public, but will have to keep doing our business, but have to direct our people in a different direction and right now our focus will be helping DPH and GEMA to get supplies out. Lt. Colonel Wright declared DPS will limit the access to the public as much as they can, and this will minimize the possible contamination process. Lt. Colonel Wright stressed they are trying to get everyone to change their mindset and start thinking about this and the aspect and what it will mean if one does get contaminated.

Mr. Dan Kirk, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation shared the GBI is following all the CDC Guidelines regarding the coronavirus, cleaning facilities, personal protective equipment and have Purell available all around the GBI HQ and the regional sites. Mr. Kirk added the facilities have been asked to up their cleaning more often and being diverse across the state, there are a lot of options when it comes to being able to work at different locations if the need arises. As far as tele-working, Mr. Kirk advised GBI does this already, noting the Investigative Division and the GCIC can tele-work and the Laboratory is a different story as they cannot do analysis at their house. Mr. Kirk shared there are a lot of regional laboratories and if needed can spread things out and if things get bad enough, they can go to skeleton crews and work priority cases.

Mr. Kirk updated the Board regarding the crime lab backlog, and added as long he has been working for the GBI, the crime lab has always been up and down as far as their being a backlog or not being a

backlog. Mr. Kirk stated he appreciates that Director Reynolds has looked at this and there is not just one answer and are looking at every aspect of what is being done in the crime lab. Mr. Kirk stated a company the crime lab has used before has completed computer models and have been very successful. Mr. Kirk added the company looks at the operations, spent a week or two in the lab following operations, gathering data to create computer models and have done this for toxicology and forensic biology in the past and were very successful, until the laws changed and then now have to reevaluate how things are done. Mr. Kirk stated for the most part, this process is complete and can now look at if we put a person here and change a function here how does that affect, what they produce and very useful. Mr. Kirk shared they are looking at their backlog and noted 13% of the backlog is over three years old and have a plan in place for the next months are so, where they are sending back the cases that are over three years old, and added some are 10 years old to the agencies. Mr. Kirk stated this will amount to a little over 5,000 cases. Mr. Kirk stated further analysis showed 18% of the cases backlogged are 2-3 years old and these cases will be moved to an inactive-pending status and the customers will have the ability to take from an inactive status and put back into active status and if the case needs to be completed, will have 60 days to do this. Mr. Kirk advised they are not looking at homicides or violent crimes, mostly looking at drug cases, latent print cases or firearms cases. Mr. Kirk stated the agencies will have an opportunity to look at these cases and reactivate them and what they do not reactivate, will then be sent back to the agencies and that is another 5,000 cases. Potentially over the next six months, Mr. Kirk advised they are looking at about 10,000 backlogged cases, which is significant as along with having all those cases at the GBI, is the upkeep and care of these cases. Mr. Kirk stated GBI has completed two agencies, Fulton County and Hapeville and have eight other agencies ready for pickup of their cases and another ten are being scheduled for pickup.

Mr. Kirk advised the crime lab is doing some modifications to the firearms section and the NIMAS System which is run by the ATF, which is essentially a system that is used to enter a digital image of a cartridge case into a data base and then goes and searches all of the other images in the system and gives an idea, if there are 3 or 4 cases the computer thinks might match. Mr. Kirk shared this is a way of tying cases together of identifying of where what crime a gun may be used in, because the gun was over here, then the gun was over there, we have those two hits. Mr. Kirk added it can also be used as a screening tool and all the cases that are coming in now where the cartridge cases are looked at and a case is completed by the scientists, they will screen all the cases first and hope this will save some manpower hours and speed up what the crime lab is able to do with firearms. Mr. Kirk stated this is something other agencies across the country like the GBI have already started doing, and hopes will be successful for the GBI.

Mr. Kirk stated the backlogged numbers should change rapidly and will pull vendor numbers out of the backlog and have a separate category for this. Mr. Kirk stated there are two grants that are being utilized for outsourcing chemistry cases and forensic biology cases, have some state money set aside that will be used for more chemistry cases and will eventually work in some firearms cases and latent print cases. Mr. Kirk noted with outsourcing is the capacity out in the private sector to do this and have a commitment from one company to handle the drug cases, that can handle between 500-1000 a month and will be sending those to them and the forensic biology cases, the company they normally deal with can only handle about 300 cases for the rest of this year and next year has committed to do

about 1100 cases. Mr. Kirk added the crime lab is in the process of putting out more bids to find another company to provide additional capacity for forensic biology.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Mr. Kirk if the group from South Korea planned to still come to the GBI and Mr. Kirk stated they are planning to come at the end of July.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Mr. Kirk if he had an update on the inquiry of retired sworn GBI personnel to work part-time. Mr. Kirk advised Director Reynolds approved this, a reserve agent program where they will have to volunteer several hours a month with the GBI and then because of this, they are able to wear the uniform and do some outside employment. Mr. Kirk stated the GBI would also have the right to call the reserve agents up for events. Mr. Kirk added they would like reserve agents to look at cold cases, which is moving along, developing a process and the pay scale. Mr. Kirk stated the reserve agents could also do backgrounds and have received a good response to the inquiry.

Mr. Richard Hyde asked Mr. Kirk and other agency heads if they were able to obtain hand sanitizer and other items for the coronavirus. Mr. Kirk advised they have had a hard time finding hand sanitizer but are trying through their vendors to obtain more hand sanitizer.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center shared since last month's Board report, during the month of January there were almost 31,000 students. Director Wigginton noted since last January the GPSTC has hit 126,000 students.

Director Wigginton thanked Commissioner Vowell for his kind words and appreciates the partnership and declared trooper school will continue to be trooper school. Director Wigginton acknowledged to himself personally, the campaign hat is something he earned throughout his career and will not give away something that is not earned. Director Wigginton declared the GPSTC staff is dedicated to jump in there, are not intimidated, have embraced it and have jumped into the fire. Director Wigginton assured the BPS as he did the DPS Command staff, when the troopers graduate, they will have the full experience of trooper school.

Regarding the partnership with FLETC, Director Wigginton shared they have a couple of meetings coming up, separate programs that are going to be beneficial to both organizations on the training side. Director Wigginton added GPSTC will continue to train federal agents and local and state law enforcement.

Director Wigginton advised GPSTC held a GANG Symposium in partnership with the Prosecuting Attorneys Council with 350 patrolmen, investigators and prosecutors from the DA's offices throughout the state. Director Wigginton added the GPSTC brought in two speakers, one from Texas, who was in deep undercover with organized crime MS13 for several years and another one from California, a member of the Bloods and Crips, who were able to offer a lot of information and insight to what is a growing problem in Georgia. Director Wigginton declared the GANG Symposium was very successful.

Director Wigginton stated the Fire Academy continues to grow in student population and the biggest impact that is being seen in this area is with the volunteer firefighters throughout the state. Director Wigginton noted, two years ago, this training was not offered and now that the training is out there, the volunteers are really embracing it.

Director Wigginton stated the GA Public Safety Memorial will be held on May 18th, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Director Wigginton shared there is a donation to be presented today where the Georgia K-9 Association has approached the GPSTC for a granite monument to recognize the canines that have been killed in the line of duty in Georgia and hope to have it in place at GPSTC for the May 18th GA Public Safety Memorial.

Director Wigginton stated GPSTC is working with GEMA and the Department of Public Health to establish a containment area on the back side of the GPSTC property to be used for people that have been exposed to the coronavirus.

DONATIONS

Major Mark Perry, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Public Safety requested approval of the following donation:

One Kustom Pro Laser III Lidar \$ 4,695.00 Glynn Co. Sheriff's Dept.
and One Decatur Genesis II Select Radar

The motion to accept this donation was made by Chief Bruce Carlisle, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell, and voted approved by the Board members.

Mrs. Cindy Jones, Comptroller, Georgia Public Safety Training Center requested approval of the following donation:

K-9 Memorial \$ 11,375.00 GA Police K9 Foundation

The motion to accept this donation was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Mr. Mark Revenew, and voted approved by the BPS members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Charles Sikes made a motion to present former DPS Commissioner Mark W. McDonough a Resolution for his service to the State of Georgia. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the BPS members.

Commissioner Michael Nail made a motion for the BPS to go into Executive Session. This was seconded by Chief Bruce Carlisle.

Sheriff Joey Terrell made a motion for the BPS to end the Executive Session and go back into the BPS meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Mark Revenew and vote approved by the BPS.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mr. Mark Revenew
Secretary