

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
May 18, 2021
Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Forsyth, Georgia

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Willie C. Bolton
Chief Stacey Cotton
Lt. Nicholas D. Ellis
Mr. Richard Hyde
Chief Leonard "Dee" Meadows
Commissioner Michael Nail
Mr. Samir Patel
Mr. Rossie Ross
Mr. Charles D. Sikes
Sheriff Joey Terrell
Chief Craig Tully
Commissioner Timothy C. Ward
Mr. Ellison G. Wood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chief Bruce Carlisle
Sheriff Dane Kirby

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
Lt. Colonel Stephanie Stallings, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Mark Perry, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Major Billy Boulware, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Major Jeremy Vickery, Department of Public Safety/MCCD
Captain Wayne Mobley, 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
Mr. Rodney Bostick, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Chadd Wilson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Bruce Stanford, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Ike McConnell, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Tim Melton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Jared York, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. John Weissgerber, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Tim Dawson, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Jeff Dean, 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
Mr. James Spann, Georgia Department of Corrections
Judge Paige Whitaker
Mr. John Monroe
Ms. Cheryl Buie

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the May 18, 2021 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Mr. Jeff Dean gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced the newest Board member, District Attorney Samir Patel and asked Board Members to introduce themselves to the room. Mr. Richard Hyde introduced his guest, Atlanta Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Paige Whitaker. Vice-Chairman Wood then asked other attendees in the room introduced themselves.

Vice-Chairman Wood recognized Mr. John Monroe being in attendance virtually.

Vice-Chairman Wood reminded the Board Mr. Monroe is representing the application for Relief of Disabilities under OCGA 16-11-131 for Dr. Rick Kuhlman, which was presented at the April 8th Board Meeting and voted to defer the application to the Attorney General's Office for review. Vice-Chairman Wood informed the Board since that time, there has been an informational meeting with the Attorney General's office and after review of the application, the Board wanted to give Mr. Monroe an opportunity to again speak to the Board.

Mr. Monroe noted he had nothing to add since the last meeting and would be glad to answer any questions and asked for favorable consideration of the application.

Vice-Chairman Wood advised Mr. Monroe and the Board, after review of the application and the receipt of guidance from the Attorney General's office, it would be proper to entertain a motion to reject the request based on the Board's determination the application does not qualify for relief under OCGA 16-11-131. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to reject the request, which was seconded by Chief Dee Meadows and voted approved by the Board, with Mr. Rossie Ross voting no on the motion.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the April 8, 2021 BPS minutes. Commissioner Nail made the motion to approve the April 8, 2021 minutes. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Wright, Georgia Department of Public Safety, welcomed District Attorney Samir Patel to the Board and offered thoughts and prayers to Chief Carlisle, his daughter, and family.

Commissioner Wright updated the Board on the 110th Trooper School, indicating there are 35 cadets still in school. Regarding the 111th Trooper School, which will begin in August, Commissioner Wright stated the Department is in the process of completing backgrounds; and noted the application period for the 112th Trooper School is open, and the Department currently has 267 POST Certified applicants for this accelerated Trooper School beginning in January.

Commissioner Wright stated as mentioned during the last meeting, the legislators approved construction of the new headquarters facility and the plans are complete and construction will begin in August, with a groundbreaking ceremony being planned.

Commissioner Wright reported Governor Kemp asked DPS to coordinate a joint effort to tackle some of the crime in Atlanta, such as street racing, and is proud to inform the Board due to the great partnership with GBI, DNR, and Atlanta PD, those operations have proven to be very successful. Commissioner Wright noted the activity from the April operations are part of the DPS Board Report. Commissioner Wright added crime has proven to be reduced during these weekends and thanked Director Reynolds and his staff, and Commissioner Williams with DNR for their assistance.

Commissioner Wright further stated the Department has been focusing on increasing presence on I-16, indicating data from MCCD on this initiative is included in the Board Report, but wanted to mention a few: during the month of April, MCCD conducted 987 commercial inspections on I-16, issued 817 moving violations, 437 distracted driving violations, issued 313 citations, and 177 warnings.

Commissioner Wright shared last week, the Department dedicated a Grove of Heroes at the headquarters campus, noting the trees were planted several years ago, but there has never been anything added to them to signify their existence and purpose on the campus. Commissioner Wright advised several months back, the Board approved a donation from the Fraternal Order of Police and the Department had 27 stones engraved and placed at each one of the trees.

Commissioner Wright reported the new Post in Hazlehurst is complete and is waiting on AT&T to install the data lines, and it is anticipated Post 16 will be moving in late June or July.

Commissioner Wright announced the Department's annual awards ceremony will be held at GPSTC on Friday and all Board members are invited to attend the ceremony. Commissioner Wright thanked Director Wigginton for allowing the ceremony to be held at the Center this year.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Commissioner Wright about the decline in personnel for MCCD, to which Commissioner Wright stated they have noticed the decline, adding the Department would like to have over 260 officers and confirmed a future MCO school is in the works. Vice-Chairman Wood asked if the declining numbers are due to attrition and Commissioner Wright noted some are retirements, but they have seen people moving into other professions, which is a challenge a lot of law enforcement is facing right now.

Vice-Chairman Wood thanked Commissioner Wright for the Department's emphasis on I-16.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked Commissioner Wright about the accelerated Trooper School and what the process will be, to which Commissioner Wright stated he would send out the application process and requirements for the Trooper School to the entire Board via email.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Commissioner Wright how the Department was doing with recruiting, to which Commissioner Wright noted the Department is recruiting every day and employees are the best recruiters so the Department is constantly encouraging employees to recruit. Commissioner Wright added the Department has made some policy changes that will help with recruiting, noting there were 1300 applicants for the 111th Trooper School and are hoping to see about 500-600 apply for the 112th Trooper School. Commissioner Wright stated he is encouraged and believes the current climate will begin to change as citizens realize law enforcement is needed in the communities.

Lt. Nick Ellis asked Commissioner Wright to speak on the Department's support and involvement with Fulton County and Atlanta PD in reference to the crime suppression details to which Commissioner Wright replied the Department has a great relationship with the Sheriff and Chief and communicate weekly to discuss what has evolved and what can be done to change things to help more. Commissioner Wright indicated all agencies work well together and, on the weekends when partnered up, APD sends officers to the briefings and to ride along with Troopers since they have the knowledge of the area. Commissioner Wright stated the Sheriff is always very supportive with helping get people into the jail and getting Troopers back on the road quickly. Commissioner Wright noted the Sheriff is trying to get a crime suppression unit put together as a 10-man team to assist.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, reiterated Commissioner Wright's appreciation of partner law enforcement agencies on combatting the crime problem in Atlanta and the GBI's relationship with Atlanta PD is strong.

Director Reynolds informed the Board GBI held its first "Fallen Agents" service to honor the 9 agents who have been lost over the course of the history the Bureau. Director Reynolds indicated the video is on YouTube and the GBI plans on continuing the service in the future.

Director Reynolds stated to the Board the Agency has been busy and as of 2:15 this morning, GBI had worked its 30th officer involved shooting this year in Decatur. Director Reynolds noted the GBI worked 96 last year and all were hoping and praying the numbers would be down this year, but the way it is trending now, the number could be close to what it was last year.

Director Reynolds announced the Agency is currently running a basic agent class at the Training Center. Director Reynolds notified the Board there will be a new agent class starting in September and hope by the end of the year to have close to 300 agents around the State.

Director Reynolds announced the GBI Public Affairs group have been asked to present at the National PIO conference in Dallas, TX due to the way GBI handled the media and public information part of the Rayshard Brooks shooting this past summer. Director Reynolds stated he is very proud of the way

their Public Information Office works and he is firmly convinced we have lost the narrative and we have to get it back by letting everyone know what the Agency does day in and day out, and to do this you have to get the information out at every opportunity. Director Reynolds shared Assistant Director John Melvin is heading up a re-branding of the Public Affairs Department, which will be expanded and will push out more information.

Director Reynolds stated he was honored to announce the Center for Missing and Exploited Children has named one of the Bureau's Special Agents, Trisha Cannon, who works with the CEACC unit, has been named as a nation hero. Director Reynolds explained Agent Cannon worked a case where she came to the conclusion that a 14-year-old female was being trafficked, and Agent Cannon worked the case from top to bottom and arrested the perpetrator, who has recently been sentenced to a lengthy prison term and rescuing the child.

Director Reynolds notified the Board of anticipated news forthcoming on the Bureau's first major scale labor trafficking case in the state of Georgia. Director Reynolds stated he believes this is an area that is not paid enough attention to, and this unit will be working with the new Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit.

Director Reynolds welcomed new Board Member, DA Samir Patel, and noted thoughts and prayers will be with Chief Carlisle.

Mr. Samir Patel asked Director Reynolds the status of contracting with medical companies in Colorado to expedite drug identification testing, to which Director Reynolds stated the Bureau is outsourcing the backlogs to eliminate this number. Director Reynolds added that there is the potential to outsource firearms ballistic testing due to the fact this is the next major area that needs attention, and it takes two years to train a firearms ballistic expert.

Lt. Nick Ellis asked Director Reynolds if he feels they have made some headway on gang activity, to which Director Reynolds replied he believes they have. Director Reynolds stated the Gang Task Force has done well in north Georgia, indicating the Agency works really well with the Sheriff and the Task Force is working major cases throughout the State.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Director Reynolds about the status of medical examiners, to which Director Reynolds replied the Agency is in a much better position on staffing, thanks to the recent salary increase.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, congratulated and welcomed DA Patel to the Board, and invited the Board members and visitors to tour the facility. Director Wigginton also thanked Commissioner Ward for his partnership with the Training Center and introduced the Center's new Warden, James Spann, and thanked him for his partnership. Director Wigginton shared the Training Center serves about 10,000 meals a week and has 526 beds that turn over 2-3 times a week, and without the Warden's support and assistance, the tasks involved in handling and maintaining the Center could not be accomplished.

In regard to instruction, Director Wigginton noted all the Center's courses are now on annual rotation and is updated annually to ensure what is being taught is current, explaining if a statute or supreme court decision is dropped, the curriculum is updated immediately. Director Wigginton announced because of this, the State of Alaska has reached out to partner with GPSTC on instruction, and the Training Center will start out with management and supervision training for the entire State, which does not have a training facility.

Director Wigginton mentioned the article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution in reference to a new approach by a Police Chief in Mid-West Georgia regarding use of force. Director Wigginton indicated the Center will have instructors on site this Friday to evaluate what the agency is teaching. Director Wigginton noted he will not make an opinion on what they are teaching, or on the legality of it, until he can decide and make a statement on it.

Director Wigginton thanked Sheriff Terrell and his agency on assisting with the SRO training program, noting there is one instructor that will teach every SRO in the state of Georgia. Director Wigginton stated the program is being re-vamped to be a tiered program, where an Officer will get a basic certification then can advance.

Regarding basic training academies, Director Wigginton asked for the Board's approval to approach a couple of entities to be a satellite campus for holding one or two academies during the year for agencies/departments that have a need to hire or send someone to the academy outside of the regularly scheduled academies that are held twice a year.

Lt. Nick Ellis made the motion to allow Director Wigginton to engage certain entities to serve as a satellite location for basic training academies. This was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross and voted approved by the Board members.

Mr. Willie Bolton asked Director Wigginton what a pre-requisite will be to determine which locations are selected for a satellite campus, to which Director Wigginton replied he would like to choose locations that do not have academies nearby, such as Brunswick, in Southeast Georgia and the Southwest Georgia area.

Director Wigginton shared the Center has started a Cold Case class. Director Wigginton explained the Center reached out to agencies and asked them to bring a cold case to the class and as a group, looked at the case. Director Wigginton announced the very first class led investigators to make an arrest in a 2004 murder in Bibb County.

Director Wigginton also shared the numbers at the Fire Academy continue to rise and has received national recognition and attention.

DONATIONS

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

One (1) 2003 Ford Crown Victoria	\$999.00	Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia
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The motion to accept this donation was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Lt. Nick Ellis and voted approved by the Board members.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Director Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, presented a Resolution requesting the Board of Public Safety to authorize the reversion of 0.33 acres of real property in the City of Savannah, Chatham County, from the State of Georgia, in custody of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

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

Director Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested issuance of \$3,945,000 in aggregate principal amount of State of Georgia General Obligation Bonds.

Chief Dee Meadows made the motion to adopt the Bond Resolution for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which was seconded by Lt. Nick Ellis and voted approved by the Board Members.

Major Mark Perry, Department of Public Safety, requested issuance of \$57,840,000 in aggregate principal amount of State of Georgia General Obligation Bonds.

Mr. Willie Bolton made the motion to adopt the Bond Resolution for the Georgia Department of Public Safety, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Sikes and voted approved by the Board Members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked for a motion for a Thank You Resolution be presented to former Board member Mr. George Hartwig. Chief Craig Tully made the motion to present a Resolution to Mr. Hartwig, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Mr. Charles Sikes to speak on National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the Line of Duty Deaths memorial service being held later today at GPSTC. Mr. Sikes noted the Georgia Public Safety Training Center always does a tremendous job recognizing National Peace Officers Memorial Day, which is on May 15th. Mr. Sikes shared with the Board that President Kennedy signed National Peace Officers Memorial Day into legislation in 1962, and the week in which it falls as Police Week. Mr. Sikes noted that President Kennedy had no way of knowing that, when he signed this into law, a little over a year later he would be killed in Dallas, Texas and later that afternoon a Dallas Police Officer, J.D. Tippit, would be killed while trying to apprehend the President's killer. Mr. Sikes recognized the hard work the Training Center, and Ms. Sharla Shockley, does getting the Memorial Service organized; and also recognized GBI Assistant Director John

Melvin. Mr. Sikes shared Mr. Melvin presented a Peace Officers Memorial Day speech at a finishing school in Milledgeville, Georgia which Mr. Sikes had the honor to attend, back in the 1960's. Mr. Sikes remembered Mr. Melvin addressed a high school division of the Georgia Military College and communicated to the students about Peace Officers Memorial Day. Mr. Sikes stressed schools should educate students more about this day and what it means to America in recognizing Peace Officers who have given their lives in the line of duty. Mr. Sikes also reminded the room that September 11th this year will be 20 years since the 911 attacks and encouraged everyone to remember what our lives were like before that day and how our lives have changed since that day.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary