

## **BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

November 12, 2020  
Virtual and Call-in Meeting

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chief Bruce Carlisle  
Chief Stacey Cotton  
Lt. Nicholas D. Ellis  
Mr. Richard Hyde  
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:**

Mr. George Hartwig  
Sheriff Dane Kirby

### **OTHERS:**

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office  
Ms. Cheryl Buie, Board Liaison  
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Department of Public Safety  
Commissioner Christopher C. Wright, Department of Public Safety  
Lieutenant Colonel Billy Hitchens, III, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Lieutenant Colonel Stephanie Stallings, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Robert Balkcom, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Kendrick Lowe, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Mark Perry, 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  
Mrs. Lorri Smith, Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Joan Crumpler, Department of Public Safety  
Ms. Clare McGuire, Department of Public Safety  
Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Mr. Chris Hosey, Deputy Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Director Chris Wigginton Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mrs. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Danielle Robbins, Attorney General’s Office  
Senator Billy Hickman

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

Lt. Nick Ellis gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood introduced special guest, Senator Billy Hickman, who will be going to the Legislature in January to replace Jack Hill. Vice-Chairman Wood shared Senator Hickman has been working hard for a number of months in his position and thanked Senator Hickman for taking the time to come to the meeting and asked if he would like to say a few words.

Senator Hickman thanked everyone for their support and prayers to get him through the past tough four months and mentioned that Vice-Chairman Wood has introduced him to several important people over the years: Charles Sikes, Bill Hitchens, and John Edwards. Senator Hickman added they have taken him under their wings and allowed him to learn a lot about what law enforcement people do. Senator Hickman advised he has asked that public safety be one of his committees and added he has a big heart for public safety and education

Vice-Chairman Wood then recognized the DPS Command Staff for being present, in person.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 BPS minutes. Sheriff Joey Terrell made the motion to approve the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. This was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Mr. Charles Sikes to provide a remembrance for Veterans Day. Mr. Sikes stated that twice in this nation, every six months, we look toward veterans, those who have lost their lives, on Memorial Day, and those who have served in military forces on November 11<sup>th</sup> (yesterday). Mr. Sikes stated it is wise that we do that, and honor veterans and how it has bled into one another over the years and looking at both of those entities on both of those days. Mr. Sikes expressed a nation that forgets its veterans is not long for existence. Mr. Sikes noted when talking about veterans, you have to talk about those who stand behind veterans; the families, the mothers, the fathers, the wives, the husbands, the children, the uncles, the aunts, cousins, and family members and loved ones who are in support of the veterans, so really, it's America that we honor on this day. Mr. Sikes stated we simply make note that it's for veterans and for those that lost their lives, but it's wise we do it twice a year to keep us focused on those that have served this nation, not only out front, wearing the uniform, but behind the uniforms. Mr. Sikes shared we have many celebrations throughout the land, and he encouraged anyone who sees a veteran, regardless of the day, to say thank you. Mr. Sikes noted over the last few years the veterans that wear the hats from WWII are gradually disappearing. Mr. Sikes stated you will see a WWII veteran once in a while, the "greatest generation" that we have come to call them, and need to particularly talk to them and thank them for their service during very difficult and dangerous times for the world. Mr. Sikes noted the Korean War veterans are often called the "forgotten veterans", talk to them, as we have as a country often forgotten Korea, the war is not over in Korea. Mr. Sikes noted a peace treaty has never been signed, just an armistice, so it's still an active on-going conflict that stops at the 38 parallel and can explode at any time, as each of us know from watching the news. Mr. Sikes stated the Korean War veterans are the ones up on the front lines and need to recognize them. Mr. Sikes shared he watched the final chapter of "M.A.S.H." last night and that's how a lot of people are connected to the Korean War. Mr. Sikes declared the Korean War was a brutal cold war one cannot imagine. When reading about those that participated in the Korean War, Mr. Sikes stated the soldiers talk of survival of the brutal cold weather, and of the escapes made when

the Chinese pushed back down and pushed the American Army back down, where the Army pretty much evacuated to the south completely.

Regarding the Viet Nam war, Mr. Sikes shared Bill Hitchens is a Viet Nam war veteran in the Marine Corps, and one tends to forget about the Viet Nam war and it's a tragedy that we do. Mr. Sikes stated the nation overlooked the Viet Nam veterans, and not until the last 10-20 years, the Viet Nam vets have been welcomed home. Mr. Sikes stated the country now has veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Mr. Sikes acknowledged Memorial Day is for veterans who have lost their lives and Veterans Day is for those who have served. Mr. Sikes stated war takes a tremendous toll on a nation, not only through death, but those who survived the war, those who were wounded – tragically wounded, who will live with these wounds for the rest of their lives and many who were not wounded; who were wounded mentally and have to live with that. Mr. Sikes added we should be supportive of all veterans. Mr. Sikes stated when he is in a restaurant and there is a young military member in there with his family or whatever, he always says to the waitress, "Give me that ticket, I'm going to pay it." Mr. Sikes stated small things like this will let the veterans know we are thinking of them and they represent us. Mr. Sikes reiterated these are two great days, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day we always need to keep in our minds.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Vice-Chairman Wood thanked Commissioner Christopher Wright for being present and congratulated him on his job and for a job well done. Commissioner Wright stated he included a monthly report for presentation that reflects enforcement and staffing levels for DPS for the month of October. Commissioner Wright added as the DPS moves forward in the coming months, additional information will be included, giving a more detailed overview of operations.

Commissioner Wright introduced Mrs. Lorrie Smith who was appointed as the Chief Financial Officer/Comptroller effective October 19<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wright shared Mrs. Smith holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Georgia College and State University and a master's degree in accounting and Financial Management from the Keller Graduate School of Management at DeVry University. Commissioner Wright added Mrs. Smith lives in Covington, GA with her husband and their two children. Commissioner Wright advised Mrs. Smith previously worked in local government as a finance director and accounting manager; she served as Assistant Deputy Secretary of State in the Georgia Secretary of State's office; and most recently served as Georgia's first female Chief Operating Officer for the Governor's office. Commissioner Wright declared Mrs. Smith comes to DPS with a wealth of knowledge and honored to have her on our team.

Commissioner Wright announced this past week, the Department launched EPORTS, an electronic on-line system to request, receive, and pay for crash reports, citations, and incident reports. Commissioner Wright added the Department has not yet equipped EPORTS to handle requests for dashcam video, photos, internal affairs reports, personnel files, SCRT files, and that sort of thing, but does anticipate in the next two weeks the on-line logging system for DPS will be completely on-line. Commissioner Wright stated this is simply a system where people can purchase incident reports, citations, and crash reports by request.

Commissioner Wright shared that the joint graduation of the 108<sup>th</sup> and 109<sup>th</sup> Trooper School was held last Friday at GPSTC and thanked all the Board members that were able to attend the ceremony. Commissioner Wright stated Georgia's First Lady, Marty Kemp, delivered the keynote address, as Governor Kemp was unable to be there because he had been quarantined for a potential COVID-19 exposure. Commissioner Wright noted that Mrs. Kemp has not missed a single graduation since the Kemps have come into office and were honored and proud for them to be there. Commissioner Wright acknowledged the Kemps continue to be tremendous supporters of DPS and the law enforcement community across the state.

Commissioner Wright advised that the 110<sup>th</sup> Trooper School will begin on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and have made 116 conditional offers to candidates. Commissioner Wright stated the candidates are now completing the final phase of the hiring process - the medical and psychological evaluations this week. Commissioner Wright added the Department plans to add two weeks of training to the 110<sup>th</sup> Trooper School so it will essentially go to 34 weeks, hoping to reduce the amount of time worked on a daily basis, thus reducing fatigue on the cadets and training staff.

Commissioner Wright thanked all the state agencies for their support of the state's response plan last week during the election, specifically the Department of Corrections, GBI, GEMA, the Department of Community Supervision, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the National Guard. Commissioner Wright gave a special thank you to Ms. Meredith Bailey and her team with GISAC, as they were a tremendous asset in providing valuable intel. Commissioner Wright stated the Motor Carrier NRAD unit conducted 75 radiation surveys at the state Capitol, Governor's Mansion, the Congress Center, DPS Headquarters, and Dobbins Airforce Base. Commissioner Wright added the Department was well-postured to deal with any potential civil unrest that may have occurred because of the election results. Commissioner Wright declared there were over 240 DPS personnel on hand; 170 personnel from other state agencies, and over 200 national guardsmen in the metro area to deal with those issues had they occurred. Commissioner Wright reported that there were no major issues and resumed normal operations on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wright thanked everybody on the Command Staff for planning and coordinating the logistics for the event, who made sure our most valuable resource, "our people", were well taken care of. Commissioner Wright stated Lt. Colonel Hitchens did a tremendous job of drafting the state's response plan for the event, but most importantly he wanted to thank all the employees at DPS. Commissioner Wright acknowledged this year has been a tremendously challenging year for DPS, and our people have stood tall and have answered the call every time we have asked them to stand up and come forward.

Commissioner Wright shared since the election, the Secretary of State has received numerous threats, so a security detail has been assigned for his protection.

Commissioner Wright advised that Motor Carrier participated in the third and final wave of Operation Safe Drive on I-95, which is a high-visibility, multi-agency traffic enforcement effort on the interstate system. Commissioner Wright noted this enforcement effort is designed to eliminate traffic fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles, and the Motor Carrier officers conducted a total of 167 inspections, placed 13 drivers out of service, and 10 vehicles out of service during this time period.

This past week, Commissioner Wright stated they held a monthly budget meeting with the DPS finance office and proud to say the Department is currently on target to meet all fiscal year 2021 spending projections.

Commissioner Wright stated for the upcoming Board Meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, he would like to invite all Board members to HQ in Atlanta for lunch and the Department will make sure appropriate safety measures are taken to protect everyone from potential COVID-19 exposure. Commissioner Wright advised the Board meeting will be held in the Media Room so everyone can take appropriate social distancing approaches, with the meal being served by the Command Staff at Building 29. Commissioner Wright stated there will be a smaller group this year and will not invite as many people as they normally would simply because of COVID and would like to limit exposure but wanted to extend an invitation to all the Board members.

Mr. Charles Sikes recognized DPS for taking tremendous steps in recruiting but stated he knows there is a concern about the number of Troopers dropping to 786. Mr. Sikes complimented the Command Staff on their recruiting efforts and commented that it is the lowest number he has seen in a long time. Commissioner Wright stated the Department is concerned but it is a trend they have seen, not just across the Department but across the nation, since early Spring when the civil unrest started in May. Commissioner Wright stated they have seen an increase in early retirements and people changing careers and are being hopeful with the 110<sup>th</sup> Trooper School where they saw a tremendous amount of people willing to step up, which was refreshing. Commissioner Wright added the Department is hoping to see this trend with the 111<sup>th</sup> Trooper School, which has been advertised with recruitment going on. Commissioner Wright shared DPS hopes to make between 90-100 final offers on the 110<sup>th</sup> and the goal is to graduate at least 60. Commissioner Wright stated they are hopeful, but have a lot of work to do, not just with our agencies, but across the country to keep people interested and keep people willing and wanting to step up and do this job as we move forward.

Mr. Charles Sikes stated that, getting back to Veterans Day, when America has a crisis the cry goes out for the first special operations unit, "Send in the Marines!". Mr. Sikes added for the Blue and Gray, "Send Troopers!" and his response is, "We ain't got that many to send". Mr. Sikes stated one has to recognize that DPS is limited to how many people can be deployed to situations and DPS has done a remarkable job, the GBI as well, and the Motor Carrier Compliance Officers in the last couple of months in providing the resources to the original jurisdictional agencies.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigations, congratulated Senator Hickman and said if the GBI can be of assistance to call on them. Director Reynolds also congratulated Mrs. Lorrie Smith on her new position and noted the GBI worked with her while she was in the Governor's office and will do a great job for DPS. Director Reynolds extended his thanks to former Special Agent in Charge Charles Sikes for his remarks on Veterans Day and informed everyone his father will be 90 years old in July and served in the US Army during the Korean conflict. Director Reynolds expressed what Mr. Sikes said hits home and his great love for veterans and this country speaks for itself.

GBI Director Reynolds announced that Mrs. Nelly Miles, Public Affairs Director, was elected as the SE Regional Vice Chair of the International Association Chiefs of Police PIO Section. She will be representing six states and are really honored for her.

Director Reynolds shared 46 gang members in Upson County have been indicted on a case worked with local agencies. Director Reynolds advised the Governor and First Lady joined the GBI at the press conference with Upson County officials. Director Reynolds stated the Board and citizens can expect to see more arrests of this nature come down in the near future on cases being worked through the Gang Task Force around other areas in the state. Director Reynolds also announced the new HEAT unit (Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit) has hit the ground running, working sexual exploitation cases and is also pleased to announce they are working labor trafficking cases, which is fertile ground that hasn't been plowed in this state in a long time. Director Reynolds declared he is very proud of the work the units have been doing.

Director Reynolds reiterated one of his goals coming into this position was to concentrate very heavily on the tremendous backlog that DOFS was facing. Director Reynolds stated DOFS were up to almost 46,000 cases when he stepped in and is thankful the number has been cut in half. Director Reynolds shared they are down to 23,000 cases in the Crime Lab. Director Reynolds stated obviously this is still too many, but for this agency to be what he envisions it to be and to go in the direction he wants it to go, they have got to do something about the numbers and is really proud of the work that's being done by cutting it in that timeframe. Director Reynolds stated the numbers continue to come down and will stay on top of it.

Director Reynolds thanked Colonel Wright for his leadership during the election and thanked him for his compliments toward GISAC who do a tremendous job gathering intelligence and sharing. Director Reynolds stated he is proud of the work GISAC is doing.

Mr. Charles Sikes complimented the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) with how it has developed since the 1970's, when the GBI separated from the DPS. Mr. Sikes noted when looking at the submission of fingerprints and the submission of dispositions, this was not in existence in any degree in the late 60's and 70's. Mr. Sikes stated when the fingerprints identification system came into existence in the early part of the last century and around the middle of the century when fingerprints and fingerprint records came into existence, they have become very important to law enforcement. Mr. Sikes added one often forgets about GCIC and the importance it has to the police officer community in the state. Mr. Sikes complimented GCIC on what they have done and what they do daily to provide an information system for original jurisdictional agencies and folks who assist jurisdictional agencies.

Vice-Chairman Wood took the opportunity to remind everyone about the invitation to the Governor's Public Safety Awards Program on December 4<sup>th</sup> and asked Director Reynolds to recognize one of the recipients. Director Reynolds was honored to share one of the awards being given, for a lifetime contribution, to Mr. Dan Kirk. Director Reynolds shared Mr. Kirk was the Assistant Director of GBI when he joined the agency, and Mr. Kirk is missed, retiring just recently. Director Reynolds noted Mr.

Kirk's background is primarily through the forensic science department where he was head of staff services at one time and stated this is a well-deserved award for Mr. Kirk.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, announced their numbers are starting to get back to consistent numbers as they were before COVID-19 hit, which has placed a burden on GPSTC by being able to meet public health protocol and demands to make sure all the students are safe when they come for training. Director Wigginton stated GPSTC still has to make sure training is done to meet the standards of P.O.S.T. and the Firefighters Training Council. Director Wigginton added the on-line numbers are up substantially, trying to make up for the deficiency for the couple of months they weren't able to teach. Director Wigginton stated GPSTC is doing a pretty good job throughout the state with the basic academy and police academy, and teaching a lot of classes in person throughout the state to get the Governor's Initiative classes taught to make sure everyone gets their minimum number of hours this year.

Director Wigginton advised the Savannah Academy became a Covid-19 "hot spot" and the decision was made to shut down the academy for 14 days. Director Wigginton received P.O.S.T. approval when a few students tested positive within a 24-hour period. Director Wigginton added the students were off for 14 days and are all back with no issues at this time and noted GPSTC is being very cautious during these unprecedented times.

Director Wigginton shared one of the courses they have been working on has finally been able to be put on the books. Director Wigginton stated there will be two offerings, in partnership between the law enforcement division and fire division, of an EVOG course for firefighters and firetrucks, both have been very successful and have never been offered before. Director Wigginton stated GPSTC is very proud to offer this course.

Director Wigginton mentioned the Governor's Public Safety Awards again, with 16 recipients being honored.

Vice-Chairman Wood thanked Director Wigginton for their special attention during this confusing time and noted those present in the room were talking earlier about confusion to what has been standard operational procedures for so many years.

Mr. Charles Sikes commented regarding the Georgia Public Safety Training Center on behalf of Senator Hickman. Mr. Sikes stated Georgia has two model law enforcement training entities in the nation, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Glynco and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center at Forsyth. Mr. Sikes added there are no other entities in existence at the state-wide level like the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, it is a model training facility. Mr. Sikes stated he grew up in an era where the state of Georgia didn't have anything, and the General Assembly and the Governor's Office saw fit to establish and buy the acreage and provide the money to build it. It is great to have in Georgia.

Vice-Chairman Wood advised Director Wigginton that they would get Senator Hickman to the Training Center for a tour and asked how many acres are in the complex, to which Director Wigginton advised there are 1,000 acres, including a 200 acre facility, with two different divisions for basic training and a track.

**DONATIONS**

Major Mark Perry, Headquarters Adjutant, Department of Public Safety requested approval of the following donations:

\$1,500.00 of Fuel	\$1,500.00	Gordon County Board of Commissioners
Twenty (20) Doses of Narcan	\$1,500.00	Manchester Fire Department
Fixed LPR Equipment for I-16 EB in Bryan County	\$45,743.00	Southeastern Drug Enforcement Office
Fixed LPR Equipment I-16 WB in Bryan County	\$46,313.00	Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA
\$2,400.00 of Fuel	\$2,400.00	Madison County Sheriff's Office
\$6,000.00 of Fuel	\$6,000.00	Jackson County Sheriff's Office
\$400.00 of Fuel/Month	\$4,800.00/Year	Berrien County Sheriff's Office
One (1) TruckVault Responder 1 Storage Unit	\$675.00	Appling County Sheriff's Office
Four (4) Alice Pack Frames	\$200.00	Gym Nation, Inc.
Fifty (50) Gallons of Fuel/Week	\$100.00/Week	Dooly County Sheriff's Office
Five Hundred (500) Gallons of Fuel	\$1,000.00	Tallulah Falls Police Department
\$650.00 of Fuel	\$650.00	Varnell Police Department
\$1,250.00 of Fuel/Month for 8 Months	\$10,000	Hall County Sheriff's Office
One (1) Char-Griller Smokin' Champ Grill	\$199.00	The Home Depot, Inc.

The motion to accept these donations was made by Mr. Charles Sikes, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Regarding the license plate readers, Vice-Chairman Wood asked if they are intended to be concentrated around the weigh stations and asked if there is a difference between the readers used for a commercial vehicle versus a light duty vehicle. Commissioner Wright explained that the plan is to



have license plate readers at all weigh stations across the state and any officer or trooper will be able to utilize them and use the information to make traffic stops based on any “hits”.

Major Jeremy Vickery presented an Administrative Order for approval to extend the temporary hours of service variance adopted by the Georgia Department of Public Safety through Section 395.341 Chapter 1 of the Georgia Department of Public Safety’s Transportation Rulebook, for the period set to expire December 31, 2021. Major Vickery stated there were no significant incidents during the most recent variance period between February 14, 2019 through December 31, 2019, and there have been minimal incidents between January 1, 2020 until the date of the memo. Major Vickery explained approval of the Administrative Order will give Commercial Vehicle Operators an extended work time of 2 hours and an extended drive time of 1 hour, compared to other commercial vehicle operators.

Vice-Chairman Wood explained the Administrative Order has been passed before and this is a continuation of the same. Vice-Chairman Wood stated the stipulation on its first approval, when it came before the Board from an interested group, was to be monitored by DPS through MCCD with those records being kept and modified. Vice-Chairman Wood added DPS feels a continuation is appropriate, as there have been no major incidents while it has been monitored and the continuation, if approved, will go through the entire year of 2021.

The motion to approve this Administrative Order was made by Chief Dee Meadows, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Clare McGuire of DPS Legal Services presented a Resolution requesting the Board of Public Safety authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to enter into negotiations with the Georgia Department of Transportation (“GDOT”) for a long-term ground lease of Georgia State Patrol Post 51-Gwinnett, at 55 Old Peachtree Road, NE, Suwanee, Georgia.

Mr. Charles Sikes made a motion for the members of the Board of Public Safety authorizing the Commissioner of Public Safety to enter into negotiations with GDOT to execute a ground lease for the 12.241 acre Property; and further, to take those steps necessary, including any steps necessary on behalf of the Board of Public Safety, to obtain the approval of the State Properties Commission to execute the ground lease. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

Vice-Chairman Wood reminded everyone of the December 10<sup>th</sup> Board meeting at DPS Headquarters and the December 4<sup>th</sup> Governor’s Public Safety Awards Program at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. Vice-Chairman Wood commended Colonel Wright, Director Reynolds, and Lt. Colonel Hitchens for their leadership during the recent elections. Vice-Chairman Wood shared during the December meeting, the Board will be presenting three service resolutions to Mark McDonough, Mark Renew, and Steve Cronic.

Chief Stacy Cotton notified the Board that he has announced his candidacy for the 5<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and would enjoy any support he could get.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Craig Tully  
Secretary