

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

September 10, 2020

Virtual and Call-in Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chief Bruce Carlisle
Chief Stacey Cotton
Lt. Nicholas D. Ellis
Mr. George Hartwig
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:

Sheriff Dane Kirby

OTHERS:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office
Ms. Cheryl Buie, Board Liaison
Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis, Department of Public Safety
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 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 Josh Lamb, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Captain Al Whitworth, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Lieutenant Stephanie Stallings, Department of Public Safety/GSP
Miss Kaycee Larson, Department of Public Safety
Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. John Melvin, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Tony Hightower, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mrs. Cindy Jones, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mrs. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the September 10th, 2020 Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Chief Craig Tully gave the Invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lt. Colonel Chris Wright introduced Mrs. Jennifer Pendarvis who will served as the Board of Public Safety Liaison effective January 1, 2021.

Vice-Chairman Wood welcomed new Board members, Chief Dee Meadows and Lieutenant Nick Ellis and welcomed their introductions.

Chief Dee Meadows stated it was an honor to be part of such a great team and have heard great things and thanked the ones that have called and reached out to him since his appointment. Chief Meadows shared he is from Waycross/Ware County, has been there his whole life and was a member of the Waycross Fire Department for 28 years, came up through the ranks with Waycross Fire Department and then became the Ware County Fire Chief and has been for three years. Chief Meadows stated he serves as the Chairman of the Ware County Board of Education and noted that kids are something he truly loves and serves on a Board of a school in Bethlehem in Palestine and travels to Bethlehem around three times a year to work inside a Christian school inside the walls of Bethlehem. Chief Meadows stated public safety has been the only job he has ever had since his high school graduation and have been in his local community his whole life. Chief Meadows thanked everyone for the opportunity and looks forward to meeting everyone and stated if he can ever do anything for anyone to please reach out to him.

Lieutenant Nick Ellis thanked Vice-Chairman Ellis and Governor Kemp for this opportunity. Lieutenant Ellis shared he started his career with the Department of Juvenile Justice as a juvenile corrections officer, working there for two and half years and had the opportunity to go back to Jesup and serve at the Jesup Police Department. Lieutenant Ellis stated he has worked a little bit in every area of the police department, patrol, gangs and drugs and recently in the last year and half was promoted to Lieutenant, as a patrol commander where he oversees the uniform patrol, off duty services, security for the school system, Walmart and local neighboring things going on. Lt. Ellis added he has been on the Wayne County Board of Education for six years and serves as Chairman. Lt. Ellis stated in the last year, he was appointed as the District Director for his area and has served as President for the Atlantic Chapter of the Police Benevolent Association and serves as a youth pastor for New Creation Ministries. Lt. Ellis shared he is very involved in his community, on the Boys and Girls Club Board and the Co-Chair of Leadership Wayne. Lieutenant Ellis stated he looks forward to serving on the BPS and is very grateful for the opportunity and looking forward to working with everyone to help better the law enforcement community.

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood, Chief Craig Tully and Sheriff Joey Terrell were reappointed and sworn in. New BPS members Chief Dee Meadows and Lieutenant Nick Ellis were sworn in.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the July 23, 2020 BPS minutes, with two corrections, one to show Mr. Rossie Ross present for the July meeting and under the GCIC Council, change from Mr. Kirk to Mr. Melvin. Chief Craig Tully made the motion to approve the July 23, 2020 BPS minutes with the corrections. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the Board members.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Commissioner Gary Vowell, Department of Public Safety welcomed and congratulated the new BPS members to the Board. Commissioner Vowell asked everyone to remember the family of Chaplain Randy Lamb and the family of DNR Captain Stan Elrod who was tragically killed a few days ago and to lift their families up in prayer.

Commissioner Vowell shared the Department is using TEAMS to handle some of their business from day to day and continue to move people back into Headquarters and hopefully business will be back to normal real soon. Regarding Covid-19, Commissioner Vowell advised the Executive Order has been extended and DPS continues to answer calls from the public on complaints, with troopers and officers responding to the complaints to those places, either warning them or making a report and then forwarding the daily report to the governor and others to keep them abreast of what is occurring. Since the last meeting, Commissioner Vowell stated there are 48 employees who have tested positive for Covid-19 and at the present time, 36 of the 48 have returned to duty and had 12 positive on leave and 12 more that are self-quarantined due to possible exposure.

Concerning civil unrests, Commissioner Vowell stated they are seeing small events periodically, mainly on weekends and will continue to have troops respond to assist Troop C on the weekends to shore up the National Guard. Commissioner Vowell thanked GBI Director Reynolds for assisting DPS with GISAC intel, as every day they keep DPS abreast of what could come or might come for the day.

Regarding staffing levels, Commissioner Vowell advised DPS has 803 troopers, 246 MCCD officers and since the last meeting, 11 troopers and 4 MCCD officers retired. Commissioner Vowell added there are currently 13 cadets in the 109th Trooper School, who are in their second phase of FTO training and will graduate November 6th. Commissioner Vowell stated the 110th Trooper School will start January 3, 2021 and reminded the BPS members due to budget cuts, this school was cut, but thanks to the governor and the legislature, the money was restored for a one and half trooper school and are hoping to have 80-100 cadets in this school. Commissioner Vowell added the PT assessments have been positive and hopeful to meet the goal of 80-100 cadets for the school.

Commissioner Vowell stated Post 51-Gwinnett has been completed and the post at Hazlehurst (Post 16) is coming along well and should be occupying it by the end of the year.

Commissioner Vowell thanked the BPS for their support with the FY2021 budget and to reduce spending, have cut back on cell phones, copiers, paper, etc. Commissioner Vowell noted a fuel restriction has been put in place on the troopers and several counties have donations for fuel today to be approved.

Director Vic Reynolds, Georgia Bureau of Investigation congratulated Cheryl on her retirement from the BPS and thanked her for her years of dedicated service and look forward to working with Jennifer and knows she will do well as the Board Liaison.

Director Reynolds welcomed the new BPS members to this great committee and added the GBI stands ready to work with them.

Director Reynolds thanked Commissioner Vowell for his kinds words about GISAC, as this is a tremendous unit where information gathering and sharing is a vital part of what is done at the GBI and strengthens our partnership with law enforcement on the state and local level. Director Reynolds shared he was interviewed on a national program yesterday and one of the things he continuously speaks about is the unbelievable partnerships in Georgia, with state, federal and local levels certainly benefits what the GBI does and thanked all the men and women who serve in public service. Director Reynolds added the GBI is humbled and honored to be a partner with each one and thanked them for that.

Director Reynolds shared there will be a GBI school in March 2021 and looking forward to bringing on a few new agents and real excited about this.

Director Reynolds stated the GBI has been wrestling for a couple of weeks with what to do with the Macon Medical Examiners Office as the ME at this location will be retiring at the end of September. With the Macon Medical Examiner Office that serves Middle and South Georgia, Director Reynolds advised an operations booklet has been developed that will be sent out to the coroners tomorrow, in order to keep the Macon office open and functioning at least for a period of time until someone else is hired. Director Reynolds stated throughout the US, there are only about 530-540 forensic pathologists in the entire country and probably 1000-1100 jobs in any one given day for forensic pathologists. Director Reynolds stated GBI is recruiting against cities like NY, Dallas, LA, Chicago and the pathologists can literally choose where they want to go and has been difficult for GBI to get medical examiners hired, put to work at the GBI to run that very important function. Director Reynolds shared they have spoken with both the Senate and the House legislature, who have been very receptive in an amended budget situation to offer more money for the doctors and believe this will come to pass sooner rather than later and will certainly help the GBI to recruit young doctors and get them interested in working for the GBI in the ME's office. Director Reynolds stated tomorrow they will be presenting something to the appropriation chairs of the House and Senate, some ideas to raise up salaries for the doctors so GBI can actively recruit from larger jurisdictions. Director Reynolds noted when speaking with a coroner in south Georgia, Director Reynolds realized the Macon office is a tremendous asset for that area and told the coroner the forensic pathologists do not work for free and will do their best to find one for the area and continue that as this is a viable part of what they do at the GBI.

Director Reynolds advised a couple of weeks ago, the GBI announced the creation and development of the new Human Trafficking Unit (HEAT), which is something very high on Governor Kemp and the First Lady's agenda. Director Reynolds acknowledged this is an interesting unit in that not only will it work sex trafficking, but also work labor trafficking cases, which has not been done with much intensity throughout GA and are looking forward to pursuing those crimes as well. Director Reynolds stated the unit is up and running, based at GBI HQ, but has statewide jurisdiction and will be talking more about the unit in the future.

Director Reynolds advised they were in Milledgeville last week and announced at a press conference the expansion of the GBI Gang Task Force, based out of the Region 6 office, will be placing a SAC, ASAC and four additional agents here with cases primarily in the Milledgeville Macon corridor as there are a lot of issues in this area. Director Reynolds added Sheriff Masee and Sheriff Davis are very cooperative and very good partners with the GBI in this fight and will be working those cases in this area as well. Director Reynolds shared no agents will be taken from the task force operating out of the metro area but will be adding agents for the middle Georgia area.

Director Reynolds stated Deputy Director Scott Dutton who has been a tremendous asset and a friend will be retiring from the GBI on November 1, 2020. Director Reynolds added the GBI does anticipate bringing Mr. Dutton back after the first of the year in a part-time position as the GTIP Coordinator to run the threat assessment program that GISAC runs.

Director Reynolds stated Inspector Chris Hosey will be appointed as the Deputy Director of the Investigative Division and announced the appointment of Region 3 SAC Terry Howard as Inspector.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Director Reynolds stated the GBI has been very fortunate and are extremely cautious inside GBI HQ and is not aware of anyone in quarantine at this time. Director Reynolds advised the National Guard came out and did testing on the employees and are very pleased with this.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked Director Reynolds how many medical examiners are at the GBI. Director Reynolds responded 18 medical examiners are budgeted for the GBI and currently short two at HQ and at the end of month will be one short in Macon, which will put the GBI at 15 at the end of the month. Director Reynolds added two of the active medical examiners out of the 15 will be going on maternity leave effective October 1. Director Reynolds stated the GBI has reached out to retired, former medical examiners who will be returning on a part time basis in the Macon office, but do not want to do homicide cases if they can avoid it and will be rotating regular doctors in and out of Macon along with the part time medical examiners who will be doing the bulk of the homicide cases. Director Reynolds shared the Macon office is a very busy office and last year they did 536 autopsies and this past Monday morning he was advised there were 18 bodies waiting on the medical examiners at HQ. Director Reynolds stated they are working closely with Augusta Medical College and Emory Medical School and have some of their people coming to HQ next week for a tour and are trying to develop a relationship with them and develop a pipeline of those who are interested in forensic pathology to use the GBI as a training ground. Director Reynolds added they are also looking at the possibility for the government to work with the GBI to forgive student debt/loan if the MEs commit to working in public service for at least ten years. Director Reynolds stated they are looking at every aspect they can to try to cure this problem and hope to do this in the future.

With the limited number Director Reynolds spoke about, Vice-Chairman Wood asked if other states contract the medical examiners as it seems like there are not enough medical examiners to go around. Director Reynolds responded the situation is different from state to state and there are not that many states that have the system that Georgia has where GBI serves as a medical examiner for 153 of 159

counties, the GBI is responsible for being the medical examiner. Director Reynolds noted the larger counties, Cobb, Fulton, Gwinnett and DeKalb have their own medical examiner and shared that Cobb County has taken three of the GBI's medical examiners as they offer about \$80,000.00 more a year than the GBI does and this is one of the dilemmas the GBI is faced with. Director Reynolds stated a lot of states do contract the medical examiners, but one cannot go to any medical examiner's office in this country and there not be a shortage of doctors, there are not enough doctors interested in this field.

Concerning the disparity of the turn around rate at the different labs, Vice-Chairman Wood asked Director Reynolds if this is because of the complexity of the cases the different labs work on. Director Reynolds stated this is based on what they do at that lab that affects the turnaround time. Regarding the back log at the labs, Director Reynolds stated 89% of the backlog is in two areas, DNA and drug identification and if those two areas are taken out, the backlog is relatively small in all the other areas. Director Reynolds stated he has pushed for some outsourcing abilities in these two areas and are starting to do this. Director Reynolds shared his commitment this year is to push those numbers down.

Regarding the 179 positions the GBI needs to fill, Vice Chairman Wood asked if this was because of budget or finding qualified persons to fill the positions. Director Reynolds advised it is a little bit of both, primarily budget issues. Director Reynolds stated they have sat down with OPB and the legislature and are looking at a different way of doing business in the Crime Lab. Director Reynolds stated he shared with his employees the GBI can not be the type of agency that he has envisioned it, even though the GBI is good as they are, he does not want the GBI to be one of the best or second best investigative agencies in the county, he wants it to be the best and the only way it will be the best if those numbers in the Crime Lab are pushed down. Director Reynolds, reiterated they are looking at the way business is done at the crime lab, not that anything was done wrong before, but can certainly improve and this is his and Mr. Melvin's drive, goal and challenge to push numbers down and work it in a different way to consider outsourcing and doing all the things differently than have been done before, while still maintain quality of work that has to be done at the GBI. Director Reynolds declared this is way high on his list to do at GBI as the Director.

Mr. Tony Hightower, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center welcomed the new BPS members. Mr. Hightower advised Director Wigginton is speaking at the inaugural of the Georgia's State Opioid Adaptive Response Training. Mr. Hightower advised GPSTC has partnered with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and have developed a state opioid adaptive response training (SOAR) for public safety. Mr. Hightower shared this program will be delivered throughout the state for first responders to better equip them to save lives and recruit their local communities to help in combating the opioid crisis.

Mr. Hightower advised GPSTC is still following the protocol and safety procedures as outlined by CDC and the Department of Public Health for Covid-19. Mr. Hightower stated the training numbers are up and no need to halt any of the training.

Mr. Hightower stated there are a couple of bond projects starting for the Fire Academy and about to add on to the Fire Academy as the number of students continue to climb and are running out of room.

Mr. Hightower advised he just signed the approval for the architect to start working on the plans and hopefully in the next few months will have the bids and hope to get started after the first of the year.

Regarding the Governor's Public Safety Award's Committee, Mr. Hightower recommended Ms. Ginny Sapp to serve as a Citizen's member.

Chief Craig Tully made the motion to approve Ms. Ginny Sapp to serve as a Citizen member on the Governor Public Safety Award's Committee. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the BPS members.

Commissioner Timothy Ward, Department of Corrections shared he is so proud of his team at DOC as he tells people they are operating about 89 small cities around the state and doing a great job. Commissioner Ward advised there have been 55 deaths and when looking at some of their counterparts around the southeast, GA DOC is doing a great job of containing Covid-19. Commissioner Ward reminded everyone the DOC population is not a stagnant population, people are coming in and out and with 61,000 inmates and unable to social distance and only have 55 deaths, his team is doing an excellent job and are very proud of them.

Commissioner Michael Nail, Department of Community Services shared his department is holding fast, doing well and biggest concern right now, with 200,000 under supervision is when the courts get out from under their emergency order is what is that is going to look like. Commissioner Nail stated DCS is running well and appreciates the partnership with everyone and proud of the women and men at DCS.

DONATIONS

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

Six Stalker DSR 2X Radars	\$	19,620.00	Carroll Co. Bd. of Commissioners
One Brother All-in-One Laser Printer and Toner	\$	914.53	Bartow Co. Commissioners
One Laser Labs Inspector II Tint Meter	\$	129.00	Hall Co. Sheriff's Dept.
Three DragonEye Technology Speed LIDARS, Four Laser Labs Enforcer II Tint Meters and Four Laser Labs Inspector II Tint Meters	\$	6,480.80	Hall Co. Sheriff's Dept.
Eight Gamma Crystals (NRAD)	\$	80,000.00	Dept. of Homeland Security
One German Shepherd Dog	\$	6,500.00	Jonathan Edwards

180 Gallons of Fuel/Month for 3 Months	\$	1,080.00	Worth Co. Sheriff's Dept.
28 Tanks of Fuel/Month for 3 Months	\$	2,630.00	Paulding Co. Commissioners
150 Gallons of Fuel/Month for 4 Months	\$	1,200.00	Lee Co. Sheriff's Dept.
\$750.00 of Fuel/Month for 10 Months	\$	7,500.00	Fannin Co. Bd. of Commissioners
500 Gallons of Fuel/Month for 4 Months	\$	4,000.00	Bartow Co. Commissioners
1,000 Gallons of Fuel	\$	1,799.10	Murray Co. Sheriff's Dept.

The motion to accept these donations was made by Sheriff Joey Terrell, which was seconded by Chief Dee Meadows, and voted approved by the Board members.

Reflecting on 9/11, Mr. Charles Sikes stated most of the group do not remember what our parents and grandparents talked about on December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked and learned as we grew up what that date meant to America. Mr. Sikes stated most of the group will remember November 22, 1963, when Walter Cronkite came on TV, removed his glasses and looked into the camera and said President John F. Kennedy has died at the Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, TX. Mr. Sikes acknowledged all of us in the group have our thoughts in regards to 9/11 and what it means to each of us and where we were when the word came out that the first plane had flown into the Twin Towers and when the second plane hit the other tower. Mr. Sikes stated he was in the Statesboro GBI office and John Edwards came into the office and told him a plane had hit the Twin Towers and then John came back shortly thereafter and said a second plane had hit the Twin Towers and were passenger airliners. Mr. Sikes shared the first words that came out of his mouth was Bin Laden, he is here as he told us he was coming, he is here. Mr. Sikes added the other picture that is always burned in his mind as he watched on the TV, one of the things he will never forget is the people coming out of the towers, coming out of the staircases and seeing the firemen going up the staircases with ropes on their shoulders. Mr. Sikes stated as he watched one fireman go up the stairs, he thought to himself that fireman is going to his death, but he is going, he is doing his duty of what he is being trained to do. Mr. Sikes reminded everyone has their own instances that are drilled into their mind about that particular day and as 9/11 is tomorrow and recognized throughout the nation, to never forget the heroic acts that were not only performed by public safety, but fellow Americans who were heroes who were coming down the stairs and stopped to help people down. Mr. Sikes thanked everyone at the meeting, as they are great Americans.

Chief Cotton shared Chief Bobby Moody who started his career in 1978 at Covington PD died last week and in 1987, Chief Cotton stated he was fortunate enough to be hired by Chief Moody. Chief Cotton stated Chief Moody influenced a lot of law enforcement in Georgia and served the BPS in the late 80's and early 90's and was also Chief of the Year for Georgia and served as President of the GACP. Chief Cotton added Chief Moody served as Marietta Police Chief and President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, influencing law enforcement all around the world. Chief

Cotton stated there are a lot of law enforcement in the metro area and the state of Georgia that owe a lot to Chief Moody's memory and ask everyone to keep his family in their thoughts and prayers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Craig Tully
Secretary