

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Minutes of Meeting Held March 9, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Wayne Abernathy
Mr. Hal Averitt
Mr. Rooney Bowen, III
Mr. Bud Black
Chief Lou Dekmar
Commissioner James Donald
Mr. Patrick Head
Chief Dwayne Orrick
Chief J. D. Rice
Sheriff Jamil Saba
Sheriff Cullen Talton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Governor Sonny Perdue
Sheriff Bruce Harris
Mr. W. H. "Dub" Harper

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Chris Brasher, Department of Law
Ms. Laura Jones, Board Liaison
Colonel Bill Hitchens, Department of Public Safety
Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White, Department of Public Safety
Captain Richard Ashmore, Department of Public Safety
Mr. Terry Landers, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Melissa Rodgers, Department of Public Safety
Ms. Rebecca East, Department of Public Safety
Sgt. Mark McDonough, Department of Public Safety
Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Assistant Director Chris Ash, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Ray Higgins, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Jon Paget, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Dale Mann, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Richard Guerreiro, Consultant with Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Frank Rotondo, Executive Director of Chiefs of Police Association
Ms. Patrice Kerner, Office of Planning and Budget

Vice-Chairman James Donald called the meeting to order, welcoming Board members and visitors. Vice-Chairman Donald gave each Board member a gavel, which had been made by Georgia Correctional Industries. The gift is a token of appreciation for what each Board member does for the citizens of Georgia.

Vice-Chairman Donald continued with reporting that Mr. Joe Ferrero has made a decision to resign; he has decided to go into private practice with former Attorney General Mike Bowers. In the interim, Mr. Brian Owens has been appointed as the Acting Assistant Commissioner, contingent upon Governor Perdue's approval.

Vice-Chairman Donald pointed out how Mr. Chris Brasher, Board Attorney, successfully defended the Department of Corrections in a case involving an execution. Mr. Brasher did an outstanding job of representing the Department of Corrections.

Vice-Chairman Donald asked each attendee to stand and introduce himself/herself to the Board members. Sgt. Mark McDonough introduced himself as the new Executive Assistant to Colonel Bill Hitchens. Board Member Lou Dekmar introduced Mr. Frank Rotondo, who is the Executive Director for the Chiefs' Association.

Vice-Chairman Donald requested approval of the Minutes of the February Board meeting. Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III motioned approval, which was seconded by Sheriff Cullen Talton, and unanimously approved by the Board members.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol

Colonel Hitchens began with reporting on personnel transactions; there have been a few retirements in the Department. Major Bohannon, who was the south division adjutant, retired in February; Lieutenant Colonel Kenny Hancock, who was the deputy commissioner, will retire the end of March; also, Major Freddie Taylor will retire. Colonel Hitchens has appointed Sgt. Mark McDonough as his Executive Assistant. Captain Richard Ashmore will be moved to another section.

After being appointed as Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, Colonel Hitchens was given a challenge to reorganize the Department. He handed each Board member a new organizational chart, which reflected the changes made. The essential changes are Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White, now the new Deputy Commissioner, and, Major Don Chastain, who will be the commanding officer over the uniform division.

An issue that has come up before the General Assembly is the changing of Department of Motor Vehicle Safety. The General Assembly is proposing to move the operations from DMVS to different state agencies; i.e., the traffic enforcement will be moved under the Department of Public Safety. Colonel Hitchens indicated that if it is transferred over, it will have the same functions that it is currently working. Two functions under the traffic enforcement are Weight and Measure and Trucking Safety. This will be a positive transfer, in that bringing over the 300-

350 positions will help in shorthanded areas under the Department of Public Safety. Chief Lou Dekmar made a motion to accept the reorganization as presented; in addition to accepting the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White as Deputy Commissioner. Mr. Wayne Abernathy seconded said combined motion and the Board unanimously voted approval.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Director Vernon Keenan reported on the Open Records Act. In 2002, the GBI embarked on a partnership with the Georgia Attorney General's office, the Department of Public Safety, Georgia Chiefs' Association, Georgia Sheriffs' Association, Prosecuting Attorneys Council, Georgia Press Association, and First Amendment Foundation, with the purpose of preparing a guidebook. The guidebook is for law enforcement people on what the Open Records Act is and what is required of law enforcement. The Open Records Guide is on the GBI website, which has been accessed 60,000 times, giving an idea of how popular the guidebook is. Since the generation of this guidebook, there has been a need to go further than the law enforcement agency head, go past the records custodian, and present this information to men and women in law enforcement who work the streets. To that end, the GBI prepared a roll call video designed to assist those particular law enforcement men and women. The videotape was shown to the Board members. Director Keenan acknowledged the help from LaGrange Police Department and Coweta County Sheriff's Office with the filming of the video. Director Keenan addressed several questions.

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Director Dale Mann began with thanking Board Member Hal Averitt for contacting legislators on a particular senate bill, which concerned donations and would have impacted all state agencies.

Director Mann reported how the Police Corps program will be removed. Congress thinks the cost to complete the program is excessive, and President Bush is not recommending that it be funded. There are four employees under Police Corps; Director Mann is planning to find places for those employees, as positions open up at the Training Center. The federally-funded employees are one director, one clerical, and two instructor positions.

Director Mann reported that next year's budget will look at where funds are directed from the Peace Officers and Prosecutors Training Fund. Director Mann would like for some of that Fund be put in a capital improvement package for the Training Center. The funding would be used to pay off bonds to build driver training facilities, firearms training facilities; the idea being to open regional academies to train local officers. Vice-Chairman Donald requested Chief Rice and his committee meet and discuss Director Mann's vision for the Training Center; to look at possible ways to consolidate facilities under other agencies with Director Mann's strategy of regional

academies. Chief Rice made a motion that the Public Safety Committee look at the feasibility of sharing resources between all state agencies and the Public Safety Training Center for establishing a regional program. Chief Dwayne Orrick seconded the motion and the Board members unanimously voted approval.

Mr. Rooney L. Bowen mentioned that Representative Mack Crawford, chairman of the House Public Safety Appropriations Committee, would like for the committee to visit the GBI headquarters, the State Patrol headquarters, and the Training Center. Everyone agreed that the House committee members would be invited, along with directors from Sheriffs Association and Chiefs Association.

DONATIONS

Mr. Terry Landers, Georgia State Patrol, requested approval of one donation:

Two Stalker DSR Radars	\$6,020	Randolph County Board of Commissioners
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Mr. Wayne Abernathy motioned for approval, Chief J. D. Rice seconded said motion, and the Board members unanimously agreed.

Mr. Ray Higgins, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval of one donation:

Crime Scene Tech Equipment	\$18,000	Rossville Police Department
Communication Equipment		
Facility Improvement		
Agent Equipment Package		

Chief Lou Dekmar motioned for approval, Mr. Wayne Abernathy seconded said motion, and the Board members unanimously agreed.

Mr. Jon Paget, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, requested approval of a Resolution:

That a Revocable License be granted to Bibb County Sheriff's Office to use and operate the Morgue Facility of the Macon Regional Drug Enforcement Office building, currently in custody of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding.

Chief Lou Dekmar motioned approval, Mr. Hal Averitt seconded the motion, and the Board members unanimously agreed.

ADMINISTRATIVE OR EMERGENCY ISSUES

Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III requested that Resolutions be prepared for Lieutenant Colonel Kenny Hancock, Major Mike Bohannon, and Major Freddie Taylor. Mr. Wayne Abernathy made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Bowen, and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mr. Wayne Abernathy made a motion that a Resolution be prepared for Judge John Girardeau, who is retiring from Hall County. Mr. Bud Black seconded said motion and the Board members voted approval.

Vice-Chairman Donald made the motion that a Resolution be prepared for Mr. Joe Ferrero, who had previously sat in on the Board of Public Safety. Said motion was seconded by Chief Lou Dekmar and unanimously voted approval by the Board members.

Chief J. D. Rice stated that last month the Board had approved a list of nominees for the Georgia Fire Academy Advisory Council. However, since that time, one nominee has moved from Georgia. Vice Chairman Donald requested that Chief Rice assist Director Mann in finding a replacement for the vacancy and bring it to the Board at a future meeting.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hal Averitt, chairman of the Committee Of The Whole and chairman of the State Patrol Committee, stated the Committee Of The Whole had recommended that the issue of a particular P.I.T. situation be referred to the State Patrol Committee. In the State Patrol Committee meeting, it was agreed that Colonel Bill Hitchens would gather more information and would report back at a future meeting. The second issue before the Committee Of The Whole involved the conveying of the Macon morgue to the Bibb County Sheriff. It was recommended that the Resolution for conveying the morgue would be approved as written.

Chief J. D. Rice, chair of the Public Safety Training Center Committee, reported that Director Mann informed them that the federal government has decided to not fund the Police Corps this year, which is a \$100,000 shortfall. Chief Rice indicated Director Mann is going to try his best to reassign those four people working under the program. Also, Representative Mack Crawford will conduct meetings this summer to address the issue of Peace Officer and Prosecutors Training Fund; there is estimated a collection of between \$20 and \$35 million this year. Chief Rice stated that Director Mann also talked about the regional training facilities concept.

Sheriff Cullen Talton, Georgia Bureau of Investigation Committee, reported that during the committee meeting with Director Keenan, that Director Keenan talked about the procedures of contracting the lab work out to private companies. Therefore, Director Keenan believes they will

be getting their results back more quickly and will be more efficient for law enforcement agencies and district attorneys. Also, Director Keenan had reported on how he had hired new scientists, who are now in training; they will be assigned in November, which will help in the efficiency of the GB I Crime Lab.

Vice-Chairman Donald shared with the group that the Department of Corrections is working with private partners to build housing in communities. This is PeachState Housing for all government agencies and employees who would like to be a part of special housing. This involves those who apply for PEN, a government loan program for those who are a law enforcement officer, an educator, or a nurse. This program is to help those state employees with home ownership. In Milledgeville, the Atlanta Land Group bought 60 acres of land to develop this housing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Rooney L. Bowen, III