

**BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Department of Natural Resources Board Room  
Atlanta, Georgia

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Wayne Abernathy  
Mr. Steve Cronic  
Commissioner Greg Dozier  
Chief Mark Revenew  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Sheriff Joey Terrell  
Chief Craig Tully  
Mr. Ellis Wood

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Danny Bryant  
Mr. Kacy Cronan  
Sheriff Dane Kirby  
Mr. Lester Rampy  
Mr. Peter J. Skandalakis

**OTHERS:**

Mr. Joe Drolet, Senior Assistant Attorney General  
Ms. Cheryl L. Buie, Board Liaison  
Commissioner Mark W. McDonough, Department of Public Safety  
Lt. Colonel Russell D. Powell, Department of Public Safety  
Major Jason Johnson, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Major Johnny Jones, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Major William Boulware, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Captain Mark Wesley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
MCO2 Chasen Woodie, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Sergeant Anthony Hughes, Department of Public Safety  
Mrs. Amy Stancil, Department of Public Safety  
Director Vernon Kennan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
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  
Ms. Cindy Franklin, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Donald Kirkland, Office of Planning and Budget  
Mrs. Olivia Duke, Office of Planning and Budget  
Mr. John Fleisch, Office of Planning and Budget  
Mr. Robert Thrower, Department of Corrections

Vice-Chairman Ellis Wood called the February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Mr. Dan Kirk, Assistant Director for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation gave the invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairman Wood asked everyone to stand and introduce their self.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the January 2017 minutes. Chief Mark Revenew made the motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the BPS members.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Mark W. McDonough, Department of Public Safety noted there were troopers involved in the relief effort in Albany and along was an opportunity that Board member Ellis Wood gave them to be part of something beyond what the troopers did concerning this effort. Commissioner McDonough noted last Thursday, Vice-Chairman Wood, his son and their contracting company with a bunch of southeast Georgia redneck goobers in the construction business, traveled to the Albany area with 50 organized vehicles, spent three days in the field doing only what volunteers can do without the restrictions that government places on them. Commissioner McDonough stated DPS was privileged to be involved in this and Mr. Ellis is not a person that would ever talk about it, but there are good men in this world and we are fortunate that the BPS Vice-Chairman Wood is a good man.

Commissioner McDonough shared the DPS Awards ceremony is on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and the BPS members are honored guests at the event.

Mr. Wayne Abernathy asked Commissioner McDonough about the Presidential Inaugural detail in Washington, DC and Commissioner McDonough responded the troopers on the detail stated they enjoyed their time in Washington, DC and the troopers were stationed in the curve almost at the White House, where they made the turn coming into the review area; it was a good day they all enjoyed. Commissioner McDonough noted DPS was not engaged in any arrest activity, more of a ceremonial detail they all enjoyed.

Commissioner Dozier thanked Commissioner McDonough and the GSP for the way they honored SFC Tony Henry yesterday at the Capitol. Commissioner McDonough reminded everyone that SFC Henry was in a motorcycle crash in early December in Tampa, FL, was brought home prior to Christmas to St. Joseph's Hospital and then transferred to Shepherd's Spinal Clinic. Commissioner McDonough shared SFC Henry was making some progress, he then got an infection that caused the swelling to come back on his brain and then he passed away. Commissioner McDonough shared that Troop E Capt. Allen Marlowe's father had passed away and the funeral would be this weekend.

Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation presented a handout concerning the GBI budget and advised the governor's recommendations for the GBI made it through the House and Senate amended 17 budgets, so the governor's recommendation remained intact and included the 20% pay increase for state level law enforcement and also for the GBI, the budget included several million dollars for vehicles and crime lab instruments, replacing those that are outdated. Director Keenan advised the amended 17 budget included three months funding for six crime lab scientists and that budget is intact and has been finalized.

Director Kennan advised he made a presentation before the House Public Safety Appropriations Committee concerning the FY18 budget yesterday and started out outlining the statewide changes that

are affecting all state agencies. Director Keenan stated there are increased funds for personal services for retention and recruitment of Medical Examiners and reminded the BPS members there is a necessity for the GBI to be able to recruit and retain Medical Examiners. Director Keenan stated Medical Examiners have to have more education beyond what is required of a regular medical doctor and a number of board certifications the Medical Examiners must go through to be an associate Medical Examiner at the GBI or anywhere else. Director Keenan stated there are less than 450 board certified forensic pathologists in the nation, the pool is getting smaller and smaller because there are less people going into the field, as it is very specialized and requires a unique type individual to spend all day long working in a morgue doing autopsies. Director Keenan stated the pay package which the governor put in his budget will allow the GBI to recruit the new doctors that are coming out of school and then to also ensure the current doctors do not go somewhere else, as there is a bidding war going on among the states and among the medical examiners systems to get the limited pool of doctors. Director Keenan declared the state of Georgia has got to be competitive or will wind up telling local law enforcement and coroners, do not bring their bodies to the state crime lab, because the GBI does not have the doctors to do the autopsies.

Director Keenan stated the second item in the governor's budget is to establish a forensic pathology fellowship program; have been working on this for four years to have a partnership with the Medical College of Georgia/Augusta University. Director Keenan stated to have a fellowship program, there is a very structured process where you have to go through a national body that administers all of the fellowship programs and then have to have an academic institution to partner with the GBI, which has taken four years to get where the GBI is and are at the point where funding is needed which is in the governor's budget to have two fellows come to the GBI. Director Keenan stated when the forensic pathologist has finished all of their other training, the final step is to go to a medical examiner's office and do the fellowship for one year and during that fellowship there are certain key components they will have to be exposed to. Director Keenan stated when the fellowship is up and running, this will give the GBI a pool of doctors to select from if there are vacancies or if there are new positions created as they will have gone through the GBI vetting process, will have been trained by the GBI and will already be in the state of Georgia. Director Keenan noted this was an idea that came from Chairman Jay Powell when he was chairman of Public Safety Appropriations and has taken four years to go through the academic process to get where we are at and if the legislature approves the fellowship funding, will immediately announce it and start recruiting the fellows to come in.

In regards to the third part of the budget, Director Keenan noted the continued funding for the six scientist positions that was put in the FY17 budget and if the funding is approved to continue on, the scientists will be for fingerprints, firearms and drugs. Director Keenan stated as he goes through the budget process for the future, priority and emphasis will be on the crime lab scientists, as the state grows, there are more demands on law enforcement for forensic services, there is more demand on the crime lab and request for services are up 11% over last year and continues to grow. Director Keenan declared without getting additional scientists, there will continue to be a backlog in the different disciplines and has made it known to the governor that this is where the GBI's priority is.

Concerning bond projects, Director Keenan stated there is funding for a new crime laboratory in Pooler for \$36,375,000, which services a 22 county area that is in the fastest growing part of the state of Georgia; will need additional resources in this area and are building the crime lab for the future. Director Keenan stated there is one doctor at the current facility and are in the process of hiring a second doctor and the pay raise will allow the GBI to do that. Director Keenan stated in the future, there will be space for five doctors, as the lab will be able to double the capacity of the staffing to meet the futures needs.

Mr. Wayne Abernathy asked Director Keenan when the new crime lab in Pooler would be operational and Director Keenan replied in two years. Director Keenan also advised in the handout there is a photo of the current morgue expansion at headquarters, which is slated to be complete in early fall of this year, which will increase the capacity tremendously at the headquarters morgue. Director Keenan stated there is a lot of construction going on at the GBI and is being favorably received within the governor's budget, and the legislators recognize the need to expand our capabilities in the crime lab.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center shared the Fire Academy was featured this past month in the GA Firefighter Magazine, as the GPSTC had been designated as a logistical staging area for GEMA in the event of a natural disaster or emergency for the state for quite some time. Director Wigginton stated this past year during Hurricane Matthew, was the first time the GPSTC was activated and used and the GA Firefighter Magazine wrote a nice article concerning the GPSTC and the Fire Academy. Director Wigginton noted the GPSTC is using its resources to enhance what is going on throughout the state, which is a plus for the GPSTC and the Fire Academy.

Director Wigginton presented a handout showcasing highlights of the four major divisions that delivers instructional courses, some of the new courses coming up with interesting numbers and statistics that might be of interest to the BPS members. Director Wigginton noted when looking at the student population last year, out of the entire population, 89% of the students were local municipality students, and 11% were state officers; GPSTC is meeting the demand for the local municipalities. Director Wigginton stated in FY15 there were a little over 100,000 students, last year there were 130,000 students and currently the GPSTC has 168,000 students who are either taking a course or on-line course up to this point this year, with little additions to the budget or manpower. Director Wigginton stated the student population is substantially growing at a minimal cost to the taxpayers of Georgia and are meeting the demand of the training requirement, getting the public safety professionals trained in the state.

Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC has two new programs coming up, the UAS program, commonly known as drones, as public safety professionals across the nation are using drones. Director Wigginton advised there are some statue regulations as far as surveillance and recording, also the FAA has some regulations. Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC has partnered with the FAA and have come up with a course that will be offered at GPSTC to educate people on how to use the drones legally and how one has to register with the FAA to use the drone and also what statues one has to follow. Director Wigginton noted this class was full in two days and see the demand to offer the class even more.

Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC will be offering the high center gravity driving course, stating the majority of vehicles in law enforcement are Explorers and Tahoes, vehicles where the center of gravity is a little bit higher and have been fortunate to not have very many roll-overs. Director Wigginton advised the GPSTC has not had a course to address these vehicles and the driving situations that a law enforcement officer might experience. Director Wigginton stated this course was put on the books this week and it is already full, a need that needs to be met, so the GPSTC is putting the course out there.

Mr. Wayne Abernathy asked Director Wigginton how the GPSTC could accommodate more students without increasing space and faculty. Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC has been creative and opened up some of the class sizes as there were classes on the books where the number of students was limited to 24 students and if it was a lecture class, the class was moved to a larger classroom and were able to take 100 students and put them in the auditorium, which decreased the waiting list and met the demand. Director Wigginton noted there were a lot of classes where students were having to drive to the GPSTC and if that information can be put online, it will be put online, but if the training is tied to a practical exercise where the student has to perform a practical exercise, restrictions have to be kept on those courses due to manpower, supplies, budgetary constraints. Director Wigginton expressed it is all about being creative and doubling up some of the class sizes. Director Wigginton noted a lot of courses had been on the books for some time, where the demand and interest in those courses had been dropping off and GPSTC started putting new and relative information out there and began to reach capacity for some of the new courses.

Commissioner Dozier shared being the GPSTC is next door to the Department of Corrections, the two training divisions have really come together and appreciates the GPSTC supporting the DOC and added his little brother who is in law enforcement spent some time at the GPSTC and feedback from the locals is phenomenal and thanked Director Wigginton for what the GPSTC is doing.

Sheriff Terrell stated his department attended defensive tactics last week and came home sore, was an enjoyable class and learned a lot.

Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC has held one use of force training class, and now the GPSTC is getting calls from agencies all over the nation to come and sit in and see what GPSTC is doing and then go back and add that to their curriculum. Director Wigginton stated there are no out of state agencies attending the training, but the interest is peaking.

**DONATIONS**

Major Jason Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Public Safety requested approval of the following donations:

Two Stalker Radar Units	\$	6,157.00	Locust Grove Police Dept.
One Kustom Pro Laser IV	\$	3,399.99	Sparks Police Dept.

Three Stalker DSR 2X Radars	\$	8,685.00	City of Toccoa
One Kustom Pro Lite Laser	\$	1,000.00	Demorest Police Dept.
5,000 7.62x51 M82 Blanks for M14 Rifles	\$	1,250.00	Orbital ATK Small Caliber Systems

The motion to accept these donations was made by Mr. Wayne Abernathy, which was seconded by Chief Mark Revenew, and voted approved by the Board members.

Ms. Cindy Franklin, Comptroller, Georgia Public Safety Training Center requested approval of the following donations:

DRE-Donation	\$	90.00	Zip Hinton
Fire Alarm System	\$	3,143.45	Edwards-AUTC Company
Pro Laser 4 Lidar	\$	2,459.00	Kustom Signals, Inc.
Various Ammo	\$	428.27	Academy Sports and Outdoors

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.

Chief Craig Tully made a motion to present former Board member Chief Danny Bowman with a Resolution. This was seconded by retired Sheriff Steve Cronic and voted approved by the BPS members.

Vice-Chairman Wood formed a nominating committee of Mr. Charles Sikes, Chief Craig Tully and Mr. Wayne Abernathy and asked them to make a recommendation at the March meeting for the two officers required by the BPS. Vice-Chairman Wood asked Mr. Charles Sikes to chair the committee and asked them to interact with the agency directors for any comments they might have.

Vice-Chairman Wood advised the March BPS meeting will be in the DNR Board room, will be in Glennville for the April meeting and at the GBI Headquarters for the May meeting.

Mr. Wayne Abernathy told Vice-Chairman Wood that one of the greatest assets a man can do is to volunteer their time to those in need and knows Vice-Chairman Wood has lots of stars in his crown and appreciates all he does.

Vice-Chairman Wood commented that the effort they made in Albany, would not have worked without the people present today, Commissioner Dozier, Public Safety, GBI had people included in the

volunteer group and just about everybody present in the room was involved in some kind of way with the effort that was put forth, primarily led by his son, Matt and GEMA Director Homer Bryson.

Director Chris Wigginton, GPSTC presented a memo asking the Board's approval to assess film makers a scouting fee of \$500.00 when requesting to use the GPSTC location. Director Wigginton noted with the booming movie industry in Georgia, the GPSTC receives a large number of requests from film makers to use the location which can be very worthwhile endeavors, but when the projects do not come to fruition they find they have wasted a lot of time and resources throughout the scouting process and the scouting fee would not only compensate for time lost for employees doing their regular daily duties, but it would allow for a return on their investment should the project not come to pass.

Chief Mark Revenew made the motion to approve a scouting fee of \$500.00 daily rate for film makers at the GPSTC. This was seconded by Sheriff Joey Terrell and voted approved by the BPS members.

Chief Craig Tully stated he was on sight and saw Vice-Chairman Wood and his 50 vehicles come into Albany, they were orchestrated and when they pulled up, they went to work. Chief Tully added before he left that afternoon, one could already see a tremendous amount of difference in what they did, and not only that, he could see the enthusiasm and the appreciation the local people showed and noticed it in the troopers, here was the Vice-Chairman of the BPS coming down with his company clearing the way, it really worked well and told Vice-Chairman Wood he really appreciates him coming to SW GA and helping the people out.

Lt. Colonel Russell Powell gave an update on Mr. Lester Rampy and stated he had a light stroke and does not anticipate any lingering effects, is in the Redmond Hospital and undergoing rehab.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chief Mark Revenew  
Secretary