

**BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

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

Department of Natural Resources Board Room  
Atlanta, Georgia

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Steve Cronic  
Commissioner Greg Dozier  
Sheriff Dane Kirby  
Chief Mark Revenew  
Mr. Charles D. Sikes  
Mr. Peter J. Skandalakis  
Chief Craig Tully  
Mr. Ellis Wood

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Wayne Abernathy  
Mr. Daniel M. Bryant  
Mr. Kacy K. Cronan  
Mr. Lester L. Rampy, Jr.  
Sheriff Joey Terrell

**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 Tommy Waldrop, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
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 Lambert, Department of Public Safety/GSP  
Captain Lewis Young, Department of Public Safety/Capitol Police Director  
Captain Mark Wesley, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Lt. Christopher Bowen, Department of Public Safety/MCCD  
Sergeant Anthony Hughes, Department of Public Safety  
Mr. Zachary Howard, 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  
Mrs. Sharla Shockley, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Ms. Cindy Franklin, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Jeff Dean, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Sam Huston, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Bruce Stanford, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Ray Saxon, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Adam Ham, Georgia Public Safety Training Center  
Mr. Donald Kirkland, 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 March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Board of Public Safety meeting to order.

Sergeant Anthony Hughes, Department of Public Safety gave the invocation and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Commissioner Mark W. McDonough, Department of Public Safety noted there has been a lot of discussion and a lot of numbers that have been thrown out due to the impact of the governor's leadership as far as pay is concerned for state sworn officers. Commissioner McDonough stated the influence of his leadership has been direct and with the direction that has been taken, there is a window of opportunity, which will last for about two years. Commissioner McDonough acknowledged with the increase of applicants, it bodes the DPS to take a look in the mirror, take a look at what DPS is doing and how things are being done. Commissioner McDonough stated he asked the HR Director to take a look statistically at all of the things that occur within the application process, background process and in trooper school, to find out where DPS is losing people, how DPS is losing people, and why DPS is losing people. Commissioner McDonough noted DPS was losing cadets from injuries, to self-dismissals to academic failures, to all those type of things, and HR looked at the percentages. Commissioner McDonough stated outside of the critical areas in training, there are a lot of people that self-dismiss, 23-25%, a lot of people that leave for physical injuries and it bodes the DPS to take a hard look at the training process. Commissioner McDonough stated there have been directions that have been implemented, starting with the recruiting staff, which is a very robust unit to include Capt. Sammy Brown, Lt. Dawn Arrowwood, SFC Crystal Zion, Sgt. Anthony Hutson and TFC Carlos Searcy. In addition to the duties safety education troopers have, Commissioner McDonough stated the troopers have been incorporated into the recruiting effort, and the same with MCCD, road officers within the regions will be tasked with recruiting.

Commissioner McDonough expressed the Department is starting to see some excellent results and for instance, with the current trooper school and SFC Zion's influence, there are seven viable female applicants for the next trooper, which is a huge change from where the department has been in the past. Concerning the MCCD, Commissioner McDonough advised the recruiting goals have been met and within a couple of months, the amount of people employed with MCCD will be by man what their budget can afford. Commissioner McDonough noted with the position status report, which is a snapshot from the past, no longer are there slots set aside that are funded, the fact of the matter is in modern budgeting, what the budget supports ends up being the people the department can have. Commissioner McDonough stated this is not reality, just a snapshot of the past, because the budget does not support this and MCCD will have 260-261 people and will max out the money available for personal services, and with MCCD's recruiting effort, going from 202 MCCD officers in a year and a half to 261 over their attrition, it is very positive on the MCCD side.

Commissioner McDonough noted in Training, Capt. Woodell, who is a very professional pro-active person, serves as an executive officer in SPPADS, is involved in this group and knows what is going on nationally, what the trends are and has excellent resources here.

Commissioner McDonough stated Capt. Woodell has been charged to complete a trooper school training review and present the plan to the Command Staff by April 1<sup>st</sup> in order to implement changes in the training strategies and procedures for the next trooper school, starting May 20, 2017.

Commissioner McDonough added that Capt. Woodell will be sending three of his training staff, one each to Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina to observe the first two weeks of their trooper school to see what challenges they have and what are they doing to meet those challenges with today's cadets.

Commissioner McDonough stated the Human Resources Dept. is identifying candidates for immediate hire, and when taking a look at some of the percentages, with the hiring process being 6-8-10 months long, people are looking for a job and to keep viable people interested during that lengthy process, once the individual has been identified and passed the background, they will be put to work as cadets in the Post across the state under the supervision of FTOs. Commissioner McDonough expressed he hopes with the exposure, these cadets will be ahead of the game when they do go to trooper school.

Commissioner McDonough added HR will be coordinating with Training to provide a physical fitness program prior to going to trooper school. Commissioner McDonough stated when looking at a lot of the statistics and the injuries, and things that occur, once the cadet passes initial PT screen, the cadet pulls the throttle back and shows up at trooper school without being prepared and not physically ready for what they will go through for the 6-7 month training period.

Commissioner McDonough advised the people hired as cadets will be given a minimum of an 8 week physical training program, a workout every day that will be supervised by the training officers in the post or the recruiting officers in the troop and when they get to trooper school, hopefully they will be more prepared than their peers in the past. Commissioner McDonough stated one of the changes the Department will have and will occur before training starts, the cadet will run the physical fitness test and if they pass, will continue on to training, if they don't, they immediately wash-out the first 30 minutes of trooper school.

Commissioner McDonough noted some might see this as counterproductive, but the command staff sees it as holding the cadets accountable and letting them know this is what is going to occur and start out with a group whose level of physical fitness is a lot greater than seen in the past. Commissioner McDonough declared the GSP is trying to look at this as a two year effort and when the governor hands you a gift, you need to take a hard look in the mirror and see how you can use it to your benefit and this is what the plan consists of.

Chief Mark Renew asked Commissioner McDonough if there are any plans to improve the pension for law enforcement. Commissioner McDonough acknowledged although the law enforcement

percentage for payment may be a little bit different, the retirement is essentially what it is for all state employees and are tied to that. Commissioner McDonough noted for the exceptions within the pension plan for the percentage law enforcement receives, the 55 yoa when one is eligible to retire if one has 25 years of creditable service and when looking at all pension plans in the state and across the country, that is an area where law enforcement is not going in the direction of more.

Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation relayed a true incident that relates to how state government operates, stating he received a call back in December from Senator Bruce Thompson who wanted to come meet with him and Assistant Director Dan Kirk regarding the capabilities of the GBI investigating cyber-crimes. Director Keenan stated they had their meeting along with the unit that does digital technology investigations. Director Keenan stated the GBI has a unit that is federally funded that handles child pornography cases and in those cases, the GBI is always seizing computers, cell phones and other technology devices that requires someone to access them and download the information so it can be used as evidence. Director Keenan stated they did a presentation for Senator Thompson and he asked what the GBI's work load was and explained the GBI had an 8-10 month backlog working those type cases, as the GBI was not only working child pornography, but also murder investigations and many other serious crimes where technology investigations are required. Director Keenan stated Senator Thompson asked what was needed in order to take care of the backlog and Director Keenan stated he told Senator Thompson they would need to double the size of the unit and Senator Thompson asked for information concerning the cost to do this. Director Keenan stated the unit pulled together all the information about the backlog and what it would take to double the size of the unit from 10 people to 20 people to address the backlog and the increased work load. Director Keenan noted when the GBI provides information to the legislature, the information is also provided to OPB and the Governor's office as they need to know everything the GBI is talking about with the legislature. Director Keenan stated after they sent the information to the legislature, the GBI began to receive phone calls from OPB leadership asking how the GBI came up with the backlog, the salaries, the staffing levels and on and on. Director Keenan stated he kept explaining to the OPB this was not a GBI idea, this is not something the GBI is pushing; we were just responding to questions from a legislator. Director Keenan stated the GBI's priorities had not changed with the governor, concerning the need of additional scientists in the laboratory which was made known to Governor Deal and put in the Governor's budget. Director Keenan stated there were two weeks of phone calls back and to with OPB concerning the figures that were provided to the senator and then the day before Governor Deal's state of the state address, Director Keenan stated he received a call from Mrs. Teresa MacCartney, head of OPB, who gave him a heads up that Governor Deal was going to be talking about a 50 million dollar item in his budget to establish a cyber security innovation center in Augusta in conjunction with the National Security Agency and the Department of Defense and will mention the GBI in his state of the state address as being part of the center. Director Keenan stated he relayed the story of meeting with Senator Thompson and thinking he had gotten the governor angry for providing this information and asked if this is what the governor has in mind for the GBI and Mrs. MacCartney responded exactly. Director Keenan stated in the Governor's state of the state address, Governor Deal recommended the 50 million dollar project that the GBI will be part of and have a cybercrime laboratory which is exactly what was purposed. Director Keenan noted the idea of having a cyber security innovation center speaks to the leadership and the foresight of Governor Deal because this is a

50 million dollar project, a 6 story building, part of it will be working in conjunction with the Augusta University, GBI will have an operational unit in the building, being handled by the GTA as they have the capability of meeting the governor's deadline to have the building completed in 18 months. Director Keenan stated he spoke with GTA Commissioner Calvin Rhodes this morning about where they were at with the process and Commissioner Rhodes told him the operation of the building will be paid by renting out space to the Department of Defense contractors and other federal agencies that have a role in cybersecurity for this nation and is already getting more requests for space than what the building will hold. Director Keenan stated they signed the contract with the architect to move this project forward, the state already owns the land, getting it cleared and the building will go up. Director Keenan stated the GBI will have an operational unit in the center and wants to have the unit that does the technology investigations with all the technology devices, but also have the ability to have interns from the universities work in the unit and also have fellowship programs for local law enforcement to come in and work with the unit and be trained in how to do these types of investigations. Director Keenan stated this speaks to the leadership of the governor to have a vision to put the State of Georgia out front in having a center like this, which will be next door to all the major operations, as the Dept. of Defense has consolidated their cybersecurity apparatus out at Augusta, and the State of Georgia will be right there with them, a great partnership with the federal government and the contractors and other persons in the private sector working cyber security.

Director Chris Wigginton, Georgia Public Safety Training Center began his report speaking about curriculum and with the governor's initiative of the new four courses, talked about the development phase and where GPSTC is at today along with the impact it has had on the law enforcement community throughout the state. Director Wigginton noted it normally takes about 20-30 hours of research, evaluating the material and gathering the material to come up with one delivery hour; it takes a lot of time behind the scenes to develop the material from scratch and get it delivered. Director Wigginton advised all of the courses developed by GPSTC are up and running, provided to POST with points of instruction for them to disseminate among agencies that want to deliver the training themselves. Director Wigginton advised in the month of January, there were a little over 4500 students that took the governor's initiative courses, in February there were 5400 students to take the courses, a little over a third of the students took the new courses. Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC is making a huge impact across the state with the new initiative and with this, also comes the demand on the GPSTC to get the curriculum up and going.

Director Wigginton advised POST recently adopted a new rule that requires law enforcement to qualify with any weapon the officer is issued or assigned; in the past, the primary gun was the only weapon the officer had to qualify with. Director Wigginton stated the GPSTC firearms course met the demand for POST, developed every course and provided to POST to put on the website and disseminate to agencies for use as a recommended course. Director Wigginton stated GPSTC is getting a lot of new and innovative courses out there and meeting the demand. Director Wigginton shared he had a south Georgia officer come up to him at the POST Council meeting and told him he took a patrol rifle course at the GPSTC and failed, but it was no fault of the staff, they did everything they could do to help him pass the course and found out for the past 15 years, he had been doing things wrong and learned more in the class on how to stay alive than what a certificate would have done for

him. Director Wigginton stated this is the kind of training the GPSTC is trying to deliver, it is not about the certificate at the end he could have walked away with, but walked away that he failed the course and he is going to come back, but what he learned in those few days, even though he failed, set a positive tone on him and he looks at it that he learned some measures that he had not learned in his 15 year career that will help him on the street. Director Wigginton stated that was worth every ounce of sweat and pain that is put into the course and thanked Firearms Instructor Sam Huston.

Concerning Basic Training classes. Director Wigginton advised the GPSTC is running over capacity and has increased the class numbers in every class trying to meet the demand. Director Wigginton added when going to conferences throughout the state and POST Council meetings, he hears the Chiefs and the Sheriffs say they cannot hire anyone, cannot fill the demand, and so on the counter, the GPSTC staff goes to them and tells them they do not know how you are not filling the seats, students are overbooked at the GPSTC; so there is a disconnect somewhere, not sure where it is at. Director Wigginton stated the cadets that are in Basic Training are not the cadets like before, and noted the GPSTC does not have anything to do with the hiring standards when the cadets are sent to the GPSTC. Director Wigginton expressed there are agencies throughout the state that have lowered their standards to send to the GPSTC and when the cadet is dismissed by GPSTC, the agency has a problem with it. Director Wigginton added the GPSTC is trying to open the conversation to the agency heads, knowing they need the help, understand they need the help, but please do not lower your standards. Director Wigginton asked the BPS members to help get this message out across the state to the Chiefs and Sheriffs that if they send a cadet to GPSTC and he is a problem and the cadet graduates, he will be a problem for the agency once he makes it through the program. Director Wigginton asked the BPS members to get the message out throughout the state to keep the standards and the professionalism at the highest level the state has. Director Wigginton noted if they get 10% that have made it through a questionable background check, they take 90% of the GPSTC staff's time to deal with, while the other 90% are getting shortchanged on the instruction at the academy.

Director Wigginton stated the driver training track is extremely ahead of schedule with the drop dead date being July 10<sup>th</sup>. Director Wigginton advised there are plans for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly expanded track when it is completed and noted the GPSTC will also be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.

Mr. Charles Sikes asked Director Wigginton what is the POST requirement for recertification every year. Director Wigginton advised the officer only has to be recertified one time during the year, which is part of the 20 hour training.

Sheriff Dane Kirby asked Director Wigginton to mention the four courses in regards to the Governor's Initiative. Director Wigginton replied Use of Force has been modified to Use of Force and De-escalation Options for Gaining Compliance, taking 4-5 hours to complete, very informative, with very good content; the other three courses are Police Legitimacy and Procedural Justice for Community Relations, Cultural Awareness and Fostering Positive Community Relations. Director Wigginton stated the officer is required to take the Use of Force and De-escalation Options for Gaining

Compliance and one of the other three courses as an elective course. Director Wigginton advised GPSTC will continue to build on the elective pool, trying to add additional classes on a yearly basis.

Director Wigginton stated the Governor's Task Force met for the second time and are currently reviewing the basic curriculum, and at this point, the Governor's Task Force has been educated on what the current standard is in Georgia, the required 408 hours, and noted the content that is covered in the State of Georgia surpasses a lot of content in other states. Director Wigginton noted there are a couple of cadets at GPSTC that were previously mandated in Florida, and after about 2-3 weeks, they came to the instructor and stated they had learned more in 2-3 weeks at GPSTC than what was learned through the Florida 18 week academy.

Director Wigginton stated he thinks the GPSTC puts out a good product, but there are areas that need improvement and when comparing content and hours with other states in the southeast region and also looking at states that are populace in comparable to the State of Georgia, the GPSTC is using this comparison for the GPSTC and what other states are doing.

Vice-Chairman Wood called for approval of the February minutes. Chief Mark Renew made a motion to approve the February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 minutes, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the BPS members.

Commissioner McDonough presented a letter from the City of Hazlehurst offering to build a new patrol post. Commissioner McDonough advised Post 16-Helena is one of the older post in the state and in this particular area there are not resources to build a new post facility. Commissioner McDonough noted Hazlehurst has an excellent police chief, the mayor is very pro-active and has made the offer in writing to build a new facility within the existing post territory. Vice-Chairman Wood called for the approval to allow Commissioner McDonough to engage in discussions with the City of Hazlehurst for the building of a new patrol post.

Chief Mark Renew made the motion for Commissioner McDonough to engage in discussions with the City of Hazlehurst for a new patrol post facility, which was seconded by Chief Craig Tully, and voted approved by the BPS members.

Vice-Chairman Wood commented that it is commendable of the DPS that they have been able to cultivate the initiative with the local communities to upgrade the facilities and certainly have a lot better facilities that what was a long time ago. Commissioner McDonough stated that is the mantra- we can't do it without them. Commissioner McDonough added with community policing and community relations, it helps to keep GSP close to the communities.

### **DONATIONS**

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

One Hyundai GDS EDR Kit	\$	5,600.00	Hyundai Corporation
-------------------------	----	----------	---------------------

Four Stalker DSR2X Radar Units	\$	11,914.00	Columbia Co. Board of Commissioners
One Stalker Dual Radar Unit	\$	1,500.00	Wheeler County Sheriff's Dept.
2017 Lifesavers Conference, Kidz in Motion Conference and Car Seat Check Events throughout GA	\$	4,800.00	The Anthem Foundation
Two Dragon Eye Lidar Units	\$	4,230.00	Baldwin Police Department
One Dragon Eye Lidar Unit	\$	2,095.00	Cornelia Police Department
One Dragon Eye Lidar Unit	\$	2,115.00	Clayton Police Department

The motion to accept these donations was made by Mr. Pete Skandalakis, which was seconded by Commissioner Greg Dozier, and voted approved by the Board members.

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

Wood Pallets	\$	2,068.00	Poly Tech Industries
--------------	----	----------	----------------------

The motion to accept these donations was made by Chief Craig Tully, which was seconded by Mr. Steve Cronic, and voted approved by the Board members.

DPS Lt. Colonel Russell Powell, advised Board member Lester Rampy has completed in-house therapy and is at home and continues rehab through an outpatient program.

Mr. Zachary Howard presented for final adoption, Proposed Georgia Department of Public Safety Rules Chapters 570-6 (Repealed) and 570-36 (Non-Consensual Towing) and Rules Chapters 570-6 (Repealed) and 570-37 (Tire Chains).

Mr. Pete Skandalakis made the motion to approve the final adoption of Georgia Department of Public Safety Rules Chapters 570-6 (Repealed) and 570-36 (Non-Consensual Towing) and Rules Chapters 570-6 (Repealed) and 570-37 (Tire Chains). This was seconded by Chief Craig Tully and voted approved by the Board members.

Director Chris Wigginton, GPSTC, presented 12 names for approval that was submitted by the Georgia Public Safety Memorial Committee to be added to the 2017 Memorial Wall.

Mr. Steve Cronic made the motion to approve the names for the Georgia Public Safety Memorial, which was seconded by Sheriff Dane Kirby, and voted approved by the BPS members.



Director Wigginton again stated the driving track project is ahead of schedule and hopes Governor Deal can join the GPSTC on July 22, 2017, for a ribbon cutting ceremony. Since the ribbon cutting will coincide with the 30 year anniversary of GPSTC, Director Wigginton requested the BPS's approval to move forward and look at some avenues to make this happen.

Mr. Steve Cronic made a motion for the Board of Public Safety to authorize Director Wigginton to move forward with the planning of the 30 year anniversary and to accept donations. This was seconded by Mr. Pete Skandalakis.

Director Wigginton advised the 2017 Georgia Public Safety Memorial Ceremony will be held May 22, 2017, at 10:00 am.

Vice-Chairman Wood called on the nominating committee for the election of the 2017 BPS officers.

Mr. Charles Sikes advised Chief Tully, Mr. Abernathy and himself served on the nominating committee and have spoken to all three agency heads and polled the BPS members and was unanimous in retaining the present Vice-Chairman Wood and Secretary Renew.

Mr. Sikes noted Chief Renew is a poster boy for the police association, presents himself well in the uniform as well as the reputation among the GA Chiefs Association and honored to have him serve in this capacity. Mr. Charles Sikes added the Board is honored to have Mr. Ellis Wood serve as the Vice-Chairman of the BPS and has served it well, served the citizens of this state well and could ask for no better leadership than the two provide. Mr. Sikes stated the BPS members try in every effort to follow their directions.

Mr. Pete Skandalakis asked that the nominations be closed and approved, which was seconded by Mr. Steve Cronic, and voted approved by the BPS members.

Chief Craig Tully made the motion to accept the recommendation for Mr. Ellis Wood to continue to serve as Vice-Chairman and Chief Mark Renew to serve as Secretary for the Board of Public Safety. Mr. Pete Skandalakis seconded the motion and was voted approved by the BPS members.

Mr. Charles Sikes reminded the Board members that Vice-Chairman Wood does a lot of charitable events throughout the state in regards to recovery, restoration and natural disasters and Vice-Chairman Wood will tell you that he is very humble in regards to do this and always points out that he is a conduit through which a lot of power flows. Mr. Sikes noted a lot of people volunteer to help out, people give money towards the effort, buying meals, etc., and that Mr. Wood says he is a conduit and does very little. Mr. Sikes stated there was an article in the Statesboro Herald in regards to Mr. Ellis being that conduit and shared a couple of copies of the newspaper with the BPS members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

---

Chief Mark Revenew  
Secretary