

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Vice-Chairman James Donald
Mr. Wayne Abernathy
Mr. Bud Black
Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III
Mr. Dub Harper
Mr. Pat Head
Sheriff Jamil Saba

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Hal Averitt, Sr.
Chief Lou Dekmar
Sheriff Bruce Harris *
Chief Dwayne Orrick
Chief J. D. Rice
Sheriff Cullen Talton

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Chris Brasher, Board Attorney
Ms. Laura Jones, Board Liaison
Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White, Department of Public Safety/State Patrol
Major Corky Jewell, State Patrol
Major Don Chastain, State Patrol
Major Keith Sorrells, State Patrol
Captain Chuck Ulveling
Chief Mark McLeod, Motor Carrier Compliance Division
Major Billy Boulware, Motor Carrier Compliance Division
Mr. Terry Landers, Department of Public Safety/State Patrol
Ms. Becky East, Department of Public Safety/State Patrol
Ms. Melissa Rodgers, Department of Public Safety/State Patrol
Mr. Lee O'Brien, Department of Public Safety/State Patrol
Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Assistant Director Chris Ash, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Mr. Ray Higgins, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Deputy Director Paul Heppner, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Director Dale Mann, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Richard Guerreiro, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
Mr. Justin Johnson, Office of Planning and Budget

Vice-Chairman Donald called the meeting to order. There not being a quorum, the meeting was started with issues not requiring a vote. Vice-Chairman then requested all attendees introduce themselves.

Vice-Chairman Donald announced that Mr. Chris Brasher has been appointed as a Superior Court Judge of the Atlanta Judicial Circuit. The Board members congratulated Mr. Brasher for

*Sheriff Bruce Harris was absent from the meeting, but present via telephone conferencing. *

the honor. Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III suggested that a Resolution be prepared in honor of Mr. Brasher. Vice-Chairman Donald also announced that Board Member Pat Head has been re-appointed for another term.

Vice-Chairman Donald reported that Governor Perdue has recommended \$48 million in FY 06 Amended Budget to the Department of Corrections; this funding will reduce the jail backlog with adding 4400 beds. The Department's goal is to have a jail backlog of no more than 732 by June 30th. Vice-Chairman Donald stated an Appropriations sub-committee hearing is being held today on the FY 07 Budget.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, reported the current staffing level, as of January 27, 2006, is at 763 troopers, 178 CEO's, 22 Capitol Police, 61 Safety officers, 303 MCCD, giving a total personnel count of 1327.

Colonel White requested approval from the Board of Public Safety to assign Jackson County to Post 32 Athens. Currently, Post 6 Gainesville is assigned Jackson County, White County, Hall County, and Banks County. Last year, numbers showed that Jackson County only had 200 car crashes. Because of the low number, Post 32 will be able to handle Jackson County, along with Clarke, Madison, Oconee, and Barrow counties. Several Board members expressed their support of this decision.

Colonel White reported on the legislative issues, which are being moved on positive notes. One of the legislative bills is Senate Bill 64, regarding slick-top cars; another bill on car markings; a bill on the badge and gun for MCCD officers at their retirement; and House Bill 1209, which is the motorcycle legislation. Also, a Governor's Office of Highway Safety bill, which is the implied consent bill, passed yesterday out of committee.

Colonel White introduced Mr. Lee O'Brien, who brought two property Resolutions. With the first Resolution, Mr. O'Brien requested that the members of the Board of Public Safety approve the Commissioner of Public Safety acquire a tract of land belonging to Ronald and Russell Cravey, described in the plat attached to the Resolution, for use by Post 16 Helena.

The second Resolution, as explained by Mr. O'Brien, is to build a new State Patrol Post 6 in Gainesville, described in the plat attached to the Resolution. This property will be brought to the Hall County Commission so they can issue a bond to pay for the post; at the conclusion of building the new post, the property will be conveyed back to Department of Public Safety. The new post will be built behind the existing post building; upon completion of the new building, the old building will be demolished.

Colonel White reported that there are two trooper schools going now, with 25 in each trooper school. He also reported that the State Patrol assisted with the King funeral detail, receiving good positive comments from the family and others in the community.

Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, began with reporting on Governor's Recommendation for GBI budget. Director Keenan stated Governor Perdue has recommended funds be provided to staff the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) unit, which is housed under GCIC. UCR gathers all arrest data from every law enforcement agency in the state; the data is compiled and sent to the Department of Justice, which uses the information to establish the formula for grants funneled down to the State. Previously, the unit had been staffed with two people and operating expenses out of state funds. However, three budget years ago, the burden was shifted over to a federal grant, which has now expired. Governor Perdue has recommended \$184,000 for the GBI budget to operate the UCR. Another area of the Governor's Recommendation involves the funding to establish a Meth Force, which will investigate methamphetamine-related crimes. Funding of \$1 million has been given to hire 15 agents, who will start school in July. There is a tremendous amount of support from General Assembly in going forward with Governor's Recommendation to give funding to hire the 15 special agents. In talking with Governor's staff, they have been surprised that an agent school had not been held in three years; however, there has not been funding to hire new agents. For the last three years, when an agent would leave, through either retirement or other employment, that funding would be moved over to hire a scientist for the Crime Lab; it being the GBI's priority. Director Keenan reported that with the resources placed into the Crime Lab, with the hiring of new scientists, and with the \$3 million given to outsource cases to private forensic laboratories, this now puts the GBI in the situation where there is virtually no backlog in the State Crime Laboratory.

Director Keenan continued with his reporting that he has gotten questions from the General Assembly on the level of agent salaries, along with other issues associated with retaining agents. In the last five years, through reductions in positions and lack of funding, the GBI has gone from 316 agents down to 244. The GBI, along with other state law enforcement agencies, compete for the same pool of applicants, and the pool is getting smaller. A point made is that not only state agencies, but also local law enforcement agencies, recruit from the same pool of applicants. The GBI does not have a problem attracting the applicant, but from the agent leaving the GBI after working several years. The GBI spends \$47,000 to train an agent and then the agent leaves employment at the seven-year mark. Once the person has gotten the training, gotten the experience, they are a sought-after commodity, by local agencies and federal agencies. Director Keenan reported that in the last five years, seventy-seven agents left to go to other careers; 20% went to local law enforcement agencies; 40% went to federal employment; 15% went to private companies; and the remainder went through a complete change of career. Upon leaving the GBI, an exit interview is held, which helps track why they are leaving. The common theme is lack of

pay. It costs this State a tremendous amount of money to train officers, and, it causes a severe impact on the cases being worked in GBI. Director Keenan stated he had answered pointed questions with the General Assembly on this issue. Several months ago, the Merit System completed a comprehensive salary survey of state level law enforcement. The survey shows that an agent with ten years experience with the GBI, makes 11% less than the average local agencies. As GBI Director, Director Keenan stated he is focusing his energy on getting the salaries brought up. He believes what needs to be done is be able to provide a substantial salary, sufficient so that an officer can invest in deferred compensation to make up for what lacks in the retirement benefit. Director Keenan responded to several questions, and, the Board members expressed their support of this issue. Director Keenan completed his report with saying that the state employees who put their lives in danger every day deserve to be paid what they are worth. Vice-Chairman Donald added that Director Keenan had spoken for all state agencies; that he expertly described the predicament all state law enforcement agencies are in right now.

Director Dale Mann, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported that he would like to add to a Resolution presented at a previous Board meeting. Director Mann requested approval to accept center located in East Dublin, currently owned by Department of Corrections. The address of the center is 164 Lovett Farm Road, Dublin. This center, with 54 rooms, will be big enough for police officers attending training. The transfer of this center to the Training Center has the support of the Sheriffs Association and the Police Chiefs Association. Director Mann noted that because the center in East Dublin and the center in Dalton are both empty, the House Public Safety Appropriations SubCommittee recommended \$300,000 to help put in beds, mattresses, and classrooms; however, the Senate removed the funding. Director Mann stated the Training Center will go ahead and set up the classroom and offices in the Dublin and Dalton centers, upon approval from the State Properties Commission.

Director Mann reported that House Bill 1019, the Taser Certification Act, passed in the House. This will be a 16-hour training program on when to use the taser, rather than how to use the taser, which is taught by the manufacturer. The cost of the training is about \$700,000; part of the funding is a one-time expenditure, but the other part will be to handle a volume of statewide training. POST will have a requirement aligning with the certification. If the officer has the equipment, training will be required.

FISCAL REPORTS

Ms. Becky East, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, began with drawing the Board members' attention to the column labeled "Percent Remaining." Ms. East pointed out that Personal Services has a slight surplus, showing over 52% remaining. Regular Operating is being

monitored very closely, in that it may contribute to the increase of fuel cost over the last six months. Motor Vehicles, Equipment, Real Estate, and Contracts all reflect less than 50%, but those are objects where most of the expenses are encumbered up front. Overall, the important number is 50.5%. Ms. East stated the agency is doing okay overall; she did not anticipate any problems.

Mr. Ray Higgins, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, with a copy of the 2nd Quarter report, pointed out the bottom right-hand corner showing the agency has spent approximately 52% of state funds. Mr. Higgins stated the agency is right on track for that time of year. Included in the numbers is little over \$500,000 of expenses associated with Hurricane Katrina detail. Mr. Higgins stated the detail is concluded; he is very optimistic of being reimbursed for most, if not all of the expenses. As Director Keenan had noted earlier, the agency is currently going through the state budget process, awaiting the final passage of FY 06 Amended Budget. Even though it is a few months away, the agency will begin preparation for the fiscal year end.

Mr. Richard Guerreiro, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, reported that in the Public Safety Training Center budget, there are some areas of over expenditures at this particular time. Pointing out the Personal Services, the agency is just a little bit over; however, the bottom line reflects 50.6%. Mr. Guerreiro stated the agency is starting to blend in the revenues from December and January that are not reflected in the report. The Utilities cost is a very high expenditure during the winter months. He noted that at this point in time, both Police Academy and Fire Academy are well off. For example, their Regular Operating Expenses through half the year is less than 40%. Mr. Guerreiro pointed out State Funds are 47.8% for Fire Academy and for Police Academy the State Funds are at 44.6%. He pointed out that it is kind of skewed at this particular point where the Police Academy and Fire Academy are at a surplus situation, but the Training Center is not. As long as the expenditures are controlled through the rest of the fiscal year, the Training Center will be in good shape.

Because there was not a quorum present, Board Member Bruce Harris was teleconferenced in so that votes could be conducted on several issues.

DONATIONS/RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Terry Landers, Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol, requested approval of the following donations:

Construction of Car Wash	\$ 4,800	Effingham Board of Commissioners
Two Decatur Genesis II Directional Radar	\$ 3,300	Effingham County Sheriff's Office
Six Dell Laptop Computers	\$ 3,594	Talbot County Sheriff's Office
Stalker Lider Radar	\$ 2,917	Bainbridge Public Safety Department
One Genesis II Select Radar	\$ 1,700	Wheeler County Sheriff's Office

Mr. Wayne Abernathy made a motion to approve these donations, seconded by Mr. Dub Harper and unanimously voted approval by the Board members present and Sheriff Harris on the conference call.

Vice-Chairman Donald requested approval of the January Board Minutes, which was motioned by Mr. Bud Black, seconded by Mr. Wayne Abernathy, and unanimously voted approval by the Board members present and Sheriff Harris on the conference call.

Vice-Chairman Donald requested approval of the Resolution presented by Department of Public Safety/State Patrol concerning Post 16 Helena, which was motioned as follows. The motion was made by Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III, seconded by Mr. Wayne Abernathy, and voted approval by the Board members present and Sheriff Harris.

Vice-Chairman Donald requested approval of a Resolution presented by Department of Public concerning Patrol Post 6 Gainesville. The motion was made by Mr. Wayne Abernathy, seconded by Mr. Bud Black, and voted approval by the Board members present and Sheriff Harris on the conference call.

Vice-Chairman Donald requested approval for Director Dale Mann to accept a diversion center, belonging to Department of Corrections, located in East Dublin to be used as a regional academy. The motion was made by Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III and seconded by Mr. Wayne Abernathy, and unanimously voted approval by the Board members present and by Sheriff Harris.

Vice-Chairman Donald called on Lieutenant Colonel Arthur White to bring his request to the table. Colonel White requested that Jackson County be reassigned to Post 32 Athens. Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III motioned approval, which was seconded by Mr. Bud Black, and unanimously voted approval by the Board members present and by Sheriff Harris.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Bud Black stated that the State Fire Chiefs' conference will be held in August in Hall County, and, requested the Board members consider holding its August Board meeting in conjunction with the conference. He stated it would be good if the Board members could be a part of the conference to show support of the firefighters association. The Board members agreed that this is a good idea.

Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III requested that Major Corky Jewell bring a briefing on the 800 MHz to the Board members at the March meeting.

Mr. Rooney L. Bowen, III requested that the monthly Board meetings be moved to the third Wednesday of every month. Vice-Chairman Donald responded that, if the Board members did not object, the monthly meeting will be held on the third Wednesday.

Mr. Chris Brasher invited everyone in the room to be with him for his swearing-in for the position of Superior Court Judge of Atlanta Judicial Circuit.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Rooney L. Bowen, III