

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

**April 1, 2021
Forsyth, Georgia**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn - Chairman
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen
Mr. Mike Coggins
Ms. Janelle King
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr.
Mr. Bill White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Larry Haynie
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE CONFERENCE CALL:

Ms. Tina Piper, Senior Assistant Attorney General

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner
Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Alan Watson, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel
Mr. Dan Brown, Director of Office of Information Technology
Mr. Terry Edge, Director of Office of Professional Development
Mr. David Ethridge, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Ms. Angela Ivester, OIT
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Mr. Henry Miller, Chaplain
Ms. Dawn Mock, OIT
Ms. Mary Jane Moss, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Clay Nix, Director of Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Amy Pataluna, Deputy Director, GCI
Mr. Mike Riley, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Savario Spencer, AV Specialist
Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Human Resources Director
Mr. Chris Tiller, Executive Director, GCI
Mr. Dexter Walker, OIT

VISITORS:

None

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the April meeting for the Board of Corrections (“the Board”) at 10:00 a.m. and Board Liaison, Simone Juhmi, recorded the minutes. Chairman Blackburn then asked Chaplain Henry Miller to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Blackburn led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Blackburn welcomed and recognized all guests, and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Next, Chairman Blackburn confirmed the following individuals were present via conference call: Board Members J.C. “Spud” Bowen, Mike Coggins, Janelle King, John Mayes, Lou Solis, and Bill White. In addition, Senior Assistant Attorney General Tina Piper was connected via conference call.

Chairman Blackburn presented the April Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. The Agenda was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Blackburn also presented the March Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The Minutes were then voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

To begin the Commissioner’s Report, Commissioner Timothy C. Ward discussed the dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

To follow, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner of the Health Services Division, to present a Division update. Mr. Sauls began his Health Services overview presentation by discussing the COVID Positive Hospital Admissions, GDC’s Positive COVID-19 Offender 7 Day Moving Average, Isolation versus being Quarantined, the Vaccination by Month, the Vaccination Totals, and the future Vaccination Plan.

This concluded Mr. Sauls’ report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner of the Facilities Division, to give an update on the Reopening Phase.

Mr. Holt began by discussing the establishment of the Coronavirus Response Team, Phase One - Planning and Education, Phase Two - Preparedness and Preventive Measures, Phase Three - Implementation and Response, and Phase Four - Reopening Phase. In addition, Mr. Holt discussed Offender Administration, Inmate Services, and Inmate Work Details. Mr. Holt then discussed GDC’s COVID – 19 Visitation Plan regarding Scheduling, Entry and Visitor Screening, Visitation Protocols, and Visitation Sanitation Practices.

This concluded Mr. Holt’s report.

Following such, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Clay Nix, Director of the Office of Professional Standards, to give an Office of Professional Standards Canine Operations update.

Mr. Nix began his report by discussing Canine Operations, Synthetics / Strips, DEA License Application, DEA License Approval, Ordering Training Materials and Training/Imprinting. In addition, Mr. Nix discussed Cell Phone Detection Canines, and the Fiscal Year 2021 year-to-date number of cellphones found inside and outside the prisons.

To conclude, Mr. Nix discussed the different types of contraband found, arrests made, and the success rate of Canine Operations and the combined tracking results.

This concluded Mr. Nix’s report.

Last of all, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Alan Watson, Assistant Commissioner of the Administration and Finance Division, to give a Budget Closeout on the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget overview.

Mr. Watson began his report by discussing the Statewide Changes, Officer Salaries, New Facilities, Program Adjustments, Capital Outlay, and the Fiscal Year 2022 Bonds.

This concluded Mr. Watson's report and the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by discussing the recent tornados that were in Coweta County and Chairman Blackburn thanked Commissioner Ward for his assistance during that time.

Next, Chairman Blackburn discussed the Coweta Hub near the airport for training for Corrections dogs/canines. Chairman Blackburn also discussed the Mantracker Training Conference that is starting on April 21st.

Lastly, under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to present two (2) property resolutions and requested that Ms. Ammons ask for the motions to approve both resolutions together.

The first resolution was the Chattooga County transfer request of the GBI Crime Lab at Hays State Prison. Ms. Ammons briefly stated that the property is a portion of Hays State Prison which was previously the 5.25 acre Georgia Bureau of Investigations Northwest Crime Lab. Chattooga County is interested in acquiring a seven (7) acre portion of this parcel, comprising the original 5.25 acre GBI Crime Lab as well as surrounding property at Hays State Prison. The Georgia Department of Corrections has ceased operations on the seven (7) acre portion of the property and has no intent to use the property in the future. The GDC is willing to transfer custody of said seven (7) acre portion of the property to Chattooga County.

Additionally, the second resolution is a request for transfer of a portion of the Bainbridge PSATC to the Bainbridge-Decatur County Development Authority. Ms. Ammons briefly stated that the property the Development Authority of Bainbridge-Decatur County is interested in acquiring is a 111.0 acre portion of this parcel. The Georgia Department of Corrections has ceased operations on the 111.0 acre portion of the property and has no intent to use the property in the future. The GDC is willing to transfer custody of said 111.0 acre portion of the property to the Development Authority of Bainbridge-Decatur County.

Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve the property resolutions. Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to approve the resolutions, which was seconded by Mr. Tommy Rouse. The resolutions were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Last of all, Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to increase, from \$25 to \$50, the amount of inmate re-entry to society money that a parolee or max-out offender receives at discharge.

Chairman Blackburn noted that his recommendation was for the Board's Budget/Utilities Committee to meet in May at the next board meeting and consult with GDC's Administration and Finance Assistant Commissioner Alan Watson to determine what amount the Committee should/would propose to the entire Board to not create a negative impact on the overall GDC budget.

Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve. Ms. Rose Williams and Ms. Andrea Shelton seconded the motion. The meeting of the Budget/ Utilities Committee was voted approved by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Blackburn reminded the board members that the Board will receive its Annual Board Training after the next board meeting in May.

Chairman Blackburn then reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on May 6, 2021 at State Offices South at Tift College in Forsyth, Georgia.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Duke Blackburn, Chairman

Andrea Shelton, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison