

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

April 14, 2022

Glennville, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn – Chairman
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Mr. Larry Haynie
Mr. John Mayes
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Alton Russell
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Guy A. Daughtrey
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Ms. Janelle King
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Bill White

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner
Mr. Alan Watson, Chief of Staff
Mr. Peter Adams, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. George Bradley, Unit Manager, Hays State Prison
Ms. Walt Bryan, DON, Washington State Prison
Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel
Mr. Suresh Ganesapandian, OIT
Ms. Connie Gill, Correctional Officer II, Lee Arrendale State Prison
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director, Data Unit
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Commissioner’s Executive Assistant
Ms. Angela Ivester, Office of Information Technology
Mr. Arthur Jackson, Correctional Officer II, Phillips Transitional Center
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. April McDaniel, LPN, Phillips State Prison
Mr. John Moore, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Donna Nations, Correctional Officer II, Arrendale TC
Mr. Kumaresh Nataraj, Manager, OIT
Ms. Mary Rankin, Phillips State Prison
Ms. April Thomas, Unit Manager, Phillips State Prison
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Human Resources Director
Mr. Chris Tiller, Executive Director, GCI
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain

VISITORS:

Ms. Eveleyn Ware-Cox, NIA
Ms. Taniyah Dameron, Citizen
Ms. Page Dukes, Southern Center for Human Rights

Ms. Elizabeth Ferguson, Psychiatrist, Centurion
Mr. Kenneth Hehassiter, Wellpath
Ms. Veilvete Hood, Wellpath
Ms. Sarah Smith, Editor, The Journal Sentinel
Mr. James Taylor, Wellpath
Mr. Sidney Moore, APRN, Centurion

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the April meeting for the Board of Corrections (“the Board”) at 3:00 p.m and Board Liaison, Simone Juhmi, recorded the minutes. Chairman Blackburn then asked Chaplain Steven Turner to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Blackburn led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Blackburn welcomed all guests and visitors to the board meeting, and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Blackburn presented the April 2022 Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Alton Russell made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The Agenda was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Blackburn also presented the March 2022 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 Ward asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner of Facilities Division, to assist in introducing and honoring four (4) correctional officers with a Commissioner’s coin for Correctional Officers Week. In addition, the Board of Corrections honors the service of correctional officers each year by presenting a Governor’s proclamation to a selected group. Correctional Officers Week will be celebrated the week of May 1-7th. A group photo was taken of the presentations.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Health Services, to assist in honoring four (4) correctional nurses for National Nurses Week. The Board of Corrections honors these nurses for the vital role they play in the correctional health setting each day. The nurses were presented a Governor’s proclamation and a plaque containing a Commissioner’s coin. National Nurses Week will be celebrated the week of May 6 - 12th. A group photo was taken of the presentations.

Commissioner Ward then discussed the dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison to the Commissioner, to give a Legislative Update.

Mr. Thrower began his report by discussing the final year of the 2021-2022 Biennium. In addition, Mr. Thrower discussed the over 2300 bills that were introduced during this biennium, and the Governor having 40 days from the end of the legislative session to sign new bills.

Mr. Thower continued his presentation by discussing the following House and Senate Bills:

- House Bill 1013 - Mental Health Parity Act which passed out of the House and Senate. This bill establishes the Multi-Agency Treatment for Children task force. The Commissioner of Corrections will be a member of the task force.
- House Bill 1092- Pregnant offender deferral bill which passed out of the House but did not make it to the floor of the Senate for a vote on day 40. This bill allows judicial discretion for a pregnant offender to have their sentenced deferred for up to 12 months.

- House Bill 1134 - Gang Prosecution Bill. This bill passed both the House and Senate, and it gives the Attorney General's office concurrent authority to prosecute criminal gang activity.
- Three bills (House Hill 446, Senate Bill 161, and Senate Bill 355) related to offenders receiving Drivers' Licenses upon release. We have had positive conversations with Senators and Representatives regarding the efforts Inmate Services have made in this area.

This concluded Mr. Thrower's report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Peter Adams, Assistant Commissioner of Administration and Finance, to give a Budget Update.

Mr. Adams began his report by giving a brief overview of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. In his presentation, Mr. Adams discussed the recruitment and retention appropriations, the statewide \$5,000 dollar pay increase, the total salary increase, the \$2,000 security retention incentive, the total officer retention increase, the statewide and agency appropriations, statewide changes, the annual leave withdrawal of 40 hours, the Employees' Retirement System/Teacher's Retirement System, adjustment to DOAS Self-Insurance Program/TeamWorks billing, and the total statewide increase.

Mr. Adams closed by discussing the agency specific increase, agency specific appropriations, the total GDC budget information, the total Fiscal Year 2023 GDC budget, the facility transformation recommendation in coordination with the Georgia Building Authority and State Properties Commission, the 20 year bonds for the state prison facility transformation, and the total facility transformation increase.

To follow, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Health Services, to give an Office of Health Services Update.

Mr. Sauls began his presentation by discussing specialty appointments such as Cardiology, Oncology, Dermatology, Gastroenterology, Infectious Disease, and Urology. Mr. Sauls also discussed the average telemedicine: 650 appointments per month, the "My Wound Doc" wound care new services beginning April 1, 2022, and Tele Physical Therapy.

Mr. Sauls closed with discussing the goal which is to migrate qualified health visits to telemedicine platforms to eliminate outside transport and movement and to improve the patient care experience.

This concluded the report of Mr. Sauls.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services, to give an Inmate Services Update.

Mr. Sanders began by discussing highlights from the Inmate Services Fiscal Year 2021 Impact Report.

Some of the highlights Mr. Sanders discussed were the recidivism rates, treatment effects from programs, Reentry Resources ID'd, Addiction Counselor/Clinical Supervisor Training, the Addiction Certification Preparation Program (ACPP), Chaplaincy/Volunteer Services, Academic Education and completions, Library Services, books that were donated and circulated, the Fiscal Year 2021 newly implemented programs, the Fiscal Year 2021 newly implemented programs (Automotive Academy, Barbering Program, Chaplin's Assistant Program, Food Truck Program), and the Fiscal Year 2021 In Demand program completions.

Mr. Sanders closed by telling the board members they each had the Inmate Services Impact Report booklet in their possession to keep and Mr. Sanders explained what page each item was listed on.

This concluded Mr. Sanders' report.

Commissioner Ward then asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Division, to give a Facilities Division update.

Mr. Holt began his report by discussing the Georgia State Prison (GSP) closure. Mr. Holt discussed the capacity of 1550, the systematic drawing down of the population for approximately one (1) year, the stopping of intake into the facility, the halting backfill of released inmates, using OPTAMO to move and accurately place inmates moving out of Georgia State Prison, transitional centers and educational/vocational information. Mr. Holt also discussed the offender population reduction with all offenders relocated to other facilities or transitional centers, and staff impact with all staff relocated to new assignments and having completed all annual training.

Additionally, Mr. Holt discussed orientation/welcome by Wardens/Superintendents at the receiving locations, staff being paired with current staff at facilities, staff housing will remain/managed by Rogers State Prison. Also, discussed were detail responsibilities such as the fire station reassigned to Rogers State Prison, the work details provided by offenders reassigned, the Transportation Hub remaining, and the offender cemetery reassigned to Rogers State Prison.

To close, Mr. Holt discussed the next steps items like project team assigned to oversee future use and planning being underway, the plan for the facility to remain minimally operational in order to accommodate tours, the energy conservation plan, and the mobile surgical unit to be relocated.

This concluded Mr. Holt's report and the Commissioner's report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by saying that he asked the Board of Corrections Facilities Committee to review and consider the possibility of naming buildings "M" and "K" at Baldwin State Prison in honor of dedicated officers Sergeant Christopher Monica and Sergeant Curtis Billue. In addition, Chairman Blackburn added to consider naming building "D" at Telfair State Prison in honor of Officer Larry Stell. Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion from the full Board to approve the naming of these buildings in the officers honor. Mr. Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr. made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. W.D. Strickland and Mr. Larry Haynie. The naming of the buildings after these fallen officers was then voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

To conclude the meeting, Chairman Blackburn thanked Vice Chairman Wayne Dasher for hosting the board meeting in Glennville, the 33rd Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Cookout, and the Joint Luncheon on April 14th.

Vice Chairman Dasher thanked everyone for coming to these events and he expressed that Mr. Tommy Rouse asked him to advise the board members that he had officially resigned from the Board of Corrections. Mr. Dasher then asked the Board Liaison, Ms. Simone Juhmi, to draft an honorary resolution for Mr. Rouse.

There was no Old or New Business, so Chairman Blackburn reminded the members the next meeting is on May 5, 2022, at State Offices South at Tift College, in Forsyth, Georgia.

The board meeting was adjourned.

Duke Blackburn, Chairman

Andrea Shelton, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison