BOARD OF CORRECTIONS
April 3, 2025
Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn
Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen
Mr. Rodney Bryant
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr. – Chairman
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Rossie Ross
Mr. Alton Russell
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Ms. Kellie Brownlow
Mr. Bruce Carlisle
Mr. Thomas Culpepper
Mr. John B. Edwards
Sheriff Gary Gulledge
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard

CONFERENCE CALL:
Mr. Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:
Ms. Amy Radley, Attorney General's Office

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:
Mr. Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Mr. Alan Watson, Chief of Staff
Ms. Latera M. Davis, Assistant Commissioner of Inmate Services (interim)
Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Division
Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner of Inmate Services
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner of Health Services Division
Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel
Mr. Adam Baswell, Director of Office of Professional Development
Ms. Komola Edwards, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Kenneth Ellis, Statewide Chaplain
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director of Data Management and Research
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, Office of Information Technology
Ms. Janine Robinson, Director, Admin Support/ Fleet Operations and Risk Management
Mr. Jeff Rogers, Warden, Coweta County Prison
Mr. Henry Rutherford, Director of Office of Information Technology
Mr. Robert Starley, Office of Information Technology
Mr. Matthew Wolfe, Director of Office of Professional Standards

VISITORS:
Ms. Angela Rogers, wife of Jeff Rogers
Ms. Monica Miller, Citizen

First, Chairman Ester Fleming Jr. 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 Fleming then asked Chaplain Kenneth Ellis to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Fleming led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Fleming confirmed that Board Member Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr. was connected via conference call.

Chairman Fleming welcomed and recognized all guests and visitors and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Fleming presented the Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Rossie Ross made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell. The Agenda was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming presented the March 6, 2025 Minutes to the Board for approval. Ms. Rose Williams made a motion to approve the Minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross. The Minutes were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

To begin the Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Tyrone Oliver discussed briefly the Commissioner's Dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

Commissioner Oliver announced that Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division, was retiring and he briefly introduced Ms. Latera M. Davis, who would be taking his position and assuming the role of Assistant Commissioner of the Inmate Services Division, upon Mr. Sanders' retirement. Ms. Davis thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve in her new role.

Commissioner Oliver discussed the Washington State Prison Update, contraband drops, and the Board watched a brief video clip from Senator Cotton's X (Twitter) wherein Commissioner Oliver had participated in a press conference in Washington D.C. regarding Cell Phone Jamming.

Commissioner Oliver discussed the Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 Budget Update. Some of the highlights were the Departmental Administration items such as the Guidehouse Year 2, the 10-Year Facility and Population Management Plan, the Statewide Targeted Marketing Initiative, and the Updated Training Curriculum. In addition, under Food and Farm Operations, Commissioner Oliver discussed the increase for Farming Operations and Health, Physical Health and Pharmacy Contract, Mental / Dental Health Contract, Agency-Managed EHR, and Physical Health Risk Share.

Furthermore, Commissioner Oliver discussed Offender Management, Transfer from State Prisons for Virtual Court, Private Prisons Increased Bed Capacity, Fiscal Year 2025 COLA Pay Parity, Correctional Officer Recruitment and Retention, and Additional Correctional Officer Positions.

Commissioner Oliver continued with discussing Safety, Security and Technology Initiatives such as Managed Access Systems, Drone Detection, Off-site Mail Screening Technology, the Digital Forensics Unit, Body Worn Cameras, Tasers, Officer Tablets, the Over Watch and Logistics Unit (and Fusus), and the Data Intelligence Advanced Integration.

Also discussed were the Locking Control Systems and support items such as the Modular Correctional Units, the Locking Control Systems Design and Construction, and the Locking Control Systems Tiger Team. Commissioner Oliver discussed emergency maintenance, major repairs and support items such as the project backlog and major maintenance and repairs, capital repairs and maintenance, facility maintenance personnel and regional support, project management resources, skilled craftsmen Tiger Teams, and the central repair redistribution from State Prisons to Probation Detention Centers, and Transitional Centers.

Commissioner Oliver ended the Fiscal Year 2025 Update by discussing Educational / Programming such as the Technical College System of Georgia contracts, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment contract, Chromebooks, Capital Outlay items such as vehicle replacements, the new Washington State Prison FFE, and the design for a new state prison.

Commissioner Oliver continued the Budget Update by discussing the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Recommendations. Some of the highlights were discussing personal services specifically Correctional Officer – 4% increase, the in-grade salary step increases, the compression for correctional leadership, the Correctional Officer recruitment – funding for additional filled positions, the Behavioral Health Counselors – statewide averages, and the additional non-security positions – education, Chaplains, food service, fire service and maintenance.

Commissioner Oliver also discussed safety, security, and technology initiatives, Inmate Services, facility maintenance / repairs and support, additional operational funding, and Capital Outlay.

Commissioner Oliver closed by discussing the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Overview categories Department Administration, Detention Centers, Food and Farm Operations, Health, Offender Management, Private Prisons, State Prisons, Transition Centers, Agency State Funds Total, Federal and Other Funds, Agency Totals, and Variance from Fiscal Year 2025.

Next Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division, to present an Inmate Services Update. Mr. Sanders began his presentation by discussing Burruss Correctional Training Center. Mr. Sanders stated that Burruss has GDC's youthful offenders, a Horticulture program, and has Workforce Opportunities for Returning Citizens (WORC).

Mr. Sanders went on to say that the adults that are housed there do On-the-Job Training items such as Beekeeping, the Guide Dog Foundation, the Veterinary Technician, Horticulture, Mobile Classrooms, and Welding. Mr. Sanders discussed the Academic Programs such as the Literacy and Adult Basic Education completions, GED, Chromebook testing, the Fiscal Year 2025 completions, the GED Acceleration Program (GAP) at Dodge, Walker, and Whitworth Women's Facility, the Math Boot Camp, and the Edgenuity Partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Foothills Regional High School.

Mr. Sanders discussed Federal Programs such as the Student Support Specialists, Instructional Coaches, and Special Education. Also, Mr. Sanders discussed Library Services such as the Law Library, the Book Repository, and the Reading Legacies pilot at Valdosta State Prison.

Mr. Sanders closed by discussing the Office Of Reentry Services Programming enrollments and completions, the Department of Labor – Walking the Last Mile Program Expansion, Substance Abuse, the Repository's total documents scanned, State Roads and Tolls Authority (SRTA), Domestic Violence Grant Expansion, Seminary Program, Managed Withdrawal Program (Detox), and Ramadan.

This completed Mr. Sanders' report.

Following such, Commissioner Oliver asked Ms. Janine Robinson, Director, Administrative Support Division, Fleet Operations and Risk Management to present a Fleet Operations Update.

To begin, Ms. Robinson stated she would be discussing GDC's Fleet Operations and Automotive Training Program. Some of the highlights were that Fleet Operations provides coordination, direction, and management of the Motor Vehicle Program, handling the Offender OJT (work detail), discussing Industry Best Practices, Inmate Transportation, Staff Transportation, Replacement Vehicles, Tier Reports (Safety and Compliance requirements), Automotive Academy - AMLR: Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair and ICAR: Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair, which reduces recidivism and provides training and tools necessary for a successful transition to the community.

Ms. Robinson concluded by discussing the garage operations, agency innovation for Fiscal Year 2024, Fleet's fully functional automotive and paint/body shop and photos of several items and projects Fleet completed and are currently working on.

This concluded Ms. Robinson's Report and the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Under the Chairman's Report, Chairman Fleming moved into Regular Session to approve a County Warden's appointment.

Chairman Fleming called upon Mr. Duke Blackburn, Chairman of the Board Facilities Committee, to give the Board the Committee's recommendation on Mr. Jeff Rogers.

Mr. Blackburn stated that the Committee received the report on Mr. Jeff Rogers – Warden of Coweta County Correctional Institution, and the Committee reviewed his report and would like to make a motion to approve Mr. Rogers' appointment as the Warden of Coweta County Correctional Facility. Mr. Blackburn made the motion to approve the appointment and stated that the entire Committee formally recommended approval so there was no need for a second motion; however, Vice Chairman Bowen seconded the motion, and the motion were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming congratulated Mr. Rogers and Mr. Rogers thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Next, Chairman Fleming advised the Board that we collected a total of two thousand nine hundred twenty dollars ($2,920.00) towards the 2025 Georgia Prison Warden's Association Board of Corrections scholarship fund. This amount surpassed the scholarship goal amount of ($2,500) so the Board did not do anymore collections for the 2025 Georgia Prison Warden's Association Board of Corrections scholarship fund. Chairman Fleming advised that once the recipient is named, the Board will be notified.

Chairman Fleming advised the Board that the itinerary for the April 30th board meeting in Augusta was in their packets for review.

Chairman Fleming advised the Board that he made updates to the 2025 Committee Assignments by adding in the newly appointed board members.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Fleming asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to present a property resolution.

Ms. Ammons stated that the resolution was for the Lawrence House Demo. Ms. Ammons stated the State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections is in custody of property in Walker County, Georgia, known as the Walker State Prison ("the Property") located at 97 Kevin Lane, Rock Spring, Georgia 30739. The property has staff housing referred to as the "The Lawrence House" (BLLIP ID# 6960, consisting of approximately 4,800 square feet) and is located on the campus of Walker State Prison.

The Lawrence House has been evaluated and deemed to be in a state of severe disrepair.
The department has determined that the Lawrence House can be demolished without causing harm to the operation of other structures on the Walker State Prison campus.

Mr. Rossie Ross made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. J. C. "Spud" Bowen. The resolution were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at the Hyatt House Augusta Downtown, in Augusta, Georgia.

There being no further business, the board meeting was adjourned.

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Ester Fleming Jr., Chairman

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Chris Clark, Secretary

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Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison