

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

February 3, 2022

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Duke Blackburn – Chairman
Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Guy A. Daughtrey
Ms. Janelle King
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Bill White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Larry Haynie
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.

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. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel
Mr. Sharrod Campbell, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Terry Edge, Director of Office of Professional Development
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
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, Office of Information Technology
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
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Human Resources Director

VISITORS:

Mr. Brian Moore, Chaplain

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the February 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 Pastor Brian Moore 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 then confirmed the following individuals were present via conference call: Board Members J.C. “Spud” Bowen, Guy Daughtrey, Janelle King, John Mayes, Tommy Rouse, and Bill White.

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

Chairman Blackburn also presented the January Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. W. D. Strickland 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.

Commissioner Ward then 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 the GDC Wellpath Now Emergency Medicine Telehealth Service. Mr. Sauls explained Wellpath Now service provides 24/7 immediate access to expert emergency medical care for patients who are experiencing an acute issue or injury. In addition, Mr. Sauls discussed the patient criteria wherein the Wellpath Now service can be used for any patient with an acute issue or injury that does not necessitate immediate engagement of 911 emergency services.

Mr. Sauls explained that the medical staff will triage the patient per policy, apply immediate medical support and assistance as appropriate, and ensure the patient is stable before using the Wellpath Now service. Mr. Sauls added that Wellpath Now does not replace the need for basic life support measures nor appropriate nursing interventions.

Mr. Sauls discussed several items such as how staff can access Wellpath Now and Emergency Medicine Telehealth Service, how to present a patient (i.e., facility medical staff will provide information to the Wellpath Now provider), utilization review, the 30 day five (5) site pilot results (Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison, Arrendale, Georgia State Prison, Valdosta, Rogers), cost avoidance, and go-live sites by phase.

This concluded the report of Mr. Sauls.

Commissioner Ward then 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 Annual Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 Governor’s Recommendation. In his presentation, Mr. Adams discussed the Governor’s Workforce Recommendations:

For the Annual Fiscal Year 2022, a \$5,000 pay increase statewide.

For the Fiscal Year 2023, a \$5,000 cost of living adjustment statewide, 40 hours annual leave withdrawal statewide, 401(k) match increase, accrued forfeited leave statewide, regional transport hubs staffing - state prison program, increase for the Teacher’s Retirement statewide, increase DOAS insurance program statewide, and decrease in Teamworks billing statewide.

Mr. Adams then discussed the Governor’s Recommendations on Infrastructure, Vehicles, State Properties Commission, and Private Prisons. Some of the highlights discussed were:

For the Annual Fiscal Year 2022, communications enhancement by replacing radio systems statewide, wireless infrastructure upgrades statewide, replacement of GDC’s vehicles (107) - state prison program, regional transport hubs (72) - state prison program, and state prison facility transformation – Georgia Building Authority,

For the Fiscal Year 2023, capital maintenance and repairs - state prison program, health, safety, and security technology projects - state prison program, state prison facility

transformation - Georgia Building Authority, and providing funds for an increase in per diem rates.

This concluded the report of Mr. Adams.

Commissioner Ward then asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to give a Legislative Session Update.

Ms. Ammons began her report by discussing the second year of the 2021 – 2022 Biennium advising that bills that did not pass in 2021 would remain viable for 2022. Ms. Ammons discussed the 40 day Legislative Session, Sine Die Day on April 4th, and continued her presentation by discussing the following House and Senate Bills:

- House Bill 371 (GDC's Video Hearing Legislation) - Allows for the utilization of video hearings in all classes of court.
- House Bill 377 (Pregnant Offender Deferral Bill) - Allows judicial discretion for a pregnant offender to have their sentence deferred for up to 12 months.
- House Bill 446, Senate Bills 161 and 355 - Mandating the issuance of driver's licenses and/or identification cards to offenders upon release.
- House Bill 485 - Would repeal the death penalty and convert all current UDS offenders to LWOP.
- House Bill 678 - Requires Sheriffs to comply with jail standards established by the Georgia Department of Corrections and report deaths in custody to the Georgia Department of Corrections.
- House Bill 728 - Prohibits the operation of private prisons.
- House Bill 851 - Requires a mental evaluation by a physician for every offender taken into custody by Georgia Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Sheriffs.
- House Bill 900 - Repeals language in the Administrative Procedures Act exempting the Board of Corrections from following the APA when promulgating administrative rules.
- House Bill 1050 - Requires that inmates get paid for any labor or goods produced on work details "at the market wage comparable to that which would be paid to a person who is not incarcerated."

This concluded Ms. Ammons' report.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services, to give a Career, Technical and Higher Education Update.

Mr. Sanders began by stating that February is Career and Technical Education Month!

Mr. Sanders continued by discussing recidivism rates, treatment effects from programs, Career Technical and Higher Education completions since Fiscal Year 2015, post-secondary, skills trade, vocational, on-the-job training, Career Technical and Higher Education programs, in-demand program completions for Fiscal Year 2021, in-demand program completions for Fiscal Year 2021 (animal science, automotive /diesel, braille transcription, building trades, culinary, firefighter, manufacturing and distribution, welding).

Mr. Sanders closed by discussing Fiscal Year 2021 newly implemented programs (automotive academy, barbering program, chaplain assistant program, food truck program, and mobile welding at Valdosta Transitional Center).

This concluded Mr. Sanders' report.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Clay Nix, Director of the Office of Professional Standards (OPS), to give a brief Office of Professional Standards update. In his presentation, Mr. Nix discussed the civilian arrests, the canine assisted arrests, and the canine seizures.

This concluded Mr. Nix's report.

Commissioner Ward then asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Division, to give a Facilities Division update on the Georgia State Prison (GSP) closure.

Mr. Holt began his report by discussing the impact of the closure of GSP on staff and reiterated that no staff would face job loss. Mr. Holt advised that the Commissioner met with GSP staff and gave them the option of being placed at one of their top 3 choices and staff housing will remain. Mr. Holt discussed the detail responsibilities highlighting the following items: the fire station reassigned to Rogers State Prison, the work details provided by offenders being reassigned, the transportation hub remaining, and the offender cemetery being reassigned to Rogers State Prison.

Mr. Holt closed by discussing the offender population reduction. Some of his highlights were the capacity, systematically drawing down the population for approximately 1 year, stopping intake into the facility, halting backfill of released inmates, and classification review to specialized placements, transitional centers, and educational/vocational.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by asking Mr. Wayne Dasher, Vice Chairman, to give an update on last month's Georgia Prison Warden's Association Board of Corrections scholarship fund. Mr. Dasher advised that the scholarship was currently at a thousand dollars and that the Board would continue to collect for this scholarship for a few more months until the fifteen hundred dollar goal was met.

Chairman Blackburn asked Mr. Dasher to give the Board an update on the April 14th board meeting in Glennville. Mr. Dasher discussed the flyer he gave to the Board regarding the 33rd Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Cookout and stated that he is working on several items for Glennville, and that he would have more firm plans by next month.

There was no Old or New Business, but Chairman Blackburn advised the Board that Secretary Andrea Shelton wanted to discuss her visit to Mississippi. Secretary Shelton gave an overview regarding her site visit to Central Mississippi Correctional Facility with Warden Jodi Ford (Whitworth Women's Facility) and "Art from the Inside" founder/HeartBound Board Member, Lucy Fugate. Secretary Shelton also gave the Board a handout with information about her experience and visit.

To conclude the meeting, Chairman Blackburn mentioned Board Member Guy Daughtrey's tentative swearing in on February 14, Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen's facility visit to Valdosta State Prison, and Mr. Alton Russell expressed the desire to have a more casual attire for the Glennville board meeting and a possible tour of the farm.

There being no further business, Chairman Blackburn reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on March 3, 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