

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

January 7, 2021

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn-Chairman
Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr.
Mr. W. D. Strickland

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. Wayne Dasher
Ms. Janelle King
Mr. Bill White
Ms. Rose Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Mike Coggins
Mr. Larry Haynie
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse

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
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, OIT
Mr. Clay Nix, Director of Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Amy Pataluna, Deputy Executive Director of GCI
Mr. Mike Riley, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Savario Spencer, AV Specialist
Mr. Chris Tiller, Executive Director of GCI
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Human Resources Director
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain
Mr. Dexter Walker, OIT

VISITORS:

None

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the January 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 Steven Turner 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 and Commissioner Timothy C. Ward presented a gavel to the former Chairman, Alton Russell, for his two years of service as Board Chairman. A photo was taken of the gavel presentation.

Next, Chairman Blackburn confirmed that Board Members Wayne Dasher, Janelle King, Bill White, and Rose Williams was connected via conference call.

Chairman Blackburn presented the January 2021 Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. W. D. Strickland made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Chris Clark. The Agenda was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Blackburn also presented the December 2020 Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. W.D. Strickland made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell. 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 three-page overview highlighting key areas within the Agency.

To follow, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner of Health Services Division, to present a COVID Vaccine Update. Mr. Sauls began his presentation by discussing COVID-19 and the Vaccination Plan.

Some of the highlights Mr. Sauls discussed were the Georgia Department of Corrections positive COVID-19 offender cases per day, hospital admission trends, and COVID-19 by county and state of Georgia 7-day moving average.

To conclude, Mr. Sauls discussed the COVID-19 Vaccination Implementation Plan, State Vaccine Distribution Phases (1A;1B;1C), general COVID-19 Vaccine information, the Georgia Department of Public Health district list, request forms for providers, and the South Health District information list.

This concluded Mr. Sauls' report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Clay Nix, Director of the Office of Professional Standards, to give a brief Contraband Interdiction Update.

Mr. Nix began his report by giving a quick update on arrests and on GDC contraband interdiction efforts. Mr. Nix stated that during the Fiscal Year 2021, GDC made 364 arrests of which 34 were staff, 159 were offenders, and 171 were civilians. Mr. Nix stated that almost every civilian arrest is someone trying to introduce contraband into our facilities to offenders or probationers, or family members of offenders.

To close, Mr. Nix gave a brief update regarding a contraband drop at Washington State Prison. He also gave an update on the status of one of our K-9 officers that was injured in the process.

This concluded Mr. Nix's report.

Following such, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Alan Watson, Assistant Commissioner of Administration and Finance Division, to give a Budget/Request for Proposal (RFP) Update.

Mr. Watson began his report by giving a brief background history on the Pharmacy and Physical Health Services. Then, Mr. Watson discussed the Physical Health Transition and Healthcare Services Procurement. Some of the highlights discussed were the Pharmacy Services, the Request for Proposal (RFP) posting, the contract negotiations, the posted Notice of Intent to Award (NOIA), and the posting closing.

In addition, Mr. Watson discussed the contract finalization, the target for notification to Augusta University, employee notification, the transition, and the final transition for all services, except 340 (B).

To close, Mr. Watson discussed the Physical Health Services (Behind the Wire/Outside the Wire Care), successful vendor staffing and managing infirmaries and clinics at Augusta State Medical Prison. Mr. Watson also discussed maintaining a network of hospitals and clinics for specialized care, Request for Proposal (RFP) finalization, the estimated response timeframe, proposal evaluation and negotiation completion.

This concluded Mr. Watson's report.

Last of all, Commissioner Ward asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel, to give an Administrative Rule for Initial Approval overview.

Ms. Ammons began by stating that the Board will look at the Georgia Department of Corrections' (GDC) Administrative Rules and give Initial Approval to change one of the Administrative Rules.

Ms. Ammons discussed O.C.G.A. § 50-13-3(A)(1) which deals with rule-making requirements imposed by law. Essentially, in addition to all the other duties that State Boards have, they are also required to enact an administrative regulation that describes how an agency will disseminate public information/public records. Additionally, Ms. Ammons discussed O.C.G.A. § 42-2-11(B) which states that the board is authorized to adopt, establish, and promulgate rules and regulations governing the transaction of the business of the penal system of the state by the department. Fundamentally, this code gives the Board the legal authority to issue administrative rules and regulations that are related to operations of the Department.

Ms. Ammons continued by explaining the process and giving the steps for making an amendment through the Administrative Procedure Act. Then, Ms. Ammons explained that the rule that needs initial approval today is RULE 125-1-1-.09, which governs access to GDC's records. The current version was enacted in 1983 by the Board and it was last updated in 2008. Ms. Ammons was seeking the Board's initial approval on some modernization of the text of the regulation. After going through each paragraph, Ms. Ammons asked the Board for a motion to approve the Initial Approval of the Administrative Rule Change.

Mr. Alton Russell made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland, and the motion was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

This concluded the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by asking the board members to review the proposed 2021 Board Calendar with the meeting locations in Forsyth. There was some discussion and Mr. Wayne Dasher suggested to change the date and location of the April 1st board meeting to April 15th with the location being in Glennville. However, Chairman Blackburn suggested that the Board should revisit the April board meeting location and date once Mr. Dasher confirms all the arrangements and details. Mr. Dasher agreed, therefore, Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Board Calendar with all locations being Forsyth, except April, which is "To Be Determined." Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland, and the motion was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Thereafter, Chairman Blackburn advised the Board that he assigned all members to specific Committees and that the members could review the Committee Assignment List. Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Committee Assignment List. Secretary Andrea Shelton made a motion to approve the Committee Assignment List, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. The Committee Assignment List was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Lastly, Chairman Blackburn advised the board members that the 2021 Georgia Prison Warden's Association Conference is June 6th through 9th, 2021 at the Lanier Islands Legacy Lodge. Board members already contributed to the Scholarship Fund last year and since the conference was canceled, board members would not have to collect again this year towards that fund. Chairman Blackburn asked members to let the Board Liaison know if they wish to attend this conference.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn stated that Mr. Ricky Myrick, former Chief of Staff for the Department of Corrections, retired on January 1st after 30 years of service. Chairman Blackburn stated that he would like to make a motion to draft an honorary resolution in his honor.

Mr. W.D. Strickland made a motion to approve the honorary resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell. The honorary resolution was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Blackburn reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on February 4, 2021 at State Office 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