

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

March 4, 2021

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen
Mr. Duke Blackburn - Chairman
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Mr. Larry Haynie
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

CONFERENCE CALL:

Ms. Janelle King
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Luis "Lou" M. Solis Jr.
Mr. Bill White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Mike Coggins

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. Sharrod Campbell, Office of Professional Standards
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
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
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain
Mr. Dexter Walker, OIT

VISITORS:

Mr. Fredrick "Ricky" Myrick, Former Chief of Staff
Mr. Larry C. Clifton, Deputy Warden - Coweta County Correctional Institution - Conference Call
Mr. Bill McKenzie, Warden - Coweta County Correctional Institution - Conference Call

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the March 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 confirmed the following individuals were present via conference call: Board Members Janelle King, John Mayes, Lou Solis, and Bill White; Senior Assistant Attorney General Tina Piper; Mr. Larry C. Clifton, Deputy Warden of Coweta County Correctional Institution, and Mr. Bill McKenzie, Warden of Coweta County Correctional Institution.

Chairman Blackburn and Commissioner Timothy C. Ward then presented a board resolution and a departmental badge to Mr. Fredrick “Ricky” Myrick, former Chief of Staff, for retiring after more than 31 years of remarkable service to the Department of Corrections and to the State of Georgia. Chairman Blackburn shared personal stories regarding his experience in working with Mr. Myrick throughout his career. Mr. Myrick thanked Chairman Blackburn, the board members, Commissioner Ward, and the staff at the Department of Corrections.

A photo was taken of the resolution and badge presentations.

Chairman Blackburn presented the March Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher 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 February Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. 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 presentation by discussing the Governor’s Extended Emergency Order renewing the Public Health State of Emergency and extending it for a period of thirty (30) days, expiring on April 6, 2021.

To continue, Mr. Sauls discussed the Phase 1A Vaccination Distribution Plan, the Responsive Guideline Driven COVID-19 Strategy of social distancing, hand washing, wearing masks, chemical utilization, fogging and wiping down. Plus, Mr. Sauls discussed the Vaccination Survey of the likelihood of offenders taking the COVID-19 vaccine.

To conclude, Mr. Sauls discussed the Vaccination Progress Report, which explains how many doses were received, how many 1st doses were administered, and the benefits of the Johnson and Johnson single dose vaccine that was recently FDA approved.

This concluded Mr. Sauls’ report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner of the Inmate Services Division, to give an update on the Inmate Services Impact Report for Fiscal Year 2020.

Mr. Sanders began by stating that he would briefly discuss the Report as the board members had a hard copy of the actual booklet within their possession and they could review at their leisure.

To continue, Mr. Sanders highlighted information on Reentry Services and Cognitive Programming, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Metro Reentry Facility, the New Freedom Program, Reentry Assessment Centers, Release Document Repository, and Community Engagement Initiative and Peach Pass Partnership. Mr. Sanders then discussed the Staff and Program Development Unit, Initial Correctional Counseling Training, Addiction Certification Preparation Program, Certified Clinical Supervisors Training, SCRIBE Counselor Enhancements, Program Development Unit, Odyssey Program Development and Implementation, Program

Treatment Completion Certificate, Domestic Violence Trauma Interventions Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Grant, and the Special Management Unit Programming.

Mr. Sanders concluded his report with discussing Chaplaincy Services, Academic Education, Charter High School Graduates, Library Services, book donations, Career, Technical, and Higher Education completions, and Post-Secondary Programs and Partnerships.

This concluded Mr. Sanders' report.

Following such, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison, to give a Legislative Session Update.

Mr. Thrower began his report by discussing the 2021-2022 Biennium, the 26 days of the Legislative Session being completed, Crossover Day, and Sine Die Day. Mr. Thrower continued by discussing the following House and Senate Bills:

- House Bill 371 (Video Hearing Legislation) - Allows for the utilization of video hearings in all classes of court.
- House Bill 168 (Inmate Records Bill) - Allows for a District Attorney to request access of an offender's entire file, with the exception of medical records, for purposes of objecting to Parole.
- Senate Bill 60 - Covers Public Safety Officers under the Georgia State Indemnification Fund in instances of a heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture suffered by a public safety officer resulting in certain disabilities or death within 24 hours of performing a work-related activity.
- House Bill 377 (Pregnant Offender Deferral Bill) - Allows judicial discretion for a pregnant offender to have their sentenced deferred for up to 12 months.
- House Bill 446 and Senate Bill 161 - Related to offenders receiving drivers licenses upon release.

This concluded Mr. Thrower's report.

Last of all, Commissioner Ward asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to give a Review of Board Statutes.

Ms. Ammons began by discussing the Board's authority and duties, and the Board operations enabling statute O.C.G.A. §42-2-1, which created the Department of Corrections. Ms. Ammons then discussed the Board's membership, congressional districts, terms, responsibilities of the Chairman and Secretary, per diem received for each day of actual attendance at meetings, and general meeting information.

Afterwards, Ms. Ammons spoke on the Board's operational role in policy making, items impacting offenders such as educational programs, programming, program certificates, contact records and discharge gratuity. In addition to that, Ms. Ammons discussed items impacting staff like employee qualifications, weapon retention, and badge retention.

To close, Ms. Ammons spoke on items impacting facilities and county correctional institutions such as facility designs and bond requirements.

This concluded the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by moving into Regular Session to approve the appointments of Mr. Larry C. Clifton as Warden of Coweta County Correctional Facility and Mr. Caden "Tyler" Sikes as Deputy Warden of Screven County Correctional Facility.

Chairman Blackburn called upon Ms. Rose Williams, Chairman of the Facilities Committee, to give the Board the Committee's recommendation on both candidates. Ms. Williams stated that the Facilities Committee would give their recommendations of each candidate separately.

Ms. Williams stated that the Committee received Mr. Larry C. Clifton's board packet, and after reviewing his report, the Committee unanimously recommends appointment approval for him.

Ms. Rose Williams made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell. The motion was voted approved by the Board as presented. Chairman Blackburn congratulated Mr. Clifton, and Mr. Clifton thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Additionally, Ms. Williams stated that the Committee advised Mr. Caden "Tyler" Sikes earlier that he did not need to attend the board meeting virtually since the Committee met and made a unanimous decision to table his appointment approval. Ms. Williams went on to say that the Committee received Mr. Caden "Tyler" Sikes' board packet, and after reviewing his report, the Committee unanimously recommends tabling his appointment approval. Ms. Williams further advised that the Committee would revisit this issue at an upcoming board meeting.

Ms. Rose Williams made the motion to approve tabling Mr. Sikes' appointment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher. The motion to table Mr. Sikes' appointment was voted approved by the Board as presented.

Lastly, under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn asked the board members for a motion to approve the following resolutions:

Correctional Officer Week: Recognizing the week of May 2 - 8, 2021 for the faithful and dedicated service performed by correctional officers each day.

National Nurses Week: Recognizing the week of May 6 – 12, 2021 for the vital role nurses play in the healthcare industry, and for their commitment in providing healthcare to each individual.

Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to approve both resolutions, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. Both resolutions were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Blackburn reminded the board members that the Board will get its Annual Board Training after the next board meeting in April, since a few members were appointed after the last training.

Chairman Blackburn then reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on April 1, 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