

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

March 3, 2022

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Duke Blackburn – Chairman
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Mr. Larry Haynie
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Mr. John Mayes
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. Guy A. Daughtrey
Ms. Janelle King
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.
Mr. Bill White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse

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. 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
Mr. Chris Tiller, Executive Director, GCI
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain

VISITORS:

Grant Blankenship, GPB
Kate Boccia, NIA/ CEO
Evelyn W. Cox, NIA Member

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 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 Guy Daughtrey, Janelle King, John Mayes, Luis “Lou” Solis Jr., and Bill White. Chairman Blackburn presented the March 2022 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 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 Senate adding to the Amended Fiscal Year 2022 budget, an additional \$4000 dollars to all post-sworn officers. This addition is on top of the \$5000 dollars they are giving to all state employees. All post-sworn officers will get a \$9000 dollar pay increase, retro back to July 1st. A medium security facility starting correctional officer salary will be \$40,044 and a close security facility starting correctional officer salary will be \$43,458. Commissioner Ward went on to say that he could not thank Governor Brian P. Kemp enough and that the Governor heard our story and now the agency will be receiving \$600 million in infrastructure upgrades, \$25 million in radio upgrades, and pay increases for our officers.

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

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 Annual Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. In his presentation, Mr. Adams discussed the statewide \$5,000 dollar pay increase, the \$4,000 increase for sworn positions to reduce turnover and overtime exposure – effective April 1, 2022, and the total statewide workforce recommendations.

Mr. Adams then discussed the infrastructure on the communications enhancement which replaces radio systems statewide, the wireless infrastructure upgrades statewide, and the total infrastructure recommendations. He also addressed the replacement of GDC vehicles (107), state prison program regional transport hubs (72), state prison program and the total vehicle recommendations.

Mr. Adams closed by discussing the State Properties Commission state prison facility transformation, Georgia Building Authority, and the total facility transformation recommendations.

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 mental health statistics for GDC’s offender population. Some of the highlights from his presentation were the percentage of GDC’s inmate population that have mental health concerns, mental health levels, mental health services, mental health population from 2011 to 2021, and the percentage of inmates receiving mental health services from 2011 to 2021. Mr. Sauls closed with discussing the mental health expansion facilities, mental health beds, additional mental health staff, and the go-live date.

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 the Inmate Services' success stories such as the Walker Faith and Character Base Prison graduation, offenders completing vocational, advance and stick welding programs. In addition, he discussed the Valdosta TC first mobile welding program, Burruss Correctional Training Center combined graduation ceremony for General Equivalency Diplomas, Common Good Atlanta, Guide Dog Program, and Welding Program.

Mr. Sanders then discussed the Arrendale TC graduation for B.A.S.I.C.S. World of Works course, (Distance Learning) first live-streamed teacher-led GED session to offender housing units and cells, distance learning science class on genetics, monthly STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) activity, Colwell PDC Rescued Dog Program graduation, Bainbridge PSATC Career Technical and High Education programs, Hudson TC Fatherhood program, West Central ITF detainees earning certificates from Wiregrass Technical for completion of Understanding Employer Expectations and Effective Communication in Work Force.

Mr. Sanders closed by discussing the Literary Braille Transcriber certifications and the Fleet Services Program Automotive Academy.

This concluded Mr. Sanders' 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 staff impact reiterating that all staff have been relocated to new assignments and having completed all annual training, orientation and welcomed by their Wardens and Superintendents at the receiving locations. Staff are paired with current staff at their new facilities.

In addition, all offenders have been relocated to other facilities or transitional centers and there is a project team assigned to oversee future use and planning is underway. Mr. Holt further discussed visitation update and online registration system remaining, COVID-19 preventive measures incorporated into standard practice, allowing contact visits beginning on March 5, 2022, allowing children age 5 and over to visit beginning March 12, 2022, and the next Family Day is being scheduled for July 15, 2022.

To close, Mr. Holt discussed the budget that was applied for the Transportation Hub regionally. Mr. Holt stated that he attended the Sheriff's Association and Jailer's Conference and spoke to the group. Some of the highlights from the conference discussion were advising what GDC plans to do, reiterating that GDC is fully committed to helping ensure our offenders get into the system the appropriate way, establishing regional hubs, sheriff's bringing offenders back to the local prisons, finalizing a conceptual design for what the hubs will look like around the state, and communication and point of contact throughout the state.

This concluded Mr. Holt's 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 probationer and civilian arrests, the probationer contraband arrests data collected from November 27, 2021 to present, and the total arrests for Baldwin, Calhoun, Dooly, Hays, Johnson, Macon, Smith, and Wilcox state prison and total civilian arrests.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by discussing his conversation with Coweta Judicial Circuit Sheriffs and Judges at a Roundtable Luncheon, wherein possible legislation would be introduced regarding adding a five (5) year sentence to an offender's sentence for the possession or use of a cellphone in a prison facility.

Next, Chairman Blackburn stated that he would like the Board of Corrections Facilities Committee to review and consider the possibility of naming a building at Baldwin State Prison in honor of dedicated officers Sergeant Christopher Monica and Sergeant Curtis Billue. In addition, Chairman Blackburn added to consider naming a building at Telfair State Prison in honor of Officer Larry Stell. Chairman Blackburn asked the Committee to consider doing a formal ceremony along with their families during the dedication. Chairman Blackburn asked the Committee to come back with their recommendation for the Board.

To follow, Chairman Blackburn asked 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 fund was currently at thirteen hundred 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, the Joint Luncheon and the Board of Corrections meeting on April 14th.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to present a RLA and Permanent Easement to Georgia Power Company, Inc. at Emanuel Women's Facility property resolution.

Ms. Ammons stated that the State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections is in custody of, property in Emanuel County, Georgia, known as the Emanuel Women's Facility.

The Department of Corrections is completing construction of a new Education Building which will require new overhead and underground electrical supply lines and the Georgia Power Company has need to install a transformer, service pole, and electrical supply lines to serve the new Education Building.

Georgia Power Company has need of a temporary Revocable Lease during construction, to be followed by a Permanent Easement upon completion of construction. This proposed Easement will exclusively benefit the State and the Georgia Department of Corrections has determined that it can accommodate the easement request without causing harm to the operations of the Emanuel Women's Facility.

Ms. Ammons then asked the Board for a motion to approve the property resolution, however, Chairman Blackburn stated that the members should also use the same motion to approve honorary resolutions for:

Correctional Officers Week: Recognizing the week of May 1 - 7, 2022, for the faithful and dedicated service performed by correctional officers each day.

National Nurses Week: Recognizing the week of May 6 - 12, 2022, for the vital role nurses play in the healthcare industry, and for their commitment in providing healthcare to each individual.

Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve all three (3) resolutions. Ms. Andrea Shelton made a motion to approve the resolutions, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher and Mr. Alton Russell. The resolutions were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

There being no further business, Chairman Blackburn reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting would be casual attire and Board polos if board members choose to do so.

Chairman Blackburn reminded the members the meeting is on April 14, 2022, at the Garden Club, in Glennville, Georgia.

The board meeting was adjourned.

Duke Blackburn, Chairman

Andrea Shelton, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison