

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

May 2, 2019

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Duke Blackburn
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Carl Franklin
Mr. Larry Haynie
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Alton Russell-Chairman
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams
Mr. Jerry Willis
Ms. Rocio D. Woody

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Mike Coggins
Sheriff Roger Garrison
Ms. June Wood

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner
Mr. Ricky Myrick, 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 OPD
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Mr. Walter Hudson, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Mr. Keith Lank, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Gregory McLaughlin, Warden of Terrell County
Ms. Gwendolyn Meriweather, Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment, Terrell County
Mr. Clay Nix, Director of Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Amy Pataluna, Director of GCI
Mr. Clinton Perry, Warden of Macon State Prison
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Mike Riley, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Chris Tiller, Director of GCI
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain
Ms. Tokoiya Williams, Correctional Officer

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:

Ms. Tina Piper, Senior Assistant Attorney General

VISITORS:

Jackie Franklin

First, Chairman Alton Russell called to order the May meeting for the Board of Corrections (“the Board”) at 10:00 a.m. and Board Liaison, Simone Juhmi, recorded the minutes.

Chairman Alton Russell then asked Dr. Steven Turner to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Russell led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and then recognized all guests and visitors, and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Alton Russell presented the May 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 Alton Russell also presented the April Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was also seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The Minutes were then voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioner Timothy C. Ward began his report by highlighting that he would be holding his first Senior Leadership Offsite (SLO) at Jekyll Island. At this meeting, the Commissioner stated that the team would be developing his mission and vision statements, and core values for the agency. In addition, the team would develop the top five priorities for the department.

Plus, Commissioner Ward discussed the upcoming Employee Recognition Week, the May 28th Executive staff field visit at Valdosta State Prison, and the Georgia Department of Corrections hosting the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) at the Westin hotel in Savannah on May 30th- June 6th.

Next, Commissioner Ward discussed the dashboard, which is a three-page overview highlighting key areas within the Agency.

Commissioner Ward then asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Deputy Director of Facilities Division, to present the Court Teleconferencing Project. Mr. Holt began by discussing how the Court Teleconferencing Project came to fruition, the data review of the number of Court Production Orders requiring transport, project initiatives, process needs, teleconferencing, video hearings, and project implementation (phases). In addition, he discussed the movements of offenders, video hearing equipment, virtual court hearings, cost (including equipment and installation) and the expansion plan.

Next, Mr. Alan Watson, Assistant Commissioner of Administration and Finance Division, presented the Amended Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations. Mr. Watson began by stating that the Amended Fiscal Year 2019 statewide changes were an adjustment to the agency premiums for the Department of Administrative Services administering self-insurance programs and in offender management, there was a reduction of funds to meet projected expenditures. To continue, Mr. Watson discussed the Fiscal Year 2020 agency specific changes in Health Program Workload Adjustments, Administration Programs, transfer funds to the Department of Community Supervision to support nine positions previously funded through a federal Justice Reinvestment Initiative grant and Offender Management Program.

To close, Mr. Watson discussed Fiscal Year 2020 statewide changes in merit-based pay increases, employer share of retirement contributions, insurance premiums, and a bond.

Thereafter, Commissioner Ward asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel, Office of Legal Services, to give a brief Legislation update. Ms. Ammons began by stating that the session adjourned on April 2, 2019. Governor Brian Kemp has 40 days to review the bills that passed both houses and decide to sign or veto. Legislative changes are effective on July 1st, unless another date is specified in the bill.

Ms. Ammons then briefly discussed the following bills:

House Bill 345 - which makes substantial changes with regards to setting forth requirements for how pregnant offenders that have just given birth, are treated, when they are in our custody, county jail custody, and any place of confinement.

Senate Bill 6 - prohibits the use of an “unmanned aircraft” (drones) for the delivery of contraband into the four facilities.

House Bill 202 - (Did Not Pass) Would create a new requirement that the GDC publish quarterly reports showing aggregate data on offenders who are subject to immigration detainers, and Customs Enforcement detainers, the offenses for which non-citizens are incarcerated, the home countries of offenders who are non-citizens, and the percentage of the total offender population that are non-citizens.

House Bill 702 - (Did Not Pass) Would repeal the death penalty and commute all existing death sentences to life without parole.

House Bill 714 - (Did Not Pass) Would codify the consequences for non-criminal disciplinary infractions. Also would limit use of restrictive housing for disciplinary infractions that are violations of state law; would prohibit consecutive periods in restrictive housing, and no more than 90 days total in restrictive housing per year unless the offender is a danger to himself/herself, others, or the security of the facility; prohibits the placement of “vulnerable” offenders in restrictive housing unless and until “alternative disciplinary sanctions” have been attempted and failed.

To close, Ms. Ammons stated that she would continue to monitor legislation for the 2020 session, and that legislation from the 2019 session that did not pass, remains active for the 2020 session and can be taken up next year.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Ricky Myrick, Assistant Commissioner of Facilities Division, to present the “Beyond the Call” employee recognition award. Mr. Myrick stated he would be presenting the award to Officer Tokoiya Williams, of Macon State Prison, for her vigilance and adherence to the GDC’s non-negotiable mission of public safety, in successfully intercepting contraband from entering a facility. Mr. Myrick stated the Georgia Department of Corrections extends sincere gratitude to Officer Williams for her professionalism in her everyday duties as a Correctional Officer, her dedication and for going above and beyond the call of duty.

A photo was taken of the plaque presentation.

Thereafter, Interim Commissioner Ward asked Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs, to introduce the “Beyond the Walls” article and short video on Mr. Mallory Thornton.

Ms. Heath stated that Mr. Thornton is the Groundskeeper Supervisor, behind that beautiful landscaping done by the Georgia Building Authority (GBA) staff, which includes a former Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) offender. Mr. Thornton maintains the flowers, decorations and lawn of the Capitol in Atlanta and he was a part of the program that allowed Lifers to gain skills while working at the Governor’s Mansion. That is how Thornton began working with the Georgia Building Authority and they saw that he was hardworking and had landscaping experience.

Thereafter, Ms. Heath showed the short video on Mr. Mallory Thornton.

This concluded the Commissioner’s Report.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Chairman Alton Russell began the “Chairman’s Report” by moving into Regular Session to approve the appointment of Mr. Gregory McLaughlin, Warden of Terrell County Correctional Facility and Ms. Gwendolyn Meriweather, Deputy Warden of Care & Treatment of Terrell County.

Chairman Russell called upon Ms. Rose Williams, Chairman of the Facilities Committee, to give the Board the Committee’s recommendation of both appointments.

Ms. Williams stated that the Facilities Committee received both board packets for Mr. McLaughlin and Ms. Meriweather, and after reviewing their report, the committee unanimously recommends appointment approval for both candidates.

Ms. Rose Williams made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher, and the motion was voted approved by the Board as presented. Chairman Russell congratulated Mr. McLaughlin and Ms. Meriweather and they both thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Chairman Russell gave the Board a brief update on the June Board meeting in Columbus.

Chairman Russell continued with Old or New Business by asking Mr. Bryan Wilson, Deputy General Counsel, Office of Legal Services, to present a bond resolution.

Mr. Wilson briefly stated that the total Fiscal Year 2020 budget passed with the bond appropriation totaling \$43,920,000, for the following items:

- Metro State Prison - Phase Three - \$13,000,000
- Smith Transition Center - New Dorm for 100 inmates - \$1,500,000
- Facilities Repair and Maintenance Bonds Emergency Repairs and Maintenance, Fire Alarms, CCTV, ETC. - \$ 11,580,000
- ASMP - Dialysis unit, Asbestos Abatement, Mechanical Systems - \$10,400,000
- GSP - Replace Fire Alarm system - \$1,985,000
- Vehicles Replace 6 Transport Buses - \$1,160,000
- Replace Vehicles - \$4,295,000

Mr. John Mayes made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher. The bond resolution was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Russell mentioned the following items to the Board:

- The amount of the Board of Corrections flower fund
- The next Board of Corrections meeting is on June 6th, in Columbus
- Following the board meeting, there will be mandatory Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for all members

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Alton Russell, Chairman

Duke Blackburn, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison