

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

May 7, 2026

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Duke Blackburn
Ms. Kellie Brownlow
Mr. Rodney Bryant
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Thomas Culpepper
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr. – Chairman
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Rossie Ross
Mr. Alton Russell
Mr. W. D. Strickland

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. John B. Edwards
Ms. Sandra D. Hudson
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

Ms. Elizabeth Crowder, Attorney General’s Office

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Mr. Louis DeBroux, Assistant Commissioner, Research, Strategic Planning, Government Affairs
Ms. Latera M. Davis, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division
Mr. Jackson Defore, Assistant Commissioner of Finance and Admin
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner of Health Services Division
Ms. Ashley Atkins, MSN, RN, Senior EHR Product Manager, (NaphCare)
Mr. Jacob Beasley, Warden, Georgia Diagnostic & Classification Prison
Ms. Darlene Bell, Training Supervisor
Ms. Lori Benoit, Deputy Director of Office of Communications
Mr. Antione Caldwell, North Regional Director
Ms. Schuvonda Davis, Correctional Officer III, Bleckley RSAT
Ms. Tanesia Davis, Sergeant, Dooly State Prison
Ms. Miya Dunlap, Training Specialist
Ms. Komola Edwards, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Kenneth Ellis, Statewide Chaplain
Mr. Benjamin Ford, Facilities Division Director
Ms. Tomeika Harvey (for Mr. Willie Wright, Correctional Officer III, Clayton TC)
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Office of Communications
Ms. Cianakah Hogan, Training Supervisor
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director of Data Management and Research
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Ms. Briyana Ingram, Training Specialist
Ms. Angela Ivestor, Director, OIT
Mr. David Jones, Director of Engineering, Construction Services
Mr. Elijah Jones, Training Manager
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Quana Kemp, Admin Assistant
Mr. Michael Mahone, Training Supervisor
Ms. Dawn Mock, Office of Information Technology
Mr. John Moore, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Jessica Perdue, Office of Communications
Ms. Cynthia Pitts, Registered Nurse, Montgomery State Prison, Centurion
Mr. Antonio Printup, Director of Office of Professional Development
Mr. Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Office of Professional Development
Ms. Janine Robinson, Executive Director of Georgia Correctional Industries
Mr. Nehemiah Robinson, Training Specialist

Ms. Michelle Sherrod, Director of Budget Services
Ms. Cordia Smith, RN - Lead Nurse, Smith Transitional Center and Women's PDC
Mr. Rodney Stone, Deputy Director of Administration and Finance
Ms. Dana Swenson, Correctional Officer II, Walker State Prison
Mr. Charles Vinson, Office of Information Technology
Ms. Bridget Wakefield, Statewide ACU/CSU Coordinator, Centurion
Mr. Bryan Wilson, Interim General Counsel
Mr. Matthew Wolfe, Director of Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Godwin Udoh, Correctional Officer
Mr. Jaun Usquiano, Training Specialist

VISITORS:

Ms. Takarah Carr, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Susie Chancey, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Charlotte Jones, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Dorothy Lester, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Charlene Martin, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Latoya Mosley, Guest of Awardee
Mr. Scotty Pitts, Guest of Awardee
Mr. Christopher Rudd, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Erica Samuels, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Cathy Swenson, Guest of Awardee
Mr. Tom Swenson, Guest of Awardee
Ms. ShaDiamond Sams, Guest of Awardee
Mr. Stuart Wakefield, Guest of Awardee
Ms. Adriane Wheat, Guest of Awardee

First, Chairman Ester Fleming Jr. called to order the May 7, 2026, meeting for the Board of Corrections ("the Board") at 10:00 a.m. and Board Liaison, Simone Juhmi, recorded the minutes.

Chairman Fleming then asked Chaplain Kenneth Ellis to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Fleming led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Fleming welcomed and recognized all guests and visitors and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Fleming presented the May 7, 2026, Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Rossie Ross made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Thomas Culpepper. The Agenda was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming presented the April 2, 2026, Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Alton Russell made a motion to approve the Minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Rossie Ross. The Minutes were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

To begin the Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Oliver briefly discussed several events such as his attendance at the 6th Annual National Returning Citizens Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, the Academic Education Conference held on April 13-15, 2026 at Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Teacher Appreciation Week on May 4-8, 2026, the Mod Corr Unit at Dodge State Prison, Lee State Prison, Hays State Prison, and Montgomery State Prison, the Taser10 and Bodycam Rollout, and observing Correctional Officers Week, Nurse Week, and Employee Appreciation Week in May.

Commissioner Oliver then discussed the Commissioner's Dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

Commissioner Oliver then asked Mr. Louis DeBroux, Assistant Commissioner Research, Strategic Planning, and Government Affairs, to do a Legislative Update.

Assistant Commissioner DeBroux began by giving the disposition of bills and stating that the bills were passed by both the House and Senate prior to Sine Die for the 2025-2026 legislative session of the Georgia General Assembly. Governor Brian P. Kemp had until Tuesday, May 12th to sign or veto these bills. If the Governor signs a bill, it automatically becomes law. But if the Governor vetoes a bill, the bill is returned to the originating chamber, and the General Assembly will have the opportunity to override the veto with a 2/3rds vote. And if the Governor neither signs nor vetoes a bill by the 40th day post-Sine Die, it automatically becomes law.

Assistant Commissioner DeBroux presented and briefly discussed the following bills below:

HB 162

This bill enacts modifications to first offender sentencing, restricting and sealing records for individuals convicted under First Offender Act sentences until such status is revoked.

House Bill 438

This bill allows certain sworn law enforcement officers to be eligible for retirement benefits at age 55; includes GDC criminal investigators and K-9 handlers.

House Bill 549

This bill provides terms and limitations regarding reimbursement for POST training by the hiring agency if the hiring of a POST-certified officer from another agency occurs within (36) months of completion of said training.

House Bill 907 (Completion Special Schools Act)

Bill requires Local Education Agencies (i.e., school system/district) to partner with a completion school OR provide equivalent HS diploma services. This requires support for students needing nontraditional paths to graduation.

House Bill 1118

Bill mandates (80) hours of paid maternal birth leave for state employees.

House Bill 1230

This bill establishes a ban on operating drones (or allowing use of land as a launching site) above prisons, jails, and other places of incarceration, except those operated by law enforcement. Violation of this statute would be a misdemeanor.

House Bill 1234

This bill provides for group term life insurance benefits to cover funeral costs for deceased individuals which are covered under ERS, GA Legis Retirement System, and the Judicial Retirement System.

House Bill 1391

This bill provides for the creation of specialty license plates honoring public safety officers. This bill was signed by Governor Brian P. Kemp on Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Senate Bill 524

This bill provides for the creation of specialty license plates honoring the Girl Scouts and honoring the 250th Anniversary of the founding of America.

Senate Bill 207

This bill provides a pre-clearance process in the licensing of individuals with criminal records who make an application to, or are investigated by, certain licensing boards and commissions. It removes the presumed denial of licensure based on previous conviction unless conviction directly pertains to the type of license sought by applicant.

Senate Bill 285

This bill requires the Georgia Commissioner of Insurance to distribute 1.5% of all collected taxes imposed by counties and municipal corporations on all life insurance companies, and all foreign, alien, and domestic insurance companies to the Peace Officers Annuity and Benefit Fund. This bill was signed by Governor Brian P. Kemp on Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Senate Bill 293

As pertains to GDC/GCI (Section 10-5b1), this bill requires all dealer license plates to be made of metal and feature raised text and designs created by stamping dies (embossed).

Senate Bill 384

This bill allows for 2-year and 5-year registration for specified vehicles (up from 1-year).

Senate Bill 452

This bill would increase the maximum employer contribution to a 401(k) for certain state law enforcement officers (POST certified). This bill increases employer matching funds by 2% per creditable year of service above (5) years, up to a maximum up 15% matched.

Senate Bill 470 ("Emergency & Public Safety Signal Protection Act")

This bill would ban possession or operation of signal jammers in the State of Georgia, with an exemption for Law Enforcement agencies.

Senate Resolution 624

A Senate resolution establishing a memorial highway in honor of GDC officers Sgt. Christopher Monica and Sgt. Curtis Billue, killed in the line of duty by escaped inmates during transport.

This concluded Mr. DeBroux's report.

Next, Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Jackson Defore, Assistant Commissioner of Administrative and Finance Division, to do a Budget Update.

Mr. Defore began by discussing the Annual Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Overview.

Some of the highlights discussed were Correctional Officer Recruitment and Retention, Departmental Administration, Food and Farm Operations, Health, Offender Management, Private Prisons, Safety, Security, and Technologies Initiatives, Operational Support and Offender Programming, Statewide Changes, Original Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (State Funds), the Total Amended Funds, the Total Annual Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (State Funds), and Capital Outlay.

Last of all, Mr. Defore discussed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Overview by program, as well as the Governor's recommendation, the House, Senate, and the Fiscal Year 2027 Conference Committee Budget.

This concluded the report for Mr. Defore.

Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Benjamin Ford, Director of the Facilities Division, to introduce the four Correctional Officers that were being honored. Mr. Ford began by stating that Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner of Facilities Division, was out and that he would handle introducing and honoring our four (4) correctional officers.

Mr. Ford introduced Ms. Dana Swenson, Correctional Officer II, Walker State Prison, Ms. Schuvonda Davis, Correctional Officer III, Bleckley RSAT, Mr. Willie Wright, Correctional Officer III, from Clayton Transitional Center was absent so he introduced Ms. Tomeika Harvey to stand in lieu of him, and Ms. Tanesia Davis, Sergeant, Dooly State Prison.

Mr. Ford spoke about each officer and then Mr. Ford assisted Commissioner Oliver with presenting a Commissioner's coin and a Governor's proclamation to these officers for Correctional Officers Week. Correctional Officers Week is celebrated the week of May 3-9, 2026. Individual photos were taken of each officer's presentation.

Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Health Services, to assist in honoring four (4) Nurses for National Nurses Week: Ashley Atkinson, MSN, RN, Senior EHR Product Manager Office of Health Services (NaphCare), Bridget Wakefield, Statewide ACU/CSU Coordinator Centurion, Cynthia Pitts, Registered Nurse, Montgomery State Prison, Centurion, and Cordia Smith, RN - Lead Nurse, Smith Transitional Center and Women's Probation Detention Center. The Board of Corrections honors these nurses for the vital role they

play in the correctional health setting each day. Mr. Sauls spoke briefly about each nurse, and the nurses were presented with a Governor's proclamation and a Commissioner's coin. National Nurses Week is celebrated the week of May 6 – 12, 2026. Individual photos were taken of the presentations.

Commissioner Oliver then asked Mr. Antonio Printup to introduce Mr. Elijah Jones, Training Manager, to discuss an incident that took place on December 7, 2025, wherein several individuals assisted in saving the life of another.

Mr. Jones gave a chronological account of the emergency response and the individuals who carried out each critical function. Mr. Jones stated that the team responded with exceptional coordination, fully aligning with the American Heart Association's High-Performance Team principles: clearly defined roles, closed-loop communication, minimal interruptions to CPR, rapid AED deployment, and strong situational awareness throughout the incident.

Mr. Jones stated that these individuals' rapid assessment, immediate CPR, quick access to the AED, and cohesive teamwork ensured that life-saving intervention occurred within seconds. These actions—performed with precision and unity—directly contributed to the individuals survival and exemplify the highest standards of the Office of Professional Development.

Next, Mr. Printup along with Commissioner Oliver and Chairman Fleming presented Life Saving Awards to the following individuals: Mr. Elijah Jones, Ms. Darlene Bell, Ms. Takarah Carr, Ms. Miya Dunlap, Ms. Briyana Ingram, Ms. Cianakah Hogan, Mr. Michael Mahone, Mr. Nehemiah Robinson, and Mr. Juan Usquiano. The lifesaving award that was being presented stated "in recognition of your exceptional bravery and swift decision-making in preserving the life of another individual." Individual photos were taken of the presentations.

This concluded the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Under the Chairman's Report, Chairman Fleming advised the Board that we collected a total of two thousand, one hundred and forty-five dollars (\$2,145.00) towards the 2026 Georgia Prison Warden's Association (GPWA) Board of Corrections scholarship fund. Chairman Fleming advised that the Board's final collection was today and that the GPWA Conference will be on June 14-17, 2026, at Lake Lanier in Buford, Georgia.

Chairman Fleming gave the Board an update on the June board meeting, expressing that the Board packet has the draft itinerary for the June board meeting in it, and that the June meeting would be held at Lake Lanier in Buford, Georgia.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Fleming asked Mr. Bryan Wilson, Interim General Counsel for the Office of Legal Services, to present the property resolution for approval to the Board.

Mr. Wilson stated the State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections has custody of, property in Lowndes County, Georgia, known as Valdosta State Prison ("the Property") located at 3259 Val Tech Road, Valdosta, Georgia 31602.

The Georgia Department of Corrections no longer needs the buildings referred to as the "South Building" (BLLIP ID# 8280 and consisting of approximately 16,032 square feet), "Flammable Storage" (BLLIP ID# 8290 and consisting of approximately 780 square feet), and "Industries Storage" (BLLIP ID# 72310 and consisting of approximately 2,400 square feet) which is located on the campus of Valdosta State Prison.

The demolition of the South Building, Flammable Storage, and Industries Storage is necessary to prepare the area for the installation of the new Mod Corr units, and the Georgia Department of Corrections reaffirms that said Buildings are surplus to the current needs of GDC and seeks to demolish said building.

Mr. Wilson then stated that all the necessary paperwork was in the Board members packets.

Chairman Fleming asked for a motion to approve the property resolution. Mr. Thomas Culpepper made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. The resolution was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at Lake Lanier, in Buford, Georgia. Chairman Fleming also reminded the Board members that lunch was available after the board meeting to honor our Correctional Officers, Correctional Nurses, and Life Saver Awardees.

There being no further business, the board meeting was adjourned.

Ester Fleming Jr., Chairman

Chris Clark, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison