

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

October 7, 2021

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn – Chairman
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Mr. John Mayes
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse
Mr. Alton Russell
Mr. W. D. Strickland

CONFERENCE CALL:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Larry Haynie
Ms. Andrea Shelton

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

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
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director, Data Unit
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Commissioner’s Executive Assistant
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
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Human Resources Director
Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison
Mr. Chris Tiller, Executive Director, GCI
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain

VISITORS:

Katie Boccia, Citizen

First, Chairman Duke Blackburn called to order the October 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 Mr. Guy A. Daughtrey, Ms. Janelle King, Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr., Mr. Bill White, and Ms. Rose Williams.

Chairman Blackburn presented the October Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. W.D. Strickland. The Agenda was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Blackburn also presented the September Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen. 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.

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 Physical Health Transition Update: Phase 1. Specifically, Mr. Sauls discussed the Joint Project Management between Wellpath and GDC, the establishing of work groups and schedules for weekly meetings, weekly leadership out briefing status report, evaluating risk, and barriers to implementation.

Mr. Sauls discussed the Phase I completion, assuming the existing medical model and delivery of care processing, intake diagnostics, sick call, chronic care, and maintaining paper medical records. In addition, he discussed utilization management, hospital admissions, complete hospital discharge planning, outside consults-care coordination, complete transition of medical leadership roles, complete communication triage, complete after hours calls, and problem resolution/escalation.

Mr. Sauls continued by discussing Phase II of adopting the Wellpath future state/medical delivery model, the kick-off meeting date, and adopting the work plan, work groups, and reporting schedules. Mr. Sauls then discussed the expected deliverables in Phase III: electronic health records, electronic medical consult scheduling, full implementation of the human resource plan, transition to a full-service delivery model, Tele-health, Tele-ED, implementing a fully integrated provider network, reporting of clinical and operational metrics, and establishing a continuous quality improvement process.

To close, Mr. Sauls showed a graph of the overall program status.

This concluded Mr. Sauls’ report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services, to give an update on Inmate Services.

Mr. Sanders began by discussing Technology Based Initiatives. Mr. Sanders discussed E-learning (Distance Learning Initiative), delivery/instruction concept of allowing an individual at one facility (or centralized location) to deliver content remotely to other facilities. This included discussing the schedule of live classes being published to facility staff, live classes being scheduled and taught regularly, live sessions being recorded and housed in a SharePoint environment to be accessed and viewed later, and teachers being taught to teach online by GA Virtual School staff with the goal of delivering this content in our tablet environment and being used for counseling services and staff training.

Mr. Sanders continued by discussing the equipment funding and distribution, the CARES Act, counseling and reentry services and staff training, academic education, rural utilities service – distance learning and telemedicine grant, academic education, and facilities in counties designated as federal qualified opportunity zones.

Mr. Sanders then discussed several distance learning equipment items such as Microsoft Teams license, laptop, 65-inch Smart TV mounted on a mobile cart, webcam, and microphone speakers. Mr. Sanders outlined some highlights of the Persevere Coding Initiative such as program stats, current students, location (prisons or transitional centers), graduates, released and employed students, job placement, recidivism and reentry services. He continued by discussing Georgia's implementation, housing at the Metro Reentry Facility, inmates applying and interviewing, initial students, program length, and days and hours of the program. .

Mr. Sanders closed by discussing certified full stack developer, responsive web design, front end libraries, information security and quality assurance, microservice, data visualization, JavaScript algorithms, and data structures.

This concluded Mr. Sanders' report.

Commissioner Ward then asked Mr. Alan Watson, Assistant Commissioner, Administration and Finance Division, to give a Budget update.

Mr. Watson began his report by discussing AFY22 and FY23 funding priorities. Mr. Watson discussed several key areas regarding people, health care, technology, food and farm. In his presentation, he discussed Corrections critical position compensation, mental health counselors, health care, mental health expansion, physical health contracts, technology, officer tablets, forensic analysis, wireless infrastructure, radio system replacement, food and farm, food/transportation and expenses.

To close, Mr. Watson discussed ARPA funding priorities. Some of the highlights were the First Responder pay supplement, COVID specific expenses, classrooms, programming and computers, infrastructure, and wastewater systems and ionization units.

This concluded Mr. Watson's report.

Next, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Division, to give a Facilities Division update.

Mr. Holt began his report by discussing Optamo, an Inmate Assignment Decision Support System (IADSS). Mr. Holt discussed the challenges with manual inmate assignment such as numerous regulations and criteria, time-consuming and prone to human errors, dependent on experienced staff, fragmented population management, and treatment programs scheduling often not considered. Mr. Holt also discussed the goal to improve overall population management which will reduce operational costs, improve facility safety, minimize transports, increase PIC accumulation, and efficiently utilize the available resources.

Additionally, Mr. Holt discussed how the Optamo optimization and modeling solutions work. Some of the highlights discussed were simultaneous assignment, criteria impacting offender assignments, NGA Score, physical and mental health, STG, programming/vocational needs, nature of the crime, sentence duration, non-association, and distance. He continued with correctional facility considerations, available beds (minimum and maximum), balanced inmate populations, scheduling of treatment programs, and offender transfers.

Mr. Holt closed by discussing the module layout, the immediate impact, staff efficiency, firefighter vacancies, the way ahead, and the facility level stratification.

This concluded Mr. Holt's report.

Lastly, Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Clay Nix, Director, Office of Professional Standards (OPS), to give an OPS update.

Mr. Nix began his report by discussing GDC and Drones. In his presentation, Mr. Nix discussed drone incidents, drone sightings by month and by region, top three drone sightings by facilities, and sightings by facilities for FY22. In closing, Mr. Nix discussed the Calendar Year 2021 contraband recovered, confirmed drone drops, the total contraband recovered, types of contraband, and drones recovered in contraband drops.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by moving into Regular Session to approve two County Deputy Warden appointments.

The first candidate was Mr. Eric Sellers, Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment for Spalding County Correctional Facility.

Chairman Blackburn called upon Ms. Rose Williams, Chairman of the Facilities Committee, to give the Board the Committee's recommendation on Mr. Sellers. Ms. Williams stated that the Committee received the report on Mr. Sellers and the Committee would like to make a motion to approve Mr. Sellers' appointment as the Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment for Spalding County Correctional Facility.

Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve the appointment, which was seconded by Mr. J. C. "Spud" Bowen. The motion was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Next, Ms. Williams continued with the Committee's recommendation on Mr. Dave Whiteside. Ms. Williams stated that the Committee received the report on Mr. Whiteside and the Committee would like to make a motion to approve Mr. Whiteside's appointment as the Deputy Warden of Gwinnett County Correctional Facility.

Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve the appointment, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. The motion was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Blackburn congratulated both Mr. Sellers and Mr. Whiteside. Each candidate thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Next, Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve an honorary resolution to be drafted for former Board Member, Mike Coggins, for his years of service on the Board of Corrections.

Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion to approve the resolution being drafted, which was seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland. The drafting of the resolution was voted "approved" by the Board.

Chairman Blackburn reminded the Board that an official photo will be taken at the November board meeting.

Chairman Blackburn then advised the Board to read an article that was before them titled, "*Paper, string jewelry connects former prisoner to new mission.*" Essentially, Mr. Blackburn stated that he intended to have the maker of the jewelry, Mr. Jay Gardner, to attend an upcoming board meeting to talk about Torn Pages outreach.

Chairman Blackburn advised that he wanted to make a motion that board members should visit facilities with the Commissioner and staff at least once a quarter starting in January 2022.

Mr. Alton Russell made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher and Mr. W.D. Strickland. The motion was voted "approved" by the Board.

Lastly, under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel of the Office of Legal Services, to present an Augusta State Medical Prison Demo Request 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 Richmond County, Georgia, known as Augusta State Medical Prison and the Water Tower Pumphouse Building, BLLIP ID# 30110, which must be demolished to make way for new construction. Ms. Ammons then asked the Board to approve the property resolution.

Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve the property resolution. Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher. The resolution was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Blackburn reminded the board members that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on November 4, 2021, at State Offices 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