

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

October 6, 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 CALLS:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office
Mr. Tommy M. Rouse

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

Ms. Deborah Gore, Attorney General’s Office
Mr. Carlton Stewart, 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. Jamie Clark, Director of Engineering and Construction Services
Mr. Terry Edge, Director of Office of Professional Development
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director, Data Unit
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Mr. Derek McKinney, Statewide STG Coordinator
Ms. Dawn Mock, OIT
Ms. Amy Pataluna, Deputy Director, GCI
Mr. John Richey, Deputy Director, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Janine Robinson, Director of Administrative Support Division, Fleet Operations
Mr. Henry Rutherford III, Director of OIT
Mr. Chris Tiller, Director of GCI
Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain

VISITORS:

Mr. Greg Icard, 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, welcomed all guests and visitors, and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Blackburn presented together the October 2022 Agenda and the September 2022 Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Alton Russell made a motion to approve both the Agenda

and Minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The Agenda and Minutes were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

To begin the Commissioner’s Report, Commissioner Ward started by stating that at the last board meeting, Chandley Communications discussed helping our agency with recruitment and retention efforts; and, as a result, we are graduating 148 individuals from BCOT. Corrections has had record-breaking classes since COVID, and we are projecting to have another one start next week. Commissioner 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 that WellStar Health System confirmed Wednesday evening that it will close Atlanta Medical Center, a 460-bed hospital in downtown Atlanta and a century-old anchor of the city’s health care. The hospital will wind down and then cease operations on November 1st.

To continue, Mr. Sauls discussed some of the effects that the WellStar announcement of the closure of Atlanta Medical Center has had on the Georgia Department of Corrections. Some of the effects were the disruption of primary location for acute hospitalizations, the acute mental health hospitalizations, prenatal diagnostic care, childbirth/deliveries/maternal care, postpartum care, cancer treatment, and surgical care elective/emergency. Mr. Sauls discussed GDC’s mission and the 15-year partnership items such as the 22 bed forensic hospital unit-acute hospitalizations, GDC assigned and dedicated duty staff 24 hours, 350 admissions per year, average length of stay per admission, total patient days, women's center, 24 births/deliveries annually, and 523 annual outpatient visits.

Mr. Sauls discussed the Southern Regional Medical Center as the solution to the Wellstar announcement. Some of the items mentioned were that our folks have been in contact with the CEO and CMO, conference calls have been held, their willingness is extremely high, they are geographically located, they are willing to accommodate displaced medical providers for AMC by offering medical staff membership, a transition team was formed, the first site visits were done, the weekly planning meeting, and the technical and operational planning between GDC and Hospital Leadership have been made.

Mr. Sauls went on to give a short overview of Southern Regional Medical Center. Some of the highlights were that it was established in 1971 as a community hospital, it is a 331 bed full-service hospital, it is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations, it is the regional provider of heart and vascular services, they have acute care for the elderly, wound care, 350 affiliated physicians, the Women’s Life Center is a dedicated breast imaging center, there is advanced imaging and fully digital medical diagnostic center, they have 3,000 deliveries per year, there is a Level 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), a prenatal care, post-partum care, emergency room, and a chest pain center advanced primary stroke center.

Mr. Sauls concluded his presentation by discussing opportunities to enhance treatment and expand hospital care.

This concluded Mr. Sauls’ report.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. John Richey, Deputy Director of the Office of Professional Standards (OPS), to give a brief OPS update. Some of the highlights from Mr. Richey’s presentation were the total physical arrests for August 2022 of staff, inmates, and civilians, the tobacco, marijuana and meth contraband recovered, and cellphone and drone contraband for calendar year 2022.

This concluded Mr. Richey’s report.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Derek McKinney, Statewide STG Coordinator, to give a brief STG update. Mr. McKinney began his presentation by discussing GDC’s Security Threat Group Unit.

Mr. McKinney discussed the Units mission which is to identify security threat groups and individuals and to track their activities and movements. In addition, their mission is to provide STG information to the executive staff, collect STG related intelligence, perform validations of all STG inmates, and collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies on gang cases. Also, GDC Special Agents are on FBI Safe Streets Gang Task Forces, they collaborate with GISAC (Atlanta), they serve as expert witnesses in gang cases adjunct gang class instructors at GPSTC, and train GDC and law enforcement agencies on past current gang trends.

Mr. McKinney discussed the make-up of the GDC Security Threat Unit, the gang cases assisted by the STG unit, the validated STG members, the "Big Seven" major STG's that are prevalent in the Georgia Department of Corrections, conducting 3-year validations, 3-year STG assaults, prison contraband, and identity reformation program.

This concluded Mr. McKinney's report.

Next Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division, to give an Inmate Services Division Update.

Mr. Sanders began his presentation by discussing Evidence Based Prisons (EBP), Gang Renunciation, and Specialty Dorms. Some of the highlights were discussing Evidence Based Facilities: Metro Reentry Facility, Lee State Prison, Hancock State Prison, Autry State Prison, Smith State Prison and Coastal State Prison. Additionally, Mr. Sanders discussed EBP training (Motivational Interviewing, Effective Communication, Cognitive Leadership, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People) and Inmate Programming (Gang Renunciation/Identity Reformation) at Lee State Prison, Hancock State Prison and Arrendale State Prison, Peer Mentoring/Support, Programming based on validated risk/needs assessment, family reunification, and community involvement.

Mr. Sanders continued by discussing the Gang Renunciation Program wherein Security Threat Group (STG) offenders participate in the Identity Reformation Course, Offender Mentoring Program, Reinforcing, Instructing, Supporting, Encouraging (R.I.S.E.) Program, and Peer Mentoring Training.

To close, Mr. Sanders continued by discussing the Faith and Character Dorms and the Veterans Dorms.

This concluded Mr. Sanders' report.

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

Mr. Holt began his presentation by discussing the Department of Corrections Strategic Priorities. Some of the highlights were discussing the 6 Month Priorities and Completions of the creation of OIT Project Management Office, the mental health expansion, the kosher kitchen, the Rogers kitchen upgrade, the transitional center cellphone rollout, the transitional center bed expansion, the offender tablet rollout, the officer tablet rollout, the Coastal mobile surgical unit, the Augusta State Medical Prison dialysis unit expansion, and Electronic Health Records (EHR).

Mr. Holt continued by discussing 12 Month Priorities such as the transition to new facility in McRae, the upgraded radio system, the Faith and Character Program, the forensic peer mentors, the complete Optamo integration, and the drone detection technology.

Mr. Holt closed with discussing future priorities, the 18 month Integrated ReEntry Model, the 24 month expansion of family reunification, expanding Wi-Fi to all facilities, the new facility construction, and the upcoming projects.

This concluded Mr. Holt's presentation.

Commissioner Ward asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel, Office of Legal Services, to give a Statewide ADA Unit Update.

In her presentation, Ms. Ammons discussed the Statewide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Unit moving from OPS to the Office of Legal Services, the new leadership, the civil rights law that requires equal access to programs and services for offenders with physical and mental disabilities, and each facility having an ADA Coordinator to address accommodation requests and providing accommodations. Ms. Ammons also discussed hearing aid batteries, canes, walkers and prosthetics, in-person or virtual interpreters provided for DR hearings, classification committee meetings, counseling appointments, parole interviews, classes, and religious services.

To close, Ms. Ammons discussed accommodative equipment, ADA trainings, program reviews, virtual remote interpreting, devices purchased, shower chairs, oversized shower chairs, oversized toilet seats, cassette players, power wheelchair and seat, headphones, stool, magnifying sheets, talking watches, chargers, pocket talkers, and UbiDuo.

This concluded Ms. Ammons report and the Commissioner's report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Duke Blackburn began the Chairman's Report by reminding the Board that the new Canine Training Facility in Coweta County broke ground and that facility will be used by several agencies and some of our Canine personnel will be stationed there. In addition, Chairman Blackburn reminded each member that they will need to put in for the 2023 Committee Assignments.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Blackburn called upon Ms. Janine Robinson, Director of Administrative Support Division, Fleet Operations and Risk Management, to present the approval of employment for two (2) Fleet Operations Mechanic employees.

Ms. Robinson began by stating that Mr. George Mathis and Mr. Thomas Thompson, who worked for Fleet Operations under general supervision, maintains, diagnoses, inspects, and/or repairs engines, vehicles, and other motorized equipment. The specific job responsibilities for these individuals, as defined by Standard Occupational Classification Manual, will include the following:

49-2096: Electronic equipment installers and repairers, motor vehicles
Install, diagnose, or repair communications, sound, security, or navigation equipment in motor vehicles.

49-3023: Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
Diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul automotive vehicles.

49-3093: Tire Repairers and Changers
Repair and replace tires.

Ms. Robinson stated both individuals displayed a strong work ethic, learn quickly, and are very capable.

After that, Chairman Blackburn asked for a motion to approve Mr. George Mathis and Mr. Thomas Thompson's employment. Ms. Andrea Shelton made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher. The employment of both individuals were voted "approved" by the Board.

To conclude the meeting, Chairman Blackburn reminded the members that the next meeting is on November 3, 2022, at State Offices South at Tift College, in Forsyth, Georgia.

The board meeting was adjourned.

Duke Blackburn, Chairman

Andrea Shelton, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison