

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

September 7, 2023

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Mr. Duke Blackburn
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Bruce Carlisle
Mr. Thomas Culpepper
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.
Mr. Gary Gullede
Mr. Larry Haynie – Chairman
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Alton Russell
Ms. Andrea Shelton
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Ms. Rose Williams

CONFERENCE CALLS:

Mr. Wayne Dasher
Ms. Janelle King
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Rossie Ross

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

Ms. Tina Piper, Attorney General’s Office

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Tyrone Oliver, 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. Adam Baswell, Director of OPD
Ms. Lori Benoit, , Deputy Director of Public Affairs
Ms. Vanessa Brewton, Statewide Specialist (North)
Mr. Jamie Clark, Director of Engineering and Construction Services
Mr. Ben Ford, Deputy Director of Facilities Operations
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Ms. Tomekia Jordan, Office of Professional Standards
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, OIT
Mr. Roy Odum, Warden of Ware State Prison
Ms. Catherine Price, Statewide Compliance and Accreditation Manager
Mr. Henry Rutherford III, Director of OIT
Mr. Stan Shepard, Director of Facilities Operations
Ms. Donna Tebought, Director, Office of Reentry Services
Mr. Chris Tiller, Director of GCI
Ms. Betsy Thomas, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Rob Thrower, Legislative Liaison
Dr. Steven Turner, Chaplain
Mr. Matthew Wolfe, Director, Office of Professional Standards

VISITORS:

Mr. Scott Melton, Citizen

First, Chairman Larry Haynie called to order the September meeting for the Board of Corrections (“the Board”) at 10:00 a.m. and Board Liaison, Simone Juhmi, recorded the minutes. Chairman Haynie then asked Chaplain Steven Turner to deliver the invocation. Following such, Chairman Haynie led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Haynie welcomed and swore in new member Bruce Carlisle, At Large Member to the Board and Sheriff Stacy Jarrard was reappointed

to District Eight. Then Chairman Haynie recognized all guests and visitors, and the Board meeting, being duly convened, proceeded with business.

Chairman Haynie then confirmed the following board members were connected via conference call: Mr. Wayne Dasher, Ms. Janelle King, and Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.

Chairman Haynie presented the September 7, 2023 Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Alton Russell made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The Agenda were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Haynie presented the June 1, 2023 Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. W.D. Strickland made a motion to approve the Minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell and Mr. Ester Fleming Jr. The Minutes were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

To begin the Commissioner’s Report, Commissioner Oliver briefly discussed the Commissioner’s Dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division, to give an Inmate Services Division Update. Mr. Sanders then introduced Ms. Donna Tebought, Director of Reentry Services, to do a presentation on Peer Mentorship Initiatives.

Ms. Tebought began with discussing the purpose of the Peer Mentorship Initiatives and stated that interventions in prison can improve the atmosphere of the prison environment, through improved relations with staff and offenders. Plus, peer mentorship generates new social relationships, which provide solidarity through the sharing of experience, strength and hope.

Ms. Tebought continued by discussing the R.I.S.E. (Reinforcing, Instructing, Supporting, and Encouraging) Mentoring Program Process. Some of the highlights discussed in the process were that the voluntary statewide offender mentoring process began in 2019. It was designed to accurately identify appropriate offenders to serve as mentors within the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), and offenders must apply for consideration/acceptance, and some of the initial requirements were stated.

Ms. Tebought continued discussing R.I.S.E Mentors, mentors in facilities, peer mentors, program mentors, mentors serving in a variety of roles, (TOPUCU) “The Only Person You Cheat is You” being conducted at an on-site training at Burruss Correctional Training Center, virtual trainings to offenders, Forensic Peer Mentors (FPMs), partnership between the Georgia Department of Corrections and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD).

Ms. Tebought concluded her report by having former Forensic Peer Mentor, Mr. Scott Melton, tell his success story.

This concluded the report of Ms. Tebought.

Commissioner Oliver then asked Ms. Betsy Thomas, Director of Human Resources, to give a brief Human Resources Update.

Ms. Thomas began her report by giving a brief overview of Recruitment and Retention. Some of the highlights that were discussed were application growth, application submission, seasonal dips, annual growth, applicant summary by month, disapproval by month, correctional officer vacancy/turnover, monthly hiring and separations, and correctional officer salaries.

Ms. Thomas closed by discussing Culture Partners Journey, Culture Equation Journey – 4 Year partnership with Corrections, Culture Equation Workshop, and Culture Accountability Workshop.

This concluded the report of Ms. Thomas.

Commissioner Oliver then asked Mr. Adam Baswell, Director of the Office of Professional Development, to give a brief update on the Office of Professional Development .

Mr. Baswell began by discussing the Basic Correctional Officer Training. Some of the highlights discussed were that the program was designed to meet the requirements established by the Georgia Department of Corrections and the Georgia Peace Officer Standards Training Council, for new correctional officers, and other staff who supervise offenders, as a part of their normal duties, in state, county and private facilities. It is also designed to provide basic skills training in security practices and procedures necessary to function in a correctional setting.

Mr. Baswell continued by discussing Basic Correctional Officer Training Regional, the Regional Georgia Corrections Academies Class, Northeast Georgia Corrections Academy, Southeast Georgia Corrections Academy, the Middle Georgia Corrections Academy, and State Offices South at Tift College Georgia Corrections Academy.

Mr. Baswell closed with discussing the Peer Support Success Coach and Coaching. Mr. Baswell stated the Peer Support Success Coaching provides individuals with personalized support and guidance to achieve their goals, overcome obstacles, and unlock their full potential to create a fulfilling and successful future with their agency.

This concluded the report of Mr. Baswell.

Next, Commissioner Oliver 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 infirmary care, infirmary beds, medical observation, and Augusta State Medical Prison infirmary bed expansion.

Mr. Sauls continued with photos of Augusta State Medical Prison Infirmary Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, the Pulaski State Prison Infirmary, and the Georgia Department of Corrections Infirmary Matrix.

This concluded Mr. Sauls' report.

Last of all, Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Matthew Wolfe, Director, Office of Professional Standards Update, to give a brief update on Audits and Compliance and American Correctional Association Accreditation.

Mr. Wolfe began by discussing his statewide staff which consists of the Statewide Compliance & Accreditation Manager, Statewide Specialist (North), Statewide Specialist (Central), and the Statewide Specialist (South). Mr. Wolfe continued by discussing the accreditation summary for prisons, probation detention centers, transitional centers, the initial one year process, reaccreditation, and the three year reoccurring process.

This concluded the report of Mr. Wolfe.

This concluded the Commissioner's report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Haynie began the Chairman's Report by asking Ms. Rose Williams, Chair of the Facilities Committee, to give a brief update regarding Board Committees. Ms. Williams stated that she would like board members to visit prison facilities within their districts whenever possible and that she would like to see board members more active in Board Committees.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Haynie asked Ms. Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel, to present a property resolution for approval.

Ms. Ammons stated that she seeks approval for the Georgia Department of Transportation Railroad Crossing Safety Project at State Offices South at Tift College.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has need for a Right of Way and Permanent Easement for the Railroad Crossing Safety Project. The Georgia Department of Corrections has determined that it can accommodate the Right of Way and Temporary Construction Easement request without causing harm to the operations of the State Offices South at Tift College.

Ms. Ammons concluded and asked the Board for approval of this property resolution.

Chairman Haynie then asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Alton Russell and Mr. W. D. Strickland made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams. The resolution were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

There being no further business, Chairman Haynie reminded the Board that the next Board of Corrections meeting is on October 5, 2023 at State Offices South at Tift College, in Forsyth, Georgia.

The board meeting was adjourned.

Larry Haynie, Chairman

Ester Fleming Jr., Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison