

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

September 3, 2026

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Duke Blackburn
Mr. J.C. “Spud” Bowen
Mr. Rodney Bryant
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Thomas Culpepper
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr. – Chairman
Ms. Sandra D. Hudson
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard
Sheriff Donnie Pope
Mr. Rossie Ross
Mr. Alton Russell
Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr.
Mr. W. D. Strickland
Dr. William “Bill” Whaley

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheriff Barry H. Babb
Ms. Kellie Brownlow
Ms. Elizabeth Crowder, Attorney General’s Office
Mr. John B. Edwards

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Mr. Matthew Wolfe, Acting Chief of Staff
Ms. Latera M. Davis, Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Division
Mr. Louis DeBroux, Assistant Commissioner, Research, Strategic Planning, Government Affairs
Mr. Jackson Defore, Assistant Commissioner of Finance and Admin
Mr. Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner of Health Services Division
Ms. Lori Beniot, Deputy Director of Office of Communications
Ms. Deidra Boan, Deputy Director of Engineering & Construction Services
Ms. Komola Edwards, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Kenneth Ellis, Statewide Chaplain
Mr. Benjamin Ford, Facilities Division Director
Mr. Wilson Hall, Director of Office of Professional Development
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director of Data Management and Research
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Dr. Jennifer Irvin, Director, Academic Education and Programs
Ms. Angela Ivestor, Director, Office of Information Technology
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, Office of Information Technology
Mr. James Payne, Deputy Director of Facilities Admin Support
Ms. Janine Robinson, Executive Director of Georgia Correctional Industries

VISITORS:

Johnathan Abercrombie, Citizen
Keisha Dickerson, Citizen
Mara Dodson, The Moss Group
Ronnie Fuller, Citizen
Daraldo Gaither, Citizen
Julio Gallo, Citizen
Jason Hall, CGL
Ken Hyle, The Moss Group
Octavious Holiday, Citizen
Mary Najarian, Guidehouse
Barbara Tahsler, Citizen
Ms. Rachel Travis, Guidehouse

First, Chairman Ester Fleming Jr. called to order the September 3, 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 September 3, 2026, Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Luis “Lou” M. Solis Jr. made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Sheriff Donnie Pope. The Agenda was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming presented the June 3, 2026, Minutes to the Board for approval. Mr. Thomas Culpepper made a motion to approve the Minutes, which was seconded by Dr. William “Bill” Whaley and Mr. Chris Clark. The Minutes were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming moved into Regular Session to approve a County Warden’s appointment.

Chairman Fleming called upon Mr. Duke Blackburn, Chairman of the Board Facilities Committee, to give the Board the Committee’s recommendation on Mr. James Payne.

Mr. Blackburn stated that the Committee received the report on Mr. James Payne – Warden of Clayton County Correctional Institution, and the Committee reviewed his report and would like to make a motion to approve Mr. Payne’s appointment as the Warden of Clayton County Correctional Facility. Mr. Blackburn made the motion to approve the appointment, which was seconded by Mr. Thomas Culpepper. The motion were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming congratulated Mr. Payne and Mr. Payne stood and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Following the vote, Mr. Blackburn stated that he and the Board Facilities Committee Members recommend forgoing the standard extensive background investigation check process for former Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) employees who are being hired for county wardens positions if said employee meets GDC requirements to become a county warden. In addition, the recommendation was that said employee must be hired by the County within 1 year of their GDC retirement, be in good standing with the Georgia Department of Corrections, and their POST (Peace Officer Standards Council) mandate training is up to date and in good standing.

Mr. Duke Blackburn made a motion to approve forgoing this process, which was seconded by Dr. William “Bill” Whaley. Forgoing the standard extensive background investigation check process for former Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) employees who are being hired for county wardens positions, if said employee meets GDC requirements to become a county warden, was voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

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

Next, Commissioner Oliver discussed the summer update of highlights that were sent to the Board, the upcoming retirement ceremony celebrating the incredible 38-year career of Deputy Director of Facilities Admin Support, James Payne, and the retirement ceremony of TC Coordinator Shawn Sikes, who had 30 years of service to the Georgia Department of Corrections. The Commissioner talked about the Mod Corr Unit being up and running, the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Johnson State prison in July 2026, two properties coming online for an additional 500 TC beds, and other DOC agencies across the country, to include Indiana DOC, coming to visit Georgia regarding our technology, drones, and cellphone operations. Last of all, Commissioner Oliver reminded the board members about the execution that would be held on September 16th, and he gave an update on Mr. Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner of Facilities Division, who has been out on medical leave.

Commissioner Oliver then asked individuals from Guidehouse, The Moss Group, and CGL to present a Guidehouse Update. Mr. Ken Hyle, with The Moss Group introduced the following individuals that were in attendance. Mr. Jason Hall, CGL; Ms. Mara Dodson, Moss Group; Ms. Rachel Travis, Guidehouse; and Ms. Mary Najarian, Guidehouse.

The individuals from Guidehouse, The Moss Group, and CGL spoke as a group one by one and some of the highlights discussed were the foundation and project context, the implementation

support overview, the action planning and technical assistance, recruitment and retention, training support, capital planning overview, capital planning activities and tools, and the next steps.

To begin, there was a brief discussion regarding building the foundation for sustainable system improvement, establish a shared understanding, strengthen the foundation, Phase II implementation support focus areas (strategy 1- action planning and technical assistance, strategy 2 - recruitment and retention enhancement, and strategy 3 - training curriculum development and implementation). Also discussed were action planning impact summaries (what we set out to do, what we achieved, and why it matters). In addition, there were highlights regarding Impact: Action Plan Successes, the Action Plan Dashboard, and Technical Assistance Impact Summary. There was also discussion on Technical Assistance (TA) efforts, recruitment and retention impact summary, strengthening GDC'S recruitment and retention, applicant tracking tool, training support impact summary, training support activities and deliverables such as job task analysis, curriculum, new cadet scenarios, supervisory training, and the FTO Pilot.

The presentation was concluded by discussing the 10-Year Capital Planning Support which is to understand current conditions, establish a planning framework, and support decisions over time. Mr. Hyle discussed GDC's Capital Planning Project Overview, 10-Year Capital planning activities, operational assessment approach, a dashboard overview, and takeaways to include the next steps.

This concluded the Guidehouse report.

Next, Commissioner Oliver asked Ms. Latera M. Davis, Assistant Commissioner Inmate Services Division, to give an Education Update. Ms. Davis introduced Dr. Jennifer Irvin, Director of Academic Education and Programs, to begin the presentation update.

Dr. Irvin began by discussing the Academic Education figures that were in the Board packet and reported the following July results:

- 96 GED credentials were earned
- 20 students completed Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- 12 students completed Literacy Remedial Reading (LRR)
- 179 students were served in high school classes

Dr. Irvin explained that the students completing ABE and LRR are progressing along a pathway toward taking their first GED Ready test. Dr. Irvin also reported that more than 400 students are considered GED Ready, meaning they are positioned to begin testing soon.

Dr. Irvin then presented the proposed high school graduation requirements for Tift Academy of Georgia for the Board's approval. Dr. Irvin explained that the Academy would use the Carnegie-unit requirements established by State Board of Education rule and would follow all applicable state laws, rules, and policies regarding transcripts, special education, and other graduation-related requirements.

Chairman Fleming then asked for a motion to approve the proposed high school graduation requirements for Tift Academy of Georgia. Mr. Rossie Ross made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Rodney Bryant. The proposed high school graduation requirements for Tift Academy of Georgia were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

The Board approved the proposed high school graduation requirements, allowing the Academy to move forward with verifying and declaring its first graduates. There was also a question about how participation in education affects recidivism rates and Dr. Irvin expressed that while referencing Mr. Cliff Hogan, the Director of Data Management and Research, that we calculate all programs together and that participation in education is part of the approximately 5% reduction in recidivism.

This concluded the report for Dr. Irvin, and this concluded the Commissioner's Report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Under the Chairman's Report, Chairman Fleming gave an update on the 2026 Georgia Prison Warden's Association (GPWA) Scholarship Award Recipient.

Chairman Fleming advised the Board that the 2026 GPWA scholarship recipient was Aubrey Sikes. Ms. Sikes graduated from Tattnall County High School in the top 1% of her class with an impressive cumulative GPA of 4.87 and is a proud member of the National Honor Society. Through dual enrollment and Advanced Placement courses, she earned more than 45 hours of college credit while still in high school, demonstrating exceptional dedication and discipline.

Ms. Sikes has been accepted to Mercer University, where she will pursue a degree in Biology on the Pre-Med track with aspirations of becoming a pediatrician. Lastly, a photo of Ms. Sikes and Board Member Alton Russell, who attended the conference was shown and Chairmen Fleming reannounced the total amount raise for the scholarship being \$2,145.00 which surpassed the \$2000 goal the Board set.

Next, Chairman Fleming discussed the 2026 Board Calendar. Chairman Fleming stated as it stands right now, the Board is slated to have the September 30th board meeting in Forsyth; however, several board members asked about changing that location to Valdosta so that the Board could visit Valdosta State Prison.

There was no discussion, so Chairman Fleming asked for a motion to change the location of the September 30th board meeting from Forsyth to Valdosta. Mr. W. D. Strickland made a motion to approve the location change, which was seconded by Mr. Alton Russell. The September 30th board meeting location was change and were voted “approved” by the Board as presented.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Fleming gave an update on the possible details regarding the hotel, facility tour, and possible dinner options for the September 30th board meeting in Valdosta.

To close, Chairman Fleming expressed that the board members would conduct board training following the November 5th board meeting in Forsyth since Board Attorney Elizabeth Crowder was absent from the board meeting.

Chairman Fleming reminded the Board that the next board meeting would be held in Valdosta, Georgia, on Wednesday, September 30th at 2PM at Wiregrass Technical College.

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

Ester Fleming Jr., Chairman

Chris Clark, Secretary

Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison