BOARD OF CORRECTIONS
September 30, 2026
Valdosta, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Mr. Duke Blackburn
Mr. J.C. "Spud" Bowen
Ms. Kellie Brownlow
Mr. John B. Edwards
Mr. Ester Fleming Jr. – Chairman
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
Mr. Rodney Bryant
Mr. Chris Clark
Mr. Thomas Culpepper
Ms. Sandra D. Hudson
Sheriff Stacy Jarrard

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
Ms. Elizabeth Crowder, Attorney General's Office

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
Mr. Antoine Caldwell, Facilities Deputy Director
Ms. Komola Edwards, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Kenneth Ellis, Statewide Chaplain
Mr. Shawn Emmons, Assistant Regional Director
Mr. Benjamin Ford, Facilities Division Director
Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director of Data Management and Research
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Office of Communications
Ms. Gwendolyn Hogan, Executive Assistant
Dr. Jennifer Irvin, Director, Academic Education and Programs
Ms. Angela Ivestor, Director, Office of Information Technology
Mr. Kendric Jackson, Warden of Valdosta State Prison
Ms. Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison
Ms. Dawn Mock, Deputy Director of Office of Information Technology
Mr. John Moore, Senior Manager, Office of Professional Standards
Mr. John Richey, Acting Director of Office of Professional Standards
Mr. Jermaine White, Regional Director for Southwest Region
Mr. Bryan Wilson, General Counsel

VISITORS:
Ms. Lynn Blackburn, Mr. Duke Blackburn's Spouse
Ms. Teresa Fleming, Mr. Ester Fleming Jr.'s Spouse
Ms. Janet F. Roberts, Citizen
Mr. Ben Herr, National Incarceration Association

First, Chairman Ester Fleming Jr. called to order the September 30, 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 30, 2026, Agenda to the Board for approval. Mr. Rossie Ross made a motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Dr. William "Bill" Whaley. The Agenda was voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

Chairman Fleming presented the September 3, 2026, Minutes to the Board for approval. Dr. William "Bill" Whaley 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 discussed the Commissioner's Dashboard, which is a four-page overview highlighting key areas and significant events within the Agency.

Next, Commissioner Oliver discussed that today being the last day of the Guidehouse contract/partnership with the Georgia Département of Corrections, the transition document for the Governor's office is currently being worked on, the upcoming election, the budget proposal, and Mental Health Week was upcoming in October.

Commissioner Oliver then asked Mr. Cliff Hogan, Director of Data Management and Research, to give a Data Update.

Mr. Hogan began by giving a Corrections Fiscal Year 2026 review. Some of the highlights discussed were the offender beds, bed breakdown, general population, age groups, security levels, mental health, security threat group, individual Security Threat Group (STG) count, the percentage of non-violent/violent offenders, sentence length, and offenders sentenced under mandatory minimum law.

Mr. Hogan continued by discussing the jail backlog awaiting pick-up, initial assignments and admissions, average age, gap growth, total admissions, Fisal Year 2026 Georgia Department of Corrections admissions, total admissions, prior incarceration, sentence length, offender security level, mental health offenders, highest education level reported, major offenses, and race/sex of offenders.

Mr. Hogan discussed contraband trends; cellphone, weapon, contraband count by type (from incident reports), employee trends, employee count, vacant position count, vacancy rate from Fiscal Year 2021 to Fiscal Year 2027, and turnover rate current and projected.

Mr. Hogan closed with discussing staff counts and the impact of salary increases and correctional officers count and tenure.

This concluded the report for Mr. Hogan.

Commissioner Oliver called upon Mr. Kendric Jackson, Warden of Valdosta State Prison, to do a Valdosta State Prison Update.

Mr. Jackson began by showing a current photo of the front hedges of Valdosta State Prison. During his presentation Mr. Jackson discussed the following items; the history of Valdosta State Prison, the type of facility and programs that are at Valdosta State Prison, the mission, values, core values, Top Five Priorities, the Georgia Department of Corrections Cultural Beliefs, leadership development, the basics and beyond, the Facilities Identification Board, and the Valdosta State Prison leadership and their combined 118 years of service to the Georgia Department of Corrections.

Mr. Jackson continued discussing Valdosta State Prison reconstruction in 1988 and reopening in 1989. Mr. Jackson also discussed the physical capacity, operational capacity, security level, acute care unit, crisis stabilization unit, infirmary, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program, Tier II program, facility challenges, Valdosta State Prison offender population, Security Threat Group population stratification, the Valdosta State Prison staffing analysis, and the Valdosta State Prison vacancy rate.

Mr. Jackson closed with discussing the food service that is contracted through Aramark, the physical health services (Centurion), mental health (Centurion), counseling services, Valdosta State Prison current projects, the updated security equipment, the NoteActive tablets, the Body Worn Cameras, Axon Taser 10, and the current projects.

This concluded the report for Mr. Hogan.

Next, Commissioner Oliver asked Dr. Jennifer Irvin, Director of Academic Education and Programs, to begin the Education Update.

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

- 213 GED credentials were earned
- 70 GED prep completions
- 36 students completed Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- 16 students completed Literacy Remedial Reading (LRR)
- 2,088 GED test parts
- 178 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.

In addition, August added 117 GED credentials to the 96 earned in July, bringing the Fiscal Year 2027 total to 213. Statewide Academic Education attendance increased to 54.9% in August from 44.9% in July. The high school diploma pathway continued statewide implementation with 178 students enrolled and 17 active GDC-owned Canvas courses, with additional courses in development.

Dr. Irvin then reminded the Board about the first high school graduates for the Tift Academy of Georgia, which will be held on Wednesday, October 7th at Dodge State Prison and Johnson State Prison.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There was no business under the Chairman's Report.

Under Old or New Business, Chairman Fleming asked Mr. Bryan Wilson, General Counsel for the Office of Legal Services, to present three (3) property resolutions for approval to the Board.

Mr. Wilson stated that he would present all three resolutions at one time and that the following resolutions were being presented for approval:

Arrendale State Prison – Red Barn Demolition

The State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections is in custody of property in Alto, Habersham County, Georgia, known as the Lee Arrendale State Prison ("the Property") located at 2023 Gainesville Hwy, Alto, Georgia, 30510.

The Georgia Department of Corrections no longer needs the building referred to as "Red Equipment Barn" (BLLIP ID# 119396, consisting of approximately 1000 square feet). The building is located on the campus of Lee Arrendale State Prison. The Red Equipment Barn has been evaluated and deemed to be in a state of severe disrepair. The Department has determined that the barn can be demolished without causing harm to the operation of other structures on Lee Arrendale State Prison property.

Georgia Diagnostic & Classification Prison (GDCP) Rum Creek Transmission Line Project Easement Request

The State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections has custody of, property in Butts County, Georgia, known as Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison (GDCP) ("the Property") located at 2978 GA-36, Jackson, Georgia 30233.

The Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) is undertaking a statewide infrastructure expansion to enhance electric power transmission reliability and system flexibility, which includes the construction of the Rum Creek – Tomochichi 500 kV Transmission Line Project (the "Project").

GTC has requested a Revocable Lease Agreement (RLA) followed by a permanent Non-Standard Easement across the Property to facilitate the construction, operation and maintenance of the 500 kV Transmission line. The proposed transmission line route across the Property spans approximately 1.10 miles in length with an easement width of 150 feet, encompassing approximately 20 acres. The Georgia Department of Correction, as custodian of the Property, is willing to grant the request of GTC, for the RLA and permanent Non-Standard Easement.

Georgia State Prison (GSP) House 127 and House 128 Demolition

The State of Georgia owns and holds title to, and the Georgia Department of Corrections is in custody of property in Reidsville, Tattnall County, Georgia, known as the Georgia State Prison ("the Property") located at 300 1st Avenue South, Reidsville, Georgia, 30453. The Georgia Department of Corrections no longer needs the buildings referred to as "House 127" (BLLIP ID#5903, consisting of approximately 1,676 square feet) and "House 128" (BLLIP ID#5564, consisting of approximately 1,676 square feet). Both buildings are located on the campus of Georgia State Prison. House 127 and House 128 have been evaluated and deemed to be in a state of severe disrepair. The Department has determined that the houses can be demolished without causing harm to the operation of other structures on Georgia State Prison property.

Mr. Wilson then stated that all the necessary paperwork was in the board members packets and that he was seeking approval for all three-board resolutions.

Chairman Fleming asked for a motion to approve the three property resolutions. Mr. John Edwards made a motion to approve the resolutions, which were seconded by Mr. W. D. Strickland and Ms. Kellie Brownlow. The resolutions were voted "approved" by the Board as presented.

To close, Chairman Fleming stated that the board members would conduct Board Training following the November 5th board meeting in Forsyth. Chairman Fleming also reminded the board members to fill out their forms for the 2027 Executive Officers positions and Committee Requests.

Chairman Fleming reminded the Board that the next board meeting would be held in Forsyth, Georgia, on Thursday, November 5th at State Offices South Tift College at 10AM.

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

_____
Ester Fleming Jr., Chairman

_____
Chris Clark, Secretary

_____
Simone Juhmi, Board Liaison