

**BOARD OF CORRECTIONS**  
**February 5, 2009**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Robert Jones, Chairman  
Mr. Bill Acuff  
Mr. Wayne Dasher  
Mr. Carl Franklin  
Sheriff Roger Garrison  
Mr. Bruce Hudson  
Sheriff Bill Masee  
Mr. John Mayes  
Sheriff Cecil Nobles  
Mr. Kris Nordholz  
Sheriff Carlton Powell  
Mr. Tommy Rouse  
Mr. Roger Waldrop  
Ms. Rose Williams  
Mr. Jim Whitehead, Sr.  
Mr. Larry Wynn

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:**

Mr. Joe Drolet, Senior Assistant Attorney General

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:**

Commissioner Brian Owens  
Ms. Laura Jones, Board Liaison  
Ms. Diane Avery, Liaison from State Board of Pardons and Paroles  
Mr. Derrick Schofield, Assistant Commissioner  
Mr. Jim Allen, Legal Services  
Ms. Becky East, Division Director of Administration Division  
Mr. Danny Horne, Director of Chaplaincy Services  
Ms. Joan Heath, Director of Public Affairs  
Mr. Harris Hodges, Division Director of Corrections  
Mr. Bob Plemons, Legislative Liaison/Engineering Division  
Ms. Patricia Smith, Executive Assistant  
Mr. Mark Guzzi, Legal Services  
Mr. Mark Waldron, Director of Planning and Analysis  
Mr. Michael Nail, Assistant Division Director of Corrections Division

Mr. Sharrod Campbell, Office of Investigations & Compliance

Mr. Timothy Ward, Facilities Director

Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Assistant to Mr. Derrick Schofield

**VISITORS:**

Mr. David Aguetti, Senate Budget

Ms. Sarah Totonchi, Southern Center for Human Rights

Mr. Jim Scott, citizen

Chairman Robert E. Jones greeted everyone and called to order the February meeting of the Board of Corrections. Chairman Jones stated that Mr. Tom Salter passed away last week, after a long battle with cancer. Chairman Jones then called upon Chaplain Danny Horne to open with prayer. After the prayer, Sheriff Cecil Nobles stated he has a card for the Board members to sign and to be sent to the Salter family. Chairman Jones stated there is a Flower Fund for Board members to contribute, and, Mr. Roger Waldrop suggested the Board members might go in together and make a contribution to the memorial as noted in the funeral notice. Chairman Jones stated that is a good idea and a nice gesture and encouraged everyone to participate in that contribution. Mr. Wayne Dasher added that at the December Board meeting, monies were collected for the Christmas gifts, which went to Ms. Diane Avery and Ms. Cathy Lee and Ms. Jones. However, there were some Board members who were not at the December Board meeting and did not contribute; there was a shortfall there. Chairman Jones requested the Board members to please go ahead and contribute either today or within the next week to the Flower Fund.

Chairman Rob Jones stated the arrangements for the Salter funeral are that there will be a memorial service on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the Ford Stewart Funeral Home in Jonesboro. Directions are available for the Board members. Chairman Jones stated that Mr. Tom Salter was passionate about his country and served his career in the United States Army. Mr. Salter was passionate about this Board, passionate about Corrections and its employees; and dedicated to this organization in supporting in any way.

Chairman Rob Jones requested each visitor to stand and introduce himself/herself.

Chairman Jones stated there will be a few additions to the February Agenda; however, requesting a motion to formally approve the Agenda. Mr. Bill Acuff made the motion to approve the Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher, and voted approval by the Board.

Chairman Jones requested approval of the Minutes of the January meeting. Mr. Kris Nordholz made the motion to approve the January Minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Wayne Dasher, and voted approval by the Board.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Brian Owens began his report with a powerpoint slide. Commissioner Owens stated he would give a very short briefing this morning to talk about some upcoming events, the jail backlog, a brief operational update, and then an update. He stated the purpose is clearly on the three B's; Budget, Backlog, and Bills. Commissioner Owens stated that is what the department is focusing on with working those three issues for the General Assembly.

With the first slide, Upcoming Events, Commissioner Owens stated there are not too many events on the calendar because the department is focusing on the General Assembly and working the budget issue. Commissioner Owens stated that Assistant Commissioner Schofield will come up to talk about the National Geographic series. By way of explanation, Commissioner Owens stated the department allowed the National Geographic virtually unlimited access for a year to the Georgia prison system. The series starts February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 on Monday nights. The viewer will see six one-hour specials of the Georgia prison system. Commissioner Owens stated this will be unique; not what a person is used to seeing. Continuing with the Upcoming Events, Commissioner Owens stated there will be a probation conference in March; this is an association event so there are no funds going to that conference. Commissioner Owens stated the department is excited that on March 26<sup>th</sup> the department is partnering with the Department of Agriculture on an equine program. There have been some media stories about horses across the state have been abandoned or neglected. With land and resources in terms of inmates, the department put together a program for technical colleges where female inmates are helping rehabilitate those horses. There are no Department of Corrections funds going into that program, and, a lot of the ladies are getting certificates of veterinary care to assist in rehabilitation of those horses. Mr. Wayne Dasher added that Commissioner Tommy Irvin had stated that was one of the best projects and Commissioner Irvin really appreciated the Department of Corrections stepping in and helping with that project. Commissioner Owens continued with stating that Mr. Dasher and Sheriff Nobles will host the Law Enforcement event in April. Commissioner Owens stated that the Board of Public Safety will be joining the Board of Corrections meeting; in addition the Board of Juvenile Justice might attend that event.

Commissioner Owens stated the Jail Backlog is at about 3,300. He stated that when Ms. Becky East gives a brief update on the Budget, she will also show a couple of slides about some fasttracks opening up which will try to get the jail backlog down to a more acceptable level.

Commissioner Owens stated the slide, County Transfers, reflects interest that the department has placed in some county jails.

With the Operational Update, Commissioner Owens stated he wanted to spend majority of his time having Board members getting to know staff. He began with introducing Mr. Derrick Schofield. Commissioner Owens stated that when he was appointed to his position, one of the

most difficult choices he had was deciding who would replace him as Assistant Commissioner. Commissioner stated that the good news is that he had a handful of highly quality people to choose from. Commissioner Owens stated he chose Mr. Schofield for his strengths with Commissioner Owens' weakness in facilities. This is the first time in about 15-20 years to have someone from ranks of the facilities actually sitting in Commissioner's office. Commissioner Owens stated Mr. Schofield started out as a counselor at Arrendale State Prison; was in the Army for eight years coming out ranked as Captain; a graduate of Fort Valley; a graduate of masters program at Columbus State Command College; and has managed several of the toughest facilities. Commissioner stated that Mr. Schofield managed Augusta State Medical Prison; then Georgia Diagnostic Classification Prison at Jackson, where he presided over several executions. Commissioner Owens reminded the Board members of the incident at Rogers State Prison involving a GBI investigation. As a part of the after action on that in looking at root causes and why it happened, the department created what is called the Office of Investigations and Compliance. Mr. Derrick Schofield was hand picked to head up that new section. His most recent role was heading up all facilities through the State of Georgia. Mr. Schofield served extremely well there; so, he was a natural choice to balance out Commissioner Owens. Commissioner Owens requested the Board members to interact with Assistant Commissioner Schofield; he will be glad to assist.

Commissioner Owens introduced Mr. Timothy Ward. Commissioner stated that Mr. Ward is almost a carbon copy in terms of service and career. Mr. Ward was the warden at Phillips State Prison. Commissioner Owens stated he picked out Mr. Ward for the same reason; Mr. Ward takes the tough assignments and does not take the easy way out. When the incident occurred at Rogers State Prison, a new warden was needed down there and Mr. Ward was the person who was put down at Rogers. Commissioner stated Mr. Ward did a marvelous job down there, and, was awarded by being promoted to Phillips State Prison, which is a tough mental health prison. Mr. Ward did an outstanding job there. Mr. Ward has a bachelors degree; a masters degree; and takes every tough assignment without complaint. Commissioner Owens stated Mr. Ward will step into Mr. Schofield's shoes and fill that role of Facilities Director.

Commissioner Owens called on Ms. Becky East to brief about the audit letter and give a brief update of budget reductions. Ms. East began with talking about the audit letter that the Board members received. Ms. East stated that staff did a great job; there being one area in which there was a concern and that was the reconciliation process. Ms. East assured the Board members that the department does reconcile the bank accounts; please do not think that was not happening on a monthly basis. Ms. East stated that the concern the auditors had was that the department had checks that were outstanding each month. What the auditors would like to see the department do more frequently is actually void those checks out, cancel them, and return them as unclaimed property. That would go to the Department of Revenue as unclaimed property. The department has already worked out a process to enhance the procedures, and, Ms. East stated she has no concerns that this will process in the future. In response to a question, Ms. East stated the department is paying about 14,000 people a year twice a month, and, the department had almost

200 outstanding payroll checks during a two-year period. The department looks to learn from its processes and then move forward in making enhancements in its processes.

Ms. East then proceeded in briefing about budget savings. Ms. East began with reiterating that as going through the legislative session, there is a lot of attention to the budget. Some of the things done is to show the things the department is doing to meet the reduction request. With a powerpoint presentation, Ms. East stated most of the reductions shown have already been implemented. The department eliminated the regional training academies. Some of the austere budget reductions the department has taken is a 3.5% operating reductions to all the budgets, the facilities, probation offices, and central office. Some of the things that the facilities have been doing are creative things, such as, turning lights off during day, working on time limits for water usage, reducing shower usage; all those things made a difference statewide. The department is seeing the energy consumption go down in some facilities. Ms. East stated that one thing the department did was extend the vehicle oil changes to 7,000 miles, according to the manufacturer's schedule. Ms. East continued with explaining other reductions; i.e., the furlough of the hourly positions; not buying any motor vehicles; the reduction of the canine teams; implemented a hiring freeze, which brought a net loss of about 1200 positions since July 1, 2008; the reduction of private prison CPI; and the realigning of facilities. With the next slide, Ms. East stated the list is Facility Specific Cost Efficiency Measures. These are things that the department has been working on for a couple of years now and it came together with the budget reductions. Under Realigning the Facilities, there are now host facilities of satellite facilities, where if a facility is within a certain mile radius then the small facility may not have all the business staff that a host facility would have; this being done to avoid duplicating positions. Under Facility Closures, facilities were closed in 2008. Under Remission Facilities, the department changed the facility mission based on population capacity and the need of the population. Under Validation Study, the department worked about one-and-one half years on the study of how a former warden went into each facility at post-by-post to look at staffing requirements. That study was important to the department because 60% of the budget is basically personal services, and, the department needs to know staffing to be able to fund that appropriately. Ms. East stated that to do that, it needs to be validated. Under Cross Leveling Actions, this is something the department took on this year. This was driven by the budget reduction; if there is a facility and their validation study reflected that it needed five positions, and, maybe another facility within a certain mile radius had five extra positions, then those five positions will be reassigned to the needed facility. This was kept within a certain mile radius so to not inconvenient employees. Ms. East stated this is being smart in using staff strategically; this is key in helping with budget reductions. Continuing with the list on the slide, under Fast Track Facilities, there are some beds coming on line this year and this will help with jail backlog numbers. Ms. East stated that Hays State Prison, Ware State Prison, Coastal State Prison, and Valdosta State Prison will come on line this year. Under Triple Bunk Initiative, 1287 triple bunks have been installed and those equate to one state prison; 468 triple bunks installed in probation detention centers equate to two probation detention centers.

Ms. East continued with providing budget reductions and stated that as an update, the Governor's Recommendation came in at around the same number that the department had requested, which is at 6.1%, a \$71 million reduction. Ms. East stated that right now, the department is tracking to meet about \$65 million of that reduction. Ms. East stated a furlough plan has been submitted to the State Personnel Administration, and, this will help meet the remaining reduction. Ms. East explained that she sits down with Commissioner Owens every two weeks to give him an update on where the department is on staffing. Commissioner Owens is very in tune with what is going on and what is happening department wide. Ms. East explained that under Furlough Options, one day for all staff equates to about \$2.3 million and one day for non-security equates to about \$600,000. Ms. East stated that one thing the department can do, the department could possibly have some additional savings from continued attrition. There is a high attrition rate each month, and, that is one way to strategically meet the budget reduction.

Ms. East completed her briefing, and, she and Commissioner Owens responded to several questions; one being if the furlough policy will affect the security side as far as performance and safety; this being answered by Commissioner Owens. Board members questioned issues of remissioning the facilities, personnel turnover rate, costs of health care.

Commissioner Owens called on Ms. Patricia Smith to brief the Board members on the department's legislation. Ms. Smith began with stating that three people work with her on legislation; those being Mr. Mark Guzzi of Legal Services; Mr. Bob Plemons of Engineering and Construction; and Ms. Joan Heath of Office of Public Affairs. Ms. Smith stated the first piece of legislation that the department is proposing is to grant transitional center placement for inmates convicted of 'seven deadly sins.' What this will do is allow some 'seven deadly sins' inmates be eligible for placement in the department-operated transition center, or work release program, within the last year of their incarceration. This legislation has not been introduced yet, however, it is being sponsored by Senator Johnny Grant. The Probation Options Management legislation is to authorize reinstatement of Probation Options Management Act and will allow statewide expansion on this program. This authorizes the department to impose sanctions on violations of probation without having to return a probationer back to court. This particular bill, Senate Bill 24, passed committee with a substitute bill, which the effective start date was changed from a specific date to upon governor's signature. Ms. Smith explained the third one, to authorize inmate prescription co-payments, which will allow the department to pass on a portion of the costs providing pharmaceuticals to non-indigent inmates who are not suffering from chronic illnesses. Representative Barbara Massey Reece is going to carry that legislation for the department. The next one, imposition of fees on day reporting centers, will allow the department to pass a portion of costs of running the day reporting centers to the offender; thereby, it will enable the department to expand the day reporting centers to other areas of the state. Ms. Smith stated this legislation has not been introduced but will have a sponsor for it before the end of the week. The next piece, the probation detention center credit for time served does two things; i.e., it limits the length of stay for an offender in the probation detention center. This legislation will also allow credit for time served for confinement while they are

waiting to go into a probation detention center. Ms. Smith stated this legislation is sponsored by Senator Johnny Grant and has passed the Senate unanimously. The next legislation, the Medicaid bill, will cap the amount the hospitals can charge the Georgia Department of Corrections for urgent care for inmates. This has not yet been introduced yet, but Representative Chuck Martin has agreed to carry this bill for the department. Ms. Smith completed her presentation and addressed questions.

Commissioner Owens called on Assistant Commissioner Schofield to brief the Board members on the National Geographic series. Mr. Schofield stated two video presentations will be shown this morning; one is the promo that National Geographic is doing now, and, the second one is about a three-minute presentation that touches on every angle about the department. As background information, a year ago the Georgia Department of Corrections authorized the National Geographic to come in and do an in-depth look at the department authorization. National Geographic looked at not just the inmates and what happens in the facility but they also looked at what happens to a correctional officer from their beginning of employment, going to an academy and then to a facility. National Geographic tracked a couple of the correctional officers and a couple of inmates. Mr. Schofield stated this takes a reality look at what is happening in the prisons. National Geographic was given unlimited access to the prisons and was escorted by corrections staff. After the videos were shown to the Board members, Mr. Schofield continued with stating those were quick demonstrations of what to expect. This will start to air on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 on the National Geographic channel. This will be a six part one-hour series. The series will cover a broad spectrum of what Georgia Department of Corrections does in prison operations, from the first day of cadet to initial assignment of a facility; will cover the prison operations internally; focusing not only on a diagnostic facility but also boot camp operations; also focusing on special operations in the series.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Rob Jones stated that this has been an active month as a Board. A number of members have been good enough to participate in a number of different events.

Chairman Jones called on Mr. Roger Waldrop for him to outline his activity at the Walker State Prison. Mr. Waldrop thanked Chairman for the opportunity to report on this. Mr. Waldrop stated this event was a ribbon cutting for Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) center at Walker. He stated he did not know how many are familiar with RSAT, but and that he learned about it at the event. This started back in 2003 with a study out of Columbia University which stated that 80% of the people in corrections system have substance abuse problems. This is a serious indicator. This program started with federal grants and it ended up being fully funded by department. The Georgia Department of Corrections has eight RSAT programs; some handle probationers; some handle inmates; and parole violators. Mr. Waldrop stated this one is headed up by Superintendent Mark Abusaft, who is well qualified for the job and is well motivated. Superintendent Abusaft has a secretary and nine security officers on his staff. Mr. Waldrop

stated that additionally the Spectrum Health System won the contract on counseling, and, they had four counselors represented at the ceremony. The Northwest Georgia Residential Substance Abuse center program is a six-month intensive substance abuse treatment program; an intensely military oriented program. This targets offenders who have been identified as having a history of substance abuse problems. This houses up to 200 offenders. It provides a safe and secure environment; it is controlled; structured and disciplined which include the military-styled regimen; targets medium risk offenders who have been identified with history of substance abuse. Mr. Waldrop stated the intensive substance abuse program is over a six-month period and consists of four phases. The first phase is assessment and orientation; the second one is active treatment; the third phase is reentry planning; and the fourth one is relapse prevention. The offenders are required to attend a minimum of twenty hours of class per week and complete all phases to graduate. Mr. Waldrop stated that Superintendent Abusaft emphasized that throughout the process, the offenders are evaluated continuously by counselors and corrections staff. The multi-disciplined team evaluates each one of them to determine whether there will be successful completion of the program. Upon completion of the program and graduation of the program, offenders are placed under probation supervision. The offender goes straight back to probation, where the offender will be required to continue in aftercare program. Offenders who fail to complete the program will be required to serve 270 days at a probation detention center. Mr. Waldrop stated the overall goal is to provide offenders with skills needed to live drug free and crime free lives. Mr. Waldrop stated this is giving judges another alternative and that is a great feature. Mr. Waldrop stated that he never ceases to be impressed with the attitude and can-do approach that Corrections folks have; they are enthusiastic about doing their job. The ceremony was well attended, and, the ceremony was professionally done. Mr. Waldrop stated he enjoyed going to the event.

Chairman Jones called on Mr. Bill Acuff on his visit to the prison. Mr. Acuff began with stating that at last month's meeting, Chairman Jones requested Mr. Acuff visit a facility and come back with a report. Mr. Acuff went on the internet and Valdosta State Prison attracted his attention with their multi-faced role that the one warden runs. On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Acuff contacted the warden's office and asked what time would it be convenient for him to come in for inspection. Mr. Acuff stated that last Wednesday he went to Valdosta State Prison, which is in Lowndes County. The prison has incorporated Lowndes prison, which is now run as an annex to Valdosta State Prison since their campuses are contiguous to each other. Each facility has its own security wire and its own mission. Valdosta State Prison proper is a close security facility, and, it is one of the state institutions for the mental health patients. Its total capacity, when the new fast track is completed, will be 1325 beds. Mr. Acuff stated it is one warden who oversees those two facilities, along with overseeing the Valdosta Transition Center and Patten Probation Detention Center; one warden oversees four facilities. The annex also operates one of the RSAT programs, as well as housing one of the correctional industries plants, which is the chemical plant. There are minimum and medium security inmates that work in the correctional industries plant, as well as being orderlies in the mental health ward at the close security facility. Mr. Acuff stated it is a good application of Corrections resources. Valdosta State Prison houses a canine unit; also a CERT team and a Tactical Squad. Mr. Acuff stated that as part of



consolidation of facilities, Homerville State Prison was closed and those inmates were transferred to the annex at Valdosta State Prison. The warden came from Homerville State Prison to be the warden at Valdosta State Prison and its other facilities. Mr. Acuff stated that the Transition facility is a 102-bed facility. There were only four inmates who did not take advantage to remain with the transition center. Mr. Acuff stated the inmates are not locked down; they go to work, earn money, and come back to go to their room where they stay. The inmates are not inside the wire, there is not a perimeter guard, and this works. Mr. Acuff stated it is one of the best things this Board has done by sending inmates who are at the end of their sentence back into the working world to re-learn a behavior and that is work. That way, instead of \$25 and a bus ticket, these inmates are leaving prison with around \$5,000 and a job. And the inmates do not return. Mr. Acuff stated the transition centers are doing a great job, and, one is run by the warden at Valdosta State Prison. Mr. Acuff stated the warden and his staff should be commended for the job they are doing for the Department of Corrections and for taxpayers.

Chairman Jones called on Ms. Rose Williams to brief the Board members of her visit to several institutions. Ms. Rose Williams stated she had the privilege of going with Commissioner Owens and Mr. Harris Hodges to seven prisons on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Williams stated she wanted to say this has been the smoothest transition that she has been a part of; she wanted to thank Commissioner Owens and all the other folks who worked hard to pull the agency together. She stated there are smart people working in this agency; and she learned a lot of riding with Commissioner and Mr. Hodges around to different facilities. Ms. Williams stated that they visited Claxton Probation Detention Center, the one for the females, and, it was so interesting there with seeing the triple beds. One particular inmate stated she loved triple bunks and would rather be on the top one; it was a good report about triple bunks. Ms. Williams stated they also went to Smith State Prison to the fast track ribbon cutting; Warden Jarriel and his staff are doing an outstanding job. Ms. Williams and Commissioner Owens and Mr. Hodges then went over to Georgia State Prison; out of all the prisons, that one stuck with Ms. Williams a little bit more than the rest of them. Ms. Williams was real pleased with the job the warden and his staff are doing there. Ms. Williams stated she had visited Georgia State Prison several times during her career, and, this time it felt good and safe. They went into the mental health unit; the mental health inmates stand like they should be; there is discipline there; the lockers were neat and in order; they also went to modular surgical unit and could see how the department is truly saving money by utilizing that particular service. Ms. Williams stated that just looking around Georgia State Prison and talking with the wardens and the deputies, one thing they are doing is that the duty officers work from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. so that there someone there in authority over the lieutenants on the grounds after hours. Also, Georgia State Prison has someone coming in at 5:30 in the morning and is there when the inmates start getting up for the day. Ms. Williams stated she was real pleased with what she saw. Then, Ms. Williams and Commissioner Owens and Mr. Hodges went over to Montgomery State Prison, and, with visiting after hours it was a chance to look for certain things. She stated that she was truly impressed with Montgomery State Prison during feeding time; this was her first time to be able to stand in the middle of the dining room and it be quiet; inmates were orderly, sat at tables eating and enjoying their food and that told Ms. Williams that there is discipline in place at Montgomery State Prison. Following

that visit, they went to Lyons Probation Center and there were probationers coming in to report and that was going well. Following that visit, they went to Pulaski State Prison and the inmates were happy to see her. Commissioner Owens added that Ms. Williams opened Pulaski State Prison and it is the only pink prison in the state; when the female inmates saw Ms. Williams, they started crying. Ms. Williams stated that after that visit, they went to Burruss Correctional prison and had a good visit there. Ms. Williams stated that everything she saw when out and about, she saw that Corrections is still following the basics. She stated she did not feel unsafe while they were out and about. Ms. Williams stated that one thing she looks at and is so dear to her is the correctional officers. The officers play a special part in her heart, and, she always tries to talk with them. If correctional officers are doing what they are supposed to be doing, the institution will be okay. If the correctional officers are trained like they are supposed to be trained, they will be okay in doing their job. Ms. Williams stated that when she goes out and about, she will be talking with the correctional officers; they know what is going on in the prisons; they know the inmate population; they can give great suggestions. Ms. Williams stated she heard from some correctional officers that they are impressed with Commissioner Owens coming out after hours. Ms. Williams stated that the visits went very well; got good reports from correctional officers; and feel like the prisons are following the basics. She stated that is a brief synopsis of that day spent together; from 6:00 that morning until 11:00 that night.

Chairman Rob Jones reported that he recently had lunch with Commissioner Owens and they spoke about how good it would be for Board members to go on a shakedown. Later that afternoon, Commissioner Owens called Chairman Jones to inform him there would be a shakedown on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chairman Jones reported that he had the privilege of meeting the Director of Facilities Tim Ward about 5:00 a.m. that Monday. Chairman stated he went down to Hancock State Prison, along with Mr. Rick Jacobs and his squad. Hancock State Prison is in Sparta, Georgia; one facility that has a very difficult population and a difficult mission. It is in a tough part of the state; one of the most economically depressed areas of the state. Chairman Jones stated he enjoyed the opportunity to spend time and learn from Mr. Ward, who is sharp as a tack, well known, well respected among officers; it was a pleasure to see him relate with the folks. Chairman Jones stated that Mr. Guy Hickman is the northeastern regional Field Operations Manager and was down there with the group also. Chairman stated that Mr. Hickman consults for National Institute of Corrections; and is well thought of and well respected. Chairman Jones stated that when going through the prison, Mr. Hickman knows where to look, what to look for, and what he is looking for. Mr. Hickman gave a number of good suggestions to the warden about areas of concern that needed to be addressed. Chairman Jones stated that Mr. Rick Jacobs is head of tactical squad. Chairman Jones talked a bit about the tactical squad; stated that he got up at 4:00 on Monday morning to meet for the briefing before going up to the prison. This tactical squad is made up of correctional officers from throughout the state; there were about 160 officers that day. These are the best of the best; those who go through extra training, extra conditioning, extra preparation. The officers are not aware of where they are going until they show up at their prisons. Many of the officers did not sleep at all that night. The officers found out Sunday evening; those getting off shift at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday and then meeting back at their prison at 12:30 p.m. to then get on the road, drive across the state

to be ready to go Monday morning. Chairman Jones stated that when they got to Hancock State Prison, they make a great show of force when coming in the prison. The officers line up and have a military bearing about them; march in to a cadence. Chairman Rob Jones, with powerpoint slides, showed pictures of squad lining up to go through the gate; of canines and officers going in; of officers crawling on their bellies around urinals to try to find contraband. With a shakedown, video cameras are used with every squad that runs through; there are counselors there; there is legal staff there; it is a smooth well-run operation. Chairman Jones went through four different wings with teams and there was no use-of-force or an extraction. This shakedown was successful in that contraband was found; around 20 shanks were found; a number of cell phones and cell phone batteries; about five/six ounces of marijuana. Chairman Jones stated the warden and staff appreciated this stuff being cleaned out. He stated that staff and Commissioner Owens are doing everything they can to help with the situation at Hancock State Prison. Chairman Jones stated it was a very eye-opening experience. One of the realizations that was real clear is that correctional officers are in extremely dangerous circumstances and their lives are on the line every day that they report to work. Chairman Jones stated he was impressed with staff and folks involved in the shakedown.

Chairman Rob Jones stated that with the committee assignments, there will be an additional committee to study the issue of recidivism. He then requested that several Board members talk to him about what committees to serve on. Chairman stated he will email out the committee list and will call the Board members he would like to be chair of each particular committee. Chairman stated he will let Board members know what briefings he would like to hear on next month.

Chairman Jones stated he will also communicate with Board members about Board policies on expenses and reimbursements. The committee discussed this issue and it was very helpful. Several years ago, Guidelines were established on this issue. Mr. Jones stated he will send a letter to the Board members about where the Board stands on this issue.

Chairman Jones stated the April Board meeting will be down at Glennville. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Wayne Dasher is hosting the Law Enforcement Supper; this is a great occasion. This is one of the best times that the Board members have to get to know one another and to also see a facility. Chairman Jones stated he encourages the Board members to come down for the Board meeting and then look to spend time in one of the facilities.

Chairman Jones stated he would like to have an hour-long work session at next month's Board meeting. In reviewing the statutes and policies and procedures, there is a tremendous statutory direction to set policy for the Department of Corrections. He stated that the way this Board is set up and the way that it is run, there is no way that the Board members would be able to do everything by policy for the Department. Fortunately, there is an outstanding correctional staff and professionals for the Board to rely upon to help in many areas. Chairman requested to be able to briefly discuss that. Chairman Jones reminded the Board members they have a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures manual and would like to talk about that. Chairman Jones

stated he would like to have a staff member address the ethical considerations that the Board members need to be cognizant of so that the Board is not in the newspaper. The Board members responded they would like to have the work session to begin at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Rob Jones stated it is a wonderful thing for Board members to get into facilities and probation offices when possible. He encourages all Board members to take the opportunity to do so. Please contact Laura Jones to let her know if you have an opportunity to visit, and she will make the arrangements. Chairman Jones encouraged the Board members it is important to do so.

Chairman Jones stated there is the possibility of another committee, one that will address intelligence issues in the prisons; what is being found; the patterns seen; problems in internal affairs issues. He stated that, however, this is something that may not be done because of considerations of disclosure of attorney/client privileged information. Chairman Jones and Board Attorney Joe Drolet will discuss this first, so to not jeopardize investigations; this will be left to professional staff and their advice as appropriate.

Chairman Rob Jones stated that the State Senate decided to pass a Resolution honoring Sheriff Cecil Nobles of Long County. The Board recognized and honored Sheriff Nobles for his longstanding service to that area.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Robert Jones asked if there were any items to bring before the Board. Sheriff Bill Masee stated there are more and more gangs involved in the jails and prison system. He requested that the staff member who oversees the gang problems to make a presentation to the Board members; the Board members need to know what is going on with gangs. Sheriff Masee saw the report covered at Hancock; there are more problems at local jails; that the presentation would be good for the Board.

Mr. Carl Franklin questioned if the tactical squad could be bused in for the shakedowns. The response was that the correctional officers are on Corrections vans and come from prisons all over the state. Mr. Franklin asked if the officers could come in on a bus instead of several vans, which would save with the cost. Mr. Rob Jones responded that these guys are literally gathering up at their prisons at 12:30 in the morning; that it would be quicker to get them from their post down to the shakedown, and, then back quickly rather than meeting up on a bus somewhere. Many of the officers would be going in on first shift early the next morning, and, they are on short rest when they are doing the shakedown. Mr. Jones encouraged the use of the vans.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

---

Robert E. Jones, Chairman

---

James L. Whitehead, Sr., Secretary

---

Laura Jones, Board Liaison