

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

**October 6, 2011
Forsyth, Georgia**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Carl Franklin
Mr. Bruce Hudson
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Ashley Paulk, Jr.
Sheriff Carlton Powell
Mr. Tommy Rouse
Mr. Roger Waldrop
Mr. Justin Wiedeman
Ms. Rose Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Jim Whitehead Sr., Chairman
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Chief George Potter
Mr. Kevin Tanner
Mr. Jerry Willis

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. Bill Acuff
Sherriff Roger Garrison
Dr. Henrie Treadwell

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:

Mr. Joseph Drolet, Senior Assistant Attorney General

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Brian Owens, Commissioner
Mr. Timothy C. Ward, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Becky East, Administration Division Director
Mr. Robert E. Jones, General Counsel
Ms. Gayle Jordan, Chaplain
Ms. Simone Juhmi-Green, Board Liaison
Mr. Buster King, Investigations Unit
Mr. John Laurence, Investigations Unit
Mr. Kenneth Mantle, Executive Assistant
Mr. Keith Nash, Investigations Unit
Ms. Kristen Stancil, Public Affair Office

VISITORS:

Ms. Jackie Franklin, Wife of Carl Franklin
Mr. Chuck McMullen, Corrections Corporation of America
Mr. David Pratt, Southern Strategy Group

Vice Chairman Tommy Rouse called the October meeting of the Board of Corrections to order. Vice Chairman Rouse called on Chaplain Gayle Jordan for the invocation.

Vice Chairman Rouse welcomed all visitors and staff to the Board of Corrections and requested everyone to introduce themselves to the Board.

Vice Chairman Rouse confirmed who were connected by conference call.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the October Agenda. Mr. Ashley Paulk, Jr. made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams, and voted approved by the Board.

Vice Chairman Rouse requested approval of the September Minutes. Mr. Roger Waldrop made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Rose Williams, and voted approved by the Board.

Vice Chairman Rouse then called on Commissioner Brian Owens to present his report.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Brian Owens stated his report would be brief starting with the Upcoming Events, Jail Backlog and a brief Commissioner's Update.

With the PowerPoint slides, Commissioner Owens highlighted some of the Upcoming Events scheduled in October, November and December. Several events were mentioned such as the Augusta (hot dog) Law Enforcement Luncheon on October 22nd. Also mentioned was the second Family Day of the year in Milledgeville, Georgia on October 28th. This event is where the leadership of the Department of Corrections meets with family members of those who are incarcerated. Plus, November 17th is the day we are scheduled to meet with the Governor on our budget presentation to give him our briefing of what our requests are. In December, you will see routine events to include the holidays.

The Sheriff's Jail Backlog count is at 5,167. Our count is at 2,838; both the Sheriff's and our count is correct. The total backlog counting probationers are about 3,400. That number is going down; unfortunately, we have been harboring around 3,000 - 3,500 in the current jail backlog and we are below 3,000 now. Commissioner Owens mentioned there is some relief in sight regarding the backlog and he would expand on this relief with his Commissioner Update shortly.

Commissioner Owens gave a brief update on Probation Officer Tiffany Bishop who lost her life in a training accident on August 31, 2011. Commissioner Owens thanked Mr. Tommy Rouse and Mr. Carl Franklin for attending her service to represent the Board of Corrections. We had over 800 people at her service. To expand on where we are right now, we asked the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI) to investigate the circumstances surrounding that loss and GBI is still doing that. We have done an internal review of our policies, procedures and practices and once we receive a final report from the GBI, at that point we will engage an outside expert. We are either going to bring in the United States military or officials from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to review all of our practices, policies and procedures. Then, we will begin moving forward after that; after a thorough review; not only internally, but by outside experts as well. As it is still under investigation by the GBI, that is all I can say about that issue now, but I thank you for your support during that tragic event.

Commissioner Owens stated you should have received copies of the Inspector General report. You've seen the actions we have taken there. With this situation also, I asked Vernon Keenan of GBI to come in behind us; behind the Inspector General and make sure there were no criminal issues there. The GBI is doing that for us and we expect to receive that report shortly as well. So, other than what you have read in the Inspector General report, again I will remain mum on that until the GBI completes that investigation; at which time it will become public and we will advise you on what is happening there.

Commissioner Owens stated on the execution update; without going into any detail, you are aware that we have had one execution since the last Board meeting. We had another one scheduled yesterday, but that was stayed by the superior court judge in Dougherty County.

Next, Commissioner Owens expanded on the jail backlog relief. We are about four or five weeks away from opening up the Riverbend facility in Milledgeville. This will be a 1500 bed medium security prison. It is expandable in the future should the Department need the additional 2500 bed space. We will begin loading that facility in the middle of December. The Jenkins facility in Milan, Georgia will follow shortly thereafter. This facility will hold 1,150 beds, but it will also be expandable to hold up to 2,500 beds should the Department need the additional bed space in the future. So, hopefully we can give our sheriffs and our jails a little bit of relief out there beginning in December 2011.

Commissioner Owens stated please review the Departments' organizational chart handout. The chart is exactly the same, but some of the players have changed. I wanted to ensure the Board was informed on who is doing what in the Department along with their telephone numbers. A staff directory of key team leaders was also distributed. Commissioner Owens advised the members they could call key team leaders directly if they had issues in certain divisions or members could reach out to him should they need information from him as well.

Commissioner Owens stated the biggest problem the Department of Corrections is facing in the State of Georgia and across this nation continues to be cell phones. Cell phones are wreaking havoc across the nation and I will give you a couple of examples of what we faced recently. Then, Ms. Kristen Stancil will come up and brief you on one of the ways we are trying to interdict by making the public aware of what we do.

When we catch somebody with a cell phone we arrest and refer for prosecution; without regard. Whether they work for us; whether they are a family member; or whether they are on the outside trying to make some money. The lengths to which people try to get cell phones into the institution are phenomenal! Three weeks ago at Phillips State Prison there was a very large tom cat lying in what we call the dead man's zone which is between the fences. Every prison has cats, but this cat contained 15 cell phones and someone sutured the cat back up and tried to throw the cat over the fence but it didn't make it.

In addition, recently at Telfair State Prison we had eight arrests for one event; eight individuals hitting the prison trying to get cell phones and other contraband such as drugs and tobacco over the fence. Two are probationers; one was a parolee and five other individuals. We are doing interdiction methods which we will not obviously publicly speak about and there is technology out there to help us. There are some physical barriers as well as laws and regulations that restrict what we can do. Cell phones are the number one concern of the Department of Corrections in the State of Georgia and across the nation. There are technological solutions that states do not have access to, but I will continue to fight on that front as well. Plus, there are jamming capabilities that exist, but only the Federal government can use that technology and the states cannot employ or deploy that technology. Again, we are working with our congressional delegation as well as the Federal Communications Commission on who controls that jamming technology. I believe at the end of the day until we jam, we are going to be fighting this battle every single day. So far we've confiscated well over 6000 cell phones in the past year in the prison system. Moreover, there is an article in your press packet wherein Macon State Prison donated over 1000 cell phones to military members overseas. This information is to make you aware of what is going on regarding cell phones so perhaps when you are talking to your elected officials, members of Congress and Senate, you can have this information. It's a disaster waiting to happen; not only to the Georgia Department of Corrections but any Department of Corrections across the nation.

Ms. Kristen Stancil came up to give a short briefing on what the Department is doing with Facebook to try to publicize our efforts on cell phone interdiction. Ms. Stancil stated I'm here to talk about how the Department uses social media to get information out about contraband being illegal in our prison system. Our main source of social media is Facebook. Facebook is used by millions of people every day to stay connected and to share links, photos and videos. We use a public profile which gives a voice to any public figure or organization and it allows users to connect to what they care about. An account is not needed to view GDC's Facebook page, so anytime you are interested in looking at it you can. You do not need a Facebook account or password to get to our page.

The purpose of us using social media and Facebook in particular is we wanted it to be a resource to communicate positive messages about GDC. We want to use it to expand our audience and to increase our public website traffic. Some of the posts on our Facebook page include: website links, pictures, public events and contraband arrest. Ms. Stancil toggled through the Departments' Facebook page and discussed how she goes about posting items to the site.

As the administrator of the Facebook page, Ms. Stancil stated she receives all the statistics and all the information of what people are commenting on and looking at on the page. Ms. Stancil quoted a statement she always includes at the end of the contraband report "the Department of

Corrections is committed to identifying and pursuing prosecution of those persons who attempt to introduce contraband to state facilities". Ms. Stancil stated that another way we can take it a step further along with Facebook is to also post the same information to our public website. Ms. Stancil went over some weekly numbers of contraband arrests that were posted on the Departments' public website. To finish, Ms. Stancil stated that the Department has over 2000 active users on Facebook and this information is given to every single user and the users get automatic updates showing this information. This concluded Ms. Stancil's presentation.

Commissioner Owens concluded his report by stating in case you think it's about prisoners and inmates wanting to call home to talk to their moms and wives, it clearly is not. We have found no cell phones at female facilities. Cell phones in the prison system are about power, money and gangs. As a matter of fact, three Saturday's ago we had a homicide over one cell phone at Hays State Prison. So, this is as dangerous and serious as it gets and I would appreciate any support you can provide to our elected officials particularly at the Federal level.

That concluded the Commissioner's report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vice Chairman Rouse began his report by asking Commissioner Owens to read and present Mr. Jerry Watson, former Executive Director of Georgia Correctional Industries, with a resolution on behalf of the Board for his years of service to the Department of Corrections. Mr. Watson thanked the Board, Commissioner Owens and staff. Mr. Carlton Powell and Mr. Bruce Hudson expressed their thanks to Mr. Watson on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Robert E. Jones came up and gave a brief summary on the Approval of Rule 125-2-4-.13 which involves a change to our policy when inmates can obtain a drivers' license while they are inside the facility for certain purposes. There was a statutory change in the last session and that is really what this Board Rule relates to; it's simply a matter of changing the name of the particular entity. The old Board Rule referred to handling the process through the Department of Public Safety and now it's handled through the Department of Driver Services. The language you will see was stricken from the proposed policy that you have and the language that was added related to a particular new code section that was passed by the legislature and it mirrors and tracks the language of that code section which is O.C.G.A § 40-5-21. We are asking the Board to vote only to simply post the Rule 125-2-4-.13 for 30 days as necessary under the administrative procedures act.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the posting of Rule 125-2-4-.13 for public viewing for 30 days. Mr. Roger Waldrop made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. John Mayes, and voted approved by the Board.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked the Board to vote on the next Board meeting location. Mr. Carlton Powell made a motion to meet in Forsyth. There was some discussion from the Board regarding the best location to routinely meet. Mr. Hudson stated that all the meetings should be in Central Georgia at the Forsyth campus. Mr. Wiedeman stated with the exception of when the General Assembly is in session we need to meet in Atlanta. Mr. Waldrop asked if there is a particular reason to meet in Forsyth for November. Commissioner Owens stated we are having a Thanksgiving holiday brunch for staff at Tift and we would like to have our Board Members who want to attend to get to know some of our staff and interact with them.

Commissioner Owens stated he agreed the Board should meet in Forsyth except when the General Assembly is in session. It would be good to hold the meetings in Atlanta then.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve all meetings in Forsyth except when the General Assembly is in session. Mr. Bruce Hudson made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Roger Garrison, and voted approved by the Board. The next meeting will be on November 3rd at State Offices South at Tift College in Forsyth, Georgia.

Vice Chairman Rouse reminded the Board that former Board Member Cecil Nobles, Colonel William "Bill" Hitchens (GSP), Colonel Mark W. McDonough (GSP), Ms. Cheryl Buie (GSP) and Ms. Nikki Renfroe (GSP) will all be at the next meeting. Plus, an official Board photo will be taken at the November meeting too.

Vice Chairman Rouse then asked Mr. Robert E. Jones to present a property resolution. Mr. Robert E. Jones stated this resolution is regarding an old building at Rogers State Prison that had a tree that fell through it and we are receiving payment under an insurance claim for that building. It was an old house that the Department hasn't used in about ten years. We want to destroy it and tear it down since it would cost more money to rebuild it. We are asking for your approval to go to the Georgia State Properties Commission and ask them to allow us to tear down this building. It's an old farm house that sits in the woods outside of Rogers State Prison. The aerial photos are inside your packets.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the property resolution. Mr. Roger Waldrop made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. John Mayes, and voted approved by the Board.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked Ms. Becky East to present the bond resolution which includes the sale of three different bonds the Department had appropriated during the General Assembly session. Ms. East stated the first bond is security and life safety in the amount of 4.75 million dollars. Funds in that bond are approved for items such as CCTV in the dorms and day rooms, statewide security electronics programs, fire alarms certification and maintenance programs, fire alarms replacements, security electronic cabinets and security bar construction and installation for facilities.

The second bond is for 10 million dollars for major repairs. This includes such repairs as asbestos effacement, water tower renovation, heating loop replacements, replacement of kitchen and laundry equipment, underground electrical distribution replacements as well as composting equipment.

The last bond is for 4 million dollars for minor construction. This includes painting projects statewide, roof replacements and repairs. The total bond resolution is for 18.75 million. They will be sold in the next bond sale which is in November.

Vice Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the bond resolutions. Mr. Carlton Powell made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. John Mayes, and voted approved by the Board.

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

Jim Whitehead Sr., Chairman

John Mayes, Secretary

Simone Juhmi-Green, Board Liaison