

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS

May 3, 2012

Forsyth, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Tommy M. Rouse, Chairman
Mr. Wayne Dasher
Mr. Carl Franklin
Sherriff Roger Garrison
Mr. Bruce Hudson
Mr. John Mayes
Mr. Ashley Paulk, Jr.
Chief George Potter
Sheriff Carlton Powell
Mr. Kevin Tanner
Dr. Henrie Treadwell
Mr. Roger Waldrop
Mr. Jim Whitehead, Sr
Mr. Justin Wiedeman
Ms. Rose Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Jerry Willis

CONFERENCE CALL:

Mr. Bill Acuff

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:

Mr. Joseph Drolet, Senior Assistant Attorney General

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

Mr. Brian Owens, Commissioner
Mr. Timothy C. Ward, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Becky East, Administration Division Director
Mr. Robert E. Jones, General Counsel
Ms. Simone Juhmi-Green, Board Liaison
Mr. John Laurence, Investigations Unit
Mr. Kenneth Mantle, Executive Assistant
Mr. Ricky Myrick, Investigations Unit
Mr. David Taylor, Investigations Unit
Mr. Randy Tillman, Facilities Division Director
Mr. Wilson Hall, Special Operations Manager
Mr. Danny Horne, Chaplain
GDC Cobra Unit

VISITORS:

Ms. Denise Caldon, Citizen
Ms. Jackie Franklin, Wife of Carl Franklin
Mr. William Phelps, Captain, Perry Police Department
Mr. David Pratt, Southern Strategy Group

Chairman Tommy M. Rouse called the May meeting of the Board of Corrections to order at 10:00 a.m. and Board Liaison Simone Juhmi-Green recorded the minutes. Chairman Tommy M. Rouse welcomed all visitors and staff to the Board of Corrections, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed to business.

Chairman Rouse confirmed that Mr. Bill Acuff was connected by conference call.

Chairman Rouse presented to the Board the May Agenda for approval. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was then seconded by Chief George Potter and was voted approved by the Board as presented.

Chairman Rouse presented to the Board the April Minutes for approval. Mr. John Mayes made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Sheriff Carlton Powell, and the Minutes were voted approved by the Board as presented.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Owens presented the Upcoming Events for May, June, and July 2012. Significantly mentioned, is the Georgia Prison Wardens Association golf tournament on May 4th, the Public Employee Recognition Week (PERW) starting on May 6th, the Appreciation Picnic for staff on May 9th, Family Day in Milledgeville on May 18th for the family members of incarcerated inmates, GDC's Annual Awards Ceremony on May 29th, and June 10-13th is the Georgia Prison Wardens Association Conference at Chateau Élan in Braselton, Georgia.

Commissioner Owens reported on the total Jail Backlog count, which is at 1,589 to include 385 Probation backlog. The Sheriff's count is at 4,610. He explained that both the Jail Backlog and the Sheriff's counts are accurate but are calculated differently for different reasons.

Commissioner Owens stated that our biggest dilemma is illegal cell phones in our institutions. In the last 18 to 20 months, around four hundred arrests of civilians, visitors, and about 80 staff members from bringing in contraband into the institutions. Actions taken to combat contraband cellphones include putting up forty-foot high netting all the way around the prison so contraband can't be thrown over. In addition, we put exterior fences at most of our high level facilities; 6 foot fences with razor wire that we reclaimed from the prisons we closed in Milledgeville with sensors and a camera on it to try to catch them coming in. So, it's an ongoing battle! One of the things we did last year to attempt to interdict not only cell phones but to have a mobile force that we could deploy at any time on any situation was to create what we ended up calling the COBRA unit. It's a tactical squad based out of Tift College and the Commander, Mr. Wilson Hall, is here today to talk to you about what their capabilities are and how we deploy these units to try to interdict cell phones and shake down institutions.

Commissioner Owens introduced Mr. Wilson Hall to present his report on the COBRA unit.

Mr. Wilson Hall gave a brief overview on his career with Corrections before he began his presentation on the COBRA unit. Mr. Hall spoke about the purpose, background, mission and capabilities of the COBRA unit. Mr. Hall discussed the Specialized Tactical Unit and their COBRA emblem. The unit was formed on July 1, 2011 which consists of a 24 member Tactical Unit designed for rapid deployment throughout the state. It is composed of a Commander, an Assistant Commander, and has 10 members per squad. The members receive advanced specialized training in civil disturbance, riot control, chemical munitions, and institutional security procedures.

As Mr. Wilson began his presentation, he requested the COBRA unit to enter the Board room. The unit marched in wearing different tactical attire and remained in the Board room as Mr. Wilson explained their attire to the Board. The first group wore attire for day to day activity such as class room instruction; the second group was dressed in Battle Dress Uniform's (BDU's)- this is the uniform they wear when they are doing more extensive training or going into some type of situation; the third group was dressed in the full riot gear for full protection and major incidents.

Mr. Wilson continued his brief and discussed things such as rapid deployment, targeting "hot spots" at facilities that are experiencing crisis situations, the unit base at State Offices South at Tift College, work shifts, entry/takedown procedures, response to riots, high profile transports, Shakedowns, and preventing escapes and other disturbances.

Several members of the Board had additional questions regarding the gear for the COBRA unit, qualifications for getting on the COBRA squad, incidents, emergencies, readiness/ response times, assistance, training, and educational classes.

This concluded Commissioner Owens' report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Tommy M. Rouse began his report by asking Ms. Becky East to present a bond resolution. The bond is 3.5 million dollars of life, safety, and security bonds that will be sold in the upcoming bond sale. These funds will be used for locking control systems, fire alarm replacements, fire alarm certifications, perimeter security, and portal security.

Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the bond resolution. Sheriff Roger Garrison made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Kevin Tanner, and voted approved by the Board.

Chairman Rouse asked Mr. Robert E. Jones to present the resolution on the Metro State Prison filming request. Mr. Jones stated that this resolution is a Short Term Temporary Revocable License Agreement (RLA) request from Stalwart Films, LLC to film scenes for a TV series' first episode at our former Metro State Prison.

Chairman Rouse asked for a motion to approve the Metro State Prison Filming Request resolution. Mr. Wayne Dasher made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Sheriff Roger Garrison, and voted approved by the Board.

Chairman Rouse asked the Board for a motion to approve a resolution honoring the Probation, Parole, and Community Supervision Officers Week which is recognized nationally from July 15-21, 2012. Mr. Wayne Dasher made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. John Mayes and voted approved by the Board.

Chairman Rouse spoke about the Joint Board meeting held in Glennville, Georgia on April 12th. Chairman Rouse thanked Mr. Wayne Dasher for his hospitality and coordination of the Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Cookout. In addition, the final collection for any Board members that wish to donate to the Georgia Prison Wardens Association scholarship fund was discussed.

Chairman Rouse asked the Board for recommendations on meeting in June, July and August. There was some discussion so Chairman Rouse asked for a motion. Mr. Roger Waldrop made a motion not to meet, Mr. Ashley Paulk Jr. seconded the motion and the Board voted and approved not to meet for the months of June, July or August unless there was official business that needs the full Boards' approval.

Chairman Rouse reminded the Board of Corrections that the next meeting would be at State Offices South at Tift College in Forsyth on September 6, 2012.

To conclude, Chairman Rouse discussed the travel reimbursement guidelines for attending events. There was some discussion so Commissioner Brian Owens asked if the General Counsel for the Office of Legal Services for the Department could review the policy and guidelines and advise the Board within 30 days. Chairman Rouse agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned and the Board members took an official Board photo for the 2012 calendar year on the Hardin Library steps at Tift College.

Tommy M. Rouse, Chairman

Rose Williams, Secretary

Simone Juhmi-Green, Board Liaison