

Board Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Present

David Connell, Chairman
Jeff Markey, Vice Chairman
Britt Fleck, Secretary
Kat Satterfield
Tony Guisasola
Frank Reynolds
Al Barber

Not Present

Rachel Little
Bob Pierce

Also attending the meeting was Cristina Correia from the State Attorney General's Office and members of the DDS Staff.

Establish Quorum/Call to Order

Chairman Connell confirmed the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Connell called for a motion regarding the minutes from the October 9, 2024 Board meeting. Jeff Markey motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes as presented; Tony Guisasola seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Commissioner's Report

The Commissioner welcomed the Board, members of the DDS staff, and others attending the meeting.

Employee Spotlight:

- The first spotlight was on Developer 2, Bhamini Patel. Bhamini started as a programmer and is the lead for the DDS DRIVES Team. Bhamini is a meticulous and dedicated IT team lead; she consistently delivers quality results while staying on top of every detail. She asks the right questions to challenge assumptions and push for the best solutions, keeping the team focused and ready to tackle problems. The Chairman asked what the biggest challenge of her job was. She said that dealing with challenges and relying solely on the Fast team when working with new technology.
- The second spotlight was Legal Assistant Shaquay Robinson who has been with the State of Georgia for 8 years. She has held various roles in the department before getting too Legal. Shaquay currently serves as the internal hearing officer for the Legal Division while also handling an average of 600 plus (609 emails, 80 calls) high-level customer service inquiries. She receives inquires come from Judges, Judicial staff, attorneys, and customers regarding complex issues and is also involved in technical changes stemming from those issues. She also conducts legal research necessary to assist high-level customers. She is in the beginning stage of applying to law school. The Chairman asked her what she thinks the difference is in the challenges in Legal and maybe running a center. She said that working in a center, you don't know the backend of the processes.

The Commissioner went on to report about the following:

Hurricane Helene Assistance:

- Hurricane Helene resulted in a lot of damage in South Georgia. They are still cleaning up there. DDS had about 95 team members who were personally affected by that hurricane. We collected three SUVs full of items needed by DDS team members.
- The Commissioner went to Savannah; Deputy Commissioner Rich dropped off items in August; and Fleet Manager Eric Mitchell dropped items off in Valdosta.
- It says a lot when staff respond to assist other staff. Thousands of dollars of items came from our team to other team members. Hats off to the DDS staff.

State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP):

- DDS participates in the Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program. It starts in September and goes until November 16th. During this time, all state agencies, university systems, and technical schools collect funds and items that are distributed to local and sometimes national charities. SCCP is a fun time for the agency. The Commissioner pointed out that more than a million dollars were raised for charitable organizations through SCCP last year. The State of Georgia does an outstanding job giving back to the community.
- In 2023, DDS collected \$27,000 in the two months of SCCP. He highlighted a few of the events by division. The finance division has snacks, coffee, tea, and apple cider for sale and does giveaways. He told board member Tony Guisasola he would like the apple cider. He mentioned HR's waffle bar, IT hot dogs, OIS nacho nook, PMO gave a chance to win a wellness package, Legal had an entry to win a \$100 gift card, and Field Operations collected money in the centers. You will see a few flyers posted around the building to notify staff of all the events. The agency is doing an outstanding job in that regard. In 2024, DDS collected \$28,992.76.

Douglasville CSC Opening:

- The Douglasville Grand Opening will take place next week. Invitations have already gone out. The center opened to the public on October 29th. In that week, we served 293 customers. The customers in the Douglasville area won't have to travel to Marietta, Atlanta, Carrolton, or Dallas. Of the 15 most populated counties in the State of Georgia, Douglas was the only one that did not have a CSC. He is glad we could close the gap and make services more convenient. The Douglasville CSC makes the 11th CDL center.
- There are now more than 400,012 CDL drivers in the state. The agency is enhancing the number of CDL drivers. We know that with the expansion of the Savannah port, every single driver is needed in the industry.

Samsung Wallet:

- The Samsung mobile driver's license (mDL) is very important to customers, such as his Executive Assistant, Shea Carter, who has a Samsung phone. Samsung was added to the mobile platform on October 30th, along with the already Apple and Google platforms. The mDL has been a long journey. When the Commissioner, General Counsel Angelique McClendon, and Director Brett Young, started the conversations in reference to all the digital platforms, it was six or seven years ago.

- These are billion-dollar companies agreeing to work with a state agency. Georgia was the fourth to implement all three platforms. Apple would tell you that DDS was the first to communicate how things should be implemented in this space. The Commissioner and team were able to go to the Apple headquarters and negotiate on behalf of the state and, in many cases, for all jurisdictions in North America, about how these wallet providers should provision these platforms. Hopefully, there will be more adoption as more mDL use cases become available. The technology is currently only at the airport. If you're traveling, you can present your mobile ID to TSA without having a physical card. The technology is not quite there with law enforcement at this moment, but we expect law enforcement and restaurants, bars, and pharmacies to accept them at some point. Georgia is ready, and our citizens will soon be able to take advantage of these conveniences.

International Driver Examiner of the Year (IDEC):

- IDEC is something the agency has done for the last 12 years. Field Operations Director Kecia Bivins, Deputy Director Pierre Miles, and the District Managers nominate a person from each of the nine districts who has demonstrated exceptional customer service & work ethic.
- Graphics and Visual Arts Specialist Avery Fields was instrumental in putting the videos together and showcasing some of the things the examiners do to get this special recognition.
- There was a ceremony to celebrate all the nominees here at HQ. Last year's winner, Dawn Scott, was also in attendance. There was a pink theme for Breast Cancer Awareness month.
- The winner will travel to Arizona next year to the next AAMVA AIC. Each individual is the shining star in their district. There are 625 to 700 examiners, depending on whether the staffing is up or down. These are nine of the most recognized of those 600-plus examiners in our state.
- The winner this year was Laura Baum from the Hinesville CSC. Laura has been with DDS for 20 years and speaks fluent Spanish. She works a lot with our military community in Hinesville. She has been a tremendous asset over the years. The winner's name will be placed in a shadow box outside of the boardroom for all to see.

Regulatory Compliance Director Brent Bennett provided an update on the Performance Audit for Driver's Education:

- The audit presented a few findings and recommendations. Some the agency provided counter points. For example, a suggestion was to move to 30 people in a classroom instead of 40. DDS pushed back on that because we don't have any evidence to suggest that 30 or 40 is the right number. The Commissioner always says that audits or complaints about the business are learning opportunities that allow the agency to improve.
- The audit's purpose was for three things. How does DDS ensure driver education at statutory industrial standards? How does funding allocation compute to driver education courses (this a GDEC function and not a DDS function), and does the research indicate that driver education courses are achieving the attended safety outcomes? There were five findings, but only 4 were applicable to DDS.
- Board member Tony Guisasola asked if vendors or DDS wrote the curriculum. Board Member Al Barber said that If DDS intends to standardize the entire program, they don't have the ability in-house to write a driver education program. There are outlines that are in these reports that have merit, and I think for the schools, if you came up with a fixed outline and leave it to the schools to fill content, they will still be able to separate themselves from each other so that aspect will still be there.
For example, the curriculum that many continue to use have modified and expanded on those curriculums to incorporate YouTube videos and other things available to bring them into the 21st century.

- The Chairman said he is sometimes concerned about technology and having young kids in cars. They spend too much time playing with the technology than keeping their eyes on the road. The Commissioner thought that was an interesting point because that's called distracted driving, which is fairly new in the industry. The focus has always been on Speeding, DUI, and wearing a seat belt. Based on new research, we are finding that distracted driving is probably a bigger cause of injury and death.
- Al thinks the curriculum of the past has been more academic in creation by high school teachers who may be looking at it from an academic standpoint for developing a curriculum for the classroom. Georgia is in a good position, and even though we don't have the standard curriculum at this point, it's not too far off. We need to focus on the major causes of wrecks. We are trying to teach them how to be safe in a car, and we know distractions are part of it. The formulas and all these different curriculums are out there, but those things mean something to a kid once they see a YouTube video of an actual wreck where you can apply those principles.
- Al said it doesn't matter what you are teaching. If you have them for 30 hours, you are challenged. You will only have up to 10% of the class actively participating. You've got a home run if you get 10% of the class participating, whether online or instructor-led in person. Never think that by rule or curriculum, you can change the behavior of kids with other issues at home, in person, or with distractions. The only thing you can do is deliver what you have time to deliver as best as possible.
- The Commissioner explained that the goal is not to take competition out of the business. If we can create standards, these are minimum things that can be taught or should be taught, and then let schools adopt those. Schools can incorporate the things they feel are best to train the students, and that creates competition. Then schools can say this is why we feel like they are a better school. Al said if you standardize the whole thing, you lose all that.
- The question is, do driving training schools help our kids become safer drivers? That question is answered through outcomes by measuring young adults over time. Conversations continued in reference to the audit, training, safety, and outcomes.

The Commissioner provided an update on the agency's performance:

The number of customers coming into the CSC during October was 272,000, which is staggering when you look at it month over month, especially year over year. The Commissioner loves that we are staying well below that 30-minute threshold. The goal is to serve customers in 30 minutes or less; on average, they are served in less than 10 minutes.

The Commissioner went over the Customer Satisfaction Surveys. The surveys measure four areas, and we recently added a fifth. That is how the agency ranks. There are 6,295 customers of the 272,000 that came in and agreed to do the survey. Most customers coming in are already existing Georgia customers. We want to know if our staff is courteous, are they knowledgeable and 5 stars is what we strive for every month. The agency is at 4.64 but could always be better.

Rules for Final Approval

- **375-3-1-.36** Fees for Driver's Licenses, Instruction Permits, Identification Cards, and Temporary Driving Permits
- **375-5-6-.25** Program Advertising and Solicitation
- **375-5-6-.26** Fees
- **375-5-6-.28** Inspection, Investigations, and Program Monitoring
- **375-5-6-.29** Enforcement of Program Requirements
- **375-5-6-.30** Alternative Resources for Background Investigations

- **375-5-6-.31** Pending Charges Against Owners and Instructors
- **375-5-6-.32** DUI Gratuities

Tony Guisasola motioned to approve the final rules for adoption; Frank Reynolds seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Waiver Petitions

1. **Barbara Lynn Moore** - She is seeking a driver's license in the name of Barbara Lynn Moore. She is 56 years old. She was born Barbara Lynn Ratley. Her parents divorced when she was a baby. Her mother married a man named William Meyer when Barbara was 7 years old. Her last name changed to Meyer at that point, but her stepfather never legally adopted her. She married Dennis Moore in 1988. Her last name on the marriage certificate was Meyer. Her last name has been Moore ever since 1988. She submitted her birth certificate (mother-Sandra I Busby; father-Patrick L Ratley), baptismal record (mother-Sandra Busby; father-William Meyer), high school Diploma, nursing assistant certificate, marriage Certificate (spouse-Dennis Lee Moore), expired U.S. Passport, mother's obituary (deceased-Sandra I Meyer), valid Florida driver's license (REAL ID compliant), Numident (mother-Sandra I Busby; fathers-William A Meyer and Patrick L Ratley; prior names used-Barbara Lynn Ratley, Barbara Lynn Meyer), Immunization record (parents' names-William and Sandra), eighth grade graduation certificate, and Social Security Card S/S.

Al Barber motioned to approve the waiver; Tony Guisasola seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

2. **Debra Vowels Tanner** – She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Debra Vowels Tanner. She is 68 years old. She was born Debra Vowels. She has always used the last name Tanner. She only found out later in life that the last name on her birth certificate was Vowels. She also found out her date of birth is May 11, 1956. No legal name change was made from Vowels to Tanner. She submitted her birth certificate (mother-Lottie Vowels), birth certificate of children, nurse assistant certificate, certificate of baptism, expired U.S. Passport, Medicare card, vehicle title certificate, valid New York driver's license (not REAL ID compliant), form SSA-1099, Income tax return, apartment rental contract, Insurance notice, bank account summary, S/S Letter (mother-Annie Bettis; father-Levi Tanner; prior names used-Debra Tanner/1971/1985/1989, Debra Vowels Tanner/1995/2013), and S/S card.

Frank Reynolds motioned to approve the waiver; Britt Fleck seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

New or Old Business

The next Board meeting will be held on January 8, 2025.

Adjournment

There was no further business to discuss; Chairman David Connell called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Tony Guisasola and seconded by Al Barber with unanimous approval by the Board.

READ AND APPROVED on 8 of January, 2025 by:

Signed by:

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David Connell, Chair

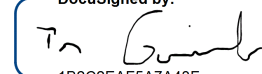
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Britt Fleck, Secretary

Absent
Bob Pierce, Member

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Rachel Little, Member

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