

Board Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

Present

David Connell, Chairman
Jeff Markey, Vice Chairman
Jeff Wigington, Secretary
Bob Pierce
Britt Fleck
Jim Cole

Not Present

Rachel Little

Also attending the meeting were Elizabeth Crowder 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 10:02 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Connell called for a motion regarding the minutes from the March 10, 2021 Board meeting. Jeff Markey made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes as presented; Jim Cole 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 all those attending the virtual meeting. He recognized Elizabeth Crowder from the AG's office, who was filling in for Cristina Correia. The Commissioner gave a quick update on COVID-19, the budget, and Women's History Month.

COVID:

- The Governor issued a press release last Wednesday and declared the state open for business. DDS has been open for business since April 1st of last year. The agency has taken steps each month to increase capacity to the point that it is very close to normal, pre-COVID business operations.
- Several protocols remain in place to protect the staff and customers. Examples include social distancing, wearing masks, and temperature checks.
- DDS will host a vaccination day at headquarters, thanks to team member Yessenia (Jessie) Daggs from Regulatory Compliance, her contacts, and the HR team. The Commissioner is very excited about another opportunity to keep the staff safe.

Budget:

- The Commissioner is very thankful to the Governor and legislators, both House and Senate, who supported this agency with the largest finding increase effort in the history of the agency for retention and turnover issues. Between the amended funds and the general appropriations for FY 2022, the agency received another \$5.5 million in funding, which is significant for the agency.

- Beyond salary increases, another \$250,000 was added for voter identification outreach to facilitate the Georgia Free ID for Voter Registration. The Commissioner was clear that the agency's mission is not voting but issuing secure credentials; however, we respect our role and will perform our responsibilities with transparency.
- Funds also were provided to help the agency complete several facility projects.

Women's History Month:

- March is Women's History Month. The Commissioner showcased the women on the Board, the Executive Leadership Team, as well as team members throughout the agency. He mentioned how DDS women leadership has proven itself time and time again and that it is more than capable of getting the job done. The Commissioner always enjoys highlighting the team and the wonderful things it does for the agency and the state.

Shevondah Leslie, Legislative Liaison, provided an update on the 2021 Legislation:

- HB 169 will change the expiration date for CDL permits from 180 days to 365 days, as well as require customers to complete an entry-level driver training course before DDS will administer behind-the-wheel road tests.
- HB 338 revises the qualifications for veteran driver's licenses and will allow all veterans who are GA citizens and served active duty military, naval, air service and released with any discharge other than dishonorable to qualify for a free issuance. National Guard members who served active duty also are included.
- HB 466 Impacts Third-Party Testing Driving Schools, as well as 17-year old drivers. The bill allows driving schools to offer online training outside of the state of emergency. All customers under the age of 18 must complete alcohol and drug training, as well as Joshua law training, to receive their driver's license. It also provides for 17yr old drivers to be exempt from holding their learner's permit for one year and a day, provided they have proof they are enlisted in the military. Additionally, school owners will have to inform DDS of a change in ownership within 30 days. Currently, they must tell the agency before the change.
- HB 534 is the Governor's drag racing bill, which adds an offense of reckless driving and provides for a layered suspension tier on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd offenses.

The Commissioner reminded the Board that, when COVID started last year, the agency made a lot of operational changes to serve customers. One of the most significant changes was the road test. DDS conducts thousands of road tests each week for new drivers. To keep the staff safe, the agency is developing a safe way to serve customers using technology.

Ricky H. Rich, Deputy Commissioner, provided an update on the virtual Road Test Pilot:

- The Deputy Commissioner was very excited about bringing this presentation to the Board. The agency wanted to find a permanent solution, through technology, to keep staff safe beyond COVID. In previous years, no one would have thought about doing a road test without the examiner in the car.
- Deputy Director of Field Operations Pierre Miles gave an update on the virtual road test. The virtual road test is a pilot program to test new cameras designed to enhance the virtual road test experience for team members and customers. The pilot first was conducted in the Alpharetta and Fayetteville CSCs. The pilot then was extended to the Toccoa and Dublin CSCs before moving to Covington and Albany.

- The pilot allows the agency to get feedback from the examiners and customers as to what is working or not working. Despite a few initial challenges, the pilot seems to be working well. A total of 42 tests were administered in Alpharetta and Fayetteville, and another 50 were administered in Dublin and Toccoa.
- A team member monitors the test from the safety of the CSC, using the latest driver-facing and road-facing camera technology mounted on the dashboard of the customer's vehicle, and a map to follow a pre-set route.
- The Deputy Commissioner gave the Board a sample view of what the examiners see while monitoring the test.

Bob Griffin, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on Facilities:

- The agency has three active projects and will potentially add two more due to the funds provided during the legislative session.
- The RFP for Dalton was released on February 1st. Seven bids were submitted, and the contract was awarded to Ward Hayes. Once announced, the agency will hold a groundbreaking ceremony.
- The Douglasville CSC will be a new CDL site. DDS is working with the county and waiting for approval from the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC).
- The Jackson site currently consists of a trailer. The RFP for Jackson also was released in February, but the four responses exceeded the established budget. DDS will continue to look for other locations and keep the Board updated.
- Two projects were added during the Legislative Session. The first provided funding to build a CDL site in Southeast Georgia, and the second will replace the building in Rome. DDS currently has meetings scheduled with Vidalia, Hazlehurst, and Rome pending approval of the budget.

Commissioner Moore provided an update of the agency's performance:

- The Commissioner showed a chart that provided a daily view of transaction volume, which is the number of people being served at our customer service centers, and includes the period when DDS transitioned to DRIVES. The number of customers being served continues to increase, and the Commissioner believes the volume will increase even more when appointments are no longer required for most services. The chart shows the agency's throughput before and after DRIVES and demonstrates that the team has adapted very quickly and efficiently.
- Commissioner Moore showed a new slide depicting the number of internet services the agency is providing through DRIVES, via either the Mobile App or Online Services. The number of people using the Mobile App and Online Services goes up each week. Usage spiked during the week of the DRIVES implementation since customers were not able to visit the customer service centers in person. The traffic moving to online services is increasing because so many customers are REAL ID compliant. The State of Georgia is in a much better place than many other states with our compliance rate.
- March CSC volume was higher than March 2020 when the pandemic hit. From February 2021 to March 2021, volume increased by almost 50,000 in-person transactions. The agency ended appointments on 4/13/2021, so wait times could increase. DDS has seen an increase in the number of customers served within 30 minutes or less, which was anticipated, but we will not see a true picture of the service level performance until more customers come into the centers. The current wait time statistic does not indicate if a customer stood outside for 30 minutes before obtaining a ticket. The 30-minute wait is from the time the ticket is pulled to the time the customer arrives at the counter.

- Commissioner Moore previously talked about Online Services and the Mobile App but showed a chart with a different format. Year over year, the numbers have more than tripled in some cases, and that is expected to continue. DDS is now a multi-factor authentication organization, so every past online account must be re-created; however, this practice will allow DDS to provide additional security for customers.

Commissioner Moore ended his report with an update on customer survey responses:

- When DDS implemented DRIVES, the agency lost the ability to receive immediate survey feedback from customers. The PMO and the BSU units have been working with FAST Enterprises to complete the new customer service satisfaction survey, and in March, a total of 462 surveys were completed. Just this morning, BSU Manager Juenesse Holman informed the Commissioner that more than 1,656 customers had completed surveys so far during the month of April. The Commissioner will have more information to share in the coming months.

Rules for Initial Approval

Angelique McClendon, General Counsel, reviewed the following rules:

- **375-3-1-.02** Applications and Supporting Documentation
- **375-3-2-.01** Expiration of License and Identification Card: When Licenses and Identification Cards May Be Renewed. Revised (proposed amendment to Term of Driver's License, Permit, and Identification Card)

Britt Fleck made a motion to approve the initial rules for adoption; Jeff Markey seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Rules for Final Approval

- **375-3-1-.21** Distinctive Driver's License for Persons Under Age 21 (proposed amendment to Distinctive Driver's License, Permit, and Identification Card for Persons Under age Twenty-One (21))
- **375-3-1-.29** Replacement of Lost, Stolen, or Destroyed Cards

Jim Cole made a motion to approve the final rules for adoption; Jeff Wigington seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Citizen Waivers

1. June M. Dorminey - She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of June M. Dorminey. She is 53-years old. She had a common-law marriage to her first husband, Williams. She has a separation agreement from the court that states they entered a common-law marriage. She is seeking a waiver for a missing legal document in her trail of name changes (Belcher, Williams, Jones, Casswell, Dorminey). She submitted her birth certificate, child's birth certificate (father – Charles Franklin Williams), separation agreement (spouse – Charles Franklin Williams), divorce decree (spouse – Charles Franklin Williams), marriage application (spouse – James Kenneth Jones, maiden name Belcher, number of prior marriages 1), marriage certificate (spouse – James Kenneth Jones), divorce decree (spouse – James Kenneth Jones), marriage certificate (spouse – Steven William Casswell), marriage certificate (spouse – Chad Wylie Dorminey), divorce decree, expired Georgia driver's license, valid REAL ID Florida driver's license, Social Security Card (S/S), Georgia weapons carry license, and IRS form W-2.

Britt Fleck made a motion to approve the waiver; Jeff Wigington seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

2. Mary Ellen McDonald - She is seeking a Georgia ID card in the name of Mary Ellen McDonald. She is 67-years old. She believed she divorced McDonald in 1977 and found out in 2009, she had not. She entered a common-law marriage with Schubert and started using his last name. She was issued a Georgia driver's license from 2000-2008 in the name of Mary E. Schubert. She went back to using her last name and is missing name change documents to show the use of Schubert and back to McDonald. She submitted her birth certificate, marriage certificate (spouse – Paul R. McDonald), child's birth certificate (father – Paul Richard McDonald), GED report, child's birth certificate, physician's letter, and form SSA-1099.

Britt Fleck made a motion to approve the waiver; Jeff Markey seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

New or Old Business

The next Board meeting will be held on May 12, 2021.

The June Board Meeting will be in-person at the DDS Headquarters.

Adjournment

There was no further business to discuss; Chairman David Connell called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Jeff Markey and seconded by Britt Fleck with unanimous approval by the Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Wigington
Jeff Wigington