

NOV 18 2020

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF GORDON

Grant Walraven  
Clerk

The Gordon County Superior Court convened on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., with the Honorable Suzanne H. Smith, Judge, Cherokee Judicial Circuit presiding. After Court was called to order, the following persons were selected as Grand Jurors for the September Term, 2020.

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. David E. Dockery, Foreperson | 14. Ashton Smith                  |
| 2. Kim Logan                    | 15. Jason Lemons                  |
| 3. Jonathan S. Smith            | 16. Wesley Tucker                 |
| 4. Samantha N. Keadle           | 17. Melea N. West                 |
| 5. Rodney Thompson              | 18. Yorismal Rodriguez Rodriguez  |
| 6. Cynthia McGuire              | 19. Rachael M. Meeler             |
| 7. Cathy Gunter                 | 20. Darrell Edward Phillips       |
| 8. Denese Sexton                | 21. Bryan Kirby                   |
| 9. Anna N. Fain                 | 22. Joseph E. Carpenter           |
| 10. Michelle L. Parker          | 23. Kevin Bramlett                |
| 11. Sean Burnette               | 24. Kelly Marie Powell, Alternate |
| 12. Megan Harbin                | 25. David C. Long, Alternate      |
| 13. Kristine Marroquin          | 26. Laura B. Walraven, Alternate  |

The following persons were elected to serve as officers for this Grand Jury:

- 1) David E. Dockery, Foreperson
- 2) Ashton Smith, Vice Foreperson
- 3) Michelle L. Parker, Clerk
- 4) Kristine Marroquin, Doorperson
- 4) Dwight Gentry & Carlton Rogers, Bailiffs

Judge Suzanne H. Smith charged and instructed the Grand Jury which followed District Attorney, Rosemary M. Greene, administering the statutory oath to both the Foreperson and then to all other members of this Grand Jury, as well, as the required oaths to this grand jury's bailiffs.

We thank District Attorney Rosemary Greene and her Assistant District Attorneys for their legal opinions and the whole staff for the assistance in the proceedings as to criminal cases presented to this Grand Jury. Also we commend our law enforcement personnel for the excellent job they do and also commend the officers who appeared before this body from all the different local agencies for their efficiency, appearance and professionalism. Finally, we thank our Bailiffs, Mr. Dwight Gentry and Mr. Carlton Rogers, for their service and courtesy to this body. We recommend that they be paid an additional day's pay for their performance and all extra duties and services that he provided this body.

1. We have examined all criminal cases presented by the District Attorney's Office and reported 140 True Bills and 3 No Bills.

2. In accordance with our statutory duties (O.C.G.A. § 36-1-7), this body received the written financial reports of the following county officials and reviewed each report:

- (1) Hon. Mitch Ralston, Sheriff of Gordon County along with Chief Deputy Robert L. Paris and Major Pat Bedford;
- (2) Hon. Scott Clements, Tax Commissioner;
- (3) Hon. John R. (Richie) Parker, Judge of Probate Court;
- (4) Hon. Grant Walraven, Clerk of Court; and
- (5) Jim Ledbetter, Administrator, Gordon County Board of Commissioners.

All financial reports have been examined and all are accepted as submitted. We appreciate and thank these officials for the job each is doing.

3. In accordance with O.C.G.A. 48-5-161(d), this Grand Jury was designated as the one to conduct the annual inspection of the Execution Docket and Cashbook of the County Tax Commissioner. The Tax Execution Docket inspection committee consisting of Sean Burnette and Ashton Smith, inspected our tax commissioner's Execution Docket and issued the following report: When visiting with Tax Commissioner Clements, we observed the original log book that was used many years ago to track all taxes in Gordon County which was done by hand in a ledger.

Now in 2020, of course all of the taxes are kept on software which makes things much easier. There are policies that have been put into place that are helping improve on property that has unfortunately been foreclosed on and then being settled by the new owner. 99.26% of 2017 taxes have been collected, 99% of 2018 taxes have been collected and 97% of 2019 taxes have been collected. We were all impressed with the knowledge and information that Commissioner Clements provided to us, and also appreciate the job he has done as tax commissioner. While there are some taxes that are owed from years prior to 2019, Commissioner Clements advised that each year tax collections are continuously closer to 100%.


4. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-12-71(b)(1), this Grand Jury was designated as the one to conduct the annual inspection of the conditions and operations of the Gordon County Jail. The inspection committee members were Cynthia McGuire and Melea West. Our report is as follows: The inspection at the Gordon County Sheriff's Office exceeded our expectations. Our tour was handed by Cpt. Mike Garigan who did a great job showing us around. We found the facility to be very clean and organized. The Gordon County Jail is staffed and run professionally, and we observed that all the prisoners are maintained appropriately. All safety measures are in place for the safety of the inmates and staff in addition to precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We thank Sheriff Mitch Ralston and his staff for a superb job and to be good stewards of the tax payer's money.

5. We acknowledge that Hon. J. Lane Bearden, Judge of Juvenile Court of this county in his capacity as Chairman of our local Child Abuse Protocol committee has submitted the report required by O.C.G.A. §19-15-2(h).


6. In accordance with O.C.G.A. §48-5-311(c), Tax Equalization Board Appointments, the Clerk of Superior Court notified this body that there are no appointments or re-appointments to be considered by the Grand Jury for the upcoming year.

7. We recommend to the Board of Commissioners when they begin consideration on the budget for the next fiscal year that the per diem and pay for bailiffs and jurors remain the same.
8. We authorize David E. Dockery, our Foreperson to call this Grand Jury back into session any time during our appointed term, if he warrants it to be necessary.
9. We recommend these presentments be spread upon the minutes of the Court and be published in the legal organ of Gordon County.

This 18th day of November, 2020.

  
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David E. Dockery  
Foreperson

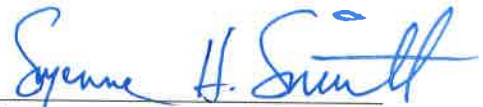
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ashton Smith  
Vice Foreperson

  
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Michelle L. Parker  
Clerk

**ORDER OF THE COURT**

Presented in open court, let the same be filed and spread upon the minutes of the Court. Let these presentments be published in the legal organ of Gordon County.

This 18th day of November, 2020.



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Hon. Suzanne H. Smith  
Judge, Superior Court  
Cherokee Judicial Circuit