100-Day Plan of Action
Sheriff Craig Owens
Chief Deputy Rhonda Anderson

We pledged to the voters of Cobb County that we would restore truth, trust, and transparency to the Sheriff’s Office. During the transition period, we continue to identify a number of areas that will need immediate attention. While we recognize there are still many unknowns, the following proposed plan outlines our priorities for the first 100 days in office and provides a blueprint for the next four years.

These four areas are:

COVID-19
Organization + Change Management
Detainee Health + Betterment
Community Engagement + Accountability
COVID-19

In collaboration with state and local health officials, and by adhering to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Owens administration will establish protocols to prevent and manage COVID-19 in the Cobb County Detention Center and across the Sheriff’s Office.

To combat COVID-19, we will:

Make decisions informed by public health officials at the county, state, and federal levels, particularly guidance specifically for law enforcement and detention centers

- Provide all deputies, staff, and detainees access to reliable COVID-19 testing
- Require testing of new detainees before they are booked into the detention center
- Provide PPE and hygiene supplies to staff and detainees
- Require self-reporting if and when individuals feel unwell or believe they have come in contact with someone who has tested positive
- Invite collaboration with law enforcement agencies, medical organizations, and others who have identified best practices and outside-the-box methods to track and combat the spread of the virus

The CCSO will apply for grant funding and requests funds from other sources to provide tests, PPE, and hygiene supplies. We recognize the past approach has been wholly inadequate and more must be done to ensure the safety of staff and detainees.

As vaccinations become available, the CCSO will mirror the county’s vaccination policy and will implement a plan for universal vaccinations for staff and others. Under review is ensuring the continuity of operations and vendor contracts due to COVID-19.

In addition to these measures, we will proactively review existing operations and communications protocols for medical and emergency events.
ORGANIZATION + CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The incoming administration brings significant management experience across the U.S. military and other law enforcement agencies. New leadership and a referendum on past failures that have led to embarrassing headlines, costly lawsuits, low morale, and – even worse – loss of life, there is much work to be done to repair the image of the Sheriff’s Office.

Sheriff Owens and his leadership team will:

• Introduce and establish a culture of integrity, innovation, and conduct
• Enlist a reputable firm to conduct a forensic audit
• Implement a bottom-to-top and a top-to-bottom review of personnel, including access to weapons, badges, and other county-owned assets
• Conduct a review of staff rank and pay to ensure parity based on gender, experience, education, and skillsets, including for bi and multilingual staff
• Develop a hiring board to determine a recruitment strategy for a diverse, capable, and fully staffed workforce
• Review and update budget priorities based on immediate needs
• Review and revise mandatory trainings to include cultural sensitivity and de-escalation
• Review and revise current promotional testing procedures
• Release publicly the new organizational chart

The forensic audit and other assessments will provide further guidance on the necessary steps to ensure the Sheriff’s Office is a well-oiled machine and we are good stewards of the public’s dollars.

These efforts will put the Cobb County Sheriff’s Office on track to receive a coveted Triple Crown Accreditation.
DETAINEE HEALTH + BETTERMENT

In a 60-month span, approximately 15 individuals died while in the custody of the Cobb County Sheriff's Office. Being booked into the Cobb County Detention Center should not equate to a death sentence. The frequency of deaths in the detention center is troubling and must be earnestly addressed.

To ensure the health and safety of detainees, we will:

- Hire an outside auditor to review existing protocols and procedures within the detention center
- Review the current healthcare contract and services provided
- Establish a protocol to require GBI review of deaths that occur in the detention center
- Work with internal and external mental health professionals to review and revise existing standards of care for detainees experiencing mental health episodes
- Implement a duty to intervene policy when healthcare or Sheriff's Office staff do not adhere to protocols

We are also committed to providing detainees access to resources that will give them the tools they need to succeed when they return to their communities. Our goal is to reduce recidivism and work with organizations and others to provide a bridge to a better, more hopeful future.

The Cobb County Sheriff's Office will:

- Review existing opportunities for detainees to further their educational attainment while in custody through programs they can continue upon their release
- Invite organizations that provide life skills training, including anger management and parenting courses
- Provide access to faith leaders to ensure detainees are able to rely on spiritual guidance
- Ensure detainees have 21st-century access to their legal counsel

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + ACCOUNTABILITY

The Cobb County Sheriff's Office is committed to building and strengthening our relationship with the community in order to develop trusted and valued partnerships that will allow for joint problem solving for community and law enforcement-related issues.

We recognize trust is earned, not given, and we have identified the following areas of focus to build trust between the community and the office:

- Announce the Transition and Accountability Team
- Publish a calendar of public town hall meetings to take place across the county and hold a round of virtual meetings within the first 100 days
- Recruit and identify non-law enforcement staff to respond to calls and community needs
- Review the existing 287(g) contract with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s immigration services division
- Identify a Spanish-speaking community liaison between the Sheriff's Office and the Spanish-speaking community
- Launch a Use-of-Force Policy Review Committee
- Establish a body camera policy that includes a mandate for all deputies to activate their cameras as soon as they respond to a call and determines disciplinary action for failure to adhere to the policy

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