

April 20, 2026

Chairman & Commissioners
Long County Board of Commissioners
75 West Oglethorpe Street
Ludowici, Georgia 31316

RE: Formal Demand for Release of Approved Budget Funds and Compliance with Statutory Obligations — Notice Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-6-26

Dear Chairman Hall and Members of the Long County Board of Commissioners:

This letter constitutes formal demand, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-6-26, that the Long County Board of Commissioners (hereinafter the “Board”) immediately act to fulfill its statutory and constitutional obligations to the Long County Sheriff’s Office by appropriating and disbursing the funds set forth herein. As an elected constitutional officer, I, the duly elected Sheriff of Long County, Georgia, am charged by law with the enforcement of the criminal laws of this State and the preservation of the peace within Long County. O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10; Ga. Const. art. IX, § I, ¶ III(a). The Board approved my Office’s operating budget but has failed to disburse the funds necessary for my Office to operate safely and effectively. That failure has rendered my Office unable to discharge my lawful duties in full, in derogation of clear and controlling Georgia statutory and constitutional law.

Be advised that, absent full compliance with each demand set forth in this letter within thirty (30) days of the date hereof, I will proceed, without further notice, to file a Petition for Writ of Mandamus Absolute before the Superior Court of Long County, Georgia, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-6-20, *et seq.*, to compel the Board’s performance of its non-discretionary legal duties.

I. PAYMENT OF JAIL HOUSING FEES O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1

Long County maintains no secure, operating, jail facility of its own. Acting pursuant to my statutory authority, I arranged for the housing of Long County prisoners in the facilities of neighboring counties. Georgia law imposes an unambiguous obligation upon Long County in this regard. O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1 provides that “[t]he county where the offense is committed shall be primarily liable for jail fees and costs and shall pay the same monthly *in advance* to the county holding the prisoner.” (Emphasis added.)

Notwithstanding this unequivocal statutory mandate, Long County is presently in arrears on its housing obligations to multiple counties. As of April 9, 2026, the following balances remain unpaid:

County	Amount Due
Tattnall County	\$40,410.00
Appling County	\$15,210.00
Screven County	\$7,095.00
Wayne County	\$19,215.00
McIntosh County	\$56,140.00
TOTAL	\$138,070.00

Long County's failure to make these payments constitutes a present and ongoing violation of O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1, which requires payment in advance. The consequences of continued non-payment are immediate and severe. While it has been alleged that the Counties to whom payment is owed will continue to house our inmates even absent payment of the arrearage, it is not unlikely that in the future, these same counties will find themselves without available space for Long County inmates when I, or my deputies, call to determine if an inmate can be housed at those facilities. Should that occur, I will have no lawful facility in which to house arrested individuals, effectively nullifying my ability to enforce the criminal law. This situation has already compelled Long County prosecutors to agree to release defendants on own recognizance bonds — not on the merits — solely because no housing is available. This poses a grave and ongoing threat to public safety in Long County.

The Board is hereby demanded to immediately appropriate and disburse \$138,070.00 to bring all jail housing accounts current, and to ensure that all future monthly payments are made in advance, as expressly required by O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1.

II. EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS

O.C.G.A. §§ 15-16-10; 15-16-20(c)

O.C.G.A. § 15-16-20(c) provides that “[e]xpenses for deputies, equipment, supplies, copying equipment, and other necessary and reasonable expenses for the operation of a sheriff’s office shall come from funds other than the funds specified as salary.” Based on this mandate, the Board approved my operating budget, which encompasses each of the items set forth below. Notwithstanding that approval, the Board has failed to disburse the funds necessary to procure these items, leaving my Office unable to carry out its duties safely or effectively.

I require the following items, all of which are necessary for the lawful and safe operation of my Office:

Item	Estimated Cost
Ammunition (duty and practice)	\$8,600.00
Body Worn Cameras (25 units @ \$1,500 each)	\$37,500.00
Ballistic Vests (4 units)	\$4,500.00
Laptop Computers for Patrol Vehicles (2 units)	\$6,800.00
Desktop Computer (1 unit)	\$1,200.00
Patrol Vehicle Equipment, 3 vehicles @ \$30,000 each (lights, sirens, radios, cages, radars, gun mounts)	\$90,000.00
Safety Deposit Box (Ludowici Bank)	\$40.00
Monthly Clothing Allowance (\$100 per sworn deputy)	\$100.00/deputy/month
Outstanding Vendor Obligations (credit card accounts)	~\$10,000.00
Training Funds (Georgia Public Safety Training Center)	To Be Determined

With respect to ammunition, the majority of my Office's current duty ammunition was purchased in 2018 and is in need of replacement. Georgia law mandates that law enforcement officers qualify at least once per year. The Sheriff's Response Team — which handles emergency situations — is required to qualify and train with live ammunition on at least a quarterly basis. The absence of adequate ammunition renders compliance with these state mandates impossible and jeopardizes officer and public safety alike.

With respect to body worn cameras, it is now standard practice for law enforcement officers to wear such cameras in the discharge of their duties. These devices protect deputies from unfounded allegations, and concomitant civil claims against the Long County Sheriff's Office, for which the County would be financially responsible, and ensure transparency with the public the Sheriff's Office serves.

With respect to ballistic vests, protective vests expire five years from the date of manufacture. My Office currently has multiple vests that have expired and others that are imminent in expiration. Deputies performing law enforcement duties without serviceable ballistic protection are placed at unnecessary and unreasonable risk of bodily harm.

With respect to patrol vehicle equipment, my Office presently has three new patrol vehicles that cannot be placed in service because the Board has not disbursed funds to equip them with the necessary lights, sirens, in-car radios, cages, radar units, and gun mounts. An additional

three vehicles have been pieced together from salvaged parts of decommissioned vehicles and currently lack cages, radars, and gun mounts, rendering them inadequate for safe patrol operations.

With respect to computers, deputies rely on laptop computers in patrol vehicles to conduct real-time inquiries of driver and vehicle information, complete field reports, and monitor the GPS locations of deputies on duty. The administrative desktop computer is necessary for the conduct of normal business operations of the Office.

With respect to the clothing allowance, my Office has been unable to provide deputies their full clothing allowance since the onset of the current fiscal crisis. Deputies require proper uniforms and boots to present a professional appearance and to safely and effectively carry out their duties.

With respect to outstanding vendor obligations, my Office currently carries approximately \$10,000.00 in outstanding balances on credit accounts with vendors essential to day-to-day operations, including Johnson Office Solutions, M&M Imaging, Georgia Technology Authority, Speros, Synergistic Software, Jesup Tire Shop, Al's Auto Supply, and Interstate Battery. These vendors provide services and supplies upon which my Office depends; their continued willingness to do business with my Office is contingent upon payment of these accounts.

I further request that the Board authorize four credit cards for operational use — three for the Sheriff's Office generally and one designated for jail-related expenses — each with a credit limit of \$10,000.00. The current two-card, \$3,000.00-per-card arrangement is wholly inadequate for the operational demands of the Office.

III. OFFICER TRAINING FUNDS O.C.G.A. §§ 15-16-10; 15-16-20(c)

I further request that the Board appropriate adequate training funds to allow deputies to attend training at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center ("GPSTC") in Forsyth, Georgia. The GPSTC provides specialized, advanced training that is essential to ensuring that deputies remain proficient in the latest law enforcement techniques and best practices. Due to budgetary constraints, no deputy from the Long County Sheriff's Office has recently been sent to the GPSTC. The absence of such training is inconsistent with the Sheriff's duty to maintain a qualified and competent law enforcement force, as required by O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10. The Sheriff's Office will provide the Board with specific cost figures upon request.

IV. THE BOARD'S CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY DUTY

The Board's obligations in these matters are not discretionary — they are compelled by Georgia statute and by the controlling precedent of the Supreme Court of Georgia. The Supreme Court has

held that “the commissioners were under a duty to adopt a budget making reasonable and adequate provision for the personnel and equipment necessary to enable the sheriff to perform his duties of enforcing the law and preserving the peace.” *Wolfe v. Huff*, 233 Ga. 162, 164, 210 S.E.2d 699 (1974). That principle has been consistently reaffirmed. In *Chaffin v. Calhoun*, 262 Ga. 202, 203, 415 S.E.2d 906 (1992), for instance, the Court held that a sheriff’s budget “must be reasonable under all of the circumstances and must provide reasonably sufficient funds to allow the sheriff to discharge his legal duties.” And in *Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County v. Saba*, 278 Ga. 176, 177, 598 S.E.2d 437 (2004), the Court reiterated that the dispositive inquiry is whether the Board fulfilled its duty “to adopt a budget making reasonable and adequate provision for the personnel and equipment necessary to enable the sheriff to perform his duties of enforcing the law and preserving the peace.” *Id.* (quoting *Chaffin*, 262 Ga. at 203).

The Supreme Court has further established that a board of commissioners may not accomplish indirectly, through the exercise of its fiscal authority, that which it may not lawfully accomplish directly. *Wolfe*, 233 Ga. at 164. A board that approves a budget and then withholds disbursement of the approved funds accomplishes precisely that which the law prohibits. The Board cannot, by inaction, effectively divest the Sheriff of his constitutional and statutory power and duty to enforce the laws and preserve the peace within Long County. *See Chaffin*, 262 Ga. at 203; *Wolfe*, 233 Ga. at 164.

The Board’s assertion that it lacks sufficient funds does not satisfy its legal obligations. Indeed, the General Assembly has expressly provided that, for the purpose of meeting jail housing costs, “the county governing authority may levy and collect an additional tax.” O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1. Moreover, O.C.G.A. § 15-16-20(c) makes plain that operational expenses of the Sheriff’s Office must be funded from sources independent of the Sheriff’s salary appropriation. These provisions collectively demonstrate that the General Assembly has foreclosed the Board’s claimed justification for non-compliance.

V. FORMAL DEMAND AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO SEEK MANDAMUS RELIEF

I previously requested that the Board disburse the funds necessary to satisfy the obligations described herein. The Board has failed and refused to do so. Accordingly, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-6-26, I hereby formally demand that the Long County Board of Commissioners, within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter, appropriate and disburse all funds necessary to:


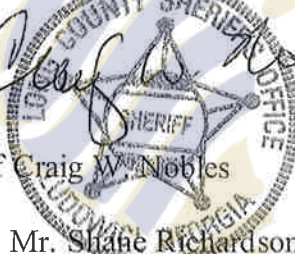
- (1) Pay all outstanding jail housing fees in the total amount of \$138,070.00 and ensure that all future monthly housing payments are made in advance to the receiving counties, as required by O.C.G.A. § 17-7-1;

- (2) Procure the equipment and supplies identified in Section II hereof, including ammunition, body worn cameras, ballistic vests, laptop and desktop computers, patrol vehicle equipment for three vehicles, and a safety deposit box, as required by O.C.G.A. §§ 15-16-10 and 15-16-20(c);
- (3) Satisfy all outstanding vendor obligations of approximately \$10,000.00 and authorize four credit cards at a \$10,000.00 limit each for operational use by the Sheriff's Office;
- (4) Restore the monthly clothing allowance of \$100.00 per sworn deputy; and
- (5) Appropriate sufficient funds to resume the Sheriff's Office's attendance at training programs offered by the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, Georgia.

Should the Board fail to fully comply with each of the foregoing demands within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter, I will, without further notice, proceed to file a Petition for Writ of Mandamus Absolute before the Superior Court of Long County, Georgia, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-6-20, *et seq.*, seeking an order requiring the Board's compliance with its statutory and constitutional duties. That petition will further seek attorney's fees and all costs of litigation as authorized by O.C.G.A. § 45-9-21(e).

The citizens of Long County are entitled to the full protection that I am duty-bound by law to provide. I am not requesting additional or supplemental funding ---I, however, do request that the Board release funds already approved in the operating budget, so that my Office may continue to enforce the law and preserve the peace in Long County. I expect prompt, complete, and unconditional compliance.

Respectfully submitted,



Sheriff Craig W. Nobles

cc: Mr. Shane Richardson, County Manager
Mr. Luke R. Moses, County Attorney

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