In Attendance: Jenna James, Joe Kuebler, Rep. Alan Powell, Judge John Ott, Lisa Reid (in Misty Giles’ place), Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Mark Morris, Susan Phillips, and Jennie Hammett.

Jenna James opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. by introducing herself as the Compact Administrator/Commissioner for Interstate Compact. Everyone then had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Jenna explained staffing within the Parole ISC and Probation ISC. She also discussed the future addition of Specialized Parole Officers. Probation currently has probation officers designated by circuit to process interstate cases. Due to compliance issues, the state of GA has been instructed by the Commission to submit a Corrective Action Plan to include recommendations for improvement along with a training mandate. Due to the compliance issues, the Probation Compact Office has made some personnel changes to include the addition of a manager, Susan Phillips. Susan has added staff and continues to review and improve processes within the Probation Compact Office.

The ICAOS Mission and the role of the State Council were discussed. State Council members can be an advocate when seeking resources and can also recommend legislative changes and lobby legislative groups in attempt to improve the processes of the Compact Office, to name a few.

Previous rules changes which became effective on March 1, 2011 were reviewed. These changes will have a financial impact on the state of Georgia. These rule changes mandate extradition in situations where the offender could have been instructed to return to GA on his/her own. Additionally, all warrants issued in Compact cases must be extraditable within all 50 states and the three territories within the Compact.

The 2011 rules changes which will take effect on March 1, 2012 were also discussed. These rule changes were introduced for clarification purposes and don’t have much of an impact on member states. Of particular note, one change involved the notification of victims when a GA offender requests to return to GA.

There appears to be a need to increase the Compact Application Fee from $25.00 to $100.00 per interstate transfer. The increase would require legislation to amend OCGA 42-9-80 and 42-9-81. The recommendation is to include wording that would allow the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Board of the Department of Corrections to increase the Compact Application Fee by Board Rule instead of legislation. The Compact Office would request permission to
retain $50.00 of the increase to fund extraditions and request a similar percentage of future increases. The current Parole extradition budget of $18,701 is insufficient to fund the Field Operations Division’s extraditions. The Compact Office alone averages about $1000.00 per month.

Conversely, the Department of Corrections offenders’ extraditions are coordinated and funded by the local county of conviction. As a result, the counties are often reluctant to issue extraditable warrants and often reject requests for extradition. A portion of the counties reported extradition costs for the past three months which totaled $185,832. The extradition of offenders is costly. This number provided, which does not include all counties, is a three month accounting and also does not include the offenders that were refused extradition by the counties. Extradition of offenders who violate the conditions of their release is mandatory per Compact Rules. Refusal to extradite offenders is a violation of Compact Rules and can lead to disciplinary action by the Commission.

Compact/Compliance issues, ICAOS enforcement powers, and action taken to date, were discussed. Some recommendations made were to increase the amount of the Interstate Application Fee, establish an extradition account, focus on training and possibly create a position for Extradition Officers.

Judge Ott suggested that the offenders, probationers and parolees, be charged the cost of their extradition. This suggestion will be vetted and reported out on or before the next scheduled meeting.

Representative Powell inquired about offenders who were arrested in other states for additional charges and how extradition affected those cases. He wanted to know why extradition was requested following an offender’s arrest for new charges while the charges were still pending. Judge Ott responded that this issue occurs between counties in GA. The bottom line is that some jails try to avoid the cost of housing an offender if they have knowledge of pending charges in another jurisdiction. Joe Kuebler further clarified that extradition is not mandatory in these cases until after the conviction.

Jenna James thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.