

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

FEBRUARY 27, 2019

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners' Board Room on the 13th Floor of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Controller Sandra Graffius
District Attorney John Adams
Judge Scott Lash

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Mark Scott
Sheriff Eric Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

Solicitor Christine Sadler
Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht
Chief Administrative Officer Ronald Seaman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The January 30, 2018 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 1,086. Of the population reported, 116 inmates were residing at the Community Reentry Center and 39 inmates were technical parole violators from the State.

TECHNICAL PAROLE VIOLATOR CONTRACT: The Warden stated that the contract for the TPV inmates was sent to the Department of Corrections (DOC) for renewal. She added that the TPV population may drop while they wait for the contract to be executed. Commissioner Barnhardt asked for clarification regarding the need for post release medications. Solicitor Sadler explained that the DOC required Berks to pay all costs associated with psychotropic medication for 60 days after release. Berks proposed providing up to 30 days of post release psychotropic medication and were waiting on a response from the DOC. Solicitor Sadler noted that most of the technical parole violators were released to Wernersville State Hospital which made the 60 days of post release medication unnecessary for those inmates.

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NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE WEEK: Warden Quigley spoke about National Correctional Officer and Employee Week events scheduled May 6 – May 10, 2019. The memorial service will be held in the Jail parking lot on Friday, May 10, 2019 at 2:30pm, weather permitting.

DATA DRIVEN JUSTICE: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on the Data Driven Justice progress and described her work with Justin Loose, Chief Information Officer. They were in the process of determining how to gather target data from the Jail into the Open Lattice program. They were working on verifying the accuracy of the results from an Open Lattice presentation and identifying fields within DSI, such as; inmate education level and factors directly related to the cost of housing for seriously mentally ill inmates.

STATE HOSPITALS: Deputy Warden Smith summarized the Norristown State Hospital meeting with Idea Crew Inc. on February 6, 2019, regarding competency evaluations, jail-based restoration and competency restorations.

Warden Quigley pointed out the delay for admittance into Wernersville State Hospital, comparing the issues in delays with Norristown State Hospital. Commissioner Barnhardt asked if the same inmates were being sent to both hospitals. Deputy Warden Smith explained that some inmates are sent to Norristown for competency and when they return, are found not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI) and released to Wernersville. She reported that there were 5 or 6 inmates on the waiting list for Wernersville. Representative from the Jail, DA's office, Public Defender's office MH/DD, SAM and PrimeCare meet on a monthly basis to evaluate inmate files. As an alternative to waiting in Jail, they determine if temporary community based placement is appropriate for the inmates on the Wernersville waiting list. Deputy Warden Smith stressed that the only option for long term secure residential facilities for Berks County is Wernersville State Hospital.

PCCD GRANTS: Deputy Warden Smith spoke about two grants available from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for medication assistance treatment. The first was a residential substance abuse treatment (RSAT) grant that contributes funds up to \$125,000 to counties who want to enhance or add medication assistance treatment, with a 25% match requirement. She stated that they were leaning towards the grant without the match requirement. District Attorney John Adams requested the total estimated annual cost for the RSAT grant, stating he would not want to forgo financial aid in this area.

The second PCCD grant contributes funds to administer Vivitrol, a medication used to avoid relapsing after detox of opioid addiction, to eligible inmates. Berks County Jail already incorporated the use of Vivitrol but would like to provide more doses for high risk inmates before they are released. Deputy Warden Smith stated that a meeting was scheduled with a Vivitrol representative later that day.

STAFFING: Chief Deputy Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing. There were 7 correctional officer vacancies. Nine cadets were enrolled in the academy and scheduled to graduate April 16, 2019. The next correctional officer testing was scheduled March 26, 2019. Interviews were being held for the next academy scheduled April 24, 2019. Commissioner Barnhardt pointed out that the vacancies were low compared to other Jails within the Commonwealth with 20-40 vacancies and thanked Chief Deputy Smith for his diligence. Warden Quigley added that they were expecting vacancies due to retirements.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

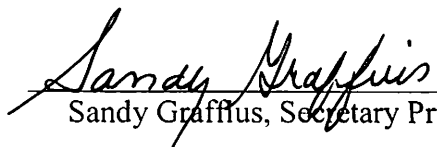
None.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 9:17 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held March 27, 2019 in the Special Operations Center at the Berks County Jail.


Sandy Graffius, Secretary Prison