

# **BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES**

## **MARCH 27, 2019**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 9:00 A.M. in the Special Operations Center at the Berks County Jail, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

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

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Mark Scott  
Judge Scott Lash  
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 February 27, 2019 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS**

**INMATE POPULATION:** Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 1,030. Of the population reported, 105 inmates were residing at the Community Reentry Center, 26 inmates were technical parole violators from the State, 1 inmate was being held for Schuylkill County and 2 juveniles were being held in Chester County.

**STEPPING UP INITIATIVE:** Warden Quigley announced that Berks County was awarded the Innovator County status by the Stepping Up Initiative. She added that Berks County was 1 out of 11 counties nationwide, and the first in Pennsylvania, to receive this status. The Warden explained that the Innovator County status was gained by using a universal definition of serious mental illness throughout the County criminal justice system, utilizing a validated tool to assess every individual that enters the jail system, and collecting data from the justice system at the Jail. She spoke about the monthly meetings with representatives from the Public Defender, DA, MH/DD, SAM and PrimeCare and provided examples of how they worked together on each individual serious mental illness case. She pointed out that there was a lot of work happening behind the scenes and thanked the entire team involved.

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STAFFING: Chief Deputy Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing. There were eight correctional officer vacancies. Nine cadets were enrolled in the academy and scheduled to graduate April 16, 2019. The next academy was scheduled April 24, 2019 with five candidates. On March 26, a correctional officer testing was held and nine candidates were moved to the interview phase. Those who pass the interview will be placed on the waiting list.

PCCD GRANTS: Deputy Warden Smith stated that the application for the PCCD Vivitrol grant had been submitted and summarized what was proposed; Berks County proposes to serve 228 inmates over a 2 year period with 1-2 shots, depending on their individual need, home plans and work-release status. The Jail will be responsible for tracking re-incarceration and arrests for up to a year. Included in the grant is a position for a social worker to coordinate the program; ensuring requirements are met, and services and post release plans are offered to inmates. Berks County proposes partnering with COCA, TASC, PrimeCare and two other community providers to complete the entire discharge plan. Deputy Smith stated results from PCCD should arrive in June and, if awarded, the program will be scheduled to begin July, 2019.

Controller Graffius asked if the social worker position will be housed in the Jail. Deputy Smith confirmed that the position will be in an office at the Jail. She added that the position would be subcontracted from COCA and TASC, similar to a past program. District Attorney John Adams asked about the residential substance abuse treatment (RSAT) grant. Deputy Smith explained that she discussed the grant with COCA; however, the application submission deadline was the following week. As a result, there was not enough time to consider the information.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD**

Commissioner Barnhardt spoke about a program offered by Penn Dot that would expedite the process for released inmates to get a Pennsylvania ID or driver's license renewal. All State prisons were in the program, as well as the York County Jail, who had been part of the program for 3 years. The cost per license would be \$30.50 or \$31.50 depending on what was needed. They needed to find out how many inmates need identification to get an estimated budget for the year before requesting the Commissioners' approval. Commissioner Barnhardt considers this another effort to help individuals get back into the community and become more productive, rather than another hurdle to climb.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Board adjourned at 9:10 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held April 24, 2019 in the Commissioners' Board Room on the 13th Floor of the Berks County Services Center.

  
Sandy Graffius, Secretary Prison