

# **BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES**

## **JULY 29, 2020**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, July 29, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. in a Microsoft Teams Meeting.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

District Attorney John Adams called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

District Attorney John Adams  
Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt  
Commissioner Christian Leinbach  
Commissioner Michael Rivera  
Controller Sandra Graffius  
Judge Scott Lash  
Sheriff Eric Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, second by Controller Graffius to approve the June 24, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS**

**INMATE POPULATION:** Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 651. Of the population reported, 587 were male and 64 were female. The population was high because of an increase in commitments that outpaced the number of discharges. As of July 28, there were 328 commitments and 277 discharges. Under normal conditions these numbers were closer to even.

**STAFFING:** Chief Deputy Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing; there were 19 correctional officer vacancies; 18 custodial and 1 maintenance. The next correctional officer testing was scheduled September 3 and September 4, 2020, which will be modified due to social distancing and sanitizing guidelines. They hope to implement a new video-based testing to replace the written test.

FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS: Deputy Warden Mike Buono updated the Board on maintenance project and proposed projects.

- Chapel Wall: the wall repair was completed.
- Tech 84 Body Scanners: the scanners were installed, staff was trained, and a radiation test was completed. The body scanner policy was in the process of being created by the Solicitor and Human Resources offices.
- Tablet Infrastructure: testing will begin within the week and the pilot process will begin the following week.
- HVAC Replacements: three HVAC systems in the old CRC building were in the process of getting compressors replaced. The walk-in kitchen cooler compressor was replaced. The mini-split compressor in the data center was in the process of being replaced.
- CTPT Electrical Emergency Replacement: Square D and Pagoda Electric were onsite to determine the price of the quotes.

PAINTING PROJECT AND STEAM PIPE REMOVAL: They plan to complete the painting and removal or pipes projects at the same time because they require that inmates be removed from the unit. The lowest quote to paint the Delta block unit cells was \$54,800. The steam pipes that were used to heat the cells have become obsolete and caused other issues. The lowest quote to remove the steam pipes was \$13,520. Funding from SCAAP grant money, already accounted for in the budget, can be used for these projects. No additional funding will be requested.

MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM MODIFICATIONS: The multi-purpose room that houses a meeting space and law library for inmates had available floor space. A 14 x 12 Live Scan room will be built for finger printing purposes. Deputy Warden Buono explained that Solicitor Sadler worked on obtaining a live scan machine for the Sheriff's department to use which will alleviate the 8-10 weekly inmate transports.

COVID-19 created an increase in the use of video visitation so they would like to streamline the process. At the time, there were three rooms available but the staff running the rooms did not have offices nearby. They want to build a bank of five video visitation rooms by moving the three existing rooms to the new location. They will also include office space for the Lieutenant, Sargent and office support to run the rooms, as well as an additional Lieutenant office.

Controller Graffius asked where the inmates go for the video visitation. Deputy Warden Buono answered that the visitation is with the Courts and the inmates will go to the multipurpose room to have their visit with an attorney, Courts or other County agencies. DA Adams added that it includes every courtroom proceeding which was done through Microsoft Teams while the inmate stays at the Jail. The cost of materials for the building, construction, electric and IT infrastructure was estimated at \$28,828. The County would be doing the labor themselves. There were funds currently within the operating budget that would cover the expenses so no additional funding will be requested at that time.

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EVENTS, PROGRAM & TRAINING: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on programs. To increase inmate treatment services, Berks Counseling Center and Berks Connections Pretrial Services started offering cell-side reentry and drug and alcohol work in July. Inmates were getting information in their cells, items to work on, connections to community providers, and an opportunity for a video session prior to release for services in the community. They also opened video access to the Berks County Office of Veteran Affairs so they can talk to newly identified veterans about services and what they may need.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Solicitor Sadler required an executive session for two items which did not require action.

**COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD**

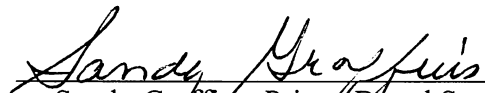
None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Commissioner Leinbach read a request from Karen Shuey of the Reading Eagle: "Can you please give an update on the number of inmates and staff that have tested positive for COVID-19." The Warden said there were four staff members that tested positive and one inmate confirmed case. They were awaiting results for a recently committed inmate who reported having a positive test prior to commitment. Warden Quigley confirmed that this inmate was quarantined in medical isolation which was different than the initial quarantine. She explained that anytime someone was showing symptoms, being tested or potentially exposed to someone with COVID, they are given doctor's orders for medical isolation. This isolation is more stringent than the quarantine period for new inmates.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, second by Commissioner Leinbach to adjourn at 9:19 A.M into Executive session which adjourned at 9:23 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held in a Microsoft Teams Meeting on August 26, 2020.

  
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Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary