

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

JANUARY 27, 2021

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 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:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Commissioner Michael Rivera
Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
District Attorney John Adams
Secretary Sandy Graffius
Judge Scott Lash

The following County staff also attended:

Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht
Solicitor Christine Sadler
Warden Janine Quigley
Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith
Chief Deputy Warden Jeffrey Smith
Director of Human Resources Jessica Weaknecht

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the December 16, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

ELECTIONS

Elections were held and the following board members were elected:

Chair- Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
Vice Chair- John Adams
Secretary- Sandy Graffius
Solicitor- Christine Sadler

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 734. Of the population reported, 669 were male and 65 were female. Twenty-seven individuals were moved

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INMATE POPULATION: Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 734. Of the population reported, 669 were male and 65 were female. Twenty-seven individuals were moved from the county to the state system. There are three juveniles being held in Chester County and two juveniles being held in Lehigh County. Way of comparison of 2019 the daily population was 1044 and in the year 2020 it was 743. The Department of Corrections opened their reception center. We were able to get 26 inmates transferred out of the facility into the state facility and have 15 more scheduled through the first week of February.

Currently one staff member out of work with a positive Covid test. Thirty-seven have returned to work during this last year of the pandemic. Two inmates that are currently positive for Covid and a total of 16 throughout the entire year of the pandemic.

FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS:

The live scan room is the room that we are building in the jail for the Sheriff's to be able to come in and be able to do fingerprinting. And the work is due to be completed tomorrow.

The painting project in one of the housing units, the contractors have failed in their workmanship. A letter was composed with the help of Kelly Laubach who assisted with the language which outlined the expectations and the contractor responded immediately and came back on January 21st and the contractors are basically starting from scratch. There is no estimate time on the completion.

The trailers that have been discussed previously for administrative staff to move back on site was approved by the Commissioners on January 19th not to exceed \$800,000. That included not just the trailers but also the utility hookups. It will also include a generator not just for the trailers to hook in but several other buildings including the warehouse. The purchase order through the trailer company has been issued.

The visitation area has some difficulty with some vendors and have been provided a list of specifications that were reviewed for doors and the type of glass to put in the door.

The Switch Gear project was approved by the Commissioners to move forward on January 19th not to exceed \$300,000. Matt Salkowski and Kelly Laubach are just working on the final details on the quotes. The PO has not been issued yet but very soon. Once the PO is in their hands it is going to take 17 weeks to manufacture those parts.

There are at times 180 volunteers that come in and out of the jail and for years the jail was blessed with a very large group of Berks County community members who come in and do various functions for us. One of those volunteers by the name of Jack Goodheart came into the facility between 2009 and 2017. He was 90 years old and he would come in the front door and walk the concrete and go up the chapel steps. He did one on one spiritual counseling and actually was like a tough love grandfather with some of the inmates. He did Bible studies with male and female inmates. He came in once a month and did a Protestant worship service on Sundays and he was missing his own so he could come here and be with the inmates. He came through the

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ministry from West Lawn United Methodist Church. Unfortunately, Jack passed away and his obituary was in the newspaper. Jack was 94 years old. In his obituary they offered up any contributions in his memory to the prison ministry at West Lawn United Methodist Church.

The Deputy Sherriff's did want to bring up the fact that having inmates rapid tested in the new scan center will put that prior to entering the facility. This eliminates close contact with the inmates in that small room and going back to individual housing units throughout.

STAFFING: Chief Deputy Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing; there were 25 correctional officer vacancies. Last month we had 12 vacancies. We have had 7 separation and retirements in addition to the 6 positions that were approved by the Board on January 4th. That would be 24 Custody Officers and one maintenance. Eight just graduated as cadets. Nine CO candidates are now going through a background process. They have gone through the CO testing on December 16th and January 13th. There is an academy start date of February 24th and looking to hold another CO testing on March 3rd.

PROGRAMS: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on the status of the grant that was received for Vivitrol. They are able to get 8 inmates through the grant though this quarter with the injection. There were issues with the amount of people we are able to get shots to because of the restrictions on the grant previously. Now those restrictions are lifted and modified and now there is an uptick and that continued into last quarter. The grant does end on June 30th and are reaching out to partners to start to look for other grant opportunities.

A new partnership with Safe Berks is starting. They reached out to a CO in December. After the meeting with them it was discussed about the services and what could be better linked between their services and inmates at the jail who have a need. Two counselors are able to meet with inmates using video conferencing. The inmates will be able to connect with the services offered by Safe Berks. Inmates are able to sign up and set up a meeting using video conferencing. They have also offered staff to participate with their sexual assault response team meeting that are held once a month.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Sadler had three items for executive session that will not require action litigation. Regarding security and personnel.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

Regarding the live scan. Everyone must be fingerprinted. In the past it has been difficult dealing with inmates refusing to come down to be fingerprinted and can be problematic. The live scan will solve a lot of those problems going forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

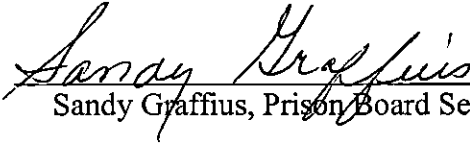
None.

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ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to adjourn at 9:20 A.M into Executive session which adjourned at 9:30 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held in a Microsoft Teams Meeting on February 24, 2021.


Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary