

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

March 31, 2021

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. in a Microsoft Teams Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

District Attorney Kevin Barnhardt 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:

- Application Specialist and Trainer Heather Berger
- Executive Assistant Jessica Blauser
- Executive Assistant Mary Buerer
- Administrative Assistant Angela Frantz
- Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson
- 1st Asst County Solicitor Cody Kauffman
- Deputy Director Facilities & Ops Rex Levengood
- Chief Information Officer Justin Loose
- Executive Assistant Barbara Lopez
- Lieutenant Bradley Roberts
- Solicitor Christine Sadler
- Facilities & Ops Director Matthew Salkowski
- Implementation Specialist Lori Schneider
- Chief Administrative Officer Ronald Seaman
- Office Support IV Kara Seawell
- Deputy CAO/Director of Economic Development Pam Shupp Menet
- Acting Warden Jeffrey Smith
- Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith
- Senior HR Generalist Kelly Stumpf
- Business Process Analyst Malcom Townes
- Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht
- Public Relations Officer Stephanie Weaver
- Oracle Position Andrew Weber

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Kevin Barnhardt to approve the February 24, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Acting Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population was 727. Of the population reported, 659 were male and 68 were female. Five juveniles 2 at Chester County 3 at Lehigh County. There are Seven Veterans. Forty-four inmates sentenced and within the next 4 weeks 24 of those inmates are scheduled to leave. As of February 26th, the intermittent sentences have resumed. The mental health roster will include 70 D roster, 366 Z roster.

STAFFING: Acting Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of staffing: there were 20 correctional officer vacancies; 19 custodial and 1 maintenance. There were 6 cadets in the academy which will be graduating in May. The next CO testing is scheduled for April 7th. Jeff explained the vacancies are caused by employees retiring or moving on or change of career choices. Covid was stalling the hiring process.

COVID UPDATES: Acting Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of staffing: there are 3 staff that are positive and 7 inmates that are positive.

FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS: Acting Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of projects: Multi-purpose room, offices and video conference rooms are still in process. The projected move in date is April 30th.

Delta room painting project pending the complication with completion date set at April 30th.

The trailers will be delivered the week of April 7th with a target move in date of early to mid-May.

AB Visitation had a few manufacturing delays with the vendor Uhrig. There is not a set target date on this project.

Switch Gear project is awaiting on vendor designing the gear. Generator transfer switch should be scheduled for April 13th this would depend on the gear being shipped which may take several weeks.

End cell heating coils is having difficulty communicating with all the heating units. The vendor has requested a change order. There is no target date currently.

Internal fencing project will be proceeding with this project.

EVENTS, PROGRAM & TRAINING: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on the Vivitrol Program. She reminded the Board this was a 2-year grant which is approaching the grant will end in June. Stephanie reached out to PPCD and DOC who provides these funds. They will be reaching out to the grantees in April and offering a one year no cost addition to the grant. This would extend this grant into 2022. There is a lot of funds remaining in the current grant. If there is an am extension the board would be updated when there is a plan or a proposal. The number of people that were helped by Vivitrol is reported to PPCD. Those inmates are tracked a year after release. The grant funds are billed down as it is used.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Sadler required an Executive Session which did not require action from the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt updates:

Item A: Ratify and confirm approval and execution of Resolution 01-2021 appointing Jeffrey R. Smith as acting Warden of the Berks County Jail System effective March 16th, 2021 at 5:00 PM. Motion made by Commissioner Christian Leinbach and seconded by District Attorney John Adams.

Item B: Authorize the appointment Jeffrey R. Smith as Warden of the Berks County Jail System effective March 31, 2021. Motion made by Commissioner Christian Leinbach and seconded by District Attorney John Adams.

Acting Warden Jeffrey R. Smith thanked the members of the Prison Board for having the confidence in him. He is looking forward to and excited for his new role as Warden. Mr. Smith wanted to take the time to thank every employee that works inside the jail. He would not be able to do this without them.

Commissioner Christian Leinbach appreciated Jeffrey R. Smith's commitment to the future of the Berks County Jail.

The salary will be reviewed at the Commissioners meeting on April 1st.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(See attached Public Q & A comment.)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Secretary Graffius and seconded by Commissioner Rivera, to adjourn at 9:14 A.M. into Executive Session which adjourned at 9:14 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held in a Microsoft Teams Meeting on April 28, 2021.

Sandy Graffius

Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary