

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 18, 2019
(DRAFT FOR APPROVAL)

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, December 18, 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
Judge Scott Lash

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Mark Scott
Sheriff Eric Weaknecht District
Attorney John Adams

The following County staff also attended:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The November 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 947. Of the population reported, 107 were female. Warden Quigley noted that the female population decreased to a total of 99 female inmates. However, the total female population seemed to be staying between 100 and 105.

TEXTBEHIND CONTRACT: Warden Quigley reported that TextBehind agreed to continue forwarding money orders to the Jail with a proposed cost of \$1.59 per physical letter or money order screened and forwarded to the County. The County agreed and negotiated a \$5,000 cap on the cost for the year. Warden Quigley credited Paul Bradshaw, Assistant County Solicitor, for helping to get the contract finalized and on the Commissioners' Board agenda. The Warden explained that TextBehind receives commission from the public when they send a digital or electronic message to an inmate. She added that the services that TextBehind and similar companies have brought to the Jail is phenomenal from a security standpoint.

STAFFING: Chief Deputy Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing; there were two sergeant vacancies and eight correctional officer vacancies; seven custodial and 1 maintenance. Eight cadets were enrolled in the academy and were scheduled to graduate January 21, 2020.

**BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 18, 2019**

2

The next academy was scheduled for January 29, 2020 and the next correctional officer testing was scheduled February 19, 2020.

RENOVATION UPDATES: Deputy Warden Mike Buono reported the status of renovation projects: the slate roof project was three quarters complete, the background checks for the crews assigned to work on the chapel roof were complete and the wiring and installation of LED lights in the parking lot by Pagoda Electrical was complete.

HOLIDAY EVENTS: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith spoke about the holiday gift donations from local churches to the inmates that were to be wrapped and distributed later that week.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

GTL CONTRACT: Solicitor Sadler explained that during the CCAP conference she learned GTL paid \$150,000 to three other counties to help purchase body scanners. The Solicitor questioned why Berks County did not receive the same offer. The Solicitor's office was in the process of reviewing the language of the contract to see if there was a significant difference in telephone rates.

LITIGATION: The Solicitor reported the appeal and arbitration for excessive use of force would be filed later that week.


TPV CONTRACT: Solicitor Sadler explained the struggle to receive payment with the Department of Corrections and their outstanding balance of almost \$200,000 for the TPV contract. She reported that the billing period between January and July 2019 was not included on the latest finalized contract and the DOC required a separate agreement for the outstanding amount. The Solicitor reported that she was later told a separate agreement was not needed for payment and the County received the payment for the April invoice. However, she was notified again that a settlement agreement was required for the remainder of the balance. The settlement agreement was not sent until Solicitor Sadler called and requested it the previous week. She added that the Warden reached out to Secretary Wetzel to see if he could expedite the process. Solicitor Sadler overnighted the contract but did not expect payment for 3-4 months.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 9:09 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held January 29, 2020 in the Commissioners' Board Room on the 13th Floor of the Berks County Services Center.



Ronald Rutkowski, on behalf of
Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary