

**BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 09, 2024**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, October 09, 2024, at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners Board Room and via Microsoft Teams.

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Commissioner Michael Rivera
Commissioner Dante Santoni, Jr.
District Attorney John Adams
Judge Scott Lash
Controller Joe Rudderow

The following member were absent:

Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

First Assistant County Solicitor Cody Kauffman
Warden Jeffrey Smith
Deputy Warden Bradley Roberts
Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith
Deputy Warden Franco Tassone Jr.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the September 11, 2024, meeting minutes as presented, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 800. There are 2 juveniles at Lehigh County and 5 juveniles at Wayne County.

The average daily population is 775 inmates. There are 3009 total commitments and 2975 discharges year to date.

There are 31 inmates sentenced to an SCI. Seventeen inmates are ready to be transported between now and October 24th. Fourteen inmates are awaiting a transport date.

STAFFING: Deputy Warden Bradley Roberts updated the Board on the status of the staffing:

- 23 Correctional Officer vacancies
- 6 Sergeant vacancies
- 6 Cadets currently in the academy with a tentative graduation date of October 22nd.
- Tentative academy starting on October 30th. With 7 Correctional officer candidates and one Sergeant Candidate
- Next Correctional Officer Testing is Monday, October 28th.

PROGRAMS: Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on the mental health roster. There are currently 95 D roster inmates in custody. This makes up 12% of the total population. Combined C and D active mental health roster makes up 58 % of the population. Twenty-seven inmates that were fully sentenced and eligible for work release last month. The average trustee population is 20. Eight individuals became trustees last month.

In 2015 there was an issue with wait times for inmates in need of competency restoration at the state hospital. The ACLU identified that people in Pennsylvania were waiting too long and filed suit against DHS and reached a settlement in January 2016. That issue has resurfaced. The county was asked for wait times for inmates waiting for competency restoration.

402 competency evaluation and restoration inmates are currently in custody and determined not competent by the courts. Those inmates are being sent to Norristown for competency restoration and if deemed competent they will be sent back to the jail to go through the court process.

304 forensic treatment commitment inmates are identified acutely mentally ill with severe mental illness and considered unsafe. Those individuals are also sent to Norristown for treatment.

Individuals may go through the court process and are deemed not guilty by reason on insanity. There is typically an order for those individuals to be committed to Wernersville State Hospital in lieu of a prison sentence. There is long wait time for that as well.

An overview will be reported monthly with the wait time for these 3 types of competency commitments.

For the end of September, individuals waiting for competency commitment to Norristown. The 402 commitment has 6 individuals waiting, the wait time a range of 4 to 55 days. There were no individuals waiting for 304 treatment commitment to Norristown. The end of September there was 6 individuals at the state hospital. Those individuals were there for a 402-competency restoration program. There are 3 individuals waiting for beds at Wernersville with a waiting range of 63 to 196 days. The goal for the wait time for competency beds is 15 days from order.

PROJECT UPDATES: Deputy Warden Tassone updated the board on the current projects:

- The mansion has been painting and the final touches will be completed by end of day.
- The water heaters are installed on Mike unit and L unit is now being worked on
- Yard doors need to be redesigned for a better fit.
- Metal siding for out buildings will be completed by the end of the week.
- Multi-purpose rooms project is in the final trim stages.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

First Assistant County Solicitor Cody Kauffman had nothing to report and no need for executive session.

JAIL BOARD COMMENTS

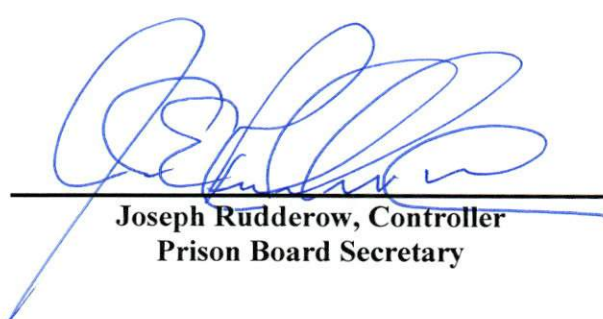
None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cesar Cepeda from Forward Thinking Communities spoke about his nonprofit organization. Forward Thinking Communities gives second chances to individuals by giving them equal opportunities to thrive in the community.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Judge Lash to adjourn at 9:28 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 13, 2024.



**Joseph Rudderow, Controller
Prison Board Secretary**