

# **BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES**

## **AUGUST 14, 2024**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners Board Room and via Microsoft Teams.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Judge Scott Lash called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

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

The following member were absent:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach  
Commissioner Michael Rivera  
Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

Deputy Warden of Custody Bradley Roberts  
County Solicitor Christine Sadler  
Warden Jeffrey Smith  
Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith  
Deputy Warden Franco Tassone Jr.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made to approve the July 10, 2024, meeting minutes as presented, motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS**

**INMATE POPULATION:** Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 732. There is 1 juvenile at Lehigh County and 4 juveniles at Wayne County.

The average daily population is 739 inmates. There are 2251 total commitments and 2382 discharges.

There are 21 inmates sentenced to an SCI. Ten inmates are ready to be transported between now and August 27th. Eleven inmates are awaiting a transport date.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS: Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the board on the current state of affairs:

- Title 37, Chapter 95 Inspection conducted by the Department of Corrections is scheduled to take place on August 27<sup>th</sup>. The last inspection was in 2022. The inspection in 2023 was skipped because the jail was in full compliance.

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

- 19 Correctional Officer vacancies
- 8 Sergeant vacancies
- There are 2 promotions waiting for Commissioners approval later this month
- 6 Cadets in the academy with a tentative graduation date of October 18<sup>th</sup>
- Currently conducting Sergeant and CO interviews from the July testing session
- Next CO testing is scheduled for August 29<sup>th</sup>

PROGRAMS: Deputy Warden Smith updated the Board on the mental health roster. There are currently 89 D roster inmates in custody. This makes up 12% of the total population. Twenty-Seven inmates that were fully sentenced and eligible for work release last month. The average trustee population is 21. Sixteen individuals became trustees last month.

Effective August 5<sup>th</sup> the jail expanded the opportunity for inmates that were recently released to access 14 days of prescriptions in the community. This is provided from a partnership with Prime Care and Rite Aid in West Reading. Individuals will get notice when they arrive that this is available to them along with a document upon release with the address and hours of operation.

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

- The painting PO was submitted, and work will be started shortly
- Hot water tank replacement is up and running and working well a quote was requested for 2 more units
- Shop drawings were approved for new doors and in building stage
- Kitchen and J Unit doors will be shipped with an arrival date of next week
- T 1-11 project is waiting for an updated quote
- Multipurpose room project has been started on August 13<sup>th</sup> with 6 rooms framed out
- Community service removed Grass was removed from the flagpole and replaced with river rock. The next project is painting the fire escape

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

County Solicitor Christine Sadler spoke about the Solicitors office has seen a significant increase in the number of arbitrations over the last 6 months.

The remaining session of the Teamsters contract is going to enter arbitration which is scheduled for February of 2025.

**JAIL BOARD COMMENTS**

Controller Joe Rudderow asked about the high vacancies of the Jail. The highest vacancy was as high as 40 and as low as 12. Warden Jeffrey Smith explained the current vacancy of 19 is a good number. Covid has affected these vacancies.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Judge Lash to adjourn at 9:08 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 11, 2024.



---

**Joseph Rudderow, Controller  
Prison Board Secretary**