

**BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER
COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM
AUGUST 10, 2016**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, August 10, 2016 at 9:00 A.M. in the Boardroom on the 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Mark Scott called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Commissioner Mark Scott
Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Judge Scott Lash
Sheriff Eric Weaknecht
Deputy Controller Ronald Rutkowski
on behalf of Controller Sandy Graffius

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
Controller Sandy Graffius
District Attorney John Adams

The following County staff also attended:

Solicitor Christine Sadler

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The July 13, 2016 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT None

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

The Warden informed the Board that the Jail passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act audit on the first round. She recognized Lieutenant Castro, PREA coordinator who wrote several policies, for his diligence to the project, as well as the staff. The private PREA auditor, certified through the Federal Government, was in the facility three and a half hours and interviewed about 40 inmates.

The Warden reported the current population at 1,022 which is low compared to the past numbers of 1,200 to 1,300. The Warden mentioned the low numbers may be partially due to the low population of technical parole violators which normally averages around 120 but is currently 33.

Commissioner Scott questioned if the Schuylkill County contract regarding the facilitation of Schuylkill County inmates was set up as a fail-safe or if they had pending activity. The Warden explained that the reason for this contract is to bring in revenue for the Jail and to help Schuylkill County because of its close proximity. Recently, Schuylkill County Prison was over the State capped amount and went through a purge. Warden Quigley does not anticipate the Jail will get any inmates transferred from Schuylkill County in the near future. If the Schuylkill County inmate population rises they have an existing agreement in place which will help both parties.

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Solicitor Sadler added that originally they expected to get inmates fairly quickly from Schuylkill County but the purge changed the circumstances.

Deputy Warden Kyle Russell reported the staffing update: 10 correctional officer vacancies, 3 correctional officers on unpaid administrative leave, 5 correctional officers on alternate work duty and 2 correctional officers on full FMLA leave.

Deputy Russell explained that alternate work duty is for employees who cannot perform full job functions as a correctional officer but can perform different administrative tasks in various areas of the Jail. The Warden added that this encourages them to come back to work while completing functions that the Jail needs help with.

Deputy Russell updated the Board on the Professional Visitor Interview Rooms renovation project; all quotes have been submitted to the Purchasing department to complete the project in-house. They are awaiting the final purchase orders to be issued and items to be shipped. Once the items are received, they will be able to set up a timeline.

Commissioner Scott questioned if the Jail had a design for the Professional Visitors Interview Rooms. Deputy Russell answered yes and explained that Facility Manager, Dorn Reppert has put together full project plans and designs which have been shown to Solicitor Sadler and District Attorney John Adams for feedback.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Item to discuss for Executive session.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

Commissioner Scott questioned whether the Jail population could be decreased by releasing inmates who are awaiting their trials by utilizing some type of electronic monitoring. The Warden explained that a risk assessment would need to be completed on the front end, on an individual basis, to determine if the inmate would show up for court, would not commit crime and go through due process versus making the situation worse while incarcerated. The Warden strongly favors pursuing the process of releasing qualifying inmates instead of leaving them in the Jail.

A discussion took place about the current process, how it affects statistics and how other Counties have changed to avoid incarcerating low risk inmates. Commissioner Leinbach mentioned that the statistics for the population on pretrial were confusing because of certain circumstances. He stated the percentage of population, which he believed was listed near 50%, were there pre-trial on bail, but not exclusively there on one charge. The Warden offered examples to support Commissioner Leinbach's statement: 1. a person may be already serving a sentence on one case but has another case open. 2. a person may have a detainer from another county so they have to stay incarcerated even if they make bail on the Berks charge. Considering these circumstances, the Warden believes the population on pretrial is actually around 25%. Judge Lash questioned if Berks Pretrial Services provided bail information. The Warden explained that because the Jail does not have an automated

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system to get the statistics, the Lieutenant in booking provides the raw data to Berks Connections. Then Berks Connections creates charts and provides statistics.

A discussion took place about the effects on low risk inmates and what can be changed on the County level to assess offenders for risk before they are incarcerated. The Board talked about a potential system that can capture data, such as demographics, amount of bail, charges, risk assessment, etc. that could potentially be arranged by interns from local colleges. Commissioner Leinbach advised the Warden to contact Arnel Wetzell, Human Resources director regarding intern policies.

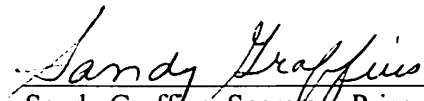
Commissioner Leinbach spoke about the CCAP Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force study and will provide the Board with a copy of the report. A discussion took place about short term and long term efforts to impact the prison population.

Solicitor Sadler stated that the Jail is proceeding with the CCAP Initiative Guardian RID program, dealing with checks correctional officers are required to perform for suicidal inmates. Similar to a barcode scanner, the correctional officer will scan the cell doors. This will provide a level of accountability for the staff. The Warden added, rather than logging the time and information on a clipboard, the times will be automated, events such as sleeping or awake can be selected on the device and this information will be preserved in a system. Solicitor Sadler believes that Berks County is the first county in the state offered this program. Aside from an annual maintenance fee the program is fully funded by CCAP.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 9:10 a.m. into the Executive Session which adjourned at 9:36 a.m. The next Prison Board meeting will be September 14, 2016 in the Special Operations Center at the Berks County Jail.


Sandy Graffius, Secretary Prison Board