

**BERKS COUNTY JAIL SYSTEM  
PRISON BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
January 8, 2025**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. at the Berks County Jail System Training Center and via Microsoft Teams.

Notice:

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

The following members were in attendance:

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

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach  
Commissioner Michael Rivera

The following County staff also attended:

Warden Jeffrey Smith  
Deputy Warden Bradley Roberts  
Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith  
Deputy Warden Franco Tassone, Jr.  
County Solicitor Christine Sadler  
Chief Operations Officer Kevin Barnhardt  
Chief Human Resources Officer Jessica Weaknecht  
Chief Clerk Amanda Bentzel

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The December 11, 2024, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS** – No comments.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Jail Senior Staff members gave the following reports:**

**Warden Report**

Today's Population – 723 including 4 Juveniles (1 housed in Lehigh County and 3 housed in Wayne County)

**Year To Date:**

Average Daily Population – 749 inmates (for December 2024)

Total Commitments – 3778 in 2024 and 37 to date

Total Discharges – 3827 for 2024 for 28 to date

**Inmates sentenced to an SCI:**

31 inmates are sentenced to an SCI.

15 are ready to be transported to an SCI between now and January 16th.

16 inmates are either awaiting a transport date or pending other charges.

Warden Smith observed the passing of retired CO Mark Powers and services will be this Friday.

**Looking Ahead in 2025**

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit is coming up in March which takes place every 3 years and is designed to ensure that necessary measures to prevent sexual abuse and maintain a safe environment for our incarcerated individuals. It evaluates policies, procedures, and practices to ensure PREA standards are being met. Warden Smith stated they are looking into a new system to process or scan mail that will increase the safety of the staff and inmates. He stated that May 9<sup>th</sup> is this year's Memorial Service during National Correctional Employees week.

Current State of Affairs at the Jail:

**Deputy Warden of Custody Report**

Staffing Update:

There are currently 16 Correctional Officer vacancies and 5 Sergeant vacancies. There are 8 cadets in the academy, comprised of 1 Sergeant and 7 Correctional Officers, with a tentative graduation on January 22, 2025. There are 11 candidates for the next Academy with a tentative start date of January 29, 2025. The next testing date is on February 4, 2025. 5 CO positions were zero budgeted.

**Deputy Warden of Treatment Report**

Programming Update:

There are currently 102 D roster inmates in custody. This makes up 14% of the total population. Combined C and D active mental health roster makes up 66% of the total population. 24 inmates were sentenced and made eligible for work release per their sentencing order. There was an average Trusty population of 30 and 7 inmates were newly classified as Trusty.

Currently in population there are zero individuals waiting to go to Norristown. There are two individuals waiting to go to Wernersville. Of those sent to Norristown in December, 2 went for competency restoration and waited an average of 72 days for admission; 3 went for treatment and waited an average of 24 days for admission. No inmates were admitted to Wernersville. There are currently 14

inmates at Norristown; 10 are there for competency restoration and 4 are there for treatment.

**Deputy Warden of Operations Report**

Project Update:

The 2025 budget is open and ready to be spent, emails were sent out requesting quotes for upcoming projects. Requested and received an updated quote from Gordian for the lobby and restroom project. Once PO is received, project can begin. Request quotes from Burkhardt Mechanical for 3 more water heater units and for stainless steel shower cladding for the housing units.

**Finishing up 2024 projects**

Waiting on a start date from Detwiler to begin the gutter replacement at the mansion. Yard doors for L and M units arrived. Install date pending warmer weather. ProMax fencing project has started. Entire project is expected to take 4 weeks, pending weather. The cadets are in their 8<sup>th</sup> week out of 16 CTO (Certified Training Officer) portion of the academy which is shadowing along with being evaluated leading up to graduation.

**Solicitor's Report:**

One item for Executive Session with no action required.

**Comments from the Prison Board** – No comments.


**Executive Session**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – No comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Judge Lash adjourned the meeting at 9:07am.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Dante Santoni, Jr., Commissioner  
Prison Board Secretary