

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

AUGUST 10, 2022

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, August 10th, 2022, at 9:00 A.M. at the County of Berks Jail and via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

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
District Attorney John Adams
Secretary Sandra Graffius (Teams)
Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht
Judge Scott Lash

The following County staff also attended:

Executive Assistant Jessica Blausner
Executive Assistant Barbara Lopez
Solicitor Christine Sadler (Teams)
Deputy Warden-Custody Jeffrey Schearer
Warden Jeffrey Smith
Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the June 8th, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

WARDEN:

- INMATE POPULATION:
 - Today's Population - 664
 - Juveniles – 1 (Lehigh)
 - Inmates sentenced to an SCI – 21:
12 of those inmates are scheduled to leave between now and August 29th.
7 inmates are awaiting transport date to be scheduled. 2 are not ready to be issued a transport date due to other circumstances.

- **PROJECT UPDATES:**
 - **Sewage Pump at FCRC** – All parts have been ordered, insurance and contract issues have been resolved.
 - Once the parts arrive, Burkhardt will be onsite to conduct the repair.
 - **Heister Mansion** – Architects have been onsite to provide a scope of work so it can go out for bid.
 - To address the exterior issues and waterproof the structure.
 - **NVR Project** - Plan to have all new components programmed and installed in late September or early October.
 - **All other projects** are in progress or have been completed according to plan.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE JAIL –

- We received our final report for our PREA audit which was conducted in April.
 - All standards were met or exceeded
 - No deficiencies
 - The report is available for anyone to view on our website
- The Jail team has been working with CGL on round 3 of the Space Program
 - Identifying all space needed to operate the facility.
 - Considering new concepts
 - Preparing to present the BCCF Steering committee with space projections in the upcoming weeks.

CHIEF DEPUTY WARDEN REPORT

- Received letter on 7/6/22 from Dept of Human Services- OMHSAS requesting that they receive packets of information on all our 304 commits a 2 days prior to the commitment hearing so they can decide if they want to attend or not. They have never attended before, but are stating that they may choose to attend now to raise concerns about a potential admission. We are reviewing with MH/DD and Solicitor's office and will keep Board updated.
- Received PrimeCare memo to all their contracted jails on 7/22/22 about medication assisted treatment. We are Reviewing all MAT standards and practices as well as meeting with PCM staff and community partners to determine what enhancements and recommendations may be helpful. Will keep Board updated.

Deputy Warden of Custody's Report

- **STAFFING:**
 - 38 Correctional Officer vacancies
 - Six (6) cadets currently in the Academy
 - Tentative graduation 8/22
 - Next XO Testing 8/29
 - Six (6) CO candidates in the process for the next Academy
 - Start date 8/31
 - Waive application fee
- Offender management system project had been elated many times due to COVID. Working with the vendor and County IS. Conversion to new offender management system effective 8/29/22. Expected outage while the conversion takes place. May

experience some delays when system goes online. Information on accessing the new system will be sent out early next week to the county agencies that use the system.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Christine Sadler mentioned that CCAP Courts and Corrections committee has been involved and she has also been in contact with the Public Defender. We will be sure to coordinate with the state to make sure they get what they need.

John Adams asked the Solicitor to keep him informed of any updates

REPORT FROM DA JOHN ADAMS

DA Adams wanted to make the Prison Board aware of an issue that he has been seeing regarding homeless individuals being charged with minor offenses and being committed to the BCJS. He looks at the commitments daily. He says this is a combination of homelessness and mental health issues. Some of these individuals want to be committed and some are not always cooperative with attorneys. The MDJ's are not doing anything wrong but thinks we need to take a closer look. Barbara Lopez is to reach out to Jack Williams at the Coalition to End Homelessness.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER BARNHARDT

Programming for the building is underway and will be finalized by August.

- CGL presented an update to space programming which provides a plan for management concepts, spatial descriptions and functional adjacencies informed by the project's mission statement.
- The output will be a staffing plan with initial cost projections that will be used as a basis for the architect and contractor.
- Programming takes into account inmate, staffing and visitor needs in order to provide flexible spaces with a balance between secure and open; restrictive and therapeutic.
- The Steering Committee will share the programming document with the Prison Board and Commissioners as well as posting the report on the project website.

Public outreach will begin soon.

- The project website launched last week in both English and Spanish; this will become the information hub throughout the project:
- www.BCCF.countyofberks.com
- www.BCCF.countyofberks.com/es
- Public outreach will begin in the next few weeks with nearly 30 stakeholder groups. We also plan to host a county-wide town hall in September to help our communities understand the need for the new facility.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Sandy Graffius and a second made by Judge Lash to adjourn at 9:14 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held on September 14th at the BCJS.

Sandy Graffius

Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary