

# **BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES**

## **SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. in a Microsoft Teams Meeting.

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

District Attorney John Adams called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

- District Attorney John Adams
- Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
- Commissioner Christian Leinbach
- Commissioner Michael Rivera
- Controller Sandra Graffius
- Judge Scott Lash
- Sheriff Eric Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

- Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht
- Solicitor Christine Sadler
- First Assistant Solicitor Chad Schnee
- Deputy CAO/Director of Economic Development Pam Shupp
- Executive Assistant Jessica Blauser
- Executive Assistant Mary Buerer
- Executive Assistant Barbara Lopez
- Warden Janine L. Quigley, CJM
- Chief Deputy Warden Jeffrey Smith
- Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith
- Facilities Manager Dorn Reppert
- Senior HR Generalist Kelly Stumpf
- Chief Information Officer Justin Loose
- Public Relations Officer Stephanie Weaver
- Implementation Specialist Lori Schneider
- Application Specialist and Trainer Heather Berger
- Administrative Assistant Traci Rhoads

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Sandra Graffius, seconded by Christian Leinbach, to approve the August 27, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS**

**INMATE POPULATION:** Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 781. Of the population reported, 697 were male and 84 were female.

The Warden reported that the jail was approaching population levels as seen in March and April and that the commitments have increased over the past couple months, gaining track on the discharges.

Last month, the Warden told the Board how there had been a back log of state sentenced inmates that were scheduled to serve a sentence in a State facility but, because COVID-19 test results were taking longer than 7 days within a transport as required by the State, many transports were cancelled. She told the Board that, to remedy the situation, the State made an agreement with the counties to use a State lab and that is was working well. However, a transfer of 10 inmates had to be cancelled last week after being informed of intermittent closures of the booking and intake areas in the State facilities. The jail is waiting for the areas within those facilities to reopen in order to reschedule and resume State transports.

The Warden reported that she spoke with Bob Williams, Probation and Parole, last week about reviewing population statistics. She and Mr. Williams intend to review possible diversion methods for parole and probation commitments while minimizing risk to the community. Warden Quigley communicated how important it would be to review segments of the population again because it is easier to manage the jail with the current COVID-related protocols when inmates could be distanced from one another. Chairman Adams asked if we are currently taking State commitments to SCI-Phoenix or SCI-Camp Hill and both Sheriff Weaknecht and Warden Quigley confirmed SCI-Camp Hill.

**STAFFING:** Chief Deputy Warden Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of staffing: there were 20 correctional officer vacancies; 19 custodial and 1 maintenance. There were 21 potential candidates currently in the hiring process who just finished their psychological evaluations. The next academy is tentatively scheduled to begin October 21, 2020.

**EVENTS, PROGRAM & TRAINING:** Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on the Vivitrol Program. She reminded the Board of the letter previously drafted regarding the exclusionary criteria for violent crimes and how it prohibited inmates with a history from getting a vivitrol injection prior to release. She stated how much the jail struggled the first year due to the exclusions, informing the Board that she compared some statistics from the last fiscal year and the first quarter of this fiscal year. A total of 10 vivitrol injections were given during the

last fiscal year and 8 injections were given the first quarter of this fiscal year. Even amid the pandemic our numbers increased, and Deputy Warden Smith believes it is directly related to the change in eligibility requirements. She also informed the Board that the number of inmates either waiting for approval or for an injection have also doubled. In addition, we were denying people last year because of their charges and we have been able to stop that the first quarter of this fiscal year. The denial rate changed by about 20%, as we were denying about 80% of the referrals last year and are only denying about 60% now. Denials typically occur because inmates are being released rather quickly after getting their referral or because they are simply not interested in an injection.

**FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS:** Warden Quigley indicated that Deputy Warden Buono couldn't be in attendance but there has been progress with painting and pipework projects inside the jail. She stated that Dorn Reppert was in attendance and could address any questions or concerns. None noted.

### **SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Solicitor Sadler required an Executive Session which did not require action from the Board.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD**

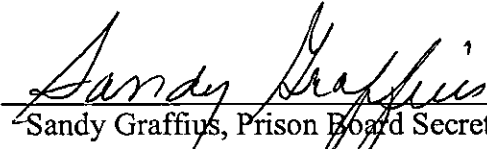
Sandra Graffius announced that it was Erica Kelly's last day and that Warden Quigley offered to have her staff take the minutes for the next two Prison Board meetings. Sandy's new Administrative Assistant is coming from outside the County and starts on October 7, 2020. She will have a lot to learn and, moving forward, please contact Sandy's office if you do not receive all the reports.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

(See attached Public Q & A comment.)

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leinbach, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, to adjourn at 9:09 A.M. into Executive Session which adjourned at 9:22 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held in a Microsoft Teams Meeting on October 28, 2020.

  
Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary