

Minutes of the Monthly
Meeting of the
Lancaster County Prison Board
June 16, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Joshua Parsons at 9:15 a.m. in the Work Release Room at the Lancaster County Prison.

Members Present: Commissioner Joshua Parsons, Commissioner Ray D'Agostino, Commissioner John Trescot, President Judge David Ashworth, Sheriff Chris Leppler, First Deputy District Attorney Travis Anderson, and Controller Lisa Colón.

Not Present: District Attorney Heather Adams.

Others Present: Cheryl Steberger, William Aberts, Joseph Shiffer, Kim Wolfe, Arla Brown, Bob Devonshire, Toni Warfel, Kristal Abenshon, Tammy Moyer, Linda Schreiner, Brett Cole, Kent Kroehler, Jonathan Fox, Todd Haskins, Colin Evans, Jason Perkowski, Carrie Kurtz, Karlee Shambaugh, Lawrence George, Kathleen Morrison, Jackie Pfursich, Tom Zeager, Helen Zeager, Peggy Lou Platt, and Diana Rivera.

Commissioner Trescot moved to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2022, Prison Board Meeting. Commissioner D'Agostino seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Cheryl Steberger, Warden; William Aberts, Deputy Warden for Operations; Joseph Shiffer, Deputy Warden for Inmate Services; Arla Brown, Director of Administration; and Bob Devonshire, Director of Facilities; gave reports on their areas of responsibility. All of these reports, including operations and statistical information, are posted on the County's website.

Cheryl Steberger, Warden, provided an update on staffing. Warden Steberger reported the current staffing complement: allotment of 229, current staffing of 177, making it 52 officers short at the facility. She stated that 33 interviews were conducted in the month of May and 20 jobs were offered. Warden Steberger mentioned that most of the applicants hear about the job openings through Indeed.com and through the current employees.

Warden Steberger reported the inmate population this morning is 758. The average inmate population in May 2021 was 664 and 750 in May 2022.

Warden Steberger reported that there are 42 inmates currently in the Work Release unit. She stated that the work release program is up and running again since the onset of COVID, and staff are diligently working on placing additional inmates in the program. Video conferencing continues in the visitation room and there have been over 1,500 video conferences held during the pandemic.

Warden Steberger provided an update on the new prison project. A Request for Proposal (RFP) went out for the owner's representative for the new prison. Warden Steberger stated that the Purchasing Department received two proposals from outside vendors and the evaluation committee reviewed the proposals. The vendors gave their presentations at a Commissioners' work session this past Tuesday and the evaluation committee is hoping to bring the contract suggestions to a Commissioners' meeting by July 1st.

Warden Steberger reported that the next PrisonStat meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2022, at 1:30 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the Lancaster County Administrative Office Building. There will be no Prison Board meeting in July.

President Judge Ashworth commented that the Supreme Court's use of Advanced Communication Technology (ACT) expired as of yesterday and it would not be renewed. He thanked the Prison staff for their effort throughout this process. President Judge Ashworth stated that the Supreme Court is not going to allow the continued use of video conferencing except for certain circumstances. Those that are on the ACT task force have submitted their recommendations to the Supreme Court to continue the use of ACT and are awaiting their response to the recommendations.

Warden Steberger welcomed the new class of correctional officers to those in attendance.

William Aberts, Deputy Warden for Operations, reported the officers of the month for May: First Shift, Officer Brandon Snyder; Third Shift, Officer Joseph Brooks-Johnson. Officers Snyder and Brooks-Johnson were unable to attend the meeting.

Deputy Warden Aberts reported that minor upgrades have been completed on the control panel project with no real change taking place.

Joseph Shiffer, Deputy Warden for Inmate Services, reported that there were 11 grievances specifically for medical in May. He stated that Title 37 requires that the Prison has a grievance process in place, and it has been reviewed and updated frequently.

Deputy Warden Shiffer reported that they are creating a written policy regarding the voter registration/absentee voting procedure. He noted that seven inmates voted during the election last month.

Matthew Wagner, Reentry Program Manager, provided a reentry services update. He reported that there were 31 graduates of the New Beginnings program. Currently, there are nine participants and 16 referrals that have been made to the Pathway Homes grant. Mr. Wagner stated that drug and alcohol groups have resumed. He stated that

they are reviewing the reentry policy and curriculum to put together a more streamlined program in hopes to have a massive impact as participants are graduating the program. Mr. Wagner stated that next week they will be asking the Commissioners for approval of a one year extension of the vivitrol program and monies to purchase more workbooks. There have been 75 participants year-to-date in the Pathway Homes grant, which is a partnership between the Prison, Career Link, and IU13. This program provides pre-release education and pre-readiness classes along with post release career navigation and support. Mr. Wagner stated that they are working with inmates to obtain birth certificates and PA ID's. So far, 45 applications have been submitted for birth certificates and 44 applications for PA ID's. Mr. Wagner stated that they have applied for 21 scholarships for recovery houses, which is currently on hold for licensing.

Mr. Wagner introduced the new Reentry Caseworker, Sophia Lombardo, to those in attendance.

Jonathan Fox, Have a Heart, commented that he is still waiting for the information he requested two months ago regarding grievances. Deputy Warden Shiffer stated that he was not clear on Mr. Fox's request and will meet with him after the meeting.

Arla Brown, Director of Administration, reported that they continue to offer monthly barbering services. In June, they increased the number of slots available. Ms. Brown reported that this month they had 58 inmates who received a haircut. Of the 58, 12 were indigent, thereby receiving services at no cost.

Ms. Brown reported that since the last meeting, they requested input from other facilities regarding commissary operations and included their responses in the report, as well as a copy of the commissary menu.

Ms. Brown reported that the statistical information on the overall operations of the Prison is provided online with the monthly report.

Linda Schreiner, Purchasing Department, reported on the upcoming commissary contract renewal. She stated that on July 8, 2015, the Board of Commissioners passed Resolution 46 and awarded a contract for commissary services for the Prison. This contract allowed a fixed commission rate of 45.65%, based on gross receipts for a base period of four years and an extension for three years, which means the current contract is due to expire on July 7, 2022. Ms. Schreiner stated that they intend to bring their recommendations to enter into a new contract to the Board of Commissioners by the end of June. She stated that the County was presented with price structures that they have reviewed, and they will be recommending an option that fixes the commission rate at 35% of net sales. This will include a reduction of cost on 40 items that are currently on the menu and holding remaining items at the current cost, and that cost will remain fixed for one year. The vendor, Oasis, will also introduce web ordering for friends and

family as part of the contract. Ms. Schreiner stated that they surveyed nine counties throughout PA of similar size and the current commission rate is between 37%-45%, which places Lancaster as maintaining one of the leading and reasonably priced contracts.

Kent Kroehler, Have a Heart, stated that he appreciates Lancaster County becoming a leader by reducing the rate to 35% for commissary items. He stated that he believes that the competitiveness of our rates in commissary is close to what stores charge, but some things are above. Mr. Kroehler stated that when the reentry program started it was a new program funded by commissary expenses. He stated that the reentry program is now permanent, and it should be a part of the permanent funding of the Prison. Mr. Kroehler stated that an ethical issue for him is that the funding still comes from families and congregations. He stated that he would be willing to relent a bit on the overcharging for commissary because the total cost is apparently competitive. With regards to the phone contract, Mr. Kroehler stated that he is unrelenting ethically in that he feels that we are taking money from people with limited income in order to fund other needs through the Inmate General Welfare fund.

Bob Devonshire, Director of Facilities Management, reported on his areas of responsibility:

- CGL's on-site supervisor retired, with one of the existing staff being promoted to replace the supervisor. An offer of employment as an electrician has been made to a candidate.
- They continue to assist Deputy Warden Aberts on the door access control system upgrades.
- There were 83 work orders closed in May, with 365 closed year-to-date.

Controller Lisa Colón presented the financial report on the Prison. In reviewing the finances for May, the Prison's actual expended to date for personnel services is \$8.9 million, supplies are \$240,561, and purchased services is \$2.9 million, which is an increase of \$1.7 million from last month.

Jason Perkowski, Power Interfaith, asked how this report compares to last year. Controller Colón stated that based on this year as of May, we are at 41%.

Tom Zeager, Justice & Mercy, asked for the cost for each inmate per day. Warden Steberger stated that the cost is \$107.21 per inmate per day.

In new business, Commissioner Trescot, discussed the Inmate General Welfare Fund policy. He stated that right now if there is anything above a half million in the fund, the

excess goes back to the general fund. Commissioner Trescot stated that he would like to make a change to the policy so that the monies that are raised in the Prison stay in the Prison. He stated that the money should be used for the inmates and not go back into the general fund. Commissioner Trescot would like to have a discussion at the next meeting to change the policy.

In business from guests, Colin Evans, LNP, asked what initiatives the Prison has been doing to increase the staff. Warden Steberger commented that in the beginning of the year the Prison was 99 correctional officers short and now is only 52 officers short. She stated that as long as they continue to make progress they are in a good place. She noted that a new class of three officers will start next week. Warden Steberger stated that the schedule and the building is fully operational in a safe manner. She stated that some of the initiatives taken were: the Facebook page, job fairs, banners outside of the building, advertisements, retention and sign-on bonuses, and wage increases.

Kent Kroehler, Have a Heart, followed up on their "white paper" they submitted a few months ago with some questions about the vision for the new facility. He asked who from the County, Prison Board, or staff will prepare the vision statement for the new facility. Commissioner Trescot stated that as part of the owner's representative, the needs assessment is the first step in the process. He stated that there will be a changeable document that will be accessible to the public throughout the process. Mr. Kroehler asked how the public will expect to hear about the vision for the new facility. Commissioner Trescot stated that it will start with the Warden and her vision along with the Commissioners at various levels. He stated that the Commissioners will have to interface with the owner's representative with the owner's representative producing that vision in a document. Warden Steberger stated that through their leadership training, they are working on a vision statement for the new facility. Mr. Kroehler commented that Have a Heart would like a seat at the table in the discussion during this process.

Mr. Kroehler asked if any decision has been made about the composition of the Prison Board with the changeover to county classification. Commissioner Parsons stated that there was a discussion and there was no law or statute for 2A counties. He stated that the state passed a law that basically said that the counties may remain in the current composition which they decided to do.

Mr. Perkowski encouraged the Board to consider the voices of those who have been impacted by the jail system and the judicial system as a whole in the design process. He encouraged the Board to make an effort to make space to hear from those who have previously been incarcerated as well as their families. He also requested they reach out to those currently incarcerated and find out their concerns. Mr. Perkowski requested that documents are made public even before they are finalized, to give the opportunity for the public to comment. He asked how the long term planning for the Prison

interfaces with long term county planning for some other needs, such as drug and alcohol issues and mental health issues.

Commissioner Parsons commented that this is going to be the biggest project they have ever done, so there is going to be a huge amount of planning that goes into it. He stated that Drug & Alcohol and Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (BHDS) deal with these issues on a daily basis, as well as other groups.

Commissioner D'Agostino commented that he agrees with Commissioner Parsons. He stated that these things are already happening by the Coalition and the Reentry program.

President Judge Ashworth commented that he has been working on the bench for 42 years and he has seen tremendous efforts being made on these issues.

Mr. Fox commented that a resolution was passed for outside counsel for the new prison construction at last night's commissioners meeting. He asked when this letter will be available to the public.

Jackie Pfursich, Solicitor, commented that the attorney who is the principal for Post & Schell construction work group was unable to attend the meeting last night. She stated that she reached out to him again and he is in depositions and hopes to receive it today. Ms. Pfursich stated that she does have the construction information if Mr. Fox would be interested.

Mr. Fox commented that in March 2022, Have a Heart presented a "white paper" on suggestions for the new jail design based on their expertise and research on innovative and effective features. He stated that they respectfully request two or three of their members as a part of the committee on the jail design. Mr. Fox stated that their group is examining the overall perspective of persons impacted by the criminal justice system. The other organization that may be similar would be Justice & Mercy, and they would also like to have a role in providing their insights into corrections.

Tom Zeager, Justice & Mercy, thanked everyone for what they are doing in the new prison project. He stated that he agrees with what Have a Heart has said about the new prison ideas.

Commissioner D'Agostino moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m. Commissioner Trescot seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is August 18, 2022, at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa K. Colón
Secretary