

Minutes of the Monthly
Meeting of the
Lancaster County Prison Board
June 17, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Joshua Parsons at 9:15 a.m. in Public Meeting Room at the Lancaster County Administrative Office Building.

Members Present: Commissioner Joshua Parsons, Commissioner Craig Lehman, President Judge David Ashworth, District Attorney Heather Adams, Sheriff Christopher Leppler, and Controller Brian Hurter.

Not Present: Commissioner D'Agostino.

Others Present: Cheryl Steberger, William Aberts, Joseph Shiffer, Kim Wolfe, Arla Brown, Brett Zerphy, Larry George, Kathleen Morrison, Louis Chirichello, Toni Warfel, Elvin Hurst, Mark Wilson, Michelle Gallo, Peggy Lou Platt, Tom Zeager, Stacie Dixon, Neil Ward, Kent Kroehler, Jonathan Fox, Kelly Ehrich, Kelly Rhoads, Ellie Rohrback, John Maina, Kim McDevitt, Michelle Akritas, Kim Reichenbach, Carrie Kurtz, Mary Moore, Carter Walker, Lydia Kovalchuk, and Diana Rivera.

Controller Hurter moved to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2021 Prison Board Meeting. Commissioner Lehman 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 Brett Zerphay, on behalf of 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 a COVID-19 update. She reported that as of June 11, 2021, there were zero positive inmates and staff at the facility. She stated that testing continues to be conducted throughout the facility. Warden Steberger reported that PrimeCare held the second vaccination clinic on May 25, 2021, where 34 inmates received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and 128 individuals received the Pfizer vaccine. Of the 128 individuals that received the Pfizer vaccine, 11 of those were staff members. Warden Steberger stated that masks are still required for staff and inmates when outside of their cells and anyone entering the facility, social distancing efforts are still in place, and there is increased cleaning throughout the facility. She stated that they are opening more programs with work release opening July 1, 2021.

Warden Steberger reported the inmate population this morning is 711. The average inmate population in May 2021 was 664 and 698 in May 2020.

William Aberts, Deputy Warden of Operations, reported on the staffing complement, allotment: 228, current: 177. He reported a new class of three officers will start on August 2, 2021. Deputy Warden Aberts reported that the training department and Human Resources is working together to come up with ideas for employment recruitment at the Prison. He stated that Prison Administration decided to come up with a plan to alleviate the amount of mandatory overtime. He reported that a video conference officer and a visitation officer on the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift were dropped. The classification area and housing area 2-2 were shut down. Deputy Warden Shiffer stated that supervisors and counselors can voluntarily work a shift on their off hours or on the weekend rather than requiring an officer to work mandatory overtime. He reported that they ramped up the rapid tests to move inmates into the general population and court returns are no longer required to be quarantined. In addition, he stated that they revamped the training schedule to allow them to get officers on the floor quicker.

Deputy Warden Aberts reported that the control panel project has restarted and the installation is taking place on the second floor control. He stated that concrete work on the exterior castle portion of the Prison started on Monday.

President Judge Ashworth thanked the Prison for their efforts in regard to Advanced Communication Technologies (ACT) which provides the ability to continue court proceedings without having to transport people to the Courthouse.

Commissioner Lehman asked Deputy Warden Aberts if rapid tests are being conducted for everyone coming back into the facility. Deputy Warden Aberts stated that rapid tests are being conducted only on new commitments.

President Judge Ashworth commented that the Administrative Order that was issued on Monday lifting the mask requirement in the Courthouse as of June 28, 2021, does not prohibit the Prison from doing whatever they feel is necessary with respect to the inmates wearing masks.

Joseph Shiffer, Deputy Warden for Inmate Services, reported that the department is down three positions: Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Case Manager, Drug & Alcohol Specialist, and a General Inmate Services Specialist. He stated that they are interviewing for those positions.

Deputy Warden Shiffer provided a reentry update. He stated that there have been two reentry classes held over the past five weeks. A male class graduated three weeks ago and a female class of five, started last Monday. Deputy Warden Shiffer reported that drug and alcohol classes have started in work release, which is where the inmates are housed after graduation. He reported that they are working with community partners to restart groups and classes.

Arla Brown, Director of Administration, reported that they are working with the Controller's Office in preparation of the upcoming annual budget. She stated that they are also preparing for the Title 37 inspection scheduled in November 2021.

Ms. Brown reported that they are reviewing applicants for the vacant HR Manager position. She stated that they participated in a "pop-up" job fair hosted by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Brown stated that they are seeking other options for recruitment as well.

Ms. Brown reported that the next PrisonStat meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the Lancaster County Administrative Office Building.

Ms. Brown reported that policy and procedure meetings have restarted. She stated that the Warden and Deputy Warden from the Lebanon County Prison participated in the last meeting and received good feedback.

Ms. Brown reported that the tablets distributed to the inmates continue to be successful. She stated that tablet rentals continue to increase with 679 in April compared to 475 in March.

Brett Zerphey, on behalf of Bob Devonshire, Director of Facilities Management, reported on his area of responsibilities:

- CGL is currently fully staffed.
- The work has started on the masonry repairs.
- They continue to work with Deputy Warden Aberts on the door access control system upgrades.
- There were 112 work orders closed in May, with 774 closed year-to-date. This is an average of 155 work orders at the Prison closed per month for 2021 and 174 closed work orders per month in a five year average.

Commissioner Parsons provided an update on the land acquisition for the new prison. He stated that the Board of Commissioners moved forward with the purchase agreement which means they are now in the due diligence period. Commissioner Parsons stated that they will report publicly as they get additional information.

Commissioner Lehman commended all who worked to reduce the inmate population since 2012. He stated that it is important that we remain vigilant managing the population because it will have a direct impact on the size of the new Jail.

In business from guests, Mary Moore, commented that she is happy that a new prison will be built, but she is concerned about the current conditions in the Prison. Ms. Moore asked what the County is doing regarding the heat conditions in the Prison. Commissioner Parsons stated that they continue to invest significant amounts of money in the old facility to maintain the building. He stated that the heat conditions are a problem every summer. Warden Steberger stated that they are limited to what they can do about the heat, but they do have large factory fans on the housing units, ice is provided at each meal, and she noted that there is one housing unit that has air conditioning.

Jonathan Fox, Have A Heart, asked if there have been any issues of heat related medical problems. Warden Steberger stated that there have not been any issues. Mr. Fox asked PrimeCare to address any medical issues in the past month. Kelly Ehrich, Vice President of PrimeCare, stated that she is very pleased that there are no positive cases at this point. She stated that there have been no significant health issues at the Prison. Ms. Ehrich stated that they work very closely with the jail administration and the County to provide healthcare services in the jail. She stated at times it can be difficult, but they always manage to work through it. Ms. Ehrich stated that there are no medical issues or concerns at this time. Mr. Fox asked for PrimeCare's experience over the last year as far as dealing with the healthcare of the inmates during the pandemic. Mr. Fox also asked if PrimeCare deals with the employees' issues as well. Ms. Ehrich stated that they consider themselves a family with the correctional facility. She stated that the past year and a half has been a difficult place to be in the medical field, as well as in corrections. She stated that they had daily conference calls and/or meetings with the Warden and the Deputies, and were able to contain, to the best of their ability, what they could in the facility. Ms. Ehrich stated that once the vaccine was provided to them, they had a massive vaccine clinic which she personally took part in. She stated that it was one of the best run clinics that PrimeCare has seen, which can only come from the diligence of the vendor working together with the administration and County officials. Ms. Ehrich stated that it has been a tough year for the medical and corrections professions, but she is hopeful that moving forward they can get back to normal and continue providing great healthcare to the patients at Lancaster County.

Ms. Moore asked if visitors must be COVID tested or vaccinated. Warden Steberger stated that they do not, but masks are still required.

Commissioner Lehman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. Controller Hurter seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is August 19, 2021, at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian K. Hurter
Secretary