

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
JUNE 8, 2022

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, June 8, 2022, at 9:00 A.M. at the County of Berks Jail and also 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 Christian Leinbach
Commissioner Michael Rivera
Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
District Attorney John Adams
Secretary Sandra Graffius
Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht
Judge Scott Lash

The following County staff also attended:

Executive Assistant Jessica Blauser
Todd Haskins-PrimeCare
Solicitor Christine Sadler
Deputy Warden-Custody Jeffrey Schearer
Warden Jeffrey Smith
Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the May 11, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 694. Twenty-eight inmates are sentenced to SCI. Five inmates are scheduled to leave by June 21, 2022. Eighteen are awaiting transport dates. Five are not ready to be issued a transport date due to other circumstances.

PROJECT UPDATES: Warden Smith updated the board on the sewage pumps at the former CRC building that are in need to be replaced. The county is waiting on Burkhardt to return the signed contract, bonds, and compliant certificate of insurance to complete the repair/replacement of the sewage pumps.

Roof Conduit Repair is waiting on Pagoda to draw up a proper quote to fit the Co-Stars format.

Capital projects for the metal roof repair, gutter repair and warehouse door are delayed due to bonding issues with the vendors. All other projects are completed according to plan.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE JAIL: CGL was on site May 17th-19th to conduct programming sessions. It was an opportunity to cover project goals, architectural space needs, and multiple aspects of the new facility. Lobby, visitation, staff support, housing, and healthcare services were covered. Programming review sessions with more in-depth conversations regarding these topics are scheduled later today.

PROGRAMS: Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board that the Council of Chemical Abuse agreed to cover the cost of the case management component for Vivitrol cases. This would allow the county to use the remaining budget for Vivitrol supplies and supports for the program. The grant is now extended to the end of June 2023.

Chief Deputy Smith also spoke about a new program called *New Leash on Life*. The program partners with local animal shelters and bring dogs into the jail. The inmates that are approved for the program would have the dogs for 12 weeks and learn skills on training the dogs so that they are not euthanized. The program also gives opportunities for treatment programs and reentry work and intensive case management services post release.

PRESENTATION: Todd Haskins from PrimeCare provided on the programming for health care services. Mr. Haskins went over the Chronic Care Program that is provided for all the inmates entering the jail. All inmates are fully evaluated on mental health status and tested for any chronic illnesses. Inmates that are found to have any chronic illnesses will be treated and have follow up appointments scheduled as needed or at least every 90 days.

STAFFING: Deputy Warden-Custody Jeffrey Schearer updated the Board on the status of the staffing; there are 33 Correctional Officer vacancies. There were 7 cadets in the academy scheduled to graduate in mid-August. The next testing is scheduled for June 15th and July 11th. Deputy Schearer has one personal item for executive session that does not require action.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Christine Sadler has items for executive session that does not require action regarding litigation.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Commissioner Barnhardt updated the board on the Steering Committee. The Visioning Session on May 12th helped to define the objective and goals for the new correctional facility. The website will be launched in the upcoming weeks in both English and Spanish and both versions will be released at the same time. Project fact sheets and talking points are also being created between the stakeholders and project's progress. Commissioner Barnhardt wanted to emphasize choosing the same terminology at meetings and in the public going forward over the next several years until the new correctional facility project is completed. It has been decided the Central Booking would stay at the service center. There may be a smaller booking facility at the jail as well. There will not be a MDJ office located at the new facility to try to keep the facility secure and keep the traffic to a minimum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to adjourn at 9:18 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held on July 13, 2022.

Sandy Graffius

Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary