

**BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES
MAY 11, 2022**

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, at 9:00 A.M. in a 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 Blausler
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 March 9, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 665. Twenty-one inmates are sentenced to SCI. Thirteen are scheduled to leave by May 31, 2022. One inmate is awaiting a transport date. Seven inmates are not issued a transport date due to other circumstances.

PROJECT UPDATES: Warden Smith updated the board on the sewage pumps at the former CRC that need to be replaced. A budget transfer is complete and awaiting approval.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE JAIL: CGL will be on site later in the afternoon to tour the jail and the visioning session is scheduled for Thursday April 12th.

Please note that the next Prison Board meeting is scheduled to be held at the jail. There are no concerns at this time but will depend on the positive Covid cases.

PROGRAMS: Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board about the Vivitrol program grant. This grant is currently funded through PCCD, and the jail was able to do a no cost extension last year for the grant to continue till the end of June. PCCD offered an additional no cost extension with funds that are left on the grant. There has also been talks with COCA about funding for the program in the future when the current grant funds are gone.

STAFFING: Deputy Warden-Custody Jeffrey Schearer updated the Board on the status of the staffing; there are 38 Correctional Officer vacancies. There were 3 cadets that graduated the academy on May 9th. One Correctional Officer was rehired and will resume employment on May 18. There are 8 candidates that will start the academy on May 25. The next testing is scheduled for May 16th and June 15th. Deputy Schearer had a security update for executive session doesn't require any action.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Christine Sadler had one item no action needed regarding contract negotiations.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Commissioner Barnhardt updated the board on the Steering Committee. The draft needs assessment recommended 960 beds numbers are down nearly 24% from 2018 study do in part declining number of inmates, decrease in county crime rate, and adoption criminal justice initiatives aimed at reducing facility population. Berks County has been ahead of national trends on its criminal justice initiatives. Data is compiled from national data and trends as well as historical data from the County. The report is being finalized and will be formally presented for approval to the Board of Commissioners in late June. Predesign services continue to progress and are entering the programming phase of the project in the terms space allocations. County representatives along with the representative firm CGL recently completed a benchmarking and best practice tour of comparable facilities in Columbus OH and Nashville TN. The county will host a visioning session on May 12th at 11:15 and is open to the public in the Commissioners

Boardroom. The County has approved an approach to sustainability for the project the statement will be included as part of the project website which will go live in late June.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to adjourn at 9:07 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held on June 8, 2022.

Sandy Graffius

Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary