

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners Boardroom and Microsoft Teams Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

Judge Scott Lash called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Commissioner Michael Rivera
District Attorney John Adams
Secretary Sandra Graffius
Judge Scott Lash

The following member were absent:

Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

Solicitor Christine Sadler
Warden Jeffrey Smith
Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the January 11, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 685. Twenty-one inmates that are scheduled to an SCI. Eighteen of those will be scheduled to leave between now and March 1st. Three inmates remain in custody due to other circumstances.

PROJECT UPDATES: Warden Smith updated the board that the outdoor projects will resume when the warmer weather returns. And indoor projects are now being handled.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE JAIL: Warden Smith update the board stating Berks Fire and Water is still onsite at the FCRC for clean-up and remediation efforts. Should have the contracted staff from the FCRC moved to the BCRC by the end of month.

STAFFING: Warden Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing:

- Thirty-nine Correctional Officer vacancies
- Four Cadets currently in the academy- will graduate on Friday
- Eight candidates will start on February 22nd for the next academy
- Next testing date – March 6th

MENTAL HEALTH ROSTER: Warden Smith Reported the Mental Health Roster:

D – 76
C – 360
B – 69
A – 103

Commissioner Leinbach Spoke about the recent decision to put the new jail on pause and work on areas where we can limit the number of inmates. Focusing on an SMI alternative by getting the inmates the help they need outside of the context of jail. Work release eligible inmates is another area of focus. Those two areas have averaged between 20 and 25% of the total population. Commissioner Leinbach would like for those numbers to be tracked. Mental health category D numbers are important and category C is the second most serious to look at. Categories A and B would make the least amount of impact in cost savings.

PROGRAMS: Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith updated the Board on programing. The jail started the veterans support group at the end of January. Volunteers and coming in once a week to run a support group for the veterans in population. Attendance is around 85% of the veteran population.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

County Solicitor Christine Sadler had 1 item for executive session with no action required.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Judge Scott Lash to adjourn at 9:19 A.M. Attorney John Adams. The next Prison Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 8, 2023.

Sandy Graffius

Sandy Graffius, Prison Board Secretary