

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

JANUARY 30, 2019

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 9:00 A.M. in the Commissioners' Board Room on the 13th Floor of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M.

The following members were in attendance:

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt
Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Controller Sandra Graffius
District Attorney John Adams
Judge Scott Lash

The following members were absent:

Commissioner Mark Scott
Sheriff Eric Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

Solicitor Christine Sadler
Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht
Chief Administrative Officer Ronald Seaman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The December 19, 2018 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

Warden Janine Quigley stated the inmate population was 1,121. Of the population reported, 2 inmates were being held for Schuylkill County, 1 juvenile was being housed in Chester County and 50 inmates were technical parole violators from the State. Of the population reported, 142 were female and 979 were male.

Commissioner Leinbach mentioned a proposal discussed at the CCAP priority meetings he attended. The proposal would give control of certain behavioral health funds to the State, rather than the County. He explained that each year, a couple of hundred people with mental health issues avoid being added to the jail population, through programs provided by MH/DD. He added that it was clear legislators were not aware of the impact these programs were making. Commissioner Leinbach emphasized the importance of counties speaking out against this proposal to avoid the funds being redistributed elsewhere. Warden Quigley offered her assistance regarding the proposal. Commissioner Leinbach stated that the Jail already helped by presenting behavioral health breakdown reports.

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Commissioner Barnhardt notified the Board that the Behavioral Health Task Force was working on determining the amount of first time offenders that were sixty years old or older. He explained, the Task Force wants to find out what they were being convicted for, to determine if they can be diverted from entering the criminal justice system. Commissioner Barnhardt reported that 84 inmates who were 60 years old or older were convicted to the Prison, last year.

Chief Deputy Jeffrey Smith updated the Board on the status of the staffing. There were 5 correctional officer vacancies. Nine cadets were enrolled in the academy that started January 30 and were scheduled to graduate April 16, 2019. Testing dates were scheduled February 13, 2019 and March 26, 2019. Chief Deputy Smith noted that the training lasts 11 to 12 weeks. The next academy start date was scheduled for April 24, 2019.

Chief Deputy Smith had one item for Executive session regarding personnel. No action was necessary.

Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith spoke about a program in Chester County that she previewed in November, with Warden Quigley, Commissioner Barnhardt, representatives from Berks County Prison Systems (BCPS) and the Adult Probation Office (APO). She explained that the Women's Reentry Assessment Program (WRAP) initiative focuses on providing services for females in jail and after, as they transition back into the community. Deputy Smith described different types of services, including risk-need assessments, cognitive programming, psycho-educational programming and supportive services from the community. She mentioned the importance of trauma care and building relationships between inmates and the APO staff who supervise released inmates. Deputy Smith stated that APO would be the driving force of this program initiative and they were determining if they could implement this program into Berks County.

The Warden spoke about the challenges caused by a water pipe, originally installed in the 1930s, that burst in the field outside of the Prison. The inmates were provided with filtered drinking water until the testing process was complete.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

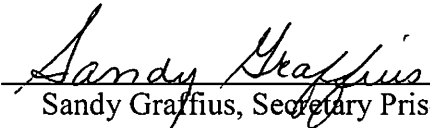
None.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

Commissioner Leinbach announced that Todd Haskins, a regular attendee of the Prison Board meetings, recently became an owner of PrimeCare. Mr. Haskins spoke briefly about the transition and expressed gratitude towards Berks County. Commissioner Leinbach emphasized that PrimeCare demonstrates interest in helping clients get well and receive the best possible treatment, even if it means another company provides the services.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 9:16 A.M into Executive session which adjourned at 9:37 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting will be held February 27, 2019 in the Commissioners' Board Room on the 13th Floor of the Berks County Services Center.


Sandy Graffius, Secretary Prison