

**BERKS COUNTY JAIL SYSTEM
PRISON BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

March 12, 2025

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. at the Berks County Jail System and via Microsoft Teams.

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

NOTICE:

Public comment will be accepted in person and through the Q&A function. Please include your first name, last name and municipality for all comments. Any comments without name and municipality will not be considered. Each citizen can submit one comment. Comment length is dictated by limitations of the platform being used (Teams Q&A). In person comments will be accepted first, followed by comments submitted virtually. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 30 minutes including both in person and virtual comments. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the Board. Please be concise. Comments that are germane to County business will be read during the meeting and should not be considered to be interactive dialog with the Board. The County Solicitor shall be the final arbiter of whether a comment is germane and should be read. Any response to public comment will be done at the discretion of the Board.

The following members were in attendance:

Judge Scott Lash
Commissioner Dante Santoni, Jr.
Controller Joe Rudderow
Sheriff Mandy P. Miller
Commissioner Christian Leinbach
Commissioner Michael Rivera
District Attorney John Adams

The following County staff were in attendance:

Warden Jeffrey Smith
Deputy Warden Bradley Roberts
Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith
Deputy Warden Franco Tassone, Jr.
County Solicitor Christine Sadler
Chief Human Resources Officer Jessica Weaknecht
Deputy Chief Clerk Jessica Blausen

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 12, 2025, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Jail Senior Staff members gave the following reports:

Warden Report

Today's Population – 680 including 3 Juveniles
(1 housed in Lehigh County and 2 housed in Wayne County)

Year To Date:

Average Daily Population – 720 inmates (for January 2025)
Total Commitments – 692
Total Discharges – 710

Inmates Sentenced to an SCI:

15 inmates are sentenced to an SCI.
12 are ready to be transported to an SCI between now and March 26, 2025.
3 inmates are either awaiting a transport date or pending other charges.

Current state of affairs

PREA Auditor is onsite to begin an audit which is held every 3 years. Jail staff is working with IS on video visitation for professional visits. Zoom Video Cloud will be the new software utilized with an expected launch date of March 17th and appropriate notices were sent out regarding the change. The DA issued a press release regarding a scan dealing with electronic monitoring or access to halfway houses. Along with the DA's press release, Jail staff made notification on the website and social media. Since the last Prison Board meeting, within the last 30 days, the Jail has discharged 5 individuals with detainers to ICE. Every individual that ICE was notified about was picked up. Currently there are 32 individuals at the jail that also have an immigration detainer.

Deputy Warden of Operations Report by Warden Smith

Project Update:

Yesterday they had a second pre-bid conference for the jail parking lot, access drive, and access area improvements. The renovation project of the lobby and breakroom restrooms will begin soon. The Cadets are in their 7th week of the academy and are navigating it well.

Deputy Warden

Custody Report

Staffing Update:

There are currently 7 Correctional Officer vacancies and 5 Sergeant vacancies. There are 10 cadets in the academy with a tentative graduation on April 23, 2025. There are 5 candidates who went through the interview phase of the hiring process and 1 in the background phase.

Deputy Warden of Treatment Report**Programming Update:**

There are currently 93 D roster individuals in custody. This makes up 13% of the total population. Combined C and D active mental health roster makes up 63% of the total population. 21 individuals were sentenced and made eligible for work release per their sentencing order. There was an average Trusty population of 32 and 14 individuals were newly classified as Trusty.

At the end of February, there were zero individuals waiting to go to Norristown for competency restoration or treatment. There were two individuals waiting to go to Wernersville due to NGRI orders. In the month of February, there were zero admissions to Norristown for competency restoration and five admissions to Norristown for treatment. There were zero admissions to Wernersville. The individuals sent to Norristown for treatment waited an average of 17 days to be admitted after their order. There are currently 11 individuals at Norristown; 6 are there for competency restoration and 5 are there for treatment.

On 12/5/2024 the Board of Commissioners signed a contract with the state to implement a program for incarcerated individuals to receive IDs or Drivers Licenses while at the jail. PennDOT executed the contract on 2/26/2025 and we will begin accepting applications on Monday 3/17/2025.

2. PrimeCare Medical Annual Statistical Summary

Todd Haskins, Chief Operating Officer for PrimeCare Medical shared various statistics including:

- PrimeCare's current number of employees at the Jail: 45.6
- Patient trends
 - Reduction of population has not resulted in a reduction of overall care requirements
 - Increased hospital stays and community appointments
 - Greater prevalence of mentally ill and substance abuse issues
- MAT Program continues to be a success with an increase in participants

He also recognized the 36-year partnership between the County and PrimeCare.

Solicitor's Report

No items for Executive Session. The interest arbitration hearing was held on February 18th we are awaiting the decision, and we are also awaiting a decision on 1 grievance arbitration.

Comments from the Prison Board

No comments.

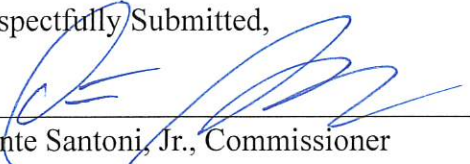
PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Judge Lash adjourned the meeting at 9:18 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dante Santoni, Jr., Commissioner
Prison Board Secretary