

BERKS COUNTY PRISON BOARD MINUTES

JUNE 14, 2023

The Berks County Prison Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 9:00 A.M. at the County of Berks Jail 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
District Attorney John Adams
Secretary Sandra Graffius
Judge Scott Lash

The following member were absent:

Commissioner Michael Rivera
Commissioner Lucine Sihelnik
Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

The following County staff also attended:

Solicitor Christine Sadler
Warden Jeffrey Smith
Deputy Warden- Custody Bradley Roberts
Deputy Warden-Treatment Stephanie Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the May 10, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

JAIL SENIOR STAFF REPORTS

INMATE POPULATION: Warden Jeffrey Smith stated the inmate population is 758. Thirty-eight inmates sentenced to an SCI. Twenty-eight are ready to be transported between now and June 22nd. Three inmates are awaiting a transport date. Seven are not ready for transport.

PROJECT UPDATES: Warden Smith updated the board that the current projects:

- Kitchen HVAC unit was replaced – working with NRG to program it
- Pagoda Electric will be onsite this month to repair the roof conduit and they will install the new transfer switch and breaker at the FCRC
- Several in-house projects underway

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE JAIL: Warden Smith introduced the new Deputy of Custody, Bradley Roberts. His new role began on May 24th. He will have oversight of Custody and Booking.

STAFFING: Deputy Warden Roberts updated the Board on the status of the staffing:

- 37 Correctional Officer vacancies
- 5 Sergeant vacancies
- Academy start date selected for June 28th with 9 CO candidates and 1 Sergeant Candidate
- Next Testing Date – Wednesday, July 5th

PROGRAMS: Deputy Warden Smith updated the Board on programing. There are 104 D-Roster inmates in population today. There were 12 inmates eligible in May for work release. June 26th-28th National Commission for Correctional Healthcare. They will review the health and mental health policies and procedures and update the accreditation.

Commissioner Leinbach commented on the D-Roster that is slowing inching up. Deputy Warden Smith agreed that those numbers are increasing.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

County Solicitor Christine Sadler updated the Board there is a negotiation for Teamsters contract. The first meeting was a month ago and another meeting scheduled.

COMMENTS FROM THE JAIL BOARD

John Adams addressed the Prison Board about the number of juveniles committing crimes with guns and the crisis of not having a place for them. There was a 17-year-old charged with very serious offenses and there were no beds. There were no beds in Lehigh which has been relied on in the past. Mr. Adams asked for MOU's with other counties. The safety of the community is in jeopardy with juveniles and the potential for violence.

Judge Lash spoke about electronic monitoring, and they know if they do not follow those requirements with the ankle bracelets there is no consequences since there is no beds here. And that is causing more issues.

Commissioner Leinbach was asking for options.

Warden Smith clarified that the jail has beds, just not juvenile but it is not feasible to house juveniles at the jail.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Judge Scott Lash to adjourn at 9:10 A.M. The next Prison Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 12, 2023.

Sandy Graffius

Sandra Graffius, Prison Board Secretary