

Prison Board Minutes
4/22/21 for the March 2021 Report

Members in attendance: Commissioner Josh Maxwell, Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, Commissioner Michelle Kichline, Judge John Hall and Controller Margaret Reif.

Other attendees: Warden Ron Phillips, Chief of Probation/Parole Chris Murphy, County Administrator Bobby Kagel, County Solicitor Nicole Forzato, APO Section Director Rick Maninari, Chief Public Defender Nathan Schenker, Deputy Director of Treatment George Roberts.

Public attendees: Jeffery Martin, Laurie Shannon Bailey

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Maxwell called the meeting of the Chester County Prison Board to order at 1:02 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Moskowitz, seconded Judge Hall and carried to accept the minutes of the Prison Board Meeting of March 25, 2021.

** Due to the Board participating via web Zoom or via telephone, approval of the minutes must be done by a roll call vote of the Board. Vote was complete and passed.*

III. Monthly Report

General/Prison Population Information:

Warden Phillips presented:

The March Report noting that the average daily inmate population was 604 as compared to 728 in 2020. This is approximately a 17% reduction in population from last year:

The Warden pointed out that on March 31, 2021 there were 604 inmates, the following were held for:

- a. County sentenced inmates: 113
- b. State sentenced inmates serving their sentence at Chester County Prison: 7
- c. Approximately 65% of the inmate population is held for court or preliminary hearing, 20% serving sentence, 2% are held on a Balance of Max and 13% miscellaneous.

The Warden reported that there were 3 juvenile offenders (1 Chester and 2 Berks).

The Warden stated that there were a total of 133 arrestees brought in on Central Booking by 31 different agencies and in 2020 there were 87 arrestees by 24 different agencies.

It was noted that the Correctional Center for March had an average daily population of 26. Last year's average was around 55. Today the total is at 31.

It was reported that there were 10 transports to the state correction facilities due to COVID restrictions. Currently 47 are pending transfer.

Medical Transports:

There were 35 medical transports. (7 emergency room)

Correctional Emergency Unit (C.E.U.):

There were 2 C.E.U. activations.

Video Conference:

There were 436 Video Conference Hearings. Compared to 201 hearings in 2020. This is approximately a 54% increase.

Note: The Prison is currently during an assessment with DCIS on areas in need of security cameras.

Medical:

The Warden reported the following:

- a. 438 inmates were seen at sick-call.
- b. 246 of inmates are on psychotropic medications.
- c. 241 of the inmates are on prescription or "over the counter medications."
- d. 51 (8%) of the inmates are on suicide watch.
- e. 0 medical denial.

Mental Health:

It was noted that there were 53 seriously mentally ill inmates (SMI). 45 males and 8 females.

It was reported there were:

- a. 9 inmates at Norristown State Hospital (N.S.H.).
- b. 0 additional inmates awaiting a bed for treatment at N.S.H.
- c. 3 inmates referred to the Mental Health Court.
- d. 1 court order received for commitment to Norristown State Hospital.

Inmate Programs:

The Warden reported that the GED program is scheduled to complete on April 29 and GED testing shortly thereafter. The program has 3 -7 males and 2 females. The Warden also reported that for the 21 and under program 1 male has received his high school diploma.

In addition Thinking for a Change will be starting at the Correctional Center, we will be working with Chris Murphy and Adult Probation to make available video conferencing. Also, looking at Horse-works to start in the near future.

Finance:

The Warden stated that IFR and Bookkeeping fees are still suspended until further notice.

Staff Development:

0 cadets graduated from the training Academy in March. There were 339 staff training classes and we currently have 22 open positions.

New Business:

None noted

Updates:

The Warden provided COVID related statistics:

Staff confirmed positive: 55

Staff recovered: 48

Inmates confirmed positive: 94

Inmates recovered: 92

The majority of the positive inmates were housed in minimum security and are males. It was also noted that the majority became positive while incarcerated.

Warden Phillips told the Board the Intake process precautionary measures continue and that the rapid test would be incorporated into the current procedure. He also stated that PPES and cleaning all remained in effect, we are following all healthcare recommendations.

The Warden stated that as of today count is 612 and this time last year count was 728 about a 16% decrease.

Other Prison Board Matters:

The Warden reported that we currently have 50% of staff that were vaccinated on site or on their own. The prison had 150 inmates out of 600 volunteer to receive the vaccine.

Commissioner Kichline asked where we stand on vaccinations at the prison.

The Warden explained why some were hesitate to receive the vaccine.

The Board had a collective discussion concerning the vaccine rights of inmates and staff and why some are hesitate and what can be done to influence or what materials can be distributed to staff and inmates to help them make an informed decision.

Public Comment:

Laurie Shannon Bailey raised a question about the 2020 budget for the prison. She also inquired about the lack of mental health services in the County and needed a contact number for the Prison Society.

Commissioner Maxwell said that he would contact Ms. Bailey after the meeting.

Jeffery Martin gave an update from last month on how helpful Chris Murphy has been with helping his wife who is currently incarcerated. He also requested a private meeting with Commissioner Maxwell.

Commissioner Maxwell said he would follow up with Mr. Martin.

IV. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Moskowitz and seconded by Judge Hall and carried to adjourn the meeting at 1:32 pm.

** As noted earlier, due to the Board participating via web Zoom or via telephone, approval must be done by a roll call vote of the Board. Vote was complete and approved.*