The Monthly Meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board was held on Thursday **January 5th, 2017** of Conference Room #1 of the Courthouse in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania at 4:00 PM.

**Members Present:**

The Honorable Judge David Cashman

The Honorable Judge Dwayne Woodruff

County Council President John DeFazio

County Controller Chelsa Wagner

Austin Davis representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Sheriff William Mullen

Terri Klein

Also attending: Warden Harper, Marion Damick, Chief Deputy Warden Warren, Deputy Warden Wainwright, and other interested parties.

Judge Cashman opened the meeting by stating that the lawsuit recently brought against the Allegheny County Jail regarding the treatment of pregnant inmates has been turned over to the County Solicitor’s Office. Any comments regarding the lawsuit are to be made by the Solicitor’s Office. The Board will take no questions regarding the lawsuit as it is currently in litigation. The purpose of the Jail Oversight Board is to oversee the operation of the Jail and to ensure that it is functioning properly.

1. **Public Comment**

Ms. Marion Damick of the Pennsylvania Prison Society presented the following:

* Regarding healthcare in the Jail, over the past year there have been 325 ER runs, each of which involves the Sheriff’s office which is responsible for staying with and watching over the inmate. This is a costly process. Surgeries are up to 46 for the past year, and offsite specialty referrals are up to 681 which is a high and costly number.
* Healthcare staff vacancies are a concern as well. This might result in higher than necessary ER run numbers. With adequate healthcare staff numbers, health issues could be dealt with in a more preventative and cost effective manner.
* It is also concerning that there were 14 attempted suicides in the past year. Something has gone wrong if inmates find themselves in this position.
* Ms. Damick remarked that she is concerned by the number of pregnant women in jail, and disagrees that the notion that there are instances where a pregnant woman would be better off in jail.

Judge Cashman responded to the suicide attempt numbers and commented that there is a medical ethics and privacy challenge when it comes to making an inquiry as to why the attempts occurred. The Jail is not Mayview, but it is forced to operate as Mayview given the high number of mental health challenges that inmates have within the Jail. Ideally, these inmates would be treated in a mental health facility rather than a jail.

Ms. Damick commented that action should be taken in partnership with state government to create and fund mental health treatment facilities.

1. **Review of the Minutes for December 1, 2016**

A motion to approve the minutes was initiated by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. DeFazio.

1. **President’s Report**

Given recent discussion with the Warden and County Manager, Judge Cashman mentioned that two years ago the jail had a much higher jail population of 2,850 that was pushing up against the maximum capacity limit. The problem was exacerbated by the challenges presented by Corizon. At the time Judge Cashman worked with Frank Scherer to analyze the Jail population to determine how many inmates were there as pre-trial detainees and how many were there on new charges. These figures were then broken down to look at Judges who were detaining individuals in order to ascertain if these detentions were indeed necessary. As of January 3, 2017 there are 889 people detained in the Jail while the total population is around 2,100. By monitoring the individuals who are being detained the Jail has been able to reduce the number of inmates, making the operation more efficient and less costly. This is an ongoing effort. Once a month Judge Cashman gets a report detailing individuals who are being detained, why and for how long they are being detained, and the Judges who are sending them to the Jail. By engaging with these Judges they make sure that those facing charges that do not warrant detention stay out of the Jail.

1. **Warden’s Report**

Warden Harper reported that the number of inmates in the previous week dropped to 2,088 inmates which is a record low for the Jail.

1. **Deputy Warden’s Report**

Nothing new to report.

1. **Old Business**

Nothing new to report.

1. **New Business**

Ms. Wagner inquired if the issue of pregnant women in the jail could be brought up and discussed, as it has in the past, while maintaining respect for the nature of the ongoing lawsuit.

Judge Cashman responded that the Board will not address the issue as it is under litigation and comments are to be made by the County Solicitor’s office. The board will continue to monitor the services that the Jail provides and the operation of the Jail. Ms. Wagner requested that, given the way the Board has discussed the issue in the past, she and Judge Cashman meet before next month’s meeting to determine how the Board can deliberate on the issues of pregnant women in the jail in a way that is respectful of ongoing litigation. Judge Cashman agreed.

1. **Allegheny County Jail Medical Services** 
   1. Allegheny Health Network

Judge Cashman noted that the number of healthcare staff vacancies is up to 48 and inquired what was being done to address this challenge.

Warden Harper replied that they are constantly working to recruit new employees. They are working on a new incentive package attract new healthcare staff. Ms. Wagner introduced the healthcare staff vacancy report that her staff put together for the meeting and invited feedback between now and the next meeting on the report’s data and format. Ms. Wagner introduced the idea that, for positions such as the Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) for which the greatest number of vacancies are present, the Jail recruit individuals who are in school and are about to graduate into the workforce. For example, Ms. Wagner is aware of a nursing student who has been looking everywhere for open positions, and suggested that this student might be representative of a larger population who, although earlier in their career than the Jail might typically recruit, could serve as a useful population to help fill the open positions. Warden Harper commented that the Jail has had several job fairs and has specifically invited relevant schools and universities to the job fairs, at times bringing students from the school to the Jail. The challenge with hiring recent graduates is that many of them have not yet received their nursing certification required to perform the job. They hope that once these individuals receive their certifications, they will be interested in working in the Jail.

Ms. Wagner replied saying she understood and sympathized with the challenges of hiring individuals with required certifications. She inquired if there was any way the Jail could structure their hiring processes differently to hire some employees as they were still working toward their certifications.

Dr. Joseph responded that this was not a possibility given certification requirements and, when nursing students work in the field, a licensed nurse is required to supervise them at all times. The Jail has explored this option and determined it would be a challenge to make nurse supervisors available given the shortage of nurses that is already present in the Jail.

Ms. Wagner understood and inquired if the certification requirement was a medical requirement or one stipulated by the AHN contract with the Jail. Dr. Joseph replied that this was a medical requirement.

Judge Woodruff inquired how competitive the jail health staff salaries are, given that Pittsburgh is a nursing center with the presence of UPMC and other hospitals that present hiring competition for local nurses.

Warden Harper commented that salaries are based on the County nursing salaries so they are competitive to the surrounding area. Other agencies are able to offer some extra financial incentives and things like free parking to employees. The Jail is working creatively to solve the challenge of hiring for these open positions in such a competitive environment.

Judge Woodruff inquired what additional hiring incentives the Jail was planning on offering. Warden Harper responded that the Jail was looking for ways to increase salaries for these positions.

Ms. Wagner commented that, based on her experience speaking with nurses in the Jail during her last visit, parking can be cost prohibitive. Some nurses were parking as far away as the South Side given the high cost of parking by the Jail. Setbacks such as this can serve as disincentives to potential Jail employees.

Judge Woodruff commented that these challenges with regard to salary competitiveness and transportation requirements are part of a larger issue that the whole County faces when recruiting new employees.

Ms. Klein inquired if there was any way for jail health employees to receive tuition reimbursement similar to the Allegheny County FireVEST program.

Warden Harper replied that once new hires come on board they become part of the union and tuition reimbursement is part of this contract.

Mr. Davis commented that programs like this are funded by the state and he is not sure the County could offer a similar program on their own. The FireVEST program is run by the County but funded by the state.

Council President DeFazio commented that there might be ways to have work at the jail count toward certification hours required for nursing certification.

Ms. Wagner questioned why the Port Authority is not able to offer free or discounted bus passes to county employees to help attract and retain new workers. The issue of parking is similar. This is run by a city authority, but should still be negotiable. Broadly speaking these are challenges of fragmentation where isolated pockets of government are not helping one another in areas where they should be.

1. **Community Corrections Reports** 
   1. **The Program for Offenders**

Nothing new to add to the report.

* 1. **The Renewal Center**

Frank DeClair stated that the medically monitored detox unit opened on January 3. They have the capability to house twelve men and four women that are CCPHO insured. They are exploring opportunities for other insurance options. The goal is for these individuals to transition into inpatient then outpatient drug and alcohol treatment.

Ms. Klein inquired how individuals enter the program. Mr. DeClair responded that individuals can self-admit or they can be referred to by other outside agencies like county probation or the state. Self-admitting individuals must be self-paying and be referred to the center through an application process.

* 1. **Electronic Monitoring**

Steve Esswein Reported that the Electronic Monitoring report included with the Board packet was incorrect. The actual numbers for the month are: 150 successful completions and 739 individuals in the program at the end of the month. Of that group 5 were returned to the Jail for violations, four were new arrests and one absconder was picked up and returned to the Jail.

Additionally, Since January 3rd, the number of individuals detained in the Jail has been reduced to 841. The total number is still around a thousand with the rest of the individuals being in alternative housing or under electronic monitoring. Of the 841 individuals in the Jail, 751 are there for new charges, the vast majority of which are serious charges. There is a shortage of space in mental health treatment programs, so many individuals are waiting for space in mental health facilities to open.

Judge Cashman inquired if the Electronic Monitoring program had the capacity to take more individuals.

Mr. Esswein responded that, in terms of equipment, they have the capacity to take up to about a thousand individuals. With increased funding they could take up to 1,200.

* 1. **Goodwill**

Gaye Velar thanked the Chief Deputy Warden Warren for visiting the Center and helping with a program for participants who made gift boxes for senior citizens. They plan to reapply to continue the program for new residents who wish to participate.

Chief Deputy Warden thanked the Goodwill Center and added that residents enjoyed making the gifts and hand delivering them to the senior citizens.

**Adjournment**

Judge Cashman welcomed Judge Woodruff to the Board. He brings a wealth of knowledge regarding juvenile offenders. He will be an asset to the board. Judge Cashman adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Chelsa Wagner

Secretary