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

Members Present:

Austin Davis Representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Brad Korinski representing County Controller Chelsa Wagner

Charles Rodriguez representing Sheriff William Mullen

Ms. Terri Klein

Also attending: Warden Orlando Harper, Deputy Warden Monica Long, Ms. Marion Damick of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and other interested parties.

1. **Public Comment**

Ms. Damick reported that with her comments she is not criticizing just to criticize.  She wants to make the Jail, which is already well run, the best in can be.  The Board shares this goal.

Ms. Damick appreciates that Jail report data is more up to date.  It can get a bit confusing in the report if half months get confused for whole months. For some statistics it is difficult to measure whether a rate is increasing or not because half month periods cannot be compared to full months.

Regarding juvenile segregation, these people have done some terrible things, that’s why they are in the Jail rather than the Shuman facility. However they are still juveniles and they are young with brains that develop into their 20s.  If they cause a disturbance yes you need to separate them, but how long you separate them is important because segregation and isolation can be damaging, especially to a developing brain.

Ms. Damick noted that Deputy Long reported last month that specialized services for veteran inmates would be starting in the Jail.  Ms. Damick hopes this work is progressing and she knows this work is beneficial.

Regarding medication delivery in the Jail, Ms. Damick and Dr. Joseph are in agreement.  Meds come in twice a day, once at 11 am and once at 6 pm.  Even with regular staff and overtime, it is difficult to treat all of the inmates in the amount of time given.  This is a logistical challenge.

Ms. Damick noted that Jail Medical is advertising on buses which should help fill remaining vacancies.

Ms. Damick noted as a minor comment that the Chair of the Board can’t make a motion to adjourn the meeting, a different member of the Board must do this.

For Jail medical services from August through September, the numbers look good for family support, drug and alcohol programming, and CBT.

Medical housing unit admissions are at 81 in the last reported half a month.  The whole month of August is 94.  This seems like a concerning increase.   Perhaps it could be explained why this increase occurred.

Mental health referrals are 140 for half a month. Last month they were 134 for the whole month.  Again this is a significant increase.

Of serious concern is the new case of TB in the Jail.  It has been years since the Jail had a case of TB.  TB is highly contagious. The Health Department should monitor this situation.

**2. Review of the minutes for September 7, 2017**

Mr. Davis noted that the Board lacked sufficient quorum to approve the minutes. The September 7 minutes will be held for approval at next month’s meeting.

**3. President’s Report**

No report.

**4. Warden’s Report**

Warden Harper presented anti-suicide measures that are being taken at the ACJ.  Warden Harper presented to anti-suicide posters that are being placed throughout the Jail, especially the intake and classification departments. New commitments to the Jail receive 5 different medical screenings in the intake department.   During each medical screening incoming inmates are asked a series of questions pertaining to mental health and suicide risk to ascertain whether they have had suicide attempts in the past and to assess suicide risk in the present moment. As soon as an individual enters the Jail in the intake department they are greeted by an LPN or RN where they begin the initial assessment, then they are taken to the second stage where they are given a medical receiving screening and are asked even more questions about their mental health and suicide risk history. Next they go before a mental health specialist who asks them a series of questions about suicide, drug addiction, and mental health. This specialist makes a determination of whether or not the inmate should receive more mental health evaluation by referring them to a psychiatrist. If they feel there is a need for the individual to have immediate attention they can let the supervisors know and the inmate is changed into a suicide gown and they are constantly watched until they are taken to the mental health pod where they are given the services that they need. After the mental health specialist sees the incoming inmate, the inmate will go before the booking observation officer where they are asked a series of further questions. After the booking observation officer, the individual will go before another RN who reviews the mental health assessment and initial assessment and then conducts a physical assessment of the individual. After these five different screenings, the individual will go to the classification pods. Two correctional officers are assigned to the classification pods to do 15 minute irregular security inspections to make sure the individuals are safe. Correctional officers are briefed weekly by the supervisory staff to talk about suicide and other information. Correctional officers also receive suicide prevention training every year so they know what to do when they encounter anyone at suicide risk. Lastly, family and friends have the ability to report whether or not inmates are suicidal, and once they make those reports Jail staff act immediately to prevent suicide.

**5. Deputy Warden’s Report**

Deputy Warden Long presented an expenditure request to the Board of no more than $7,038 for thermal shirts as part of a holiday gift package that the chaplaincy provides to Jail inmates each December.  Volunteers and staff assemble more than 2500 packages and hand deliver them to every inmate. Each package includes other small gift items including items to write with, candy, and toiletries.  Inmates do appreciate the thermal shirts.  The cost went down by $1,000 because there was leftover inventory from previous years.  They also made sure they were getting best price by comparing costs from different vendors.

Ms. Klein inquired if the thermal shirts are one size fits all.    
Deputy Warden Long replied that they shirts are ordered in various sizes.

Mr. Davis noted that the Board cannot vote on the expenditure without quorum, and so the request will have to be postponed until next month.

Ms. Klein inquired if the Board could vote through email. Mr. Korinski did not believe the Board could take official action through email.

Mr. Korinski suggested that if they need to order the items before next month’s meeting the Board could reimburse the cost from the inmate welfare fund at next month’s meeting.

**6. Old Business**

No report.

**7. New Business**

Ms. Klein thanked the Warden for communicating openly with the Board regarding suicide prevention in the Jail. Suicide is the primary cause of death in all Jails. It might be helpful to have Jail medical talk more about suicide prevention screenings, perhaps at a later meeting.

Mr. Korinski stated that suicide among inmates are a challenge across all jails, and asked if there is there a common a common mechanism by which inmates are able to commit suicide which could be addressed.

Warden Harper reported that if an individual wants to harm themselves it is very difficult to stop them.  At the Jail they do what they can to identify and address mechanisms by which inmates could harm themselves. He can’t speak to the particulars of each case, but even if a cell were completely harm free inmates could still find a way to harm themselves.

Ms. Klein inquired if there were other environmental modifications that could be done.

Warden Harper replied that they will continue these efforts.

**8. Allegheny County Jail Medical Services**

Dr. Joseph reported regarding Kane Pharmacy medication delivery in the Jail that morning delivery is for the evening and evening delivery is for the following morning to allow time for distribution to inmates.

Regarding numbers in the Wardens’ report, electronic health record is now used now to pull numbers.  Now with EHR being used Dr. Joseph expects that a consistency in the numbers will develop with improved recording accuracy.

Physical assessments are now being done on every inmate in the beginning at intake as opposed to being done later when they would be called back for a physical at a later time. Virtually everyone now meets the standard of having this physical assessment within 14 days. This is being done in accordance with ACA recommendations. Intake structure was changed to allow for these screenings.

Regarding mental health concerns, Dr. Joseph reported that there are several points where mental health is tracked.   By the time they get to the Jail this is now also a new mental health screening. In the past before EHR started, they only conducted the mental health evaluation on those who showed or reported signs or symptoms, not it is done on everyone. This expansion has been positive because it normalizes the screenings rather than singling out individuals it will also reduce the number of individuals who under the old system may have needed treatment but stayed under the radar. Mental health referral numbers may increase as a result of the mental health screening expansion.

There was one case of TB. This person was immediately sent to the hospital was treated and released.  The County Health Department was notified as required.

**9. Community Corrections reports**

**a. The Program for Offenders**

Rick Smith Deputy Director of the Program for Offenders reported that September was National Recovery Month. 12 women and 10 men participated in a recovery walk on September 16th and worked on a banner in the West Homestead facility.

The Program is assembling an aftercare packet to help individuals upon their release no matter what time they are released.  Being released is difficult if you and don't know where to turn for shelter or other basic needs.  This packet points to various services available in Allegheny County to help individuals be more successful on release.

Ms. Klein inquired asked if individuals are released 24 hours a day.

Mr. Smith replied that individuals used to be released in evening, but this is no longer the case.  They are working to be proactive to help released individuals. The program creates an aftercare program for individuals approaching release. Still some individuals are released midday.

**b. Renewal Center**

Adam Zak reported that last week, the Center had a successful drug and alcohol audit of both inpatient and outpatient programs and detox units.

Alexander Acosta US Department of Labor Secretary toured a workforce partner called Recycle Source. Since many Renewal Center residents work at the site, the Center was invited to participate in the meeting and tour and it was a positive and informative experience.

**c. Electronic Monitoring**

Steve Esswein reported that numbers are up to 695 for the last reporting month with 7 returned for various violations.

**d. Goodwill**

Gaye Velar reported that the Center has received a three year grant from the Federal Government to launch a fatherhood initiative program that offers parenting mentoring and education and employment help.

The Center also received a grant for a new Narcan distribution kit.  It is more powerful and accessible.

The Center had a positive visit yesterday from Deputy Warden Long who had the opportunity to tour the facility and meet the staff. Ms. Velar thanked the Deputy Warden for taking the time to make this visit.

**10. Adjournment**

Lacking quorum, the Board adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsa Wagner

Secretary