

The monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board was held on Thursday December 5, 2019 in The Gold Room of the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at 4:10 P.M.

**Members Present**

Honorable Judge Clark, President Judge  
Honorable Judge Lazzara  
Sheriff William Mullen  
Brad Korinski representing County Controller Chelsa Wagner  
Barbara Pares representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald  
Ken Varhola representing County Councilman DeFazio  
Terri Klein  
Abass Kamara

Others in Attendance:

Warden Harper  
Deputy Warden Williams

**1. President’s Report**  
**Judge Clark - None**

**Meeting guidelines –**

1. Everyone in this room will be treated with dignity and respect. No exception
2. Everyone will have the opportunity to be heard, within reason. Depending on the number of public comments that sign up to speak there may be a time limit imposed.
3. Profanity and yelling will not be tolerated. Anyone using profanity or anyone who is yelling will be removed from this meeting.

**Announcements – None**

**2. Old Business**

- A. Interpreter Services
  - o Language Line, TDY and ACJ has 2 correctional officers that are fluent in Spanish and others that are proficient that speak Spanish.
- B. Mental Health Services for female inmates – Step-Down Pod
  - o Step-Down Pod is within the Female MH Unit
- C. Mental Health Census
  - o Chief Deputy Laura Williams Report
- D. Immigration Policy and ACLU agreement
  - o Policy developed in coordination with the County Law Department and the ACLU.
  - o It is a public document
- E. US Marshall Policy
  - o No policy established
- F. Port Authority Bus Tickets
  - o Board approved funding
  - o Bus Fair distribution options being discussed. Example: bar code ticket that can be printed upon release. Option must meet needs of ACJ and its residents.

- G. Jail Oversight Board members to establish committee and/or executive sessions to discuss the ability to conduct investigations
  - Executive meeting to be held in January – report to follow
- H. Public Comment by Pamela Pack at October 29<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Warden Harper investigated the complaint and found no substantial evidence to corroborate Ms. Pack’s statements. ACJ videos are available for the Board Members to review, if requested.

**3. Public Comment**

**a. Damick**

Mrs. Damick presented a cartoon from the Wall Street Journal to the board. I want to know why people are released from the jail during hours when public transportation is limited?

**Warden**

We are not authorized to hold persons once their bond is met or upon their release. They may wait in the Municipal Court until the buses are running. There are signs clearly posted directing releasees to the Municipal Court.

**Damick**

Why are we still waiting for the Suicide Report when the consultant service occurred back in October? Also, I still have a true concern of the number of suicide attempts within the jail. I understand that the closing of state mental health facilities and limited room in facilities in the area are part of the issue.

**Warden**

The Suicide Prevention Study report is expected to take 60 to 90 days. After the board receives and reviews the report, we will release it to the public.

**Judge Clark**

In reference to the suicide attempts this past year, it is hard to determine who is going to attempt suicide or why. With the increase in persons entering the facility with mental health issues; unfortunately, we have no control over who enters the jail and we certainly are not able to force an inmate to take their MH medication without going through a lengthy legal procedure. I ask the Warden to speak on the number of inmates requiring restraining wear.

**Warden**

I would like to commend all our employees for the work they do. This year we have had 692 residents placed in suicide prevention gowns. ACJ staff recognized behaviors that lead to suicide attempts and acted upon their knowledge of suicide prevention by utilizing the specialized gowns...

**Judge Lazzara**

Suggested reviewing previous years to compare what the suicide attempt rates.

**Kamara**

Suggested including trend lines within the warden’s monthly report.

**Damick**

Why isn't the county paying for the Discharge & Release Center?

**Warden**

The Prisoner Welfare Expense Fund is utilized to help make the experience better for residents.

**Clark**

Budget decisions are made through the County Administration, however, there are services that are supplemented through the prisoner welfare expense fund.

**Korinski**

The Discharge & Release Center contract was paid for out of the fund in the previous year.

**Damick**

What financial costs information can you give me on the iPads that are going to be provided to the jail residents?

**Warden**

I apologize, we are not able to disclose costs until the contract is finalized.

**4. Review of the Minutes for October 29, 2019 meeting**

*The Board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Lazzara, duly seconded by Sherriff Mullen to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2019 meeting.*

**5. Warden's Report**

Pleased to say that the Allegheny County Jail passed the annual inspection by the State Department of Corrections.

**6. Deputy Warden's Report**

**Deputy Warden Williams**

PAAR becomes aware of a PREA complaint in several ways:

- Inmate utilizes PREA phone – those calls are automatically directed to our 24/7 Helpline
  - Inmate can receive confidential support and/or make a third-party report
  - Inmate can choose to remain anonymous or provide their name
- Inmate or family member sends a letter to PAAR
- Corrections staff call PAAR to make a report
- PREA Coordinator notifies PAAR of a complaint they received directly

When a complaint originates with PAAR, I email the PREA Coordinator the details of the report and any identifying information we were able to collect. When an inmate calls

the PREA line we explain their options and document “informed consent” which allows me to release information about the call. They can choose to remain anonymous and, in those situations,, we would email information about what they experienced/witnessed but not include their name. We do have a protocol to immediately notify the jail if there is an immediate safety concern (rather than just emailing a report).

In some cases, I work with the PREA Coordinator to set up an in-person appointment for the person who made the complaint. That happens for a variety of reasons and is a case by case basis.

In addition to the Helpline and third-party reporting, PAAR provides a variety of services for this population. How those services are initiated can vary but we do frequently receive referrals from the PREA Coordinator, program staff, behavioral/mental health staff and the clinic.

PAAR – Pittsburgh Action Against Rape provides services for incarcerated survivors:

- Confidential crisis support via the 24/7 helpline (PREA phone routes to PAAR)
- Third party report of an incident they experienced or witnessed (PREA phone routes to PAAR)
- Individual Crisis Counseling – Up to 4 in-person appointments intended to help the survivor understand the impact of trauma and develop coping skills and ways to manage symptoms
- Accompaniment in the emergency department and through the Forensic Medical Exam
- Advocacy and accompaniment in the criminal court process if they choose to report to police
- Psychoeducation Groups

**Kamara**

Going back to OLD BUSINESS, can we include PAAR in Item G, JOB members to establish committee and/or executive sessions to discuss the ability to conduct investigations?

**Judge Clark**

Investigations usually arise through an allegation via a call or written letter then we initiate an investigation with local police.

**Deputy Warden Williams**

Requesting funds to purchase Narcan Kits from the Prisoner Welfare Expense Fund. There are many positives of the Kits. 200 additional kits were paid for by the Health Department. I request \$75,000.00 for 1000 Narcan Kits which will be purchased in two rounds in 2020.

*The Board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Lazzara to approve the proposal for the Narcan Kits, which was seconded by Mr. Kamara.*

**Deputy Warden Williams**

Requesting funds for the Discharge & Release Center, separate from the Jail Collaborative contract. The Discharge & Release Center provides services to the inmates by connecting soon to be released residents to the community. The Center developed a Needs Assessment Form that is distributed to each pod that the inmate fills out indicating what resources they need when they leave the jail. The DRC provides this service in an attempt to minimize recidivism and maximize success in the community. Basic and specific needs include but not limited to housing, food, mental health/substance use... The release process is facilitated by the OnBase computer system that has a workflow built in that mimics the Jail's release process. This allows for the various departments to see what is going on. It is jail policy to require all persons being released to the community to proceed through the Discharge Center.

**Klein**

The center provides essential services. I have a concern and would like to review the purpose and parameters of the prisoner welfare expense fund.

**Korinski**

I am concerned with funding Jail operations through the prisoner welfare expense fund. DCR contract is \$200,000. Can we have a representative from the DCR come to a JOB meeting and provide an overview? Maybe we can review the contract next time?

**Deputy Warden**

The contractor is Great Lakes Behavioral Research Center, the contract provides the scope of work of the staff. Services are more integrated with Health Care and DHS, we don't want to leave any gaps that could result in recidivism.

**Judge Lazzara**

233 cases a year, JRS coordinated, medications are ready for released inmate and Narcan provided.

*The Board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Lazzara to approve the proposal for Discharge and Release Center, which was seconded by Mr. Kamara .*

**Deputy Warden**

Requesting funding for Bus Tickets including Transfers, \$17,000.00.

*The Board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Lazzara to approve the proposal for the Port Authority Bus Tickets, which was seconded by Mr. Kamara.*

**Deputy Warden**

Introduced Kayla and Allie ? from the Pre Release Program POD. This program is a faith based interfaith program for residents. 10 weeks, sessions on parenting, ..., living together in community, offer service programs, mentors, and after care program.

**Judge Lazzara**

Thank you for your work, I see the effects of your POD.

**Deputy Warden**

This is a high-quality program. And I would like to request funding from the Prisoner Welfare Expense Fund to continue this program, \$203,671.00

*The Board unanimously approved a motion by Mr. Kamara to approve the proposal for the Pre-Release Program POD, which was seconded by Judge Lazzara.*

**Klein**

Can we have requests for funds further in advance?

**Warden**

We will need to meet with operations. Let me see what I can do.

**Korinski**

Request for funds at one meeting and finalize vote at the next meeting.

**Allegheny County Jail Medical Services**

**Deputy Warden Williams**

41 HealthCare Staff vacancies

Pregnant Inmates – 6

Increasing transgender population, I feel it is due to the individuals feeling more comfortable in disclosing and we have services for those interested.

**7. New Business**

No new business

**8. Community Corrections Reports**

**A. The Program for Offenders** Mike Gilmore:

**B. The Renewal Center** Adam Zach:

Currently encouraging residents to take interest in pursuing education and employment in the area of Trades as well as GED classes. We are continuing to have transfers from the Goodwill Program.

**C. Electronic Monitoring** Steve Esswein:

861 individuals are enrolled

102 completed

6 were returned

**9. Adjournment**

***The Board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Clark, duly seconded by Sheriff Mullen to adjourn the meeting at 5:20pm.***

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chelsa Wagner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chelsa" being more prominent than the last name "Wagner".

Chelsa Wagner, Secretary