The Monthly Meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Was held on Thursday November 2, 2017, in Conference Room #1 of the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania at 4:00 PM

Members Present:

Honorable Judge David Cashman

Austin Davis representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Brad Korinski representing County Controller Chelsa Wagner

County Sheriff William Mullen

Ken Varhola representing County Council President John DeFazio

Abass Kamara

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 presented the following:

Ms. Damick expressed her support for the Inmate Welfare Fund expenditure request for thermal shirts as part of a holiday gift package for ACJ inmates. She stated that the money in this fund comes from surcharges from inmates who spend money in the Jail commissary.

The Renewal Center was in the paper for their project in which their program participants clean alleyways in Downtown Pittsburgh. It is good to give ex-offenders work to do and to train them.

Ms. Damick referenced a report from the DC-based Treatment Advocacy Center which found that Pennsylvania, which was given a “D” grade, is one of the worst states for criminals with serious mental health issues.

The ACJ, as the Warden has stated many times, is forced to function as a mental health facility given the lack of treatment options for these individuals elsewhere. Our legislators need to be told that increased funding is needed for mental health treatment outside of the Jail.

Unfortunately, there was a suicide in the Jail in the past month.

Ms. Damick noted that recently five correctional officers were injured. There can be unrest in the Jail that requires the correction officers to exert some stress.

Ms. Damick noted that the Director of Nursing lasted one day and the position is currently vacant again.

The Jail is using agency nurses to make up for the RN position vacancies. Agency nurses are not all RNs. They frequently call in that they cannot come into work and then the Jail’s own RNs have to take those slots and work overtime.

Each nurse covers six Jail pods. Each pod contains about one hundred inmates. Each nurse is therefore responsible for delivering medication to around 600 inmates. If the Jail employed more nurses they could lower this number and help nurses do their jobs better.

Ms. Damick introduced the topic of suicide prevention and restated the importance of such efforts.

1. **Review of the Minutes for September 7th, 2017**

The Board approved the minutes with no additions or corrections.

1. **Review of the Minutes for October 5th, 2017**

The Board approved the minutes with no additions or corrections.

1. **President’s Report**

Judge Cashman thanked the Warden and his staff for keeping open lines of communication when incidents occur in the Jail. Judge Cashman has communicated with the Warden both outside of regular business hours and during the weekend regarding particular events as well as day to day operations within the Jail. With a population of over two thousand inmates, we know problems will at times arise. Additionally, the inmate population is highly transient and changes almost daily. It is not like a state correctional institution that has a more static population. The management system in place at the Jail is addressing problems that do arise in prompt fashion and the Board is being continually informed.

1. **Warden’s Report**

Warden Harper reported that Pennsylvania has 69 County Jails and 27 State correctional facilities. The PA Dept. of Corrections inspects these jails every year. On October 2017, the Department inspected the ACJ, and again the ACJ received full compliance. Warden Harper thanked the men and women of the ACJ for their hard work that goes into passing these inspections.

There are 19 potential correctional officers in the training academy. The training started on October 3rd. They will go through 11 weeks of training before graduation. After graduation, they will become part-time correctional officers, and when vacancies open up they will take on full-time positions.

1. **Deputy Warden’s Report**

Deputy Warden Long reintroduced 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.  The cost went down by $1,000 from last year because there was leftover inventory from previous years.  They also made sure they were getting the best price by comparing costs from different vendors.

Last month the Board lacked a quorum to vote on the expense. The shirts were ordered last month so that they would arrive in time for the holidays.

Mr. Davis made a motion to approve, Judge Cashman seconded the motion, and the expense was approved unanimously by the Board.

Judge Cashman apologized for his absence at the October meeting; he was out on unavoidable court business that day.

1. **Old Business**

No report.

1. **New Business**

No report.

1. **Allegheny County Jail Medical Services**

Dr. Joseph commented regarding suicide prevention that they have made a decision to continue to offer suicide prevention training for health staff. They recently completed a three-hour training for 15 of 19 mental health staff members. Additionally, all new Jail staff, not just healthcare staff, gets a suicide prevention training that is a minimum of one hour, once a week that focuses on how to recognize suicide risk symptoms. In mental health staff meetings, they continue to give updates on mental health and suicide prevention.

Ms. Klein noted that the medical lists three pregnant inmates on methadone, two on Subutex, yet it lists four total pregnant inmates.

Dr. Joseph replied that the difference is due to that fact that the medical report lists the unduplicated number of total pregnant inmates.

Judge Cashman noted that there were three suicide attempts in the last reporting period. This emphasizes the Jail’s efforts of the last six months or so to identify and prevent suicide risk among inmates. Referencing the study that gave mental health treatment for incarcerated individuals a “D” grade, it should be noted that you can’t put a jail and a prison in the same category. A jail is designed for pretrial incarceration. A prison is designed for incarceration. You would have to take those 27 facilities out because they house 48,000 people. There’s probably only one other jail equivalent to ours in Pennsylvania and that would be Philadelphia’s. All the other jails in PA are very small. For example, the jail for Cambria County has 600 beds and 200 of them are leased to the Department of Corrections to house state prisoners. It’s a very different situation. The ACJ deals with a very significant annual population of about 30,000 people that go in and out of the Jail. You don’t see the same thing with small rural county jails like those in Potter, Union, and Snyder counties. For years, Union and Snyder County shared one judge. The Allegheny County Jail is dealing with a large volume, unlike almost everyone else other than Philadelphia. From this standpoint the ACJ is doing well. Especially when you factor in that the one psychiatric hospital that the ACJ has access to is being used by all the other counties to do what ACJ does in-house at the behavioral clinic. It’s much like the crime lab. Allegheny County runs its own crime lab whereas most other counties in the state use the state police funded crime lab.

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

Mike Gilmore reported that they are working with their mental health providers to increase programming at the female facility. Specifically, they are working to create a program on the weekends to facilitate visitation of children of those in the program. The mother-child bond does not go away when a mother is incarcerated. They are still working to develop the curriculum.

Ms. Klein inquired if they are contracting with an organization for the program.

Mr. Gilmore reported that they are partnering with Mercy Health.

* 1. The Renewal Center

Frank DeClair reported that now all re-entrants will undergo drug and alcohol assessment within their first weeks at the center.

They recently received their ACA audit results and passed with 100 percent compliance on all mandatory and non-mandatory standards.

* 1. Electronic Monitoring

No report.

* 1. Goodwill

Gaye Velar reported that residents were recently able to participate in two community events. Pyramid offered an open house for residents to meet their families and go over the program. Goodwill has partnered with Pyramid Healthcare for the drug and alcohol assessment.

Goodwill partnered with Google this past month and residents were able to get hands-on experience with tools at Google, how to use Google, and future jobs at Google.

1. **Adjournment**

Marion Damick commented that there are inmates in the ACJ who stay sometimes as long as two years. You also have those who are waiting for hearings on a shorter term. There are two different groups in the ACJ and this is difficult. If you’re going to be in the Jail for two years you are treated differently by other inmates.

Judge Cashman stated that there are County and State sentences. A county sentence is any sentence where the minimum is less than a year. A state sentence is any sentence where the minimum is a year or more. However, there are provisions that allow a judge to sentence someone up to two and a half to five years, calling it a County sentence and retain jurisdiction. These individuals could spend potentially up to five years in the ACJ. Judge Cashman has asked the other judges not to do this given that space limitations in the ACJ have been of concern. For the most part judges avoid these sentences. When you see an inmate in the Jail for two years, it’s most likely of their own volition. It may be their lawyer continuing the case over and over trying to work out deals or because they have new cases in the system. It may also because the inmate is working as a confidential informant for the police and they want them to stay in the Jail to get more information. The courts typically do not keep inmates in the ACJ this long.

Ms. Damick stated that there are excellent programs for inmates for things like work training.

Judge Cashman stated that programs in the ACJ are designed for transient inmates. Programs designed to help inmates long-term are in the state correctional system where inmates are held for more considerable periods of time. ACJ does offer job skill training programs even to inmates who may not be in the Jail very long. For example, ACJ inmates have the opportunity to work in the kitchen to gain skills for the foodservice industry.

Mr. Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Mullen seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,



Chelsa Wagner

Secretary