

The monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board was held on Thursday May 2nd, 2019 in Conference Room #1 of the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at 4:00 PM.

Members Present

Honorable Judge David Cashman
Honorable Judge Beth Lazzara
Sheriff Mullen
Amy Weise representing County Controller Chelsa Wagner
Barbara Parees representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald
Ken Varhola representing Councilman DeFazio
Terri Klein
Abass Kamara
Others in attendance:
Warden Orlando Harper
Marion Damick of the Pennsylvania Prison Society

Honorable Judge Cashman: *calls meeting to order.* The first order of business is public comment, Ms. Damick--

Public Comment

Speaker 1 – Ms. Damick: Thank you, I’m awfully glad to—I was going to question whether you had a quorum, but you do now- okay- and I do want to thank you for the information – I keep tabs on these things, you know? Of all the material in my spare time. I appreciate the mentioning last month of the change in the law for drivers’ licenses being removed for drug offenses – unless they have been handled in a car-

Judge Cashman: Correct

Ms. Damick: - in transportation. I think that’s excellent and that was a very good thing to happen.

Judge Cashman: Well, there’s more to it than just that-

Ms. Damick: and they don’t have the four

Judge Cashman: they don’t have the multiples in doing the suspensions- because the multiples became very punitive and-

Ms. Damick: So now, it’s just one offense instead of four

Judge Cashman: you don’t get four which then triggers the habitual offender, which technically would put you out almost a decade.

Ms. Damick: that’s right- it does, you’re very right- and it’s terrific that it passed. Also, the one about clean slate – my impression though, I am often quite wrong, you mentioned after ten years, my impression on the new law was that it was for five years. Now, you may be right and I may be wrong, ten years is almost what it was before, when I was a pardon case representative – we had twelve years- you

had to be clear. Ten years is really almost as bad because what are you doing for ten years if you can't drive?

Judge Cashman: That's the last draft that I saw.

Ms. Damick: - I mean, if you still have the – if you're still listed as an offender. There are, as pointed out, a number of places now, in fact I pointed them out- that are hiring people with records- good, and that's excellent – but not everybody- and as you know, and as I think it has been brought up in your – in the minutes, how important it is to keep people from recycling- and that's the way- is to give them a job or get them to work or get them to want to work and to stay at work- and that's the parole office problem. I just wanted to point out those things that's very, very helpful- Another thing is not so helpful- I noticed unfortunately one attempt – one should I say, suicide, after we have had all of these months of very good. I am sorry to see that happen and it was, most unfortunate for everything- but it sort of ruins a great record that you did have, which brings up one of the issues that you are going to be voting on today- for these \$250,000 actually, \$260,000 for homicide blankets—

Judge Cashman: Suicide blankets

Ms. Damick: suicide, I'm sorry. Suicide blankets, thank you. My question is, each inmate—you have 40,000 of them, so each inmate gets two- just a question, what do they use the blankets for? What does each inmate – this is to the Warden- what are you going to use these – everybody wanting to commit suicide or not, what are you using the blankets for if everyone is getting them?

Warden Harper: So, the reason we wanted to go with the suicide blankets- is because the suicide blankets are so thick that the individual will not be able to tie the suicide blanket to anything to harm themselves.

Ms. Damick: Okay, then I understand it yes – so instead of the blanket that they have, you are replacing it with the suicide type blanket.

Warden Harper: Yes, Ma'am.

Honorable Judge Cashman: You can also use the other blanket as a mattress.

Ms. Damick: yes, I cannot object to that - besides which, they are notorious for being cold cells, and therefore this will help with that.

Warden Harper: Yes, Ma'am.

Ms. Damick: Moving right along – let me see if there is one other thing- the other thing I wanted to raise because it is coming up- has to do with Transgender – and I am hoping really that it was mentioned last month- we had some people talking about it – the month before, or several months before, and I think it is to come up again- this is a very serious issue, and it's a serious issue across the United States – how to keep Transgenders safe, and yet, how to keep them feeling not persecuted in solitary, and being able to take part in all the classes and everything of that sort- and I can see if you can expand on that when the

issue comes up, I certainly think that it would help the members of the board to make a decision on that- also, since I did mention- unfortunately the suicide, I did notice that there has been a – motion- an issue in the paper that they are looking for people to come in the suicide thing- and I was wondering if there has been any other progress besides that with this checking for someone to review the suicide- if you know of any it - certainly would be helpful to hear it. Now, there was one other thing- and I can understand – interestingly it occurred at a time when the Post-Gazette wasn't in print, however, there was a baby, there was a birth of a woman who was incarcerated – there was a small , I gather, a small group of people who were objecting to the treatment- now I have been, I know that there are valid reasons for not telling people when someone is going to the hospital, security reasons I can see- and also, the hospital doesn't want everybody there – maybe, who's who- and the whole thing -I can see that- and actually, I know you don't often check- you look at the baby- they have to check the baby- how healthy, not healthy, take the footprint, the whole bit- before the mother gets the child back- so I could see, I could understand, time- what I cant understand, is- and I'm not sure why they put it in the paper- is she couldn't get a shower – now, is it that she couldn't get a shower for a couple days- because she couldn't get one in the hospital- they didn't think it was secure, or there wasn't something – it just – the newspaper – as you might expect, doesn't go into great detail about why something occurred- but it did perplex me as to what was going on with the shower business and why it even was mentioned- it must have been something- caught somebody's eye- and that's really what, what we're concerned about – particularly with how the suicide thing is going- sorry about that- but we appreciate what you have been doing so far. Thank you.

Honorable Judge Cashman: Thank you. Any other public comment? Okay, we go to the review of the minutes of the April 4th, 2019 minutes

1. Review of Minutes for March 7, 2019

Honorable Judge Cashman: – any additions or corrections to the minutes?

Ms. Parees: My name is spelled wrong-

Ms. Moreno: I'm sorry, I'm new.

Ms. Parees: That's okay- you don't have to change it- the next time I'm mentioned, you can- thank you.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by the Honorable Judge Lazzara, duly seconded by Mr. Kamara to approve the minutes from the April 4, 2019 meeting.

2. President's Report

Honorable Judge Cashman: We surprised a few people today. We have a requirement to make 2 unannounced visits to the jail for inspection and we did that at 1 o'clock today in advance of this meeting, which I think took a lot of the staff by surprise, but they were well prepared for us. We had, I think, a very good time -- the men -- sat down with all 8, pardon me, 6 juvenile offenders. The most

serious crimes were attempted homicide, the least serious were armed robbery. We had a long period of time to discuss with each one of them about what their stay in the jail was like, what they think they need, what they think they would like, and we will have some interesting recommendations once we draw up the report on it. We asked all the women to deal with the adult women in the jail, but not any of the pregnant women because that lawsuit is still on-going, and I think they had the same experience. One of the other sort of surprise benefits we had was to see the scanner, we have talked about this over and over about the scanner that's in place down at the jail, so we don't need strip searches anymore. And that scanner is better than any x-ray machine I have ever seen, plus the fact that you can rotate the image on the screen so that although the individual will go through two panels, and scan from front and back, the person looking at that individual can rotate that individual all the way around and you can tell if they are trying to hide contraband in any orifice they have. It was a very interesting demonstration and it was informative from the way we do that, but we will put that in the report.

3. Warden's Report

Warden Harper: Good Afternoon everybody- I just wanted the board for taking the time out of their busy schedules to tour the jail today. You know one of the things we continuously say is that we want people to come to the jail to actually see the operation as opposed to just listening to what they hear- so we really appreciate you guys actually coming down to see the operations at the jail. Correctional employees' week and nurses' week is next week starting Monday, so we will be showing our appreciation to our nurses and our correctional employees next week. Bishop Zubik came to the jail on April 18th, on Holy Thursday to do a service for the inmates and to wash the inmates' feet and I think that went really well this year. The suicide review R.F.P was posted on the 11th and the vendors that are interested have until the 8th of May to submit their proposals so after that we are really going to fast track that to try to have someone look at our suicide prevention processes. The last thing I want to bring to the board is Ramadan starts next week - so that is going to be a real task for our dietary, healthcare, and Chaplain's office to make sure our Muslim inmates- honor that religious day- well that religious time period. That is all I have for the board today.

4. Deputy Warden's Report

Deputy Warden Williams: Good afternoon board. I have two rather large asks within the packet and I want to acknowledge that because I think that is important to do. We are proposing a request for large sums of money. The first request is for the Batterer's Intervention Program. We have typically partnered Wesley Family Services to provide these services. It's done as the Duluth model which actually started in Minnesota in Duluth and it has been one of the leading interventions that has been utilized in the United States since 2006. Research based, and we have been conducting it for some time at the Allegheny County Jail. So, our ask is that the board continues to support in partnership with the jail collaborative to offer that service to the inmates. The request for the funds is \$159,160. If we have any additional questions I would be happy to field those and if I can't I have a subject matter expert in the audience as well.

Honorable Judge Cashman: I'm just curious as to what you recoup from inmates in terms of the expenditures towards this particular problem.

Deputy Warden Williams: While they are with us in the jail we assume responsibility for providing the service. If they are in the community I believe they are paying a stipend in to that as part of their rehabilitative process. I believe it \$15 a session they are contributing, we do not ask that we they are incarcerated with us - we incur those expenses. The object of that is to assist with reintegration. A lot of What we try to do at the jail is provide people with habilitative skills or rehabilitative skills as they are reintegrating back into the community.

Ms. Weiss: Are you able to- Do you have any data to support the success of the program?

Deputy Warden Williams: All of the data is actually tracked in a system that is housed with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. I did not prepare and bring that for you but if the board would be interested in some numbers I can definitely supply that in the future.

Ms. Weiss: I think that would be helpful.

Honorable Judge Cashman: I know that this is a 24-session program are you putting people in this program from the jail that are up for parole or release before the 24 sessions would be up?

Deputy Warden Williams: So, if they are released before that period of time, they continue in the community. Many of the individuals who are engaged in these services are court ordered to complete in order to be released. So, we try to offer them at a high level of frequency so they don't have a long duration of incarceration as a result of that.

Honorable Judge Lazzara: Having just taken over the domestic violence court here in Allegheny County I know that we do have a lot of people get detained because of additional charges or other technical violations and while they are in the jail it really is a great service to them to allow them to batterer's intervention while they are incarcerated so that hopefully by the time they get out the behavior that took them back in will be remediated- so it is a very helpful program to have.

Honorable Judge Cashman: Well I don't disagree with you on that, I was just wondering the flow of the particular inmates.

Ms. Klein: I just have, and you may not have the answer- What percentage complete the program?

Deputy Warden Williams: So if you wanted annual numbers, I'd have to get back to the board with that but I do know that within the Jail Oversight packet we do report on the services so each month during the monitoring periods, the completion rates are included – so I could reference those, but if you would like to see the success over the duration of the year in comparison with some past years we can also provide those numbers.

Honorable Judge Cashman: That's a program that's going to have a higher completion rate than most other ones- You send somebody to Anger Management, they're going to go out, go to the first program,

and then leave- with the Batterer's Intervention, they know it's going to be reported back to us and then we are going to pull them in for not completing it. So, it has a very high success rate. I can't give you the numbers off the top of my head, but it is a very valuable service. We will get you those numbers and then we will vote on it next month.

Deputy Warden Williams: And then, the next ask is for \$205,960 – this is for suicide prevention blankets that the Warden has already referenced- they are thicker in material – they are more difficult to manipulate, and certainly, unable to be manipulated as such that you might be able to use that as an instrument of harm. I think one of the things that we have talked about very openly with the Board, and you all have been kind enough to provide us with feedback, is the importance of ongoing review- not just about our policies and procedures, but training of our staff as well as looking at our environment – we are not a desirable place- most people do not choose to be in our building, and as you can understand, or if you could put yourself in that position, many people who would not feel suicidal, otherwise do when they come to us. We represent a lot of things that are deemed as failure to most in society- so we have a high risk population- we take that responsibility to keep them safe very seriously- and this is one of the initiatives that we are asking your support for- so we have instituted blankets in the institution, and on those housing units that we rolled this out as a pilot program, we did not see any attempts. So we believe this to be successful, and we think that this is going to allow us to provide services and intervene with people who are at risk at a much higher rate to reduce the harm to our population.

Honorable Judge Cashman: Any questions? Any motions to adopt the recommendation?

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Sheriff Mullen, duly seconded by the Honorable Judge Lazzara to approve the proposal for the suicide prevention blankets.

Honorable Judge Cashman: Buy those Blankets.

Deputy Warden Williams: Thank you so much for your support, thank you.

5. Old Business

Nothing to report.

6. New Business

Nothing to report.

7. Allegheny County Jail Medical Services:

a. Allegheny Health Network

Deputy Warden Williams: Good Afternoon, Board, different hat. We have just already spoken about some concerns related to our pregnant population, and I think one of the important things to note is that everybody who comes to us will not necessarily have what they feel is the most appropriate experience, and we also take that feedback and we consider it. Our obligation is to provide the care possible to every extent to keep our individuals safe as we have discussed and bridge care in the community. We deal with a difficult population, just based on their criminal justice status, but we do want to ensure that we take care of them. So, we have eleven pregnant females currently. As the Warden mentioned already, we will be celebrating Nurses' week – it is Correctional Employees' week – but I like to highlight our nurses, because they are often not thought of in the criminal justice system, but they serve a very, very important role- and they are very hardworking- we have so many within the facility who have had to adapt to skills that you don't necessarily have in the hospital setting. I also wanted to report that we have been able to onboard a deputy health services administrator, so we have added Dr. Ashley Brinkman who will work directly under our health services administrator, Dr. Aloysius Joseph. That's all I had to report. Thank you.

8. Community Corrections Reports

a. The Program for Offenders

Mr. Gilmore: Mike Gilmore, Program for the Offenders- I would like to report that we have a number of female residents who are going to participate in the West Homestead Clean-Up Day Saturday Morning – and we are going to start a new cohort in our male facility for a men's parenting class – it was so well received last time that Mercy is going to continue that- hopefully that will be a permanent addition to our programming in the future.

b. The Renewal Center

Mr. DeClair: Frank DeClair from Renewal Incorporated- April was a very busy month for us as we underwent audits from our state jurisdiction as well as county and federal- we are very pleased with the results of all three audits so far- and we are currently preparing for our – every three years, we have a pre-audit- which will be next week, so we are preparing and we are very optimistic on the results for that. Thank you.

c. Electronic Monitoring

Ms. Piatt: Good afternoon, Jackie Piatt from Electronic Monitoring- we are reporting on March at this time. We had 883 individuals on electronic monitoring during the course of the month of March. We accepted 171 new cases. We had 117 people successfully complete electronic monitoring. We had 3 individuals abscond from electronic monitoring, and 8 technical violations of the program.

d. Goodwill

Goodwill Center Representative: The only thing I have to report today is that, the residents and staff are both excited- we are getting a real spring clean up. All patch work has been done at the Goodwill Center- we are in the process of painting, and all the tiles are going to be- any one that is missing- going to be replaced. After that we will be shampooing, and all the floors will be waxed. So when it is completed, we will be happy. That is all I have to report.

Honorable Judge Cashman: There is one item that I want to go, and I left it for last for a reason- Ms. Damick mentioned that we have to be concerned with the Transgender population with respect to the people in the jail- and I can assure you that each and every member of the board has that concern- we have listened to the people who have come to our meetings, we have listened to what they have said, we have attempted to investigate the claims that they have made- and I set up a meeting where every member of the board appeared, I set it up with Ms. Thomas, and we waited for an hour, and she didn't appear. I am going to try to do another one because we recognize that that is a population that has to be dealt with- and nobody knows the scope of it- there was an article in the newspaper and I wanted to go over that article with her- that talked about the population in Allegheny County identifying themselves as 3% - if we look at the numbers in the jail, 10% of the population is female. If we take that 10% times the 3%- that means 6 females that are transgender. If we take it times the other population it's 60- we have less than 70 people that may fit in there -if those numbers are correct- and I don't know that they are- I am not vouching for those numbers- I am just saying that those are numbers that I have extracted from other sources – I didn't have the opportunity to go and deal with that any farther, but I am going to continue to see if she, or any representative of her group will meet with us so that we can be better educated and make better recommendations with respect to that particular issue.

9. Adjournment

The Board unanimously approved a motion by the Honorable Judge Lazzara, duly seconded by Sheriff Mullen to adjourn at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Chelsa Wagner, Secretary