

The monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board was held on Thursday September 6, 2018 in Conference Room #1 of the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at 4:02 PM. Honorable Judge Cashman not in attendance, Honorable Judge Woodruff will be facilitating the meeting.

**Members Present**

Honorable Judge Dwayne Woodruff  
Sheriff Mullen  
Amy Weise representing County Controller Chelsa Wagner  
Barbara Pareas representing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald  
Councilman DeFazio  
Terri Klein  
Others in attendance:  
Warden Orlando Harper  
Marion Damick of the Pennsylvania Prison Society

**1. Public Comment**

Ms. Damick:

Wish you all a happy Jewish New Year.

The lock downs currently happening in the jail are not good for the mental health of the inmates. The Prison Society sees these lock downs as placing inmates in solitary, we are hoping to see a sweep of these pods in the near future.

Warden Harper: Those pods will be locked down until I am sure that event one is safe.

Ms. Damick:

The suicide attempts in the jail have not decreased but have gone up from 3 to 5. I believe that there has been suicide awareness training at the intake but the attempts are indicating that there are a number of people who feel so sad that they are going to attempt suicide within a month of being in the jail. We need to try and keep that number down and find these people before they attempt. There was an article in the paper about a lawsuit because of a suicide and I hate to see that because we could have caught that. I don't like seeing that money going to a lawsuit when it could go to something better.

Unfortunately I see that same number of pregnant inmates as last month. I also have noticed that mental health admissions and mental health referrals has gone down on intake.

There was a mention in the paper on August 11<sup>th</sup> about making mental health hospital private. State hospitals are the best if you have good hospitals; our hospitals are not the best. In our case I think it is worth looking at the private options.

Judge Woodruff:

I do want to make one comment in regards to the suicide attempts. It's my understanding that everyone that comes into the jail is evaluated; mental health is a very difficult thing. Many times the first time they've been incarcerated is here at the ACJ. And so, I think that evaluation takes place, fortunately, based on that short period of time that you're with someone. It may not come up, we can't make a determination who's going to sue the county was a job that suits are valid or not. They always come up. That's a district issue. We always have to have to deal with.

Warden Harper:

I'd also like to comment; I used to say that we were the second largest jail county jail. We are the largest county jail. Philadelphia has a complex, so I'm saying we're the largest county jail and we intake approximately 15,000 inmates a year and we released 15,000 inmates a year. My employees, the healthcare department, and our officers do a wonderful job in trying to determine who is suicidal and have mental health issues. Everybody has to realize that jails are different than prisons. When inmates go to prisons, they're stable. We are getting guys straight from the street under the influence of drug and alcohol and mental health issues. So my team does a wonderful job, as your honor said, of medical evaluations at the door, and mental health evaluations done on everybody at the door. My officers frequently are at the intake area to see if there are any issues. I commend the staff at the Allegheny County Jail for preventing those five suicide attempts.

Councilman DeFazio:

I know it may not be your specific job. Council's been getting a lot of inquiries, but I guess guards and everybody feel unsafe and things are going on and they've been sending me letters and different things, to certain counsel people. We're hearing a lot of that.

Judge Woodruff:

As far as I'm concerned; I'm sure Judge Cashman would concur as well. I don't believe that's unusual that those letters come particular after they found out whom on council to send letters to. There's nothing as far as I know with regard to his jail as to why an inmate would feel unsafe.

Warden Harper:

I think Mr. Defazio is talking about they're receiving letters from officers. I just wanted to say this to everybody; our correction officers receive the best training ever in Pennsylvania and the nation. We have a state certified academy where they are taught our use of force policy and taught defensive tactics. We even stopped them from breaking up fights by themselves. When I first came here, when the fight took place on a pod, they were running and break up the fight by themselves. We stopped that. We say, wait, call for help. When backup come, you respond, so I don't understand why you guys are getting letters like that, but we'd make sure that our staff is safe. It's our responsibility, everybody that you see here in the white to make sure our staff to safe.

## **2. Review of the Minutes for August 2, 2018**

Judge Woodruff: It indicates in the minutes that it was Thursday September the 6<sup>th</sup>, that would have been Thursday July 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Terri Klein, duly seconded by Sheriff Mullen to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2018 Board meeting.

## **3. President's Report**

Nothing to report.

## **4. Warden's Report**

Your Honor, and the board I would just like to announce that we received our body scanner is down in our intake area and I hope to announce to the board at the next meeting that it is fully operational. This is really going to help us detect contraband coming into our facility, therefore making it a more safe environment for inmates. Secondly, I would like to announce to the board that we will start the installation of new cameras on the pods at the ACJ and we want to start the installation on our female

Pods, so we're really excited about that. As you know, it's going to take a while to put the cameras throughout the facility because the jail is a fortress. We will work as quickly as possible to install these cameras to also assure the safety and security of everybody in our facility.

**5. Deputy Warden's Report**

Nothing to report.

**6. Old Business**

Nothing to report.

**7. New Business**

Judge Cashman and Judge Woodruff attended the graduation of the cadet class, they were very happy to be a part of the day.

**8. Allegheny County Jail Medical Services**

**a. Allegheny County Health Network**

We have a psychiatrist with extensive experience in correctional institutions joining us. We also have a new mental health specialist who also comes with extensive psychiatric experience from Mercy.

**9. Community Corrections Reports**

**a. The Program for Offenders**

We had a successful PREA Audit completed on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

**b. The Renewal Center**

Adam Zach, we have recently held mandatory staff trainings on diversity trainings. We've been working in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of corrections. This past week we have conducted a personal protective equipment training. Basically these are new procedures for a pat down searches, searches the facility and what to do and coming across and substance. All staff have to attend this.

**c. Electronic Monitoring**

Steve Esswein, nothing additional.

**d. Goodwill**

Pennsylvania won a national grant of \$4 million dollars and the grant is for safe streets and second chances. What makes this grant a little different is after the inmate is released, it will be a 15 month follow up after they're released. Its hope is to decrease recidivism.

**10. Adjournment**

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Sheriff Mullen, duly seconded by Councilman DeFazio to adjourn at 4:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Chelsa Wagner  
Secretary