The monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board was held on Thursday, May 7, 2015, in Conference Room #1 of the Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at 4:00 p.m.

Members present:

The Honorable Judge Joseph Williams

The Honorable Judge David Cashman

County Controller Chelsa Wagner

Austin Davis representing Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Joe Catanese representing County Council President John DeFazi**o**

County Sheriff William Mullen

Dr. Claire Walker

Also present were Warden Orlando Harper, Marion Damick, Deputy Warden LaToya Warren and other interested parties.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Marion Damick representing the Pennsylvania Prison Society addressed the Board with the following:

1. Provided a handout about information regarding SCI Graterford.
2. Praised Native American Circles at the jail.
3. Suggested that a Veteran’s Pod at the jail would be beneficial.

* Judge Williams and Warden Harper explained that there was not enough Veteran’s for a separate living unit but agreed that having them attend certain programs together might be a possibility.

1. Praised the State Department of Corrections Reentry Survival Manual and suggested one for the residents of the jail.
2. Praised the Chatham Writing Program at the Jail and the book that was produced, “Words without Walls”. It was suggested that copies of the book produced be provided to the authors from the jail as well as to members of the Jail Oversight Board.

* Judge Williams stated that these authors should definitely be recognized for their work.

1. Commented on the Corizon report provided to the Board members. Stated her concern on the increase in ER visits and the one attempted suicide, yet commended the approval of union representation for Corizon employees.

Julia Johnson representing the Allegheny County Jail Health Justice Project addressed the Board with the following:

1. Stated that when the Corizon contract ends this year, County should replace them with a new health provider that is non-profit.
2. Stated that the County should immediately pressure Corizon to fulfill its contract.
3. There are systemic issues in the provision of health care in the jail including correctional officers who prevent nurses from doing their duty.
4. Tommi Lee Harris has still to date not received an official notification of her son, Frank Smart’s death from the Warden or anyone in the County nor an apology. There have been more deaths at the jail since Frank’s death and inquired as to whether those families have been officially informed.

* Judge Williams responded that the jail has not created all of the issues nor can it solve all of them eg. Drug addiction, alcoholism, etc. The fact that residents continue to return based on these issues is mainly where the problem lies. These kinds of issues do not happen in isolation or because of being jailed. The Allegheny County Jail is where people end up when they cannot solve their problems on their own. Judge Williams stated that it is impossible to correct all and every issue quickly without having the same problems recur.

Lynn Boley, mother of a son incarcerated multiple times, stated that her son is addicted to drugs and along with that has a serious form of Type 1 Diabetes. Ms. Boley informed the Board her son has a mass on his liver, needs special shoes, anti-depressants and needs to obtain 2400 calories a day to maintain the Diabetes. Her son has not received any of this care that is needed.

* Judge Williams responded that the jail receives individuals, it does not seek them. He stated the jail’s responsibility is to assure that residents come out healthier than when they came to the jail. Judge Williams stated that Ms. Boley’s son has returned to the Allegheny County Jail 14 time and that something better must be crafted for him so that he does not have to return in the future.

Walter Stevens, a rehabilitated former resident of the jail, stated that the Allegheny County Jail is worse off now than ever. He stated that those who are housed at the jail are not being treated as human beings and that residents are getting punished for being sick.

* Judge Williams responded that the County and the Jail Oversight Board are working on making healthcare better at the jail, but right now the present healthcare provider cannot be terminated and have no healthcare at all during the interim.

Mel Packer, Allegheny County Jail Health Justice Project stated to the Board that he has been coming to the Board meetings for months. He has heard things will get better in the jail, but nothing happens, meanwhile conditions are getting worse. Mr. Packer suggested a public hearing that is open to learn what is being planned so it can be discussed openly. It was suggested that a non-profit healthcare provider might be beneficial.

* Judge Williams responded that there must be effective assessment, treatment, reentry strategies so that people do not suffer and the first thing to do is to come up with a medical solution. It is not an easy task to take an individual with issues and release them, when time comes, as a rehabilitated member of society.

Kaild Rhaheem, Allegheny County Jail Health Justice Project stated to the Board that there must be a proper comprehensive assessment system that acts transparently with community input. It was questioned as to what role the community can play in building capacity both in the community and in the jail.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

A motion to approve the minutes of April 2, 2015 by Ms. Wagner and seconded by Sheriff Mullen and unanimously approved by the board.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

Judge Williams stated the importance for the Board to include public discussion. It is not easy to correct how the lowest rung of our community is being treated. The problem does not start in the Allegheny County Jail. Being in jail is a manifestation of the crises in residents’ lives and many do not need to be in jail. Approximately 73% of residents in the ACJ are housed in the jail because they are too poor to make bond. Judge Williams informed those present that the community needs to find ways to shunt non-violent people to other paths. Staff members need to be trained how to sensitively respond to mental illness and other diseases. Judges face this dilemma in the courtroom as well. Bi-polar and ADHD defendants should not go to Jail but there is nowhere else to go. The Allegheny County Jail has to screen new arrivals for mental illness and separate them from the general population so they can receive fair and effective treatment.

Chelsa Wagner commended Judge Williams for providing an open forum and engaging in conversation with concerned community members. She agreed it would be a good thing for the Board to support public hearings on the healthcare issue. The Controller’s Office conducted an audit of Corizon health services identifying many issues and would be willing to conduct a public hearing on the audit. All branches of government should be involved not be just the Controller’s Office. One example of an action that should be taken: The County Administration should be levying a fine against Corizon for non-compliance with their contract.

**WARDEN’S REPORT:**

Warden Harper announced the new changes that took place to the management team recently at the Allegheny County Jail.

* Major Simon Wainwright has recently been promoted to Deputy Warden for Operations.
* Ms. Nora Gillespie has been hired as the new Health Care Monitor.
* Captain Robert Bitner has been promoted to Major of Operations.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**CORIZON:**

Dr. Abimbola Talabi, Interim Medical Director for Corizon, provided a report summary for March 2015. It was stated that there was a decrease in Clinical Visits, Infirmary Patient Days and Commitments to Torrance for March 2015 compared to February 2015. Dental Visits as well as Mental Health Referrals and Admissions had increased for March 2015. The number of ER Runs (Emergency Room) slightly decreased. Dr. Walker inquired as to whether these ER Runs were done outside or within the ACJ. Dr. Talabi stated that they were done outside the jail at UPMC Mercy Hospital. Dr. Walker also inquired if the PPD (skin test used to diagnose Tuberculosis) and STD tests were done regularly at the jail. Dr. Talabi stated these tests along with an HIV test are done with every intake. Dr. Talabi informed the board that Dr. Donald Stechshulte was hired on May 6th as the new Medical Director for Corizon at the jail.

**COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS REPORTS:**

***Program for Offenders-*** None

***The Renewal Center****-* Mr. Adam Sellers, program manager, informed the board that the Renewal Center had its kickoff for the new Veteran’s Committee to which that Representative Dan Miller had been a special guest.

***Electronic Monitoring***- Mr. Steve Esswein stated that as of March 2015, there had been a population of 762 to which 102 successfully completed the program and 10 were removed for violations.

***Goodwill-*** Ms. Danielle Brown reported updates on the GED Program. For the month of March, eight individuals enrolled to take the GED. One individual recently passed the Math portion of the GED and another individual had passed the Language Arts portion. Ms. Brown also informed the board that there are currently 23 individuals in the Drug & Alcohol (D&A) Treatment program.

Judge Williams stated that during his recent visit to the Goodwill Center he was enlightened about information regarding the GED. He informed the board that the GED now consists of Algebra 1 and some Algebra 2. The GED Director at the Goodwill informed Judge Williams that the test now is much more difficult and almost impossible to pass in only a few months’ time. Even though it is hopeful that the GED passing rate increases it is much harder now than in the past to do so.

Ms. Wagner recognized the recent passing of Councilwoman Barbara Daly Danko who was not only a wonderful public servant but very sympathetic and attentive of the Jail Oversight Board issues.

A motion to adjourn made by Dr. Walker, duly seconded by Mr. Davis was approved by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsa Wagner

Secretary