

Public Comments from April 1, 2021 Jail Oversight Board Meeting with Written Responses by Board Chair, Judge Clark.

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021 Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted. Below are the public comments submitted with responses from President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark. Additional public comments with responses from Warden Harper and Deputy Warden Williams will be posted as well.

Dear Mr. Lewandowski,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

The policies of the Jail are available to the Oversight Board at their request. Warden Harper will provide the policies to any board member at their request.

Due to security and safety issues, most policies cannot not be made available to the public. Safety of the residents of the jail and the staff who work in the jail is the most important consideration in deciding to disclose these policies.

Additionally, Warden Harper is committed to and is making sure that ALL of the recommendations of the Suicide Prevention Report are implemented in a timely manner. At the recommendation and request of the Board an update is given at every meeting.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge
(412) 350-1900

(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 2:40 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Alan J Lewandowski

Address: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Organization(s): Pennsylvania Prison Society

Comment : I am very concerned by Warden Harper's excessive limiting of disclosure regarding important policies related to mental health, suicide prevention, administration of medications and accommodations for people with disabilities as reported in a March 16 Public Source article. The warden's claim that disclosure of said policies "would be reasonably likely to result in a substantial and demonstrable risk of physical harm to or the personal security of an individual", rings as incredibly insincere. Attesting to this is the willingness of officials at the jails from the other five of the six largest counties in PA to be much more forthcoming. The policies guiding ACJ's dealing with these critical mental health issues should be available to the public with minor redactions at most. Instead, Warden Harper redacted all but the title and a few sentences, completely denying the public an opportunity to evaluate the policies. More importantly, any mechanisms towards accountability in ACJ's adherence to said policies are severely undermined by the redactions. Warden Harper's lack of transparency garnered disbelief and disapproval from the corrections experts interviewed in the article as well as from Allegheny County residents like myself. The warden's behavior is stereotypically associated with small out-of-the-way institutions who behave with impunity while maintaining a cloak of secrecy to keep the corruption of their institutions away from the light of public scrutiny. For this concealment to continue unchecked in the second largest county in Pennsylvania is frankly an embarrassment. This speaks to an utter disregard for the will of county residents who increasingly demonstrate the desire to see correctional institutions in the county run responsibly and humanely. The Jail Oversight Board should demand disclosure of these policies to the public for the sake of the safety of incarcerated individuals as well as for the spiritual well-being of the county. We cannot continue to allow the indifference of powerful officials like County Executive Fitzgerald to define who we are as a county. It is 2021. We can do better. I move towards closing with a quote from John Jay College of Criminal Justice's Gerard Bryant offered in the Public Source article. "Why would you want to make this a confidential document... when you're trying to reduce suicides?" he said of the suicide prevention policy. "Bottom line is suicide is everybody's business, and this should be transparent for everybody." It is unconscionable and sick for Executive Fitzgerald to countenance Warden Harper's reprehensible secretiveness in such matters. We demand vigilant and vigorous jail oversight! Sincerely, Alan Lewandowski Lawrenceville

Dear Ms. Schongar,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

Deputy Warden Williams gave a very comprehensive report about the efforts to reduce the spread of COVID in the jail and the plans to administer the vaccine to the residents of the Jail.

The jail has been approved as a distributor of the vaccine and education for the residents via tablet, hard copy and medical staff is underway. The vaccines, with an monetary incentive approved by the boards, will follow.

I can say that the Board is working harder than ever, and many good things have happened as a result:

1. The re-named Incarcerated Individuals Welfare Fund is being carefully monitored to ensure proper spending and a survey developed by the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work will provide the Board with information on the needs of the residents of the jail, which will inform our decisions on how we spend the money in the IIWF.
2. During the pandemic the Board has authorized payment of 100.00 per month to the commissary and tablet accounts for each inmate.
3. Exit Interviews of key staff from the medical and mental health departments were completed to provide the Board with insight into the issues with staffing in those departments and may provide solutions to staff retention.
4. The Board in collaboration with the Prison Society, is developing an exit interview process for jail residents to assist the Board in identifying issues from the perspective of the citizens who reside there.
5. The inmates have tablets, which while there may be some technology glitches, have provided them with better access to and contact with their families during the pandemic.
6. The Board is working on increasing access to books and reading materials in the ACJ.
7. The meetings have been expanded to include regular reports on many things such as updates on the implantation of the Suicide Prevention Report, sub-committee reports, OCVID-19 reports, restraint chair usage, etc.

In other words, the Board is doing its job!

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 9:31 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Elizabeth Schongar

Address: Pittsburgh, Pa

Organization(s): None

Comment : Conditions at the Allegheny County Jail are deplorable. The wardens have been directly responsible for overriding the judgement of trained medical professionals. Prescribed medical treatment is not properly continued in too many cases when people arrive at the jail. Policies to reduce the spread of COVID have not been properly implemented. The wardens have not been able to retain people in key positions at reasonable levels. The frequent use of solitary confinement and the restraining chair for mental medical issues constitutes torture. Trans people are regularly mis-gendered and put in cells that put them in danger or in solitary confinement that risks their mental health. The food is inadequate and unhealthy. In light of this total mismanagement of the jail the wardens should be fired. If the jail oversight committee can not do so, you should sue the county for failure to implement effective oversight. With great respect for the work the Oversight Board is trying to do this under

unreasonable constraints, thank you for making it clear how desperate the situation is.
Elizabeth Schongar

Dear Ms. Kenstowicz,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I think your request for a memorial for Dr. Patterson is a wonderful recommendation. I will make sure that the Board considers this at the next meeting.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 3:28 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : John Kenstowicz

Address: Pittsburgh, Pa

Organization(s):

Comment : RECOMMENDATION: A MEMORIAL BE CREATED AT ACJ FOR DR. MICHAEL PATTERSON WHO SERVED AS THE PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN AT ACJ FROM 2001 TO 2014. For many people, especially the poor and disabled, Dr. Michael Patterson was an apostle

in disguise, who defined for many the meaning of compassion, mercy and excellence. As the attached Tribune article entitled "Compassionate Doctor Drawn to Those in Need" illustrates, Dr. Patterson was the kind of doctor who would spend his own money to purchase medications for those in need. He dedicated his life's work to caring for the poor, elderly, uninsured and incarcerated. From my experience in working with Dr. Patterson for a number of years, my clients with serious mental health disabilities always found him to listen, treat them with respect, and teach them how to take care of their mind and bodies. I think Dr. Patterson was a source of inspiration for many. Remembering him with a plaque at the jail or naming the medical unit after his name will resurrect for many thoughts and feelings about caring for others. Research has shown that a plaque, picture or name plate remembering a figure of deep significance in the workplace can be a source of motivation and improved morale for staff. I would be willing to finance the cost of a plaque or a sign with his name commemorating him. John Kenstowicz 412-694-8852
<https://archive.triblive.com/news/obituaries/compassionate-doctor-drawn-to-those-most-in-need/>

Dear Mr. Dahl,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

The jail re-design project will include several phases. The first phase will be to obtain stakeholder (correctional officers, court and other public officials, jail health care and social service providers, lawyers, former residents of the jail and their family members etc.) and public feedback on how the jail might be re-designed or re-used to promote today's goal of a smaller facility that optimizes officer and resident safety, health and wellbeing. This engagement process will inform actual design and architectural approaches. The County expects to issue a solicitation for partners to conduct this engagement and design options process in the next few months. So, while we cannot elaborate on what the re-design might look like, we are excited to engage folks in a process to imagine just that.

A Community Advisory Committee has been formed to support the overall Safety and Justice Challenge Project (jail re-design is just one element of the project). The Committee members were invited by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and me. The Committee currently includes 7 members (others may still be invited to join) and the full list of current members is included below. The purpose of the Committee is to learn about the criminal justice system generally and the Safety and Justice Challenge strategies specifically and to advise on and inform those efforts.

Name	Organization
Valerie Dixon	Center for Victims
Reverend Cornell Jones	Violence Prevention Coordinator, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
Kurtis Mennitti	Re-entry Specialist, PCSI
Monica Ruiz	Executive Director, Casa San Jose
Claire Shubik-Richards	Executive Director, Pennsylvania Prison Society
Taili Thompson	Operation Better Block
Dante Works	Founder, House of Veterans

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge
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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:21 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Gary Dahl

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : Last month, Erin Dalton gave a presentation on the Safety & Justice Challenge Project. I am concerned and curious about the strategy mentioned of jail redesign. If possible could Dalton elaborate on what redesigning the Jail looks like? It was also mentioned that the formation of a Community Advisory Committee has happened in tandem with this project. Who is on the CAC and how did they get on it?

Dear Mr. Tucker,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

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In other words, the Board is doing its job!

I understand that the County Executive is, by statute a member of the board. He is in attendance by the participation of Ms. Parees who does an outstanding job in representing the County Executive. He is not the only member who sends a designee. Mr. Korinski appears frequently for Ms. Wagner and also does an outstanding job as her proxy. They both serve on subcommittees and have proven very valuable.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 8:49 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Benson Tucker

Address: 15219

Organization(s): Pittsburgh Friends Meeting, FAMM

Comment : It's time to get real about the JOB process and outcomes. From the media and from those experiencing it first hand, a constant stream of abuses, neglect, and human rights violations are documented at the ACJ. Elected officials like ACE Fitzgerald don't even show up for JOB meetings, let alone exert meaningful political capital to address the mistreatment of their constituents at the ACJ. It is long past time for JOB members to stop wringing their hands over these failures and show some leadership in developing a process that meets the needs. The electorally engaged citizens of Allegheny county ARE watching and WILL hold officials accountable for continued failure in improving ACJ conditions.

Dear Ms. Fan,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am sorry that you feel that the presentation of the public comments is not working. We receive far more comments than we could fit in an in-person meeting and at an in-person meeting we would limit the number of comments and the length of time that each person could speak. Many of the comments raise the same issue(s) and are duplicative. The Board feels that it is appropriate to group similar comments together and read a comment that is representative of the group and to limit the number of comments read at the meeting.

All comments are given to the board and will be posted on the website. Any member can request that a particular comment be read.

We absolutely do our best to answer each comment.

At this time, it is not possible to permit the public to attend the meetings as participants due to the number of people attending the virtual meetings. The meetings with just the Board and others who make presentations, take approximately three hours and additional participation would add to this.

I can say that the Board is working harder than ever, and many good things have happened as a result:

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5. The inmates have tablets, which while there may be some technology glitches, have provided them with better access to and contact with their families during the pandemic.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 11:29 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Bonnie Fan

Address:

Organization(s): Carnegie Mellon University

Comment : The Jail Oversight Board is one of the most inaccessible public meetings during covid-19. Most meetings give accommodation for live comment, and this has been ruled on in a court case against McKeesport, requiring "meaningful public access" - defined as opportunity for the public to give live comment virtually. This board accepts written

comment only, relying on board members to choose to read them during the meeting. With egregious conditions at the jail, multiple lawsuits, and an ongoing pandemic that has prompted other jails to more pre-emptively perform compassionate release, this jail has multiple tortuous and negligent practices to which this board has on multiple occasions refused to perform oversight duties, selectively enforcing board regulations and deferring judgment to the warden. In a study I am helping conduct on digital public meetings during covid-19, the Jail Oversight board is being highlighted as an example of inaccessible meetings coupled with inadequate oversight.

Dear Ms. Tenenbaum,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I understand that the County Executive is, by statute a member of the board. He is in attendance by the participation of Ms. Parees who does an outstanding job in representing the County Executive. He is not the only member who sends a designee. Mr. Korinski appears frequently for Ms. Wagner and also does an outstanding job as her proxy. They both serve on subcommittees and have proven very valuable.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 8:50 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Margot Tenenbaum

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : I'm concerned that Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald still has yet to attend a Jail Oversight Board meeting. Does he think the J.O.B. is not worth his time? It is deeply disrespectful to the people incarcerated at ACJ and to all residents of Allegheny

County that ACE Fitzgerald apparently cannot spare this roughly two hours of his time once a month to attend to his responsibilities.

Dear Ms. Dave,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

At the meeting, Deputy Warden Williams testified that the Allegheny County Jail has been approved as a distributor of the COVID vaccines and will begin the distribution process as of April 5, 2021. All inmates will be provided with education/information via their tablets and hard copies (in English and Spanish) on the vaccine. Medical staff will also provide education/information.

If this does not answer your questions, please contact my office at the numbers below.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 8:48 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Christine Daae

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : Last month Laura Williams informed us that, almost one year into the pandemic, the Jail had not yet created a plan to protect incarcerated people from the virus. What changes have been made over the past month to correct this? Has ACJ designed a plan for vaccine distribution to those incarcerated? Please provide as many details as possible.

Dear Ms. Enders,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 6:34 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Olivia Enders

Address: Pittsburgh,

Organization(s):

Comment : The statute governing the jail oversight board seems to require County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to participate in the board's functions. Mr. Fitzgerald has not been fulfilling his statutory duty. Why has Mr. Fitzgerald not been attending oversight board

meetings or participating at all? What are current members of the board doing to ensure that Mr. Fitzgerald attends meetings and participates?

Dear Mr. McKeand,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am also concerned that the Board has not complied with the statutory requirement to make unannounced inspections at the Jail. The Board believes that it would not be appropriate to make such an inspection during a pandemic. However, we will be making the inspections as soon as COVIC restrictions are lifted and we are in the process of receiving training from an expert on how to most effectively conduct such inspections.

I can say that the Board is working harder than ever, and many good things have happened as a result:

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 1:47 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Charlie Mckeand

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : The Jail Oversight Board is supposed to do a walkthrough of the facilities it oversees twice a year. Upon researching, it appears that the board has not done a walkthrough in over two years. Is that correct? Why? Obviously a lack of walkthroughs was an issue prior to COVID concerns, so that can't be used as a scapegoat. Perhaps people would not have so many concerns about what is happening inside the jail if the board actually did a walkthrough? How can we expect the board to be advocating for incarcerated people if you don't even know what's happening inside?

Dear Ms. Moscony,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 1:46 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Nikki Moscony

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : We all know that County Executive Rich Fitzgerald is supposed to attend these monthly meetings. We all know that he does not. Why is this not properly being addressed? Fitzgerald cannot possibly be doing this job to the best of his ability if he is not even present at the meetings. If concerned citizens of Allegheny County can give up their Thursday evenings once a month to attend these meetings, then he can too. It is literally his job. And if the rest of the board really cares about, as Clark likes to call them, "some of our most vulnerable citizens", then why aren't you advocating for Fitzgerald's presence?

Dear Ms. Dillon,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 1:46 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Jesse Dillon

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : I am concerned about the format of these meetings. Having every single public comment filter through one person is, evidently, not working. Time and time again, Clark has ignored, paraphrased, and overlooked comments. It has become abundantly clear that this task is too much for Clark, so why not change the format? It feels as though it would be better to allow community members to make their comments themselves. This way, the board can hear directly from the people whose loved ones are trapped in ACJ. This would also eliminate the issue of paraphrasing. Clark does not always read the entire comment, which can completely diminish its power. What is the point of reading public comments if they are not properly being addressed?

Dear Ms. Wilhite,

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I am also concerned that the Board has not complied with the statutory requirement to make unannounced inspections at the Jail. The Board believes that it would not be appropriate to make such an inspection during a pandemic. However, we will be making the inspections as soon as COVIC restrictions are lifted and we are in the process of receiving training from an expert on how to most effectively conduct such inspections.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Thursday, March 25, 2021 7:07 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Rose Wilhite

Address: pittsburgh

Organization(s):

Comment : Why has the ACJ Oversight Board not done an inspection since March '19? Are you not required to perform an inspection twice a year? Why has Rich Fitzgerald, who has held his position for 9 years, not attended a single Jail Oversight Board meeting? Why won't the warden provide the board full, unredacted access to the jail's policies? Are you trying to hide something or are you just very bad at doing your jobs? Or both?

Dear Ms. Torciano,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am also concerned that the Board has not complied with the statutory requirement to make unannounced inspections at the Jail. The Board believes that it would not be appropriate to make such an inspection during a pandemic. However, we will be making the inspections as soon as COVIC restrictions are lifted and we are in the process of receiving training from an expert on how to most effectively conduct such inspections.

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6. The Board is working on increasing access to books and reading materials in the ACJ.
7. The meetings have been expanded to include regular reports on many things such as updates on the implantation of the Suicide Prevention Report, sub-committee reports, OCVID-19 reports, restraint chair usage, etc.

In other words, the Board is doing its job!

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge

(412) 350-1900

(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Thursday, March 25, 2021 4:48 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Kaylin N Troiano

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : THE Allegheny County JAIL OVERSIGHT BOARD HAS NOT INSPECTED THE FACILITY SINCE MAY 2019!! THEY'RE REQUIRED TO PERFORM 2 INSPECTIONS PER YEAR. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Dear Mr. Baratta,

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(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Thursday, March 25, 2021 1:48 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Alex Baratta

Address: Carnegie, Pennsylvania

Organization(s):

Comment : Let me get this straight. You haven't inspected your facility since May 2019, Rich Fitzgerald hasn't attended a jail oversight meeting ever, and the warden hasn't allowed unredacted access in over a year. If I took 9 years to attend a meeting or a year to report issues at my non infrastructure critical IT job I'd be fired. Why should you be given a pass? I know covid has people on edge and in lockdown but do you not have the PPE you need to give that access by now? If so why don't you have what you need? If that's not the case why the secrecy? What are you trying to hide?

Dear Ms. Coughlin,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 11:48 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Monica R Counihan

Address: Pittsburgh , Pa

Organization(s):

Comment : It seems like the task of overseeing goings on at the jail is pretty difficult to do without full inspections of facilities and access to recent changes in protocol due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. How does an oversight board operate without the county's chief executive, Rich Fitzgerald, attending meetings? It seems important that these things should change in order for your organization to properly oversee and enact the necessary changes that ACJ needs. Reported conditions in the jail in the past year have many of us very concerned about over use of solitary, access to enough sunlight, air, and exercise. The extortionary fees to reach out to family virtually, and all the issues prisoners have had with that technology needs to be remedied. Due to visitation restrictions, there needs to be much more emphasis on access to properly working devices. Without proper oversight things cannot be fixed. If Warden Harper is responsible for making it more difficult for you to do the overseeing than that needs to be made public so that the process can begin to call for his resignation or termination. I think the most reasonable thing to have happen is for you as an organization to work to remove all barriers to proper oversight. Are you committed to that, or is this group largely just symbolic/performative. What is your plan to get better at doing your jobs?

Dear M J Flott,

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On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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(412) 350-1900

(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:01 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : MJ Flott

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : It is absolutely unacceptable that our city government has taken a hands off approach to the conditions and policies at ACJ. Beyond the negligence of the city Chief Executive in not attending a single one of these meetings since 2012, the fact that this board has not had a full inspection of the jail in over a year is beyond the pale. The conditions reported at ACJ throughout the COVID crisis are inhumane at best, and compounded by private contractors wringing every penny they can out of inmates for phone time and access to reading materials. These are human beings, not financial collateral. They deserve much, MUCH better than this board has provided them.

Dear Ms. Verrico,

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On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens

Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge

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(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 6:05 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Margaret Verrico

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : It is shameful that the Board has not inspected the facility since 2019. Rectify this immediately.

Dear Ms. Forney,

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On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 3:32 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Emily Forney

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : Please make sure County Executive Rich Fitzgerald attends the meeting as he is required to as reported in the Pittsburgh Current. Please conduct an inspection as the

Jail Oversight Board is required to do. Please allow the Jail Oversight Board to actually perform it's oversight function in the jail by allowing it full access to the jail. Jail Oversight Board members should not be hearing about news from the jail from the newspaper.

Dear Anonymous Citizen,

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(412) 350-1900

(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 1:06 PM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Anonymous Citizen

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : The jail oversight board hasn't done its biannual walk-throughs in 2020 or any in 2021 so far. Is it not the JOB's job to keep people in ACJ safe even (especially) during a pandemic? Have you not walked through to protect your own health? at the expense of people inside? What is being done to address coronavirus in the jail other than endlessly & ineffectually questioning the deputy warden who has no medical license? COs who refuse the vaccine are they being kept from the jail population? If the warden and deputy warden are unable to manage staffing issues, medical issues, cleanliness issues, and this now 1yr+ pandemic, why are they still employed? Doesn't JOB have hiring/firing power? There are abuse lawsuits & bad meal service contracts & censored policies, and JOB is acting like this is normal? How much of this will we have to endure? What are y'all gonna do for our folks inside? Do y'all have power outside of questioning the warden & deputy warden? If Judge Lazarra's survey crew comes back with a variety of needs the warden and deputy warden (will invariably) refuse to exist, or delay or deny to fix (like the mental health guidelines for 2 months now), what will y'all do? How can you fill needs outside of the warden? If the warden & deputy warden thought these things were actual issues, not meant to actually occur at the jail, like

people bitten by rats, abuse in restraint chairs & other abuse by COs, complete lack of healthcare & malnutrition & more we would see things already done about it, we would see acknowledgement that these things need to change. It's exhausting to see the warden and deputy warden congratulate themselves and compliment their staff every time a (valid!) critique comes up about the LIVING CONDITIONS of the jail. The JOB is complicit in the hellish conditions at the jail. When will you walk through? What will you do once you've walked through? How will you take accountability for the trash that's the conditions of the jail, outside of interrogating the warden & deputy warden?

Dear Ms. Stoner,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 11:05 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Emily Stoner

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : Hello, As a citizen of Allegheny County, I am writing to ask the board to start doing your jobs to serve those incarcerated. This includes, but is not limited to: - Inspecting the facility twice a year - Showing up to meetings, specifically the Allegheny County Chief Executive, Rich Fitzgerald - Making sure that Warden Harper provides this board with full, unredacted access to the jail's policies ACJ is known for its horrible treatment of inmates, and the citizens of Allegheny County are calling on you to do your job and make right of these situations, especially in the midst of a global pandemic.

Dear Ms. Neffshade,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:31 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Rachael P Neffshade

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : The Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board (JOB) has not inspected the facility since MAY 2019. It is required to perform two inspections per year. Why is this happening? Why is the JOB refusing to do its job? Rich Fitzgerald, the Allegheny County chief executive, has not attended a single JOB meeting. He has been the chief executive since 2012, and has never attended once! Why are you not holding Fitzgerald accountable for his negligence? Warden Harper has not provided the JOB with full,

unredacted access to the jail's policies since MARCH 2020. Why is this withholding of information being tolerated?

Dear Mr. Wiens,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am sorry that you feel that the presentation of the public comments is not working. We receive far more comments than we could fit in an in-person meeting and at an in-person meeting we would limit the number of comments and the length of time that each person could speak. Many of the comments raise the same issue(s) and are duplicative. The Board feels that it is appropriate to group similar comments together and read a comment that is representative of the group and to limit the number of comments read at the meeting.

All comments are given to the board and will be posted on the website. Any member can request that a particular comment be read.

We absolutely do our best to answer each comment.

At this time, it is not possible to permit the public to attend the meetings as participants due to the number of people attending the virtual meetings. The meetings with just the Board and others who make presentations, take approximately three hours and additional participation would add to this.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:20 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Henry Wiens

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : The monthly Jail Oversight Board meetings have been virtually hosted due to Covid for the last year. It seems to me, a concerned citizen, that these meetings will continue to be held remotely for some time to reduce the risks of transmission. This entity's use of Microsoft Teams to only stream as opposed to hosting a more participatory meeting using a different service has been a failure in my opinion. It is inefficient, ineffective, and frustrating to have comments and questions filtered through a single person who mostly paraphrases and leaves out crucial words from the public. Please consider moving to a forum that would allow the public to ask, in their own words, questions for the board.

Dear Mr. Newell,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:11 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : David Newell

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : The JOB has not walked through ACJ since May 2019. That's 23 months. The JOB is required to inspect the facility twice a year. Question: has anyone on this board ever walked through the facility?

Dear Ms. Gorman,

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Kim Berkeley Clark, President Judge
(412) 350-1900
(412) 350-0269

From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:07 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Margaret Gorman

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : Where is Rich Fitzgerald? Respectfully, it is absurd that a retired former employee is serving as proxy on this board for the county executive.

Dear Lee Burkhardt,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I can assure you that the Board is working hard to make the need of the residents of the Jail a priority and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

I can say that the Board is working harder than ever, and many good things have happened as a result:

1. The re-named Incarcerated Individuals Welfare Fund is being carefully monitored to ensure proper spending and a survey developed by the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work will provide the Board with information on the needs of the residents of the jail, which will inform our decisions on how we spend the money in the IIWF.
2. During the pandemic the Board has authorized payment of 100.00 per month to the commissary and tablet accounts for each inmate.
3. Exit Interviews of key staff from the medical and mental health departments were completed to provide the Board with insight into the issues with staffing in those departments and may provide solutions to staff retention.
4. The Board in collaboration with the Prison Society, is developing an exit interview process for jail residents to assist the Board in identifying issues from the perspective of the citizens who reside there.
5. The inmates have tablets, which while there may be some technology glitches, have provided them with better access to and contact with their families during the pandemic.
6. The Board is working on increasing access to books and reading materials in the ACJ.
7. The meetings have been expanded to include regular reports on many things such as updates on the implantation of the Suicide Prevention Report, sub-committee reports, OCVID-19 reports, restraint chair usage, etc.

In other words, the Board is doing its job!

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:03 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Lee Burkhardt

Address: , 15219

Organization(s):

Comment : I'd like to highlight this board's decision to use person-first language when speaking about the people who are incarcerated at ACJ. However, the sentiment of humanizing language is completely empty unless you truly put the person— their dignity, needs, and humanity— FIRST.

Dear Ozra Karkehabadi,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am also concerned that the Board has not complied with the statutory requirement to make unannounced inspections at the Jail. The Board believes that it would not be appropriate to make such an inspection during a pandemic. However, we will be making the inspections as soon as COVIC restrictions are lifted and we are in the process of receiving training from an expert on how to most effectively conduct such inspections.

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I understand that the County Executive is, by statute a member of the board. He is in attendance by the participation of Ms. Parees who does an outstanding job in

representing the County Executive. He is not the only member who sends a designee. Mr. Korinski appears frequently for Ms. Wagner and also does an outstanding job as her proxy. They both serve on subcommittees and have proven very valuable.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:57 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Ozra Karkehabadi

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : Why has the jail oversight board not inspected the Allegheny jail since May 2019 when 2 inspections a year are required? This is unacceptable. Rich Fitzgerald hasn't attended a single jail oversight board meeting since becoming Allegheny County Chief Executive in 2012. This is unacceptable. Rich Fitzgerald should be attending jail oversight board meetings. Warden Harper should be providing the jail oversight board with full, unredacted access to the jail's policies. They haven't since March of 2020. Incarcerated people are even more vulnerable during a global pandemic and it is unacceptable that even the basic requirements of the jail oversight board have not been met.

Dear Mr. Barkman,

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:47 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Alexander Berkman

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : If the Jail Oversight Board has not performed a walkthrough of the facility in over a year and has not been able to view the full jail policies in the same time period, how can you claim to be overseeing the jail? Oversight requires having information about what happens in the jail, and it seems that the JOB is usually in the dark. The conditions at ACJ are unacceptable and have been for a long time. If you cannot do your jobs, you should resign and let someone else try.

Dear Mr. Gillilans,

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On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:43 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Theron Gilliland

Address: Pittsburgh, PA

Organization(s):

Comment : 1. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald attends the meeting is required to attend the meeting. 2. The Jail Oversight Board is required to conduct an inspection. 3. The Jail Oversight Board must perform its oversight function in the jail by allowing full access to the jail. 4. Jail Oversight Board members should not be hearing about news from the jail from the newspaper. DO YOUR JOBS!!!

Dear Mr. Walker,

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I understand that the County Executive is, by statute a member of the board. He is in attendance by the participation of Ms. Parees who does an outstanding job in representing the County Executive. He is not the only member who sends a designee. Mr. Korinski appears frequently for Ms. Wagner and also does an outstanding job as her proxy. They both serve on subcommittees and have proven very valuable.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:35 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Jay T Walker

Address: Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Organization(s): Green Party of Allegheny County

Comment : Please make sure County Executive Rich Fitzgerald attends the meeting as he is required to as reported in the Pittsburgh Current. Please conduct an inspection as the Jail Oversight Board is required to do. Please allow the Jail Oversight Board to actually perform it's oversight function in the jail by allowing it full access to the jail. Jail Oversight Board members should not be hearing about news from the jail from the newspaper.

Dear Peter K.

Because of a Microsoft outage, the live feed to the April 1, 2021, Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board Meeting was disrupted, I am responding to each public comment individually.

I am sorry that you feel that the presentation of the public comments is not working. We receive far more comments than we would in an in-person meeting and at an in-person meeting we would limit the number of comments and the length of time that each person could speak. Many of the comments raise the same issue(s) and are duplicative. The Board feels that it is appropriate to group similar comments together and read a comment that is representative of the group and to limit the number of comments read at the meeting.

All comments are given to the board and will be posted on the website. Any member can request that a particular comment be read. We do our best to answer each comment.

On behalf of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, I thank you for your comments and your concern for the vulnerable citizens who reside in the Allegheny County Jail.

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From: donotreply@alleghenycourts.us <donotreply@alleghenycourts.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:19 AM

To: Jail Oversight Board Comments

Subject: RE: Public Comment

Name : Peter K

Address:

Organization(s):

Comment : The last few Jail Oversight Board meetings have demonstrated that the current system for receiving and addressing public comments is not working for the board. There have been repeated issues with submitted comments not being read at meetings. At the January meeting, Judge Clark chose not to read all the comments because she felt some were too similar to others. In February, she decided not to read one comment because she felt it had been addressed earlier in the meeting, and failed to read several others. In March, Judge Clark allowed only a short time at the meeting to respond to comments, and arbitrarily decided which comment to read first. I believe Judge Clark does her best to do her job fairly, but it is absolutely unacceptable for any one person to exercise this level of control over public comments. They are supposed to be for the public, and the process needs to be more transparent. As citizens, it is extremely frustrating that we are only able to submit one comment per month, and our comments often go unaddressed. At ACJ there are reports of inedible food, inhospitable temperatures, violence against those incarcerated, and serious gaps in medical and mental health services, among many other pressing issues. Submitting comments to the oversight board is the only option that citizens have to try to resolve these ongoing problems, and when our public comments are ignored our only voice is taken away. During the March JOB Judge Clark said that any comments she didn't get to would be addressed at this meeting. I appreciate Judge Clark's dedication to reading and responding to public comments, but this solution simply will not work. There are new comments submitted for this meeting, so it won't be possible to get through the leftover comments from this month and all the new ones. Comments will simply accumulate forever, and never be addressed. Therefore I am calling on Judge Clark to begin holding JOB meetings in a public meeting room that citizens can remotely join and voice our concerns directly to the board. Other agencies within Allegheny County including the County Council have held meetings this way, so the JOB should be able to do the same. This system would be more transparent and democratic, and would also allow the board to respond to more comments, as reading pre-written comments aloud takes far longer than letting us speak to the board directly.