

The monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board, Thursday, November 4, 2021 held as a virtual conference at 4:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honorable Judge Kim Clark

Bethany Hallam

Stephen Pilarski for County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Abass Kamara (was on via phone but was unable to mute for roll call)

Terri Klein

Judge Beth Lazzara

Gayle Moss

County Controller Chelsa Wagner

Others in Attendance:

Warden Harper

Deputy Warden Williams

1. Welcome, Call to Order and Rules

Judge Clark:

Good afternoon. Welcome to the monthly meeting of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board. I am Judge Kim Clark, the Chair of the Board. Just to reiterate the rules, we ask everyone to be respectful. Everyone will have the opportunity to be heard. Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect. There are no exceptions to that rule.

2. Presentation – Stimulus Money for Transition-Aged Youth in the ACJ

Judge Clark:

Our first item on our agenda is the presentation by Ms. Dalton. I think the board is probably not aware of. It is a presentation on stimulus money for transition aged youth in the ACJ.

Ms. Dalton:

Thank you, Judge Clark. I am going to do what I normally do; share some slides and I will talk you through. I am happy to get any questions or comments. A bit of background, this will be a quick walkthrough, but I am happy to share more with anyone if you are interested. This a federal program that came out during the coronavirus in an attempt to provide specific help for young adults who have experienced the child welfare system. You can see on my slides a May 2020 national study, among lots of other research, found that young adults transitioning out of foster care were really struggling, period, and especially during the pandemic. Congress appropriated funding for, there is some technical language in here that is technical to these systems, which I will try to make sure that is clear, what we call Chafee-eligible use. Allegheny County received \$3.7 million in one-time funds. Chafee-eligible means young adults between 18 and 26, who are in child welfare placement. That is things like foster care, but definitely could be kinship care or group care who were 14 plus when they experienced that care. Anyone 18 to 26 essentially today, during the eligibility of the program, who experienced foster care. The goals of the program were to provide low barrier direct financial assistance to as many young adults as possible; to reconnect those young adults to not just financial resources, but other resources; and then we also were, of course, interested in understanding how that financial assistance could impact those young adults. About the way we outreached to these young adults: you will see that some of them were in the jail that is why I am talking with you about it. How we communicated with them (in jail) was slightly different, but across the whole program we partnered with lots of community groups and we reached out via phone calls, via text, emails, social media, we wrote letters with my signature on them. It is hard to write a letter to young adults that does not sound like we are trying to get information from them that tells them there's free money available. I learned

that doing this work. We were pretty successful in reaching out to people. We met our outreach goals. Close to 100% of kids and child welfare care or already connected to aftercare services, like the 412 Youth Zone and over 60% of kids who we were not in contact with responded and applied via the website that we set up. You could just see the text messaging that we did on the side there. We attempted to help them get through the process and made the application as low barrier as possible. About some of those results, we had very little time to launch this program and close this program. We launched on June 7th and we closed on August 22nd. We distributed 2 payments of \$1,000 each, \$2000 total, to 1,900 young adults, including 66 young people who were in the ACJ. We connected a lot of those youths, 1,200, to other resources. We also collected a bunch of survey data that helped us to understand how they were using those dollars. I am not going to read the quotes unless somebody wants me. Those of you who are participating can see them, but we included some quotes from people who receive these dollars and how important they were to their lives at the time. A little bit more about payment, \$1,000 was sent to about 1,900 youth and we use PayPal, which is maybe not the most modern. We also distributed checks. Then another second \$1,000 to 1,864 youth. Some of the kids that were in the program initially were no longer eligible due to their age. So over \$3.7 million directly to young adults. So, 66 of those young people were in the jail at the time of the program for a total that we were able to release to them of \$112,000. You can imagine how difficult it is to launch a program like this so quickly. I think lots of places around the country were happy with whatever they got out the door and did not take the time to try to really reach these young people in the jail. I am very grateful to the folks in the jail, the warden and his staff, in particular to Amy Kroll, who really went the extra mile to think through with us and help execute on getting this funding to the young people. The way it worked, maybe a little bit more detail than you need, but the way it worked for persons who are incarcerated, they received while they were in the jail \$200 on their commissary account. Amy went and talked to each one of them individually. We gave them a resource packet. Then depending on what they were eligible for, we released the second payment, which was between \$800 and \$1,800 to them upon release. The way that works is that the Discharge Release Center would notify our Justice Related Services Transition Age Youth Forensic Services Group when the recipient was released from the jail or will be released from the jail for the young people that are still there. Then either the youth would reach out or if they did not then we reached out to them. We met them and provided a gift resource backpack with all kinds of supports as well as their additional dollars. Then that group also connected folks to the 412 Youth Zone to address any immediate needs, as well as other resources, Kids Voice for Legal Support, Opportunity Passport for Financial Wellness. This created an opportunity for us to engage with these young people about other needs they might have. Some high-level findings from the survey, this is not for the incarcerated persons, this is overall, young people are most likely to spend money on bills, housing, vehicle, and food expenses. These reported having enough money to meet their basic needs, more after those pandemic resources, so 35%. It is still not the majority feeling like they can meet their basic needs but over 10 percentage points higher than before receiving those dollars. They reported decreased financial anxiety and they were more likely to report being employed. That is nice to hear. We are still working on survey results and feedback from incarcerated persons. The Transition Age Youth Forensic Team is doing this contact. So we only have 16 here but the top ways that recipients reported that they wanted to spend their money upon exiting the jail was just what you would expect, clothing, housing rent, parent and child expenses. The top three needs upon being released from the jail were housing, finding a job, and getting identification. I just wanted to share a little bit about this program and again express my great thanks to the Warden and his team for helping us to get these resources to folks.

Judge Clark:

Any questions about this program? I think it is great in that the eligible youth that were in the jail were able to benefit from these funds as well. I know that for some kids that have aged out of foster care that are older, I have their cell phone numbers and they have mine. I did text some of the kids that I knew were eligible that could apply for the funds. They were really grateful for that because even the ones that are doing pretty well \$2,000 potentially is a nice chunk of money to have. Thanks for that opportunity. Alright, thank you. We will give another shout out to Amy Kroll.

3. Community Corrections Reports

A. The Program for Offenders

Judge Clark:

We can move to our community corrections reports. The Program for Offenders?

Michelle Morris:

Good afternoon, Michelle Morris reporting for the program. We are going to be hosting another vaccine clinic on November 11th for our booster shot. About 10-11 of our residents and about 30 of our staff members have already signed up to receive their booster shot. That is all we have for this month. Thank you so much.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Does anyone have any questions for Ms. Morris?

B. The Renewal Center

Judge Clark:

Renewal?

Adam Zak:

Adam Zak reporting for Renewal Inc. Due to the pandemic flattening out and lifting of restrictions, community service opportunities have once again opened up for our men and women. In the past 2 months, they have been volunteering at Mount Ararat Church, the Urban League, and Project Destiny Food Bank. This weekend we will have several volunteers at the 10-mile race, and we are anticipating more events in the upcoming months, especially around the holidays. That is all I have for this month.

Judge Clark:

Anyone have any questions for Mr. Zak?

C. Electronic Monitoring

Judge Clark:

Last but not least, Electronic Monitoring?

Steve Esswein:

Steve Esswein, for the Probation office. Currently, we are seeing numbers are increasing. We are just under 600 individuals on the bracelet and during the last reporting period 95 individuals just successfully completed the program. That is all I have.

Judge Clark:

Any questions for Mr. Esswein? Alright, thank you.

4. Review of Minutes for October 7, 2021

Judge Clark:

We will move to the review of the minutes from our October meeting. Again, I just want to thank Ms. Carroll for all the work she does getting those together and getting the packets out to the board. It is a lot of work and we really appreciate it. The minutes were sent out to you. I hope you have had an opportunity to review them. At this time, I will entertain any additions or corrections or a motion.

Judge Lazzara:

So, move that we adopt the minutes.

Judge Clark:

Alright, there's a motion by Judge Lazzara to approve the minutes as drafted by Ms. Carroll. Is there a second?

Ms. Moss:

I'll second.

Judge Clark:

Alright, Ms. Moss. Any discussion? Questions? All those in favor?

Others:

Aye

Judge Clark:

Any opposed? The minutes are approved.

The board unanimously approved a motion by Judge Lazzara, duly seconded by Ms. Moss, to receive the Jail Oversight Board Meeting Minutes from October 7, 2021.

5. Old Business

A. Resuming In-Person Meetings

Judge Clark:

We will move to old business. The first item is resuming in person meetings. I am hoping we might be able to do it in January, but I would like to hear what the board members think. I look at the numbers pretty much every day, but most things are back in operation. I believe that we could meet in person safely. We may have to wear masks, but I do believe we could do it. I think we should shoot for January, but I would like to hear with the board thinks.

Mr. Pilarski:

I have no issues with being in person.

Judge Clark:

Judge Lazzara, what about you?

Judge Lazzara:

January sounds reasonable. Finish out the year online and then start the new year in a new way.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

I agree.

Judge Clark:

Alright. Ms. Hallam, are you still there?

Ms. Hallam:

You all know where I stand on this because I thought we had made an agreement earlier that we weren't going to resume until the folks who are incarcerated had the opportunity for their families to visit them. That is still not in place. I would just like to stick with what we had agreed upon previously.

Judge Clark:

Was there a motion to that effect? I know that was part of the discussion and that was what you had indicated but I do not really remember whether we voted on that. Does anybody remember? I can go back and look in the minutes to confirm that.

Ms. Hallam:

Yeah, I would just like to get an update on when they are expecting that to happen. If it is their plan to resume in January, then I am very comfortable with us resuming our meetings in January as well.

Judge Clark:

I am not sure why one has to be affected by the other. There are very different reasons why in the ACJ it might not be safe to resume in-person visits, whereas having the board convened in-person might be appropriate. But we will get an update on that.

Ms. Moss:

I am okay with going back in January.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Wagner, I guess you will not be on the board, but I still want to hear your opinion.

Ms. Wagner:

Sure. One of the considerations I have always believed important for this is the availability of the vaccination for young kids, even though I won't be on the board at that point but that is also a consideration for my office. So, I would agree now that is available that it is fair for the board in January, but I would also say I do agree with Ms. Hallam. You know, I don't disagree with you Judge Clark that they are two different things and two different considerations, but I would like to have an update from the jail on a resumption of visits. I think alongside that it is probably giving us some explanation of what they are anticipating with the vaccine deadline on December 1.

Judge Clark:

Thank you and then we will ask for that. I think that is on the agenda. Did I miss any board members? Thank you.

B. IIWF Report

Judge Clark:

Next on the agenda is a report from the IIWF committee. Judge Lazzara?

Judge Lazzara:

Hello. There were two things listed on the agenda for us, the survey, and the liaison position. I can tell you that the committee has been working to get the liaison position moving forward. That is what we worked on more this month than anything. We have some things in the works, but we are still undertaking a little bit of study to figure out how best to move that forward. I actually just sent my committee members an email asking them to respond for some dates for another meeting that we need to have with an interested party. So, if you guys would get back to me, I would appreciate that. So, that is moving forward. We are hoping to have a lot of good information for you for the December meeting, but we think we need a little bit more time to firm things up. In terms of the survey, I am really sorry, but we have not talked about that. I am going to ask if Brad and Terri have some additional information about where the survey is.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Klein has her hand up, so will acknowledge her. Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

This is from Dean Farmer; she is halfway through data entry and there was a signed contract that she received two weeks ago. So, thank you people in the county. She is hired a team to speed up the entry process. She is expecting to have all data entered by early November and then start the analysis. She is reluctant to make any preliminary analysis because she is going to pod by pod and there seems to be a lot of different concerns based on the pod. Looking forward to good information soon.

Judge Clark:

Does anyone have any questions for Ms. Klein or Judge Lazzara?

Judge Lazzara:

That is such great news. I am so glad that the contract is done in they are moving forward. I cannot wait to see the results and cannot wait to report on our liaison results hopefully next month.

Judge Clark:

That would be great. Mr. Korinski, is there anything you want to add?

Mr. Korinski:

No, Judge Clark. Thank you for asking but I have the same information Ms. Klein does. So, thank you.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Well that is very good report and I appreciate all the work that your committee has done. I know how hard you are working. I know what a hard worker Judge Lazzara is, so I know she is cracking that whip a little bit but that is okay. It is important. Thank you.

C. Suicide Prevention Committee

Judge Clark:

Next, we are going to have any updates from the suicide prevention subcommittee. Really just an update on the status of recommendations from the report, if any, by Warden Harper and an update regarding re-inspection of the completed recommendations.

Ms. Moss:

As far as the recommendations, we have not met yet. We have to meet with the Warden and find out. Barb Pareas was in charge of the committee, right?

Judge Clark:

Yeah.

Ms. Moss:

Well we have to get together to meet. We have talked about it, but we will have to meet with the Warden, so we can find out regarding the re-inspection of the work that has already been done.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Warden, do you have any updates on the status of any recommendations? Has there been any new things that have happened since our last meeting?

Warden Harper:

Good afternoon, Jail Oversight Board and Judge Clark. I just like to report to Jail Oversight Board that our facility's maintenance team is working in our facility to remove plumbing, toilet fixtures, and faucets out seven cells designated on our pod to install our padded cell. We are working on that now and hopefully the installation of the padded cell will begin sometime next week. That is all I have to report pertaining to the NCCHC report.

Judge Clark:

Anyone have any questions for Warden Harper? Alright thank you.

Ms. Moss:

Excuse me, could you tell me who is on the suicide prevention committee?

Judge Clark:

I do not remember off the top of my head. I would have to go back and look. I know originally it was Ms. Parees and I think you. Was there anyone else?

Judge Lazzara:

I thought that myself and Bethany were on it, and maybe even Chelsa. There was there was a lot of overlap, I think, between the two.

Ms. Moss:

No, they were not. There was one other person, but I do not believe it was Chelsa. I do not think so because we never really met as a group.

Judge Lazzara:

We had a Teams meeting over this summer, I remember, where we went through all of the recommendations and where it was.

Ms. Moss:

Right.

Judge Lazzara:

That may have been the only meeting we had because I think after that it is just a matter of getting their reports.

Judge Clark:

Initially there was a couple of reports and then the recommendation was that at each meeting the Warden would provide us with an update on the progress. I think at the last meetings it was raised, and that is why this is on the agenda, about once all the things are done who comes back and says all of it is done.

Ms. Moss:

That is the last thing we spoke about, right.

Judge Clark:

Once all of your things are complete, will someone come back and review the changes and the improvements and say yes you did them or not you did not?

Warden Harper:

Your honor, we were not planning on doing that. We feel we have the experts in our facility that can provide that recommendation. So, no we were not planning on doing that.

Judge Clark:

Okay, thank you. The board could come look and you could give us tour if we wanted to do it that way at some point.

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am. If that is what you recommend.

Judge Clark:

What does the board think? Or is there something else that you would like to see happen with regard to the improvements. Well, let us think about it. I think it might be good once everything is completed. There is still a lot of things in progress like the padded cells are being done. It might be nice once the Warden says that everything is complete that we go, and we look. We have the report. We can see what the issues were and then we can see what has changed. I think that might be a good start. Anything else?

D. Update on Policy for Polycom Device to be Used for Meetings with Other Providers

Judge Clark:

Warden, can we have an update on the policy for Polycom devices?

Warden Harper:

I am proud to announce that the policy for the Polycom devices is complete. We have the scheduling up and running for the Polycom machines. The only issue now, your Honor, is we are working on verbiage to put on the website so the professional visitors will know how to schedule the visits. I will have that up and running within the next week.

Judge Clark:

Great. Does anyone have any questions for Warden Harper?

Judge Lazzara:

That is so wonderful because that really has been a concern about trying to get people out to programs with the inability for them to be assessed by those programs. I am quite sure Warden if you work with some folks from JRS, and if you need who I can certainly get you who, because JRS does a lot of the work with the other providers. That could be a way to get the word to them about how to do the scheduling.

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am, we could do that.

Judge Clark:

Great. Any other questions or comments? Thank you.

E. Update on Plan to Resume Visitations in the Jail

Judge Clark:

Warden, this has already been mentioned and it is on the agenda, any updates on a plan to resume visitations in the jail?

Warden Harper:

One of the things that we do at the ACJ is we monitor the COVID cases in our community. If you look at the COVID cases in our community you still see that this kind of high and with us having the approval to vaccinate children,

we would really like to get data about the vaccination of the children before we start resuming visitation into our jail. So right now, that is what we would like to do. Then we will make a determination later after we review the data for the children being vaccinated.

Judge Clark:

Do you have a target date where you would like to see visitations in the jail resume in any form? It could be that you might decide that you do not want children right now because of that but other family members may be able to visit. Do you have any kind of target date in your mind? I guess the other thing is, have you sought any guidance from the Health Department in how you could safely resume any form of visitations in the jail?

Warden Harper:

The target date is as soon as possible. As soon as we can see the COVID cases in the community are reduced and are kept at a steady reduction for a while, I will definitely talk to the Health Department to see if it is safe to resume visitation. But I will talk to the Health Department and maybe they can give me some guidance as to what the numbers should be when we start visitation back at the jail. I will talk to the Health Department about that.

Judge Clark:

What I am thinking Warden is that you might be able to say, we are not going to resume it full force. But, for example, if the resident in the jail and the person visiting are both fully vaccinated that it might be appropriate for a visitation to take place. So, they would have to show proof of vaccination. You know which residents of the jail are vaccinated. So, you could start small. Which, I think, would be a good idea, since it has been so long, to do it incrementally. In my mind, it at least makes sense to me. I am not a health expert. So, there is a disclaimer on that. But it seems if you had a resident in the jail that was fully vaccinated and then the person coming in requesting the visit showed proof of fully vaccinated, that maybe you could start there. That is just a suggestion and maybe that is something you could talk to the Health Department about.

Warden Harper:

I think that is a great suggestion, your Honor. That is something I will talk to the health care department and my team about. I will definitely look into that.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

First thing, I know the state DOC, their policy is that only incarcerated folks who are vaccinated are allowed to have their family members come and visit. I do not know if that also applies to the people coming to visit them, but I do know that. So maybe Warden Harper can reach out to them. Also, York County has reopened visitation, as well as, Lancaster County, Dauphin County, and a lot of comparably sized county jails throughout the Commonwealth have reimplemented visits as far back as August. Maybe, Warden Harper, someone from your team would be willing to reach out to them to figure out what it is that they have done to be able to do it, just so we can get those back up and running as soon as possible.

Deputy Warden Williams:

We have spoken to a lot of the different agencies. You're correct about the PA DOC. They had been allowing more broad visits but then with the presence of variants they scaled those back to only their vaccinated population and family members needed to provide proof as well. Any others were doing non-contact visits. I think the hard thing is that jails can be of similar size, but setup is significantly different. There are a number of different things that we have to evaluate to make sure that we can safely manage this. Those children getting vaccinated is one part. It is very important. We also have a number of different organizations that are supporting the employees need to be vaccinated. The federal government just announced that any health care provider that provides patient care

for Medicare patients, all of those employees must be vaccinated by January 4th. The nice thing is that we believe in Allegheny County at large the vaccination rates will improve, infection rates will decrease, and that the same will be reflected within our population. Our hope is as soon as possible, and it is very contingent on what the recommendations will be.

Ms. Hallam:

Can I ask you about that? So if that is something that you're making this decision contingent upon, the majority of visits at the ACJ are non-contact visits, correct? Is that still the case?

Deputy Warden Williams:

Yes

Ms. Hallam:

There is a very physical barrier between the incarcerated people and the folks coming in to visit. I assume masks can still be required and all. I am just wondering what specifically are we waiting to change, because really if an incarcerated person or a loved one has COVID and they are separated between 4 feet and 2 panes of glass, what really is it that we're waiting for to change?

Warden Harper:

You have to realize these individuals coming into our facility pass employees when they come in. Therefore, that virus can be passed on to the employees who work on the different pods so that is the issue.

Deputy Warden Williams:

I think to we recognize that as a public health measure we are a facility where those visitors will have close contact with each other. They are going to be riding elevators with each other and in enclosed spaces where they cannot socially distance. Even though we require masks, as I am speaking, I have to continue to adjust my mask to be up as well. These are not ideal answers and we recognize that. I think we all want this to be over. We desperately want it to be over, but we have to recognize that we as an institution stand for the safety of all. That includes those that visit our institution as well.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, to clarify that deadline is coming up soon that all of your staff have to be vaccinated, correct?

Deputy Warden Williams:

Correct.

Judge Clark:

Any other comments or questions for Warden Harper or Chief Williams? Alright. So, we look forward to hearing more at the December meeting about this.

F. Update on Plan for Compliance with the Solitary Confinement Ban Ballot Referendum

Judge Clark:

The next item of old business is an update on the plan for compliance with the solitary confinement ban ballot referendum. Warden Harper?

Warden Harper:

We are still moving forward to make sure that we are in compliance to the referendum chapter 205 but as you guys know you know December 1st, there could be some issues. Right now, we are on track on being in compliance, but December 1st could change some things up.

Judge Clark:

So, there has been some trainings that have been going on, is that correct Warden Harper?

Warden Harper:

Not yet, ma'am. I was going to report on the trainings that are going to be taking place in the future during the Warden's report.

Judge Clark:

Okay, we will leave that for then.

G. Review of Cell Extraction Policy and Any Reports

Judge Clark:

Can we just segue into the next thing about the review of the cell extraction policy?

Warden Harper:

One of the things I want to report to the board is that in October we had four uses of chemical agents. After December 5th, we will not be able to utilize chemical agents. Therefore, a cell extraction team will have to be utilized to extract these individuals from the cells. I want the board to just be mindful if more inmates and more officers are hurt it is because we cannot utilize chemical agents after December 5th.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Any questions?

Ms. Hallam:

I have a question about that. Is the Warden telling us that because they cannot use chemical agents that people are going to be hurt? Is that what he is saying right now, or did I misinterpret that?

Judge Clark:

What he is saying and I think we heard when we had the meeting about the C-SAU and the information that I got from then Secretary Wetzel is without the ability to use pepper spray and shackles in a cell extraction, I can tell you secretary Russell basically said he can guarantee more people will be injured. Because it is a volatile situation. If they cannot get someone to deescalate with words, they have to go in, and they do not have the less lethal types of methods to extract or to stop someone. If you cannot shackle, people can be kicked. If you cannot spray, I mean, they are going to have to send a team of people in to physically take someone out of the cell, if that person is a danger to himself or others. That is what they are going to have to do. I think that is what the Warden is saying.

Ms. Hallam:

Yeah, I just very much did not appreciate the way that was said. It came across as a threat.

Judge Clark:

I think that is not a fair...everybody else is shaking their head no, so I do not think...

Ms. Hallam:

It came across to me as a threat and I did not appreciate that. I will move to my question, how long was the jail using chemicals?

Warden Harper:

Ever since it was built.

Ms. Hallam:

So, the day the jail was built. What year was that?

Warden Harper:

1995.

Ms. Hallam:

So, prior to 1995, the jail got along just fine without it?

Warden Harper:

I cannot speak to what happened before 1995, Ms. Hallam. The best practices in the correctional industry, and if you talk to any correctional professional, OC is utilized to try to quell the disturbance before the use of force. That is best practice that has been taken from us.

Ms. Hallam:

Do you have any data on injuries due to the removal of chemical agents? I would like to see that, if we are going to state that and use that as the basis for why there are issues with complying with a referendum that was passed by the voters of this county.

Warden Harper:

I do not have data, Ms. Hallam. It is just basic knowledge that if we cannot use the OC spray, and we have to go in to get individuals, people are going to get hurt.

Judge Clark:

I think that was the statement of I am sorry I cannot remember his name. Mr. Korinski, the expert that testified what was his name?

Mr. Korinski:

That was Mr. Rainey.

Judge Clark:

Yes, Mr. Rainey.

Mr. Korinski:

I think he was talking about the use of the restraint chair to move people with that.

Judge Clark:

But he also mentioned the pepper spray and the shackles. That was also the information that I got from Secretary Wetzel, which I provided to the board. I think that is the issue. There probably is not going to be any data, at least with the jail, until after they cannot use them but there might be data somewhere else. I do not know. Does someone else have a comment or question? Yes, Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

Would there be consideration to have a subject matter expert on Tasers because that is something that will still be available to use?

Warden Harper:

We already have Tasers and our staff is already trained in the use of Tasers. But Tasers cannot go around mattresses. Tasers cannot go through doors. Tasers are effective somewhat but are not effective all the time.

Ms. Klein:

I guess my question was if there would be any additional training by someone out there, given the restrictions from the referendum, that might have suggestions for Taser use but perhaps that is not possible

Warden Harper:

Ms. Klein, we already have Taser-certified instructors here at our facility that have received the course. We have the expertise here that is already trained. We are still going to run into that dilemma when an individual that is incarcerated in our facility put that mattress up against the door. A Taser is not going to go through a mattress. No matter what other training we get, it is just not going to be effective.

Ms. Klein:

I understand.

Ms. Hallam:

I do not know where Judge Clark went so, I could ask another question while we are waiting. I hear a lot of discussion about like the limits of the referendum and I understand that those exist. I do believe that they were intentional that is why the referendum was drafted the way that it was. But what I mostly want to hear about is what steps are actually being taken to be prepared for this December 1st deadline. Is there a plan to inform the incarcerated people of these new policies? Is there a way to give them a way to report any violations of the referendum ban? What exactly is the jail doing to prepare for this? I understand that there are obstacles and you go over the obstacles multiple times, but can you go over exactly what you have done to prepare for the referendum implementation? What it is going to look like on December 5th?

Warden Harper:

I am not going to get into everything that we are doing to prepare for the referendum Ms. Hallam because that is going to violate some safety issues at our facility. What I will say is this, we are preparing to train more correction officers to do cell extraction. We have not put out to the inmate population as to what can be done and what will not be done. We will not do that because I feel as though that if they know that could cause more issues after December 5th. I do not know what else you would like for me to report on.

Ms. Hallam:

I would like to know, after the previous contract was ended what new steps you have taken to be sure that you are able to comply. I understand you are doing cell extractions trainings. What do those look like? Who is conducting them? Who is receiving the training? Is that all that you are doing to prepare for this? Do you also have all the administrative aspects for the reporting requirements as well?

Warden Harper:

We have all of the administrative processes in place for the reporting but of course that is changing quite frequently. As I stated, we are preparing to train more correctional officers in cell extraction, and we have certified correctional officers here that can teach that training.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, but specifically what about the solitary confinement aspects of it? About that being banned. Do you have procedures in place to let the incarcerated people know? I don't see how that could be a security concern to let them know that they are not permitted to be held in their cells and exceed a certain amount of hours a day without a certain amount of rec time, those sort of things. Is there a way to let them know? Will there be a reporting mechanism, if they believe that the referendum requirement for a solitary ban, you know, to understand their rights?

Warden Harper:

Incarcerated individuals have multiple ways in which they can report any violation. They have the electronic tablets where they could do to request, or the paper complaints. They have the reporting system. I am sure that they already know that after December 5th segregated individuals must be provided more than 4 hours of out of cell time. I know they already know that. I do not have to do that announcement because they know. The last thing I want to say is we are getting prepared by building more recreational areas so we can provide incarcerated individuals more out of cell time. So, I think that we will be ready on December 5th.

Ms. Hallam:

Specifically, about the appeals process, there is an appeals process that was written into the referendum for anyone, I do not want to call it a sentence, or a punishment, of solitary confinement despite the ban. What is the process that you have implemented for the appeals process?

Warden Harper:

I have not yet.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, and do you have a plan to build that process?

Warden Harper:

We will look into that.

Ms. Hallam:

I just want to clarify that you understand that is a requirement of the referendum.

Warden Harper:

I hear you are saying that. I will read the referendum again to ensure and if that is what the referendum says we will comply.

Ms. Hallam:

Great. Thank you.

Judge Lazzara:

I do not know where Kim went either. I am going to sort of take over until she comes back.

Judge Clark:

Can you hear me?

Judge Lazzara:

We can hear you now.

Judge Clark:

I got kicked off. I guess there is an Internet issue here in my office. I am trying to get back on. I am on the phone but if you could Judge Lazzara because I cannot see people you know raise their hand or anything. So, if you could move on until at least I can get back in.

Judge Lazzara:

I was going to. I figured there were no other questions. I was going to ask if anyone else had any other questions for Warden Harper on the issue of the cell extraction and complying with the referendum? If no one does then we are going to move on.

H. COVID Vaccination Status

Judge Lazzara:

Next is the COVID vaccination statistics for correctional officers and staff.

Deputy Warden Williams:

I can provide the full vaccination or just state what Ms. Hallam had requested last meeting, which was those that have direct contact, how many remain without proof of vaccination. That number is 174 out of 609 employees. I am including in that number people who have not completed but may be in their vaccination series. At this time, I cannot count them as having completed yet and need to act as if they are not in compliance with that order.

Judge Lazzara:

Any questions with regard to that? We have Kim back. Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

So that is the direct contact number. I very much appreciate you getting that number for us today. Can you also give us the total number of fully vaccinated versus total employees at the jail because I believe even folks without direct contact are required to be vaccinated?

Deputy Warden Williams:

Yes, all county employees are required to demonstrate proof of vaccination. Our total county employee is 609 in the institution. So, 388, or 64%, have demonstrated proof of full vaccination. We have 211 with no proof any vaccination or even starting. Then 10 that are currently in process. The 211 is reduced to 174 for the direct contact.

Ms. Hallam:

Is there a plan, operating under an assumption there is that many people that may not have a vaccine from one month from today, what is the jail plans?

Warden Harper:

We do have a plan. I am not going to discuss that plan in the setting, but we do have a plan.

Ms. Hallam:

Can we hear general statements about the plan? This is the Jail Oversight Board. I do think it's pertinent that we have the plan for a mass exodus of jail staff members.

Warden Harper:

Ms. Hallam, I am not going to jeopardize the safety of this facility. If the board wants to talk to me one on one, we can talk but I am not going to do it in this setting.

Judge Clark:

Warden, can we do it after this meeting in an executive session?

Warden Harper:

Absolutely, we can.

Judge Clark:

We will do that then. Thank you. Any other questions? Ms. Wagner?

Ms. Wagner:

Thank you. Just a quick question on that. Typically, with other types of meetings, those are the types of things that we could handle in just 10 minutes of executive session. So that, what are employee matters in this situation are not being discussed publicly. If that is something that we could do.

Judge Lazzara:

Kim had already said that right after the meeting.

Ms. Wagner:

The mute function when you are on the phone it speaks over and it says you are coming off of mute, so you don't hear things for about 5 to 10 seconds. So, I apologize.

Judge Clark:

That is okay. No problem. Any other questions concerning that?

Ms. Hallam:

I guess my other question would be, in addition to the COVID plan, in case anyone you know doesn't comply with the vaccine mandate, what percentage of staff vacancies exist prior to that? Are we already operating on a low staff count in regards especially to the folks that have direct contact with incarcerated folks?

Warden Harper:

That is something I would like to discuss in the executive session.

Ms. Hallam:

Cool. Alright.

Judge Clark:

Anything else? Alright, thanks.

6. Public Comments

Judge Clark:

We will move to public comments. We had a number of public comments many of them dealt with conditions in the jail, so I am going to start with those comments.

A. Phil Wiggins

"I heard that over the weekend that people housed on 8D went on a hunger strike and in response, ACJ took away their tablets. During that time, people could not file sick call requests or grievances which can only be done using the tablet. Can the JOB require ACJ provide hardcopies of these forms, so that people who are denied access to their tablets can still receive medical attention and be able to exhaust their administrative remedies? Also, the tablet does not allow an individual to keep copies of the sick calls or grievances filed, which can prevent someone from pursuing various forms of legal and medical relief. Can ACJ allow individuals to retain an electronic copy of these essential documents that they file on the tablet?"

Deputy Warden Williams:

The response to this is that over the weekend 8D was extraordinarily unhappy and they utilized their right to refuse meals. That ended before a 24-hour period had lapsed. The allegation that they were not able to file any sick call requests or grievances is false. We have paper copies of those. In fact, the sick call process is a paper process. Some of the incarcerated individuals utilized a section within the tablets that called medical complaints or sick calls but that was truly designed for the grievance process for health care needs. Sick calls have been and will continue to be, until the interface is established, a paper process. Additionally, all of the requests that are

submitted throughout the tablet, they do not disappear. There is an electronic record of those at all times that is associated with the individual's account. Even when they are no longer active in the institution. So, if those were needed those could be provided at any given time.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

I just had a quick because with the paper grievance process they were able to retain those records for themselves whenever they file any sort of grievance or sick call. In my understanding, from what you are saying, is that now with the tablets they have to formally request those. Is there a way that they can automatically receive those records since you are saying that they exist anyways? What is preventing you from giving them those records anyways?

Deputy Warden Williams:

The exist in electronic form. They can access what they have submitted and the responses at any time through the tablet while they are incarcerated. They can make a request for those just like if they were to make a request for their healthcare records. Their health record is in electronic format as well. They submit for that in writing and they sign a receipt as having received those records. We do not just as a standard practice print. That would be an enormous waste of paper and a detriment to the environment but if that were required then that can be provided.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, thank you.

Judge Clark:

Any other questions?

B. Sam Roberts

"What progress has ACJ made in renegotiating the commissary prices with Summit so that individuals are not charged exorbitant prices for hygienic and sanitary items, which are necessary to prevent the spread of covid?"

Warden Harper:

I think we took care of this months ago. We discuss Summit. The Summit prices are final as of this time. We will not be able to renegotiate the prices until the next contract.

Judge Clark:

Are they different than what was reported a few meetings ago? I know that Mr. Korinski had done a report on the prices and a comparison with prices other places. Are those the same prices or have they changed any? There was a concern about some of the prices being really high.

Warden Harper:

You are right, your Honor, and those prices are still in effect. We are not going to be able to change those prices until the next contract.

Judge Clark:

I am not sure that is accurate but because I think there are some legal issues with the prices. Could you check with the Solicitor and see if anything can be done before the next contract? So that at least the prices are in compliance with the law.

Warden Harper:

I could do that, your Honor.

Judge Clark:

Then we will get a report on that at the next meeting.

C. Richard Jones

“ACJ requires incarcerated people, including those who are indigent, to buy Tylenol, Motrin, and other basic over-the-counter medicines, instead of providing it for free. But because these meds are so expensive, many who are prescribed to take them daily cannot afford them, even with the money allotted for commissary. Many incarcerated people are forced to choose whether to use their limited funds to talk to their family on the tablet or suffer in pain. How does the jail decide which medicines to charge for? Can the JOB require the jail to provide these medicines for free to the people prescribed it?”

Deputy Warden Williams:

I want to respond to this if I can. We do have over the counter medications available on commissary. That is not new. That has always been existent, despite the new vendor for commissary. However, some people in the facility are prescribed these medications. So, we provide, for free, anything that is deemed to be of medical necessity. Things that are not deemed to be of medical necessity, that is made by the practitioner’s determination, and then the inmate or incarcerated individual could be redirected to purchase those items from commissary. We have a number of individuals who may be used to taking medicines, like Tylenol or Ibuprofen, but those are really to be prescribed for short term. Length of time or long time taking of those can have other medical conditions that might result. This is left up to the practitioner’s determination. Items that are medically necessary or services that are medically necessary are provided at no charge with no copay to the incarcerated individuals during the length of their stay.

D. Sylvia Williams

“Currently the jail is consolidating housing pods in response to staffing shortages. For example, 8D which is a max, maximum pod is being combined with 4C, an intake pod. This is dangerous because increasing the pod’s population prevents incarcerated people from being able to socially distance safely. It is also dangerous because it mixes people of different classification levels—meaning a person charged with first degree murder is on the same pod as people charged with much less serious offenses. Are there other options available to address the staffing shortages that doesn’t risk the lives of incarcerated individuals and staff?”

Warden Harper:

A lot of this comment is inaccurate. Our classification procedures and the management the population meet all safety guidelines. We feel as though we are meeting all the safety guidelines when it comes to managing the population at our jail.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

Yes, so going off of that comment, are pods being consolidated right now?

Warden Harper:

Pods are being collapsed. We are collapsing pods based on classification and best practices. So yes.

Ms. Hallam:

Are the folks on the pods, especially now that they are being collapsed, is anyone on the same pod as someone with a different classification as them?

Warden Harper:

I am just going to say this because I am not going to get into that in this forum, we follow all of our classification procedures.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, and why are pods being collapsed right now?

Warden Harper:

I am not going to get into that in this forum. We can talk about that later.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, why not?

Deputy Warden Williams:

The management of the population is our prerogative, that is something that we have discussed. I think the Warden has said on more than one occasion that it is not appropriate to discuss in this forum and it will not be. So, the response is not going to change no matter how many times you ask.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, well I will ask a different question then. I am wondering if during COVID, when it's obviously too dangerous to even have visitors come in, why we are condensing and collapsing pods and putting more incarcerated people on each pod?

Warden Harper:

Ms. Hallam, again we can discuss that during the executive session.

Judge Clark:

Thank you.

E. Concerned Resident

"Awesome to see members of the Oversight Board doing jail inspections!!!! I know photography is typically not allowed inside the jail because of safety concerns but I was wondering if Board members might be able to take some pictures or video recordings? Since we talk so much about food service, for example, it would be great if Board members could take photos of food trays when they eat at the jail."

Judge Clark:

I think the answer to this is sort of obvious, but I will ask the Warden to address the reason why we cannot take photos.

Warden Harper:

I do not think that the board members would need to take photos because when you guys did your unannounced visits you actually sat and ate the food when you came into our facility. So why would you need to take photographs when you actually observe the wonderful meals.

Judge Clark:

I think what the person who is writing this meant was they could be shared with the public. I don't feel like I need to take any photos because I was there. I saw whatever I saw but I think the idea is that the public wants to see what we saw on our visit.

Warden Harper:

I would just say, your Honor, that hopefully the citizens would trust our board members to report the wonderful meals that are being served at our jail. I think on the inspections that took place you guys observed the meals that were being served.

Judge Clark:

I think they were talking about more than just food service. That was one example. I guess the question is, is there a safety concern if board members were to take photos during their inspections of the jails? I guess that is the question.

Warden Harper:

Yes, ma'am. I think that would be a safety concern.

Judge Clark:

I would not have thought ask it, but somebody asked the board.

F. John Kenstowicz

"Since April 2020, 10 people have died, who have been incarcerated at ACJ. Cody Still, Justin Brady, Vinckley Harris and John Brady all died after being at ACJ for only a short period of time. ACJ has the responsibility to provide emergent care when someone walks through the doors of the jail. In addition, police, paramedics and the courts also have a responsibility for the well-being of individuals before they arrive at the jail. These deaths were very possibly preventable. I am asking the County Executive and the JOB to form a task force of subject matter experts in the fields of law enforcement, emergency medical services, opioid and mental health services and county jail administration to develop best practices for these instances."

Judge Clark:

Well I am going to ask Warden if you have any response to that. I would say that there are some things that are happening, including the RFP for the jail redesign project that would possibly cover some of these things. Also, I think Ms. Dalton had given some other presentations on crisis response and things like that, which would help as well, but I do not know if you want to add anything. Then I can ask the board whether they want to do anything in response to Mr. Kenstowicz comment.

Warden Harper:

Your honor, I really do not have a response for this.

Judge Clark:

Mr. Kenstowicz, I am sure you are listening. Maybe we could talk, and you could tell me exactly what you might like to see happen. I could set up a call. So, if you could email me in the next couple of days and maybe the two of us can at least start by chatting. How about that?

G. Ronald Johnson

"What challenges does ACJ expect to encounter from the staffing shortages in the healthcare and corrections departments in the months ahead? Can the state department of corrections or another correctional facility temporarily assign their corrections officers to ACJ to make up for the staffing shortages? Can the County assign more healthcare providers to ACJ?"

Deputy Warden Williams:

In general, I think that we have said on a couple of occasions in this meeting alone that we will not be discussing you know those staffing shortages. What I can say is that we are not the only agency complying with mandates as such as we have upcoming. There are nationwide shortages and have been in the healthcare field as well as in the field of corrections. We will lean on our partners for additional ideas and support, but I doubt that they will have the resources available to lend additional staff to our institution.

Judge Clark:

And I guess some of these things we will be discussing in the executive session. Thank you, Chief Williams. Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

You mentioned health care staffing, do you have a breakdown of the unvaccinated staff members that work in the healthcare field in the jail.

Deputy Warden Williams:

I do. They were included in the direct contact numbers as well.

Ms. Hallam:

In that 174 direct contacts, how many of those are health care workers?

Deputy Warden Williams:

4.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, thank you very much.

H. Janelle Cornyn

"At the October meeting Mr. Pilarski said that fruit is not allowed at ACJ because it can be used as a weapon. Can the jail explain that? It sounds a bit strange to civilians."

Warden Harper:

An apple can be used to be thrown at an individual. Then also apples and fruits can be cut up to make homemade wine. Of course, we do not want incarcerated individuals to be under the influence while they are in the jail. So, we do not want hard apples or whole apples be utilized as a weapon or thrown at individuals to cause injury to staff and to inmates.

Judge Clark:

Thank you.

I. Chris Jacobs

"One of my friends recently lost tablet privileges for almost a month. For that whole time he was listed as "SUSPENDED" on the Getting Out app and he wasn't allowed to send or receive any messages. Because his account was suspended I couldn't contact him at all and was really worried about his mental and physical wellbeing. I thought that everyone in the jail was supposed to have access to the tablets? Why would someone's account be suspended?"

Warden Harper:

If an incarcerated individual violates our rules and regulations, we do take their privileges from them. But when privileges are taken and they cannot make phone calls, they are still provided a tablet, so they can do law library services. Apparently, that individual must have violated rules and regulations.

Judge Clark:

I guess the question is though, I guess it is in the comment, it's not specific question, if a family member is concerned about that person how would they then try to contact or find out about that person if the tablet privileges are suspended?

Warden Harper:

I would advise that they email us, we have an email that they could send to us, or they can call.

J. Rachel DeWitt

"One of my friends just got transferred from ACJ to a jail in Ohio and he says that at the new facility they're allowed out of their cells every day from 7am to 10pm. I understand that every industry has struggled to adapt to COVID but it seems like ACJ is having a much much harder time than other jails. Why is ACJ still on 23-and-one? Why has it been locked down this entire time?"

Warden Harper:

Your Honor, our primary responsibility to make sure that virus does not spread in our jail. Now that our numbers are down, we are going to look at allowing more individuals to come out so that they can get more out of cell time. But our primary responsibility is to stop that virus from spreading.

Judge Clark:

Thank you.

K. Malcolm DurrIDGE

"In a recent interview Susan McCampbell of the Center for Innovative Public Policies said that she wasn't aware of any jail in the whole country that has been operating as restrictively as ACJ throughout the pandemic. In PA most detention facilities are no longer in lockdown and York, Lancaster, and Dauphin county jails are allowing in-person visits again. The entire country has had a hard time dealing with COVID and with staffing shortages, but only ACJ has been on 23-and-one lockdown for the entire pandemic. Why does ACJ have this problem?"

Judge Clark:

So, we already really kind of had this discussion based upon the last question and we also talked about in-person visits. Ms. Hallam, did you want to say something?

Ms. Hallam:

I just wanted to read, citing the same person who the person from the public commenter cited. That is, Susan Campbell. She is the president of the Center for Innovative Public Policy. There was an article where she was quoted. I just wanted to add on it because something else she said I think is very important and I would like a response to. She said that "Any facility that has 100% of their incarcerated individuals locked down 23 hours a day, there's something really, really wrong with it. If the COVID epidemic has overcome them that means that they, the Allegheny County Jail, has very poor health care. There are issues with incarcerated folks' supervision, staff hiring, and staff training." So, has the jail done anything differently since the lockdown started in regards to staff hiring, staff training, or health care at the jail to try to stop this lockdown from happening? Because it truly does seem based off my research, based off talking to experts in the field, that Allegheny County Jail truly is an outlier in this situation.

Deputy Warden Williams:

To directly address the hiring conditions, we were one of the facilities, I don't know of any others that have been able to do this, but last year during the pandemic, we had support to dramatically increase rates so that we could further recruit for additional staff. We are competing with a lot of different health care entities in the Pittsburgh area as you guys are well aware. Our LPNs, for example, went from these \$18/hour for \$28/hour. Our RNs went from \$26/hour to \$34/hour. Having competitive pay rates has been something that has very much limited us in the past but has allowed us to bring an additional staff throughout. I think that it is very convenient for somebody who is not seen our setting to make such blatant comments about the Health Care Department. I am devastated that anybody would just so willingly say things that are totally disrespectful to the hard working people who have been in this institution fighting during a pandemic, during staffing shortages, but everybody is entitled to their opinion. I just want to focus on that is an opinion of a person and not facts. I would also state that it's important to remember that our case counts, though they have definitely at times been higher than they were in the early months of the pandemic, as an institution we have had some of the lowest case counts despite having thousands of people come in and out of our facility. So, our COVID mitigation measures have been effective for the population and we do have an obligation to keep those safe. We have struggled with vaccination rates, which I will be providing those numbers. Despite continuous vaccination, we cannot meet 50% because of the transient nature of our population. I think it is easy to look at numbers. I think it is easy to just say jails this, prisons that, but it is not indicative of what is actually going on in this institution. I feel like every single employee here would expect the respect and dignity to understand that they are working very hard.

Warden Harper:

I just want to piggyback off the Chief because I was just reading a newspaper article today that one of the county jails had 21 deaths during the pandemic. Five of the deaths were through homicide and five of the death were through suicide. Unfortunately, we had one death due to COVID. So, I piggyback off the Chief, we have done a wonderful job during this pandemic with the measures that we have taken place. We could be just like this other county jail and have all of these deaths within the 18 months.

Ms. Hallam:

I think my question was misinterpreted. It was not directed at all to the health care workers at the jail but instead the administration who is responsible for the policies of the jail. Really, I just want to know if the issues that were experiencing are ones that according to you aren't being experienced by all other jails in regard to staffing shortages and those kinds of things. How come we're the only one who's still on 23 and 1? How come we're the only ones who still are not having visits? How come we are the outlier in this situation? I understand again all of the problems that we are dealing with but those are not problems that are unique to Allegheny County or the Allegheny County jail. So why is it that we're in this situation? If you could please just answer that question.

Warden Harper:

I am going to answer this again, Ms. Hallam. We had 1 COVID related death. Look at other jails our size and how many deaths that they had. It is because of this administration and the employees and what they have done. So that is the answer to your question. What we have done works. It saves lives.

Ms. Hallam:

That is not an answer to my question because I also read the same article that you are referencing about the Philly jail and I am wondering why the other jails who also have not had COVID deaths, who also are back resuming visits, who also are done with the 23 and 1...

Deputy Warden Williams:

Ms. Hallam, it was an answer to your question, it was not an answer that you want. It is okay that we have a disagreement here. We do that frequently.

Ms. Hallam:

I am trying to keep it all together because I do not appreciate the way that you direct your comments towards me, the way you speak towards me, it is wholly disrespectful. But I am beyond that because I am here to try to protect the people in this jail and you are giving work around answers. It is either we cannot answer your questions because of security concerns, or we are just going to say we answered a question that was not answered. It was my question. I did not get a complete answer to the question and that is all I am asking for. I do not think that is too much to ask for. So please, watch how you talk to me. I try to give you respect when I ask you questions, and I am not getting it in return. I would simply like my questions answered. Thank you very much.

Judge Clark:

Alright, so respect works both ways. I think we are going to just move along.

L. Kim Sanders

“Warden Harper told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that ACJ conducts an "internal review" of each person who dies in the jail's custody. Can you describe ACJ's internal review process? What is its purpose? What materials or information does ACJ rely on in conducting this internal review, like looking at autopsy reports, and what else?”

Warden Harper:

I do not think that it is appropriate for me to discuss everything that we do to review a death. If that is something that we can discuss in executive session I would be more than willing to do so.

Judge Clark:

One question I have, does the jail even received the autopsy reports or review them?

Deputy Warden Williams:

We do not receive the autopsy reports, your Honor. We do receive cause and manner of the death, but we do not get to see further details.

Judge Clark:

One other question, is the Allegheny County police involved in the investigation?

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am.

Judge Clark:

So, there is a police process that happens through the county police.

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am.

Judge Clark:

Is that for any death that happens in the jail or does it depend on the type of death?

Warden Harper:

All deaths.

Judge Clark:

Does that county, well you probably cannot answer what the county police does with their reports. Alright, thank you.

M. Marc Samms

"I'd like more details on the jail's death reporting policy. I thank Deputy Williams for telling us about 6A releases but was not really clear on when or why the jail might ask for a 6A release. For example John Brady died at UPMC Mercy last year on November 20th after having a medical emergency at the jail, and his death was not reported to the Board. Had a 6A release been requested in his case? Was Mr. Brady still under the legal custody of the jail at the time of his death? What are some examples of times when a 6A release would be appropriate? I think it would also be very helpful if the jail would make its death notification policy available to the public."

Judge Clark:

I think you did talk about the 6A release last time Chief Williams. I think Mr. Samms wants some clarification on that and what that means with the 6A release. Even though I do believe this was part of what you stated at the last meeting about whether the person is still in the custody.

Deputy Warden Williams:

Absolutely. So, I will not discuss this particular case. I am not able to. The individual was not incarcerated, and I cannot provide any further detail on that. I can confirm that he had a medical urgency at our institution, and we sent for higher level care.

Judge Clark:

He did not ask for specifics about this case. I think he is asking about if...

Deputy Warden Williams:

He did ask if he was under the custody of the jail at the time of death.

Judge Clark:

Oh yes, he did.

Deputy Warden Williams:

The process is, and we did discuss this last month, we report any death that happens to a person who is in legal custody. That does not necessarily mean that they are in physical custody of the institution, but legal custody. So, individuals who pass away while they are hospitalized, and we do make report of that, they are still in our legal custody and just not in our institution. We will and have continued to report any of those circumstances. The 6A release truly is a document. That is how we refer to the legal document that is submitted by the courts and is processed through the records department here. Then they go into the release process in the institution. If there is somebody who has not been fully booked then they are getting released by ROR, non-monetary bond things like that. There are a number of reasons why we might request the 6A. I think I discussed this too. There are a number of people who come into incarceration that this is not an appropriate setting for them. When community resources are limited, or somebody is not engaged at an appropriate level of care in the community and maybe they have a wellness check at their home because neighbors are concerned about them. They may get cited or brought to our institution because of terroristic threats. When they come into our institution, we actually find that they have dementia or Parkinson's or some kind of degenerative cognitive disease. We would with our social workers on site work through DHS supports, as well as the courts, to advocate that that person be redirected to an appropriate level of care, so that they can receive treatment. Those are the circumstances in which we would be advocating for somebody to be released. That is certainly not the only example. It does happen very frequently. At the jail, we advocate for individuals who do not have to be here to be somewhere else but ultimately, we are at the court's discretion. We will continue to follow our legal obligation to hold any remands that are legally designated to our facility.

Judge Clark:

Thank you.

N. Leshawn Owens

“What is the oversight board's plan to ensure that incarcerated people can watch JOB meetings and provide public comments?”

Judge Clark:

This is actually pretty good one. I had not thought about it. Mr. Owens, thank you for this consideration. I think it is something that the board should think about. First of all, I think on their tablets they could probably access the public comments. Warden, is that correct? If an incarcerated individual wanted to submit a public comment, can they do that on their tablets? Can they access the court website?

Warden Harper:

They cannot, ma'am.

Judge Clark:

Okay. Is there any way that that could happen, I guess?

Warden Harper:

I will have to check with GTL to see if that is possible.

Judge Clark:

If not, then I think it would be possible for them to submit just a regular comment in writing and there would be some way that they could be forwarded to the board. I do not think that is an issue. I think the board should talk about that process. I will say that I do get lots of mail from incarcerated individuals, not specifically for the board, but lots of mail all the time from incarcerated individuals. That my office does try to respond to, but I do think that it is a possibility. We had talked about even when we go back in person to continue to live stream the meeting so that more of the public could watch. Is it possible that the live streaming could be available for incarcerated individuals to watch once a month?

Warden Harper:

I do not know if that is possible. That is going to require Internet connections, etc. I will talk to my IT team, but I do not know if that is possible.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. I think that is something that we should think about. That if we can make that happen, I shouldn't speak for the whole board but I see heads nodding so I am assuming that the ones that are on video, that this is something the board would be in agreement with. Alright so thank you Leshawn Owens, that was a great comment. I think it is a good one to end on. So, thank you.

7. Warden's Report

Judge Clark:

We are going to move to Warden Harper's report.

Warden Harper:

I would just like to report that 27 incarcerated individuals voted by absentee ballot. We have 15 employees that will be scheduled for mental health first aid training on November 9th and 12 employees are scheduled for de-escalation training that would take place on November 22nd and 23rd. Then I just like the report effective October 26th the FCC reduced the telephone rates from \$0.19 to \$0.16. That is all I have for the Warden's report.

Judge Clark:

Anyone have any questions? Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

Can you tell me, will there be someone on all shifts who have had this special de-escalation training?

Warden Harper:

I am really trying to do that now, Ms. Klein. I am really trying.

Ms. Klein:

I appreciate that.

Judge Clark:

Will this be, sort of like a train the trainer? Are any of the people that are being trained, will they be able to do training internally within the jail?

Warden Harper:

We have 5 individuals that is going to be certified as trainer for training for mental health first aid.

Judge Clark:

What about the de-escalation?

Warden Harper:

All twelve of those individuals will be trainer for training. Yes, ma'am.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

The 12 staff members who have been trained, are they specific positions in the jail or do they have specific levels in the hierarchy at the jail? I am not looking for their names of who they are but what their roles are in the jail.

Warden Harper:

The 12 employees have not been trained yet, but they are employees of different departments in the jail.

Judge Clark:

Are they corrections officers, line staff, supervisory?

Warden Harper:

Yeah, a combination of everybody: line staff, correction officers, health care staff...everybody.

Judge Clark:

Thanks. Any other questions?

Ms. Moss:

Yes, I do. I am sorry that I could not on teams at all today. So that is why I am not on. I wanted to ask the Warden, is it possible to make sure that the people or whoever scheduled for I guess the midnight shift, I am not sure how your shifts are, that it be mandatory that they have deescalated training. As I talked to the different people about de-escalation, especially Torrance, they were saying one of the mistakes they made is that they did not have the 11-7 shift trained. They are usually younger employees because everything is done by seniority. They needed to know how to handle situations because it seems that is when most of the things happen, late at night, where you get the most

intake of persons who are maybe either coming off of drug high or what have you. Is there a way that you can make sure the people that work those shifts get the training?

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am. Our goal is to have everyone trained in mental health first aid and de-escalation. That is going to take some time.

Ms. Moss:

Thank you, but that was just a thought. So, you can keep that in mind because they said that is when they seemed to have their most problems.

Warden Harper:

Yes ma'am.

Ms. Moss:

Thank you.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

I just had one more question, these 12 staff members who are from all different departments that are about to get trained, I've heard that there's some new team of staff members at the jail, called the CRU team, is that what these people are? These 12 folks that are receiving this training and if not what is that CRU team? Is it related to this at all?

Warden Harper:

The CRU is our correctional response team and some of those individuals will be receiving mental health first aid and de-escalation training.

Ms. Hallam:

What is the correctional response team responsible for? I had never heard of them before recently.

Warden Harper:

They respond to emergency situations at our jail.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay, it is kind of like the CERT team?

Warden Harper:

Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Hallam:

Thank you.

Warden Harper:

You're welcome.

Judge Clark:

Anything else?

8. Deputy Warden's Report

Judge Clark:

Alright, we will move to Chief Williams report.

A. COVID Update

Deputy Warden Williams:

Thanks, your Honor. The jail website has been updated. So, I will not provide all of the specifics that are on there. They are comprehensive on the website and then we also have the month look back. The more important numbers are that we presently have 6 incarcerated individuals who are positive within the facility. Today's institutional count with 1,592. We have 5 individuals who are pending tests. They are being tested for purposes of transfer not for concerns related to clinical symptoms. In terms of employees, this again is a comprehensive number, we have had 177 staff from all job classifications, not just one, who have reported positive test results. Presently we have 3 individuals who are continuing through their recovery process and have not returned to work. As you know, we have been doing vaccinations throughout the institution. We have been holding clinics Monday through Friday for the incarcerated individual population. To make sure that we are providing an abundance of opportunities for staff to engage in that process, we are providing those clinics as well. We had two of those this week alone for employees specifically. We have supported the vaccination of over 1,750 incarcerated individuals. It is becoming a little bit difficult to track now that we are doing that booster vaccine. I am going to try and get those numbers to be better next month to make sure that I do not have any duplicate counts within those numbers. We still maintain a supply of Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen. We have 745 individuals, or 47%, of our incarcerated population who is presently fully vaccinated within the institution. That is a decrease. Last month we had 770 and the month before that we were over 800. So, we continue to provide vaccination, but we are not able to maintain a population of vaccinated persons within the institution. We are still complying with the recommendation to provide \$25 to the account of all individuals who do elect to receive the vaccination. I have already provided the numbers related to employees for vaccination. But just in case anybody missed those, out of 609 county employees, 388 have provided proof of full vaccination, 10 are in partial vaccination status, and 211 have not provided proof of vaccination with 174 of those being direct contact. If nobody has any COVID questions, I can move on.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Hallam, do you have COVID question?

Ms. Hallam:

I do. Are there certain pods that the incarcerated folks are vaccinated are on? I know they had reported that they were told that in addition to that \$25 per shot that we requiring them to be given for getting vaccinated that they were also told they would get more rec time if they were to get vaccinated. So, I am just wondering how that is being handled?

Deputy Warden Williams:

I believe we discussed this last month where we did incentivize, and we sent out that notice in the month of June. There was a time period when county case rates were low, as well as institutional case rates and there were a lot of different incentives for individuals who were vaccinated. We had housing units that had the primary vaccination numbers centralized on those units for increased immunity purposes. However, with the variants present we have found a volume of our vaccinated incarcerated individuals, as well as staff members, who have continued to test positive. So, we scaled back those incentives. We do hope to be able to reintroduce those very soon but that is not presently going on.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay but are there pods that are fully vaccinated? Are they segregated from unvaccinated folks? Is it organized at all like that?

Deputy Warden Williams:

There are no pods that are fully vaccinated right now but we do have several housing units that are 95% or more.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay thank you.

Judge Clark:

Any other questions about COVID? Alright thank you. Chief Williams?

C. Medication Assisted Treatment Update

Deputy Warden Williams:

Medications for opioid use disorder, I was hopeful that I was going to be able to provide more specific details related to Methadone, but we are still in conversations with the implementation process with that service provider. So, next month. In terms of Buprenorphine, presently in the facility we have 43 individuals who are prescribed Buprenorphine. From October 1 to October 31 we had 100 unique client individuals who were prescribed Buprenorphine. Again, this is a large volume of turnover. Our numbers on a day to day do not seem to be high but we are continuing those treatments for individuals within the institution. We have a commitment from a pharmacy and contracts are in the works to make sure that they can provide us with Sublocade. Our medications for opioid use disorder policy is currently under review once again and revision. We are getting feedback from our prescribers, as well as some other agencies, on the best way to identify those that would be most appropriate to receive an injectable form of Buprenorphine, the long acting agent that is Sublocade.

Judge Clark:

Any questions? Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

I have a question, but it is not about MAT. On page 9 of the Warden's report it said there were 11 commitments to Torrance but no admission. I just would like some clarification on what commitment to Torrance means.

Deputy Warden Williams:

Commitment is when the commitment hearing takes place, so somebody is going to be under 304, 402 or a 403. I think most of us are familiar with the term 302, which is an involuntary commitment in the community. So, 304, 402 and 403 are related to those forensic commitments within Torrance. So those commitment orders have been granted, which means that they are currently in our building awaiting their transfers. Torrance, like many other agencies, ours included, has had to delay, or cease all admissions due to COVID. We work with them in partnership. They have started again, that is not reflected in this report because we do until the 15th of the month. Since these numbers have been published, we have sent individuals to Torrance and we are currently working to make sure that we continue that process with them.

Ms. Klein:

I would assume that while they are awaiting transfer to Torrance, they are housed in your acute mental health unit.

Deputy Warden Williams:

Yes ma'am. So, either the acute, the chronic or the step-down unit for the population. Competency restoration treatment is very specific, expensive, and expansive. While they are with us, we continue to make every effort to

get them to restore to competency through other modalities or treatment measures. There are occasions when we are successful at that, they are rechecked and then the commitment is rescinded but that has not been the recent case for us. The numbers that are outstanding remain outstanding and will need that higher level of care.

Judge Clark:

This is the statewide problem Ms. Klein. Judge Lazzara and I talked to judges all across Pennsylvania. One, there's just not enough beds. They have over years closed mental health hospitals and sometimes, even in the best of times before COVID, there was just a wait for bed availability. So, the judge has issued the order to commit and they are waiting for transport basically. Yes, Ms. Klein?

Ms. Klein:

Would it be possible to put on the Warden's report how long people are waiting? I understand that is no reflection on you, it is a reflection on there not being beds in Torrance. But I think that would be helpful information for us to know about really significantly mentally ill people awaiting treatment in ACJ.

Judge Clark:

Can we put that on there, like when the commitment order was entered?

Deputy Warden Williams:

That is not something that we presently track but that is something that we could. We are primarily focused on continuing to offer and provide treatment while they are in our custody. I hate to say that the length of time that they wait does not really impact how we are going to provide care to them here. So that is why we do not track it, but I do understand a large number of entities including some legal organizations would probably like that information.

Judge Clark:

I think it would be useful and for the court too. If you are able to provide that information in a report for the board to look at that would be greatly appreciated.

Deputy Warden Williams:

I will try to work on that for next month, your honor.

Judge Clark:

If you have any stumbling blocks or something just let me know, but I think it would be useful to know that. Ms. Hallam, did you have your hand up?

Ms. Hallam:

I was just going to ask the same question that Ms. Klein asked about the wait time because I remember the ACLU put out a report a few years ago that Pennsylvania has the longest wait times in the nation for people needing to go to a place like Torrance. So, I was just wondering also what our average times are.

Judge Clark:

As bad as we think it is here, I think our colleagues in Philadelphia, the judges in Philadelphia, it is much worse there. It is not a good situation, but it is not obviously in the control of the jail. It would be helpful to know. I do not know. Sometimes if you know then maybe something can happen. I do not know what that is. I have no answer, but I think it would just be useful to know. Thank you. Chief Williams, anything else that you want to report on today?

B. Update on Modification to Healthcare Record Including Length of Individual Counseling Sessions

Deputy Warden Williams:

I can make comment that the healthcare record implementation has not yet taken place. With that organization we've had a couple of bills related to COVID and specifically managing the booster tracking map that has jumped the line in getting that worked out, but as soon as that module is implemented, I will provide updates.

Judge Clark:

Thank you. Any other questions for Chief Williams? Alright. Thank you again for your very thorough reporting. It is greatly appreciated.

9. New Business

Judge Clark:

We will move to new business. We have two items under new business. Ms. Hallam?

A. Motion to request money from the IIWF to be put on the commissary accounts of each person.

Ms. Hallam:

Thank you, Judge Clark. The first is a motion to request money from the Incarcerated Individual's Welfare Fund to be put on the commissary account each person in the ACJ. As of the time that I drafted this motion there were 1,628 folks incarcerated in the jail. The motion is for \$50 for each person. Total cost of \$81,400. So, I would like to make a motion to approve.

Judge Clark:

Is there a second to the motion?

Judge Lazzara:

Second

Judge Clark:

There is a second by Judge Lazzara. Any discussion? All those in favor?

Others:

Aye

Judge Clark:

Any opposed? The motion is carried.

The board unanimously approved a motion by Ms. Hallam, duly seconded by Judge Lazzara, to request money from IIWF to be put on the commissary accounts of each incarcerated individual (1,628 individuals x \$50.00 = Total \$81,400).

B. Motion to request money from the IIWF to be put on the tablet accounts of each person.

Judge Clark:

Ms. Hallam?

Ms. Hallam:

Thank you. The next one is a motion to request money from the Incarcerated Individual's Welfare Fund to be put on the tablet accounts of each person. Again, 1,628 folks incarcerated in the jail, \$50 for each person, total cost of \$81,400. I would like to make a motion to approve.

Judge Lazzara:
Second

Judge Clark:
Judge Lazzara made the second. Any discussion? All those in favor?

Others:
Aye

Judge Clark:
Any opposed? The motion is approved.

The board unanimously approved a motion by Ms. Hallam, duly seconded by Judge Lazzara, to request money from Incarcerated Individual's Welfare Fund to be put on the tablet accounts of each incarcerated individual (1,628 individuals x \$50.00 = Total \$81,400).

Judge Clark:
Any other new business at this time? Any old business? If not, I will entertain a motion to adjourn and we will go into Executive Session.

Ms. Moss:
If I am on the phone, is there a number for me to call?

Judge Clark:
You will just stay on.

Ms. Moss:
Okay.

Ms. Hallam:
Just to clarify before we go into executive session is this only for members of the board or are there other folks who are going to be in the executive session as well?

Mr. Bacharach:
Your Honor, I was going to ask in light of the discussion if I could sit in.

Judge Clark:
Does anyone have an issue with the solicitor sitting in?

Ms. Hallam:
I think that it would be very helpful to have a solicitor's input on the legality of some of the things we are discussing in executive session. I was more asking about like proxies and those sorts of things if they are going to be in executive session. It is one thing to sit in on a meeting, it is another thing in an executive session. I am just wondering what the rules are on that.

Judge Clark:
Well executive session usually includes just the board, but it also includes those other folks that the board designates to receive information from. Obviously, the Warden and Chief Williams are not members of the board, but they would be in the executive session because there's no sense in having it because the Warden has to answer the questions.

Mr. Bacharach has asked today, and you thought that was a good idea. I personally think because it might be a good idea for Mr. Pilarski to stay on, but he is technically not a member of the board. But all the other people, we have the community corrections people, I see Mr. Shearer from probation is there, all of those folks would have to exit.

Ms. Hallam:

Okay I would just like to enter, for the record, that I do not think that non board members that are not invited by the board should be in the executive session, such as proxies.

Judge Clark:

I would like to invite Mr. Pilarski if there are no objections.

Ms. Hallam:

I object.

Judge Clark:

Does anyone else object?

Ms. Moss:

Who did you want to invite? I did not hear that, something cut off.

Judge Clark:

Mr. Pilarski from the County Executive's office.

Ms. Moss:

Well is he representing the County Executive?

Judge Clark:

Well he was here in his place today. That is up to you to object. I would like to invite him to stay because there may be some useful things that, you know...

Ms. Moss:

No, I am not objecting. I just wanted to understand because it got cut off, I did not hear all of it.

Ms. Hallam:

I am objecting.

Judge Clark:

Thank you, Ms. Hallam.

Mr. Pilarski:

Thank you, your honor.

Judge Clark:

Can we have a motion to adjourn?

Ms. Moss:

Moved.

Judge Clark:

Alright, so there is a motion to adjourn. It does not need a second. All those in favor?

Others:

Aye

Judge Clark:

Any opposed? Alright, so we will move into executive session. We will ask Mr. Sykes to close out the live meeting and will ask all the other folks so please exit at this time. Thank you.

Kindest regard,



Chelsa Wagner

NAME	CONCERN
John Kenstowicz	Since April 2020, 10 people have died, who have been incarcerated at ACJ. Cody Still, Justin Brady, Vinkley Harris and John Brady all died after being at ACJ for only a short period of time. ACJ has the responsibility to provide emergent care when someone walks through the doors of the jail. In addition, police, paramedics and the courts also have a responsibility for the well-being of individuals before they arrive at the jail. These deaths were very possibly preventable. I am asking the County Executive and the JOB to form a task force of subject matter experts in the fields of law enforcement, emergency medical services, opioid and mental health services and county jail administration to develop best practices for these instances.
Lorenzo Rulli	What if any changes have been put into place to prevent having insufficient trays for inmates. What is the current situation concerning the investigation into the meals and providers at the ACJ. What if any resolution has been put in place to ensure visitation is happening for every inmate. When if at all does the jail plan to lift the 23-1 lockdown.
Michelle Smith	What are you all going to do about the horrific conditions in the county jail? I have family that call me daily about their mistreatment and health issues. Just yesterday my friend told me a rat was cooked in their food and roaches were in their bread. How the guards show favoritism to certain inmates and will ignore health issues that they have. Especially the female inmates. I sent my friend a card with a letter she never received it. A month later it was sent back saying it was "empty" but they clearly took the stuff out and taped up the side where they opened it at. Inmates are not getting their proper medication, food, water, rec, or showers. They are treated like filthy animals and this must stop! And they do not follow covid guidelines
Joshua Palmer	The death of Paul Allen marks the fifth death this year of a person incarcerated at the Allegheny County Jail. This means the jail's per capita death rate is higher than Rikers Island. I demand the Jail Oversight Board and especially president Judge Kim Clark acknowledge the atrocity and shameful nature of this. I demand to know what kind of immediate material action will be taken to intervene in this atrocity—not just the deaths but the torturous conditions occurring within the jail. Also: Where is County Executive Fitzgerald and why is the rest of the board not outraged at his negligence in participating in this civil forum? The jail is a blight on this city and the JOB should be working overtime to improve conditions.
Garret Wassermann	The most recent news at the jail is that folks held there have been on a 23-1 lockdown for months, basically since Covid began. This is torture and flies in the face of referendum this year against solitary confinement. When is the board & County Executive Fitzgerald going to hold Warden Harper responsible for repeated human rights violations for years?
Brian Englert	My comment concerns the jail manager of administration not adhering to the city of Pgh. COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. This ordinance was enacted last year, and applies to any employer in the city with more than 50 employees, that's not a state or federal agency. In the last 6 months 28 Officers were ordered to quarantine due to a positive COVID test or exposure to a positive individual. 40 Officers overall since March, all unpaid. This act mandates employers to provide up to 80 hours of emergency sick time to the employee, outside of their benefit time. The jail has stolen over 400 benefit days from Officers, forcing them to get Family Medical Leave in order to take their benefit time. Our vacations are needed for family time.
Cecelia Torres	At the Oct. meeting Judge Clark stated that a board member who can't attend a meeting where a vote is expected can give their proxy to another board member, so why have non-board members been allowed to vote for board members? Why are board members who don't attend the public meetings allowed to vote on anything since they did not participate in the public discussion that happens at these meetings? And finally since Fitzgerald refuses to attend these meetings, I believe a stipulation should be added to the rules that you can only miss say 1-2 meetings a year. I have listened to these meetings since they have gone virtual and I believe he has been to 1 meeting and that was only because of the amount of media coverage. That's disgraceful!
concerned staff member	Administration makes decisions impacting inmate and staff safety while refusing input from employees with knowledge of potential repercussions for years. You are currently working to change our facility following the trend in other major cities, those changes are not effective in other cities, why do you want to follow a failing trend? Crime rates will rise in our city, they already are. You do just as our administration does to us, you take advice and implement changes that are wanted by individuals that lack the knowledge to understand the consequences (like taking away our restraint chairs). Can anyone answer this question? this is not a comment, HOW BAD DOES IT HAVE TO GET DOWN HERE BEFORE SOMEONE WILL LITENSE TO US?
Janelle Cornyn	At the October meeting Mr. Pizariski said that fruit is not allowed at ACJ because it can be used as a weapon. Can the jail explain that? It sounds a bit strange to civilians.
Concerned Resident	Awesome to see members of the Oversight Board doing jail inspections!!!! I know photography is typically not allowed inside the jail because of safety concerns but I was wondering if board members might be able to take some pictures or video recordings? Since we talk so much about food service, for example, it would be great if Board members could take photos of food trays when they eat at the jail.
Marc Samms	I'd like more details on the jail's death reporting policy. I thank Deputy Williams for telling us about 6A releases but was not really clear on when or why the jail might ask for a 6A release. For example John Brady died at UPMC Mercy last year on November 20th after having a medical emergency at the jail, and his death was not reported to the Board. Had a 6A release been requested in his case? Was Mr. Brady still under the legal custody of the jail at the time of his death? What are some examples of times when a 6A release would be appropriate? I think it would also be very helpful if the jail would make its death notification policy available to the public.
concerned citizen	Are there any updates on Martin Bueck's death on July 3rd? What happened to him?
Travis View	Has the jail administration thought any more about what it will if Corrections Officers choose to quit their jobs instead of getting vaccinated? A 24/7 lockdown would obviously not be an acceptable solution if the problem arises, what's the back up plan?
Chris Jacobs	One of my friends recently lost tablet privileges for almost a month. For that whole time he was listed as "SUSPENDED" on the Getting Out app and he wasn't allowed to send or receive any messages. Because his account was suspended I couldn't contact him at all and was really worried about his mental and physical wellbeing. I thought that everyone in the jail was supposed to have access to the tablets? Why would someone's account be suspended?
Rachel Dewitt	One of my friends just got transferred from ACJ to a jail in Ohio and he says that at the new facility they're allowed out of their cells every day from 7am to 10pm. I understand that every industry has struggled to adapt to COVID but it seems like ACJ is having a much much harder time than other jails. Why is ACJ still on 23-and-one? Why has it been locked down this entire time?
Malcolm Durridge	In a recent interview Susan McCampbell of the Center for Innovative Public Policies said that she wasn't aware of any jail in the whole country that has been operating as restrictively as ACJ throughout the pandemic. In PA most detention facilities are no longer in lockdown and York, Lancaster, and Dauphin county jails are allowing in-person visits again. The entire country has had a hard time dealing with COVID and with staffing shortages, but only ACJ has been on 23-and-one lockdown for the entire pandemic. Why does ACJ have this problem?
Phil Wiggins	I heard that over the weekend that people housed on 8D went on a hunger strike and in response, ACJ took away their tablets. During that time, people could not file sick call requests or grievances which can only be done using the tablet. Can the JOB require ACJ provide hardcopies of these forms, so that people who are denied access to their tablets can still receive medical attention and be able to exhaust their administrative remedies? Also, the tablet does not allow an individual to keep copies of the sick calls or grievances filed, which can prevent someone from pursuing various forms of legal and medical relief. Can ACJ allow individuals to retain an electronic copy of these essential documents that they file on the tablet?
Claire Troutman	At a recent JOB meeting, Deputy Warden Williams said that ACJ files a 6-A release to request the release of people in the jail's custody who are critically ill. How many people have been "6-A released" in the past year? How does the jail track this information?
Leshawn Owens	What is the oversight board's plan to ensure that incarcerated people can watch JOB meetings and provide public comments?
Kim Sanders	Warden Harper told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that ACJ conducts an "internal review" of each person who dies in the jail's custody. Can you describe ACJ's internal review process? What is its purpose? What materials or information does ACJ rely on in conducting this internal review, like looking at autopsy reports, and what else?
Sam Roberts	ACJ requires incarcerated people, including those who are indigent, to buy Tylenol, Motrin, and other basic over-the-counter medicines, instead of providing it for free. But because these meds are so expensive, many who are prescribed to take them daily cannot afford them, even with the money allotted for commissary. Many incarcerated people are forced to choose whether to use their limited funds to talk to their family on the tablet or suffer in pain. How does the jail decide which medicines to charge for? Can the JOB require the jail to provide these medicines for free to the people prescribed to?
Richard Jones	Currently the jail is consolidating housing pods in response to staffing shortages. For example, 8D which is a max, maximum pod is being combined with 4C, an intake pod. This is dangerous because increasing the pod's population prevents incarcerated people from being able to socially distance safely. It is also dangerous because it mixes people of different classification levels—meaning a person charged with first degree murder is on the same pod as people charged with much less serious offenses. Are there other options available to address the staffing shortages that doesn't risk the lives of incarcerated individuals and staff?
Sylvia Williams	What challenges does ACJ expect to encounter from the staffing shortages in the healthcare and corrections departments in the months ahead? Can the state department of corrections or another correctional facility temporarily assign their corrections officers to ACJ to make up for the staffing shortages? Can the County assign more healthcare providers to ACJ?
Ronald Johnson	Do ALLEGHENY COUNTY judges have to be vaccinated by 12/1/2021? If so will the non-vaccinated judges be terminated the same as everyone else? The Allegheny county jail is already at a hardship with low staffing issues, mandated overtime for both medical & correctional officers and the battle of non-vaccinated MAY lose their jobs(stressful times) How will you continue to run the jail with less than 40% of the working staff gone? Do the inmates have a choice of being vaccinated or released? No, so why do officers have to make a choice of vaccinate me or lose my job? How is this a fair work practice? How are you going to fix these issues? Jail morale is at an all time low on from officers, medical and inmates. Why is the jail not transparent?
Jane Doe	