

**To:** File

**From:** Steve Pilarski, Sr Deputy County Manager

**RE:** Tour of ACJ on September 23, 2022

On Friday September 23, 2022 I along with Judge Elliot Howsie conducted an on-site inspection of the jail for approximately two hours. During the visit we were escorted by Captain Frank. By our request we visited the security area, kitchen, intake area, the juvenile pod, the medical treatment pod, and a female pod on 1C.

Our visit started in the security area which was initiated in 2022 and has only begun operating fully as of September 19, 2022. Currently the employees are in training, but once training has been completed, employees will be able to monitor the jail seven days a week for compliance with jail policies, procedures, rules, and overall security. These individuals also monitor the tablets for inappropriate actions or content by the individuals on the call. They work closely with the County Police Internal Affairs division assigned to the jail. After leaving the security room we moved to the kitchen area.

Immediately upon arriving in the kitchen I was approached by multiple kitchen workers who wanted to tell me something. While many were speaking at the same time making it difficult to hear what was being said I spoke individually with at least two workers. The first worker (who asked not to be named) described what was being served for lunch that day. Turkey ham, green beans, potatoes and gravy, corn bread and a piece of cake. He stated he generally did not like the food as it was bland and lacked seasoning. He asked if I wanted to see the dead mice that were not cleaned up and I asked him to point out where they were so I could go see. Upon walking over to where he said the dead mice were, I could not see any dead mice. I continued to look along other walls in the area where the kitchen worker said they were but did not see any dead mice. I asked Captain Frank the process for setting mouse traps and clearing any mice that are caught. I was told the traps are reviewed each shift and any dead mice promptly disposed of. While the kitchen was very busy, I continued through the kitchen watching as worker were packing the lunch trays to be transported to the pods. Upon questions from Judge Howsie, Captain Frank described the differences between the trays as some were special dietary trays. These trays had specific names on them of who was to receive them. A question was asked if any workers ever "tampered" with the food. Captain Frank explained that while it is possible, it is unlikely because you do not know who is going to receive what tray. Measures are also undertaken to minimize the chance of this happening. She explained how workers are classified and selected as kitchen workers. Captain Frank did state there can be more issues with contraband with the special dietary trays since they have individual's names on them, so they are more diligent with these trays. Next, we spoke with kitchen worker EJ (initials). He explained that he has been a kitchen worker for approximately three (3) months. EJ was asked about the food and he stated that he has also been housed at the Westmoreland County Jail

and the food was about the same in both facilities, mostly bland and not good but some meals are better than others. EJ was asked about the cleanliness of the kitchen. He stated the kitchen was clean because "kitchen worker always clean-up after themselves." EJ went on to say that he has always been a kitchen worker in Westmoreland and Allegheny County, but it is better at ACJ "because you have more freedom." EJ continued saying that he rarely sees any cockroaches but does see mice from time to time. EJ stated that prior to COVID there were other benefits to being a kitchen worker, but he did not elaborate. EJ was very talkative and helpful with understanding what it was like to be a kitchen worker and what goes on in the kitchen. Moving from the kitchen we were escorted to the intake area.

At intake we were met by Sgt. Gerber who went through the intake process with us. Sgt. Gerber explained how when an individual is arrested and brought to facility by law enforcement agency; come to intake sally-port where a pat down search is done by correctional officers w/ the arresting Law Enforcement agency present. Individuals are then taken to the ASAP desk where they are provided a temporary jail ID bracelet. ACJ takes possession of "serious" property, i.e., large sums of money. Any possessions are listed on a property slip and the individual is provided a carbon copy of what in in possession of ACJ.

Individuals must surrender their shoes (shoelaces) and anything else that can be used for strangulation i.e., scarves, belts, strings to hoodies/sweatpants. Next the individual will receive a personal "review screening" which can be done by any employee regardless of title as long as they have been trained. This assessment differs from a "risk assessment" which can only be performed by medical personnel. After completion of the review screening, with the exception of pregnant females and juveniles, individuals are sent through a body scanner to further check for the possible introduction of contraband into the facility.

The Individual is then sent through ID process. If they are female a urine sample is taken to determine if they are pregnant. (If pregnant a drug screen is done and any appropriate medications for pregnancy or withdrawn are issued) At this time a photo is taken, they are fingerprinted (to confirm identity) and run through NCIC and CLEAN to determine if there are any outstanding warrants, possible bail recommendations etc. they are then placed back into the holding cell.

Once the initial assessment is completed and recommendations are made (if any) they are sent to the magistrate; this process is time dependent on whether the criminal complaint has been received or not, this can and does cause delays. Once the initial assessment is complete, they are sent back to pre-arraignment where magistrate will provide an order. At this time bond will be assigned. No bond, ROR, non-monetary bond. If it is non-monetary or ROR, they will be released through the quick release process. (If they have been officially booked the process is a little different); If the individual is staying;

1. Charges are assigned in the system
2. Photo taken

3. Submit booking process (Answer questions)
4. Provided permanent ID bracelet that has photo and DOC # on it (DOC # is unique to you anytime you would come back to ACJ)

A health assessment is also completed; This may include a drug screen but does not always include a drug screen. We do not drug screen everyone. A urine sample is taken and tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia. (other STD tests are done through a blood draw); a TB test is taken if positive then the individual is scheduled for an x-ray (the x-ray is not immediate but scheduled for a future date as soon as possible). A complete physical assessment is done so any necessary medications can be administered ASAP. Everyone receives a mental health screening (not diagnostic) to attempt to identify any suicidal tendencies. This is an assessment tool more than a screening tool.

Once all that is complete the individual is asked if he/she has any money to be placed on their account. They now surrender all of their other possessions, are strip searched and provided a shower and uniform. Our last part of the intake process was to speak with the individuals who are intake workers who are responsible for keeping the intake area clean, empty any garbage, clean the showers and holding cells, etc. The three workers were asked if they liked working in the intake area and were asked an open ended question asking them to describe their stay. All three stated they like being intake workers as it keeps them busy every day and that Sgt Gerber treats them good and they generally didn't have anything bad to say. One of the three stated how he was anticipating being released very soon as he was passed the time of his minimal sentence and just a few months shy of his complete sentence. The individuals were asked if they had ever been to another facility and how that compared to ACJ. One of the three stated that he had also spent time in the Westmorland jail and the situations were similar. He did state he thought the food was a little better at the Westmorland Jail but not by much.

Before completing the tour of the intake area. I asked Sgt Gerber how he liked his job and if he wanted to elaborate on what is good and bad about ACJ. Sgt. Gerber stated that he enjoyed his job and has worked here for twelve years. Like any job it has its good days and bad days, but he would apply to work for ACJ all over again if he had to. He stated that this job has allowed him to provide a lot for his family. We then left the intake area and proceeded to level 1C.

Upon arriving at pod 1C (female pod) we were told that women were showering. While this was being conducted out of sight, our stay on Pod 1C was brief. We were told that all individuals were quarantined for ten (10) days upon arriving and there were currently seventy to eighty (70-80) individuals on average on the unit. We then proceeded to the medical treatment pod.

Upon arriving I noticed what appeared to be a Dr (white lab coat) conferring with nurses (in scrubs) as they had paperwork in their possession they were reviewing. They then proceeded into the rooms. Captain Frank and the correctional officer working the unit proceeded to provide some details on the process. The CO (name not given) stated that he has worked on the medical unit for approximately one (1) year for a few days a week. Men are housed on one side

and woman on the other. While they see all kinds of medical ailments, they do quite a few gunshot wounds and open wounds that require attention and changing of surgical dressing. They also see a lot of critical illnesses. While he stated that he believes every received good medical treatment on the pod, it is difficult at times as some individuals are “embarrassed by their drug use and do not disclose a lot, others will tell you anything.” If they are not truthful it makes it difficult to assess and treat them. Upon leaving the medical pod I noticed the food trays were still sitting on the delivery cart, this was the second pod that I noticed the lunch trays were still sitting on the delivery cart. (1C was the other). I asked Captain Frank what the average time is the food trays sit upon delivery. She stated they are delivered immediately unless there is activity or an on-going incident on the pod. While the medical unit was busy, and the CO appeared to be bringing the trays in as we left, I do not know when the trays on the other pod were delivered.

At this time Captain Frank asked if we wanted to see one of the new “suicide resistant cells” as this was not part of our initial request to visit. We confirmed our desire to see this area and proceeded to 5C to exam the cell. I walked into the cell and felt the padded walls that were on every side and proceeded to bounce my head against the padding to see how hard it was. Upon leaving the cell we stopped and spoke with the medical employee (Paul) and correctional officer who were working the unit. I asked Paul if he felt comfortable answering any questions. Paul stated he would answer anything we wanted, and that people don’t always like him because he tells the truth. Paul relayed to us that fourteen (14) individuals on the unit have been committed to Torrance Hospital and are waiting for an opening. The longest has been waiting since July 13, of this year. Paul stated that when individuals are committed their average time at Torrance is approximately sixty to ninety (60-90) days. Paul went on to say the individuals do not belong in jail and should be in a hospital. Paul blamed the State for closing all of the facilities years ago leaving jail as the common option. He went on to say the medical department could improve its communication and the “custody side” and “medical side” need to be more inclusionary and communicate effectively.

Lastly, we visited the Juvenile Pod and spoke with Officer WS (initials) who has been a CO for approximately 2.5 years. Many Juveniles were not present as they were in school at the time. WS stated the juveniles leave the pod to attend class at the school on level 1. School has been on level one with the exception of COVID mitigation periods, where the teachers will come to the pod where a makeshift classroom has been established. Juveniles who are placed on RHU (Restrictive Housing) would not be transported to the classroom the teachers come to those individuals for class. WS stated that he has worked both the adult and juvenile pods and generally likes working the juvenile pod. He did not that juveniles tend to be “mouthier” than adults and explained he believes that to be because they are “immature” but “they are just kids.” No female juveniles were present and WS stated that if there were female juveniles, they would be housed on pod 5B, but female juveniles are rare and “generally and historically they do not stay as long as males.” When asked if he knew why that was, he could not elaborate. WS was asked if there was anything else, he thought we should know about the good and bad of

the ACJ. He stated that the food "should be changed" but that he has no complaints about the job and would take the job again. WS noted that he believed that "mandatory overtime is why can't hire" and the job can be "stressful" at times but overall is a good job.

This concluded the tour and Captain Frank return us to the warden's office, where we retrieved our belongs (cell phones, keys, etc.)

Other than what has been specifically noted in this report, overall, the jail was clean and in order and no other specific deficiencies were noted during this tour.