

September 2023 JOB Public Comments

Name: Malcolm Durrige

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: Thank you to Controller O'Connor's office for performing its staffing audit. I would greatly appreciate it if the Board added an item to the agenda for O'Connor to discuss the report's findings and answer any questions from other members. This issue is of vital importance to all stakeholders (including the public!) and should be discussed in an open forum.

Name: Brett Campbell

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: About a year ago Judge Howsie assured me via email that firearms were no longer in use in the jail. Last month Warden Harper informed us that firearms are indeed in use in the jail and have been discharged on multiple occasions. I don't know if Harper lied to Howsie or if Howsie lied to me, but either way the public have been lied to. We were assured back in 2021 that these firearms were necessary to perform cell extractions, but last month we learned they're not even being used for that purpose-- Harper said they are mostly used to intimidate incarcerated individuals. If that weren't enough, the use of these weapons is a huge liability. (For example, see *Rutsgi v. Reams* -- <https://tinyurl.com/rustgi>). Why are these weapons still in use?

Name: Rachel McGrady

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: Last month my comment was in regards to Judge Howsie and his disrespect for Councilwoman Hallam. I asked that he stop calling Councilman Pat Catena's name during roll call and simply call Hallam's name instead. Then at the August meeting he not only called Councilman Catena's name rather than Hallam's, he also changed the order of roll call to read Catena's name dead last. Stay classy, Judge!!!

Name: Ruth V Romano-Keppler

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: 1) Regarding the number of guns in the jail-- It is already public record that the county purchased 19 shotguns and 16 rifles for the CSAU training. This would put the number of firearms at 35. 2) Regarding whether or not the jail must report deaths that occur after a seriously ill individual is granted 6A release at the hospital-- A representative from the Bureau of Justice Statistics has confirmed that jails in fact ***MUST*** report such deaths. You can read more about it in this newspaper article: <https://archive.ph/X3UAU>

Name: Miracle Jones

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Organization(s): 1Hood Media

Comment: Dear Board, Thank you for your time and consideration on these important matters. I am reaching out to because those who are awaiting trial at the Allegheny County Jail but do not have convictions are permitted by law to register to vote and vote in the elections. Is there a public written policy to 1) inform people of their rights to vote 2) identify eligible voters 3) carry out voter registrations and election education? I am asking because we want to ensure these individuals are not forgotten during election season. Thank you so much.

Name: Virginia R McNulty

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Organization(s): The Human Race

Comment: I'm told that this will be the very last JOB meeting where we'll have to see Orland Harper as overseer of incarcerated people. I am thankful. I have watched this... person snicker about letting people under his care and responsibility die from medical neglect and violence. I've watched him duck and dodge questions about just how much money he and his cronies are skimming off of the food budget. I'm so grateful to the members of the JOB and to the community leaders who keep showing up for public comments. You are making a real difference and I thank you <3 Jen Liptak need to go next. You're really trying to sneak Adelphoi, a Synanon cult currently under suit for serious abuse, to care for incarcerated kids? What is wrong with you, Jen?

Name: Maddy McGrady

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Organization(s): Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance

Comment: As a social worker and lifelong resident of Allegheny County, I am deeply invested in the safety and well-being of my community. I continue to be alarmed by the conditions at Allegheny County Jail, which show a blatant disregard for human life and dignity. Even those accused of crimes deserve to be have their basic human rights upheld: to have adequate food, shelter, and healthcare, and to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. Warden Harper has exhibited a frankly disturbing disregard for human life during his tenure, which cannot end soon enough. We can and must use human rights as a framework for justice moving forward.

Name: Fran Procto

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: Abolition today, working at a jail or upholding prison system is despicable and y'all are some scum bags for all that and Lord knows what else

Name: Asher King

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: Over the last 7 years as I lived & engaged in community work in Pittsburgh, I have heard testimony of hundreds of ppl in, immediately released & formerly incarcerated at ACJ, and reported on stats out the ACJ myself. From this I know ACJ is an unlivable, abusive, inhumane place on account of food & water quality (despite multiple diff contracts), health care, CO power abuse & malpractice, illegal lockdown, racism, sexism, antisemitism, psychological torture, financial coercion & preventable death. Under warden harper's term ACJ is 1 of the deadliest jails in the country & for those who don't die there, a traumatic, brutal, & cruel place. We can only hope that freedom from Harper brings an increased quality of life for our locked up loved ones.

Name: Belinda Marks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: It's shameful that Warden Harper be allowed to retire with a state pension given the number of deaths and the incalculable suffering, neglect, and intentional mistreatment that occurred in the jail during his time as warden.

Name: Mary Mcgarity

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: I am pleased to know that the reign of Warden Harper is coming to an end. As a parent whose children have spent time in this facility for various drug related offenses I can state his policies and actions during his tenure did nothing to improve conditions for prisoners nor guards, instead he seemed to delight in making them worse. His actions during the height of the pandemic were reprehensible and I am grateful my child survived. The lack of medical services for mental health and addiction have cost lives. I am hopeful his replacement is someone who will work to improve conditions and act in a transparent manner.

Name: Joseph M Popovich

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Organization(s): Former inmate not at ACJ

Comment: Warden Harper has allowed multiple human rights violations to happen under his watch. This man was supposed to watch over our incarcerated people, and he has used his time in power to reinforce harsh environments instead of community building goals. This is a pivot point for our jail structure, and hopefully we can make it a place that understands what a "criminal" is... just a disenfranchised member of the community who needs to get better. Not a threat to society in every shape and form. Good riddance.

Name: Ish Balla

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: All of the deaths in the jail fall on your shoulders and you should be ashamed. This is years too late. Goodbye. And let's get someone who actually has some empathy to take your job.

Name: Rachael P Neffshade

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: I am truly happy to see Warden Harper leave. What an absolute disgrace upon our county he has been. Incarcerated people at the Allegheny County Jail have had to endure inedible, contaminated food, a lack of medical care, torture, and, let's not forget, the number of people who have died at this county jail due to the neglect of their needs. Is this level of neglect and abuse not criminal? Should not the warden and the county executive be held accountable for these crimes?

Name: John Doe

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: We are paying every single person money (I believe it to be \$150) just because they happened to be processed into the jail on such and such date. Instead, these monies should only be paid to the incarcerated residents that have spent the last month in the jail. Under the current standing, someone could go to the jail, be processed in, and then be released the same day and given \$150 without ever making it upstairs. We are literally paying people to go to jail.