

Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board

Unannounced Inspection Report

Conducted by: Councilperson Bethany Hallam and Muhammad Ali Nasir (MAN-E)

Date of Inspection: January 7, 2026

Time: Approximately 9:00 PM – 10:15 PM

Escort: Captain Milisevic and Sergeant Maust

Areas Visited

- Intake Area
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Intake Area

We conducted this inspection exclusively in the intake area and spoke with numerous individuals at varying stages of the intake process, including individuals who had been in intake for as few as six hours and others who reported being held for 24 to 32 hours. Many individuals expressed confusion and anxiety regarding the intake process, including questions about how long they would remain in intake, when they would be moved to housing units, and what steps in the process remained. These concerns were particularly pronounced given that many individuals had been arrested for the first time and were unfamiliar with jail procedures.

The intake area was noticeably and significantly colder than other parts of the jail, including the hallways and entryway leading into the part of intake where the vending machines and phones exist. Individuals reported that they were not permitted to keep coats/hoodies or receive blankets while in intake, despite the cold temperatures. Several individuals were observed wearing only T-shirts and stated that they were extremely cold. We were asked repeatedly why blankets were not permitted and whether anything could be done to address heating or insulation issues in this area, especially given its location on the ground floor.

Nutrition and Food Service

Multiple individuals reported that they were served bologna sandwiches as their only food while in intake and that breakfast was not provided. Several individuals stated that they were given bologna sandwiches up to three times per day. Complaints were raised regarding the quality of the food, with individuals stating that the bologna appeared discolored and, in some cases,

tasted foul. Individuals expressed concern about the lack of variety, the absence of breakfast, and whether this food service met basic nutritional standards for individuals held in intake for extended periods.

Medical Care and Emergency Response

We spoke with an elderly woman who reported that she suffered a seizure while in intake because she did not receive her prescribed seizure medication. She stated that no correctional officers assisted her during the seizure and that other incarcerated women helped her through the episode. This incident caused significant distress and raised serious concerns regarding medication continuity, emergency response, and staff intervention for individuals experiencing medical crises during intake. Staff informed us that individuals would be seen by medical personnel during the overnight shift, which begins at approximately 10:00 PM.

Legal Status and Intake Population

The majority of individuals spoken to during this inspection reported being held on bench warrants or probation violations. Many asked questions related to their legal status and court processes, reflecting a lack of accessible information for individuals newly entering custody. While these concerns were not specific to jail conditions, they contributed to heightened anxiety and confusion during intake.

Facility Conditions

We observed several facility-related issues within the intake area. Missing ceiling tiles were noted, along with cold air infiltration contributing to the low temperatures. We also observed that both sets of the double doors at the staff entrance to intake were stuck open. These doors have reportedly remained in this condition for at least five to six months, with signage indicating the issue but no apparent repairs having been completed. We questioned why the doors had not been repaired after such a prolonged period, particularly given their impact on temperature control and security.

Despite these issues, the intake area itself appeared clean and smelled clean at the time of inspection.

Staff Concerns

We spoke with various staff members during the inspection. Staff raised concerns regarding the broken intake doors and also inquired about the cost of parking in the jail parking lot. Inspectors noted staff concerns regarding being charged for parking while working long hours and multiple days per week at the facility. Additionally, sergeants informed us they have been working without a contract for the duration of their existence as an organized union, and instead have been held to a less-enforceable MOU. We indicated an intent to follow up on the issue of employee parking costs as a workforce and retention concern.

Summary of Concerns

This inspection highlighted recurring issues related to intake conditions, including inadequate temperature control, lack of access to blankets or coats, limited and potentially inadequate nutrition for individuals held for extended periods, gaps in medication continuity, and insufficient emergency response during medical events. Facility maintenance issues, particularly the prolonged failure to repair intake doors, continue to exacerbate these conditions.

Report Submitted By:

Councilmember Bethany Hallam
Muhammad Ali Nasir (MAN-E)

Date: January 14, 2026