



BLAIR COUNTY PRISON BOARD

c/o Blair County Controller, 423 Allegheny St., Ste 141, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Blair County Prison Board Meeting of December 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. In Commissioners' Public Meeting Room

Board Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Bruce Erb, Commissioner Laura Burke, Controller A.C. Stickel, President Judge Elizabeth Doyle, Commissioner Amy Webster, Sheriff James Ott

Board Members not in Attendance:

District Attorney Pete Weeks

Quorum: Present

Non-Board Members in Attendance:

Warden Abbie Tate, Deputy Warden Eckerd, Deputy Warden Shaun Edmundson, Deputy Warden Jay Whitesel, Nicole Hemminger

Primecare Representatives in Attendance: NONE

AFSCME Representatives in Attendance: Dave Carey

Prison Society Members in Attendance: NONE

Media in Attendance: Kay Stephens, Altoona Mirror

Call to Order: Controller Stickel called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The roll was called by Controller Stickel.

Moment of Silence: Controller Stickel led a moment of silence in memory of Corrections Officer Rhonda Russell and her family, the staff of Blair County Prison, and the family of former Corrections Officer Courtney Holland.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: Led by Controller Stickel

Call for Public Comment on Prison Board Items: Controller Stickel called for public comment on Prison items. Kay Stephens, Altoona Mirror, asked for a status update regarding COVID-19.

Approval of Minutes from October 21, 2021 Meeting: A motion was made by Commissioner Erb and seconded by Sheriff Ott to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2021 Prison Board Meeting. The motion was unanimously carried.

Recognition of BCP Employee: Warden Tate wanted to thank the entire staff and everyone in the County and the community. They have supported the Prison in many ways through the last month. The Department of Corrections supplied staff to operate the Prison for 24 hours. Cambria County sent an officer to run Central Control. Bedford County sent staff.

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Many in the community sent donations. This made Officer Russell's Memorial Service the tribute it was. She also thanked the Prison Board and the Commissioners' Office for their concern and support for the staff.

Controller Stickel praised the staff on the way they handled themselves following the tragic event of that terrible day. This was a very emotional tragedy and everyone performed in an outstanding fashion.

Controller Stickel also stated, as time passes, the weight of what happened may begin to settle in. Counselors will continue to be available to anyone who is interested.

Inmate Population Report: Warden Tate provided an updated Inmate Population Report which will be kept on file with the minutes.

Inmate Services Report: Deputy Jay Whitesel reviewed the Inmate Services Report which will be kept on file with the minutes. Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings have 7 participants. Women's In-Prison Drug/Alcohol Pre-Release Program has 16 participants, Men's In-Prison Drug/Alcohol Pre-Release Program has 16 participants. Reformers Unanimous has 20 participants. Women's Parenting has 23 participants. Men's Parenting has 32 participants.

Warden's Report: Warden Tate provided the Warden's Report which will be kept on file with minutes.

Staffing Update: Deputy Warden Eckard provided a Staffing Report which will be kept on file with the minutes.

COVID-19 Update: Warden Tate stated K-Block is under COVID-19 quarantine. 10 female inmates were moved to the gym on December 15, 2021 because of the number of inmates currently housed in K-Block. K-Block is the only female unit. It was housing 60 inmates, and that does not allow for the lead way needed for moving inmates around. All other housing units have been cleared. The Prison reinstated in-house items that had been put on hold during modified lock down. Visits are allowed (behind the glass). Volunteers are not allowed in the building at this time.

Controller Stickel asked Warden Tate what the in-mate vaccination rate is. Deputy Warden Eckard stated it is approximately 63%. The Prison continues to offer vaccinations and boosters. Tyrone Pharmacy is still willing to come, even if it is for only 1 person.

Chairman Report: Chairman Stickel congratulated the Prison Staff. He received a determination letter from NCCHC, indicating that it will continue to accredit the Blair County Prison for its compliance with NCHHC's Standards for Health Services in Jails.

He also received a letter of condolences from Suzanne Estrella, Commonwealth Victim Advocate.

Chairman Stickel knows we all have a lot of questions regarding the incident at Central Court last month. The investigation is ongoing and he anxiously awaits the

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report. We will have ample opportunities to review policies and procedures, but he will not speak publicly at least until he has reviewed the report. The Warden and her staff remain vigilant in maintaining a secure operation.

He is grateful for our staff and how they handled themselves, and continue to do so. The Prison is a facility that no matter what happens must continue to operate. With assistance from countless people and organizations, we were able to operate the prison safely and securely, while giving Officer Russell the memorial she deserved.

Chairman Stickel wanted to thank:

Warden Tate, Deputy Warden's Edmundson, McMahon, Whitesel and the entire BCP Staff

PA Dept. of Corrections, and staff from a wide range of facilities

Cambria County Prison, Warden Smith

Bedford County Prison, Warden Eichenlaub

Blair County Convention Center, Chef Tom and his staff

Coca Cola Bottling - Ebensburg

Pepsi Bottling – Pinecroft

U.S. Foods

Penn D.O.T.

Pennsylvania State Police

Blair County Commissioner's Office

Blair County Social Services Department

Jim Hudack

Ken Dean

Cindy James

Blair County Adult Probation Office

Blair County Sheriff's Office

Bedford County Sheriff's Office

Indiana County Sheriff's Office

Allegheny Township Police

Blair Township Police

Bellwood Borough Police

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Duncansville Borough Police
Hollidaysburg Borough Police
Martinsburg Borough Police
North Woodbury Township Police
Tyrone Borough Police
Allegheny Township Fire Department
Hollidaysburg Borough Fire Department
Bellwood Fire Department
Duncansville Fire Department
Logan Township Fire Department
Tyrone Fire Department
American Legion Riders
Blue Steel Motorcycle Riders
The Public in General

Prison Operations Continuity Report: Chairman Stickel stated on December 1st the Prison had COVID issues in the kitchen. The Prison made use of our contract for outside meal prep. That has since ended.

Prison Expansion Committee: Chairman Stickel stated another meeting has been scheduled with R.L. Kimball, Architect for early January to discuss options outside of what they previously presented.

Financial Report: Controller Stickel provided a report for November 2021 which will be kept on file with the minutes.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the board, Controller Stickel adjourned the meeting at 8:52 a.m.

The next monthly meeting will be held Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Public Meeting Room.

Respectfully Submitted,


President Judge Elizabeth A. Doyle
Secretary