



# BLAIR COUNTY PRISON BOARD

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

## Blair County Prison Board Special Meeting of April 8, 2020 at 10:00 AM In Commissioners' Meeting Room by Conference Call

### **Board Members in Attendance:**

Commissioner Laura Burke by phone,  
District Attorney Peter Weeks by phone,  
President Judge Elizabeth Doyle by phone,  
Commissioner Bruce Erb by phone, Sheriff  
James Ott by phone, Controller A.C.  
Stickel by phone, Commissioner Amy  
Webster by phone

### **Board Members not in Attendance:**

NONE

**Quorum:** Present

### **Non-Board Members in Attendance:**

Warren Crilly, Esquire by phone, Deputy  
Warden James Eckard by phone, Nicole  
Hemminger, Public Defender Russell  
Montgomery by phone, APO Director  
Amanda Moore by phone, Warden Abbie  
Tate by phone, Deputy Warden Jay  
Whitesel by phone

**Primecare Representatives in  
Attendance:** NONE

**AFSCME Representatives in  
Attendance:** NONE

**Prison Society Members in Attendance:**  
NONE

**Media in Attendance:** Kay Stephens,  
Altoona Mirror

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**Call to Order:** Controller Stickel called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:** Led by Controller Stickel.

Controller Stickel provided the ground rules due to the fact this meeting is being conducted via telephone conference. Only voting members of board may leave their telephones unmuted during the entire meeting, but we would request each avoids excess noise from your location. All other participants should mute their telephones until called upon to speak. Public participants may only speak during the designated public comment period near the beginning of the meeting and must keep their phones muted during the rest of the meeting. Each person needs to avoid interrupting the person speaking. Each speaker **MUST** state his/her name before talking each time he/she speaks so others will know who is speaking and to ensure minutes will be accurate.

**Purpose of meeting:** On Friday April 3, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued an order to all President Judges regarding the possible early release of inmates in County Prisons. The order recommends the President's Judge to consult with interested parties. I've called this meeting for that purpose.

**Call for Public Comment on Prison Board Items:** Controller Stickel called for public comment on Prison items.

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Kay Stephens, Altoona Mirror, asked if the Prison had any concerns about following CDC guidelines regarding repetitive cleaning of shared areas and other items in those guidelines and asked if that would be addressed during this meeting.

Controller Stickel stated that those concerns will be addressed during the Warden's report.

President Judge Doyle clarified that today's meeting's purpose is to share what the Supreme Court has told the President Judges has to be done. First is to coordinate with relevant county stakeholders to ensure that that the county correctional institutions in their districts address the threat of COVID-19 applying the recommendations of public health officials including the CDC's interim guideline on management of the Corona virus in correctional and detention facilities. Prison Board has also received comments from local Emergency Management Coordinator Mark Taylor (attached.) It is anticipated that Warden Tate's report will address the efforts that the prison is taking both in complying with the CDC interim guidance on management of the Corona Virus disease and any recommendations from the Emergency Management Coordination if there is any difference between those two.

**Discussion regarding Supreme Court Order dated April 3, 2020:**

Report from the Prison.....Warden Tate

- Below I have made a list of changes, policies, and procedures we have put into place during the COVID-19 crisis. This list is not everything we have done but it is the major changes. I have also included some data that is current to this date 4/6/2020.
- County facilities have been reporting positive test to the DOC we receive an updated list daily as of this date 4/6/2020 there have been 51 reported positive cases with 31 of those being in the Philadelphia county prison facilities. As of this date none of our neighboring counties have a positive case in their county prisons.
- As of 4/6/2020 we have sent 19 males and 6 females to state facilities with another trip scheduled for 4/13/2020 for 9 male inmates.
- Since March 19th we have released 112 inmates this includes inmates that were released to drug and alcohol treatment. We have had 16 commitments during that time and 9 of those commitments are still incarcerated.
- Prime Care received testing kits on 3/23/2020, we currently have not had to test any inmates for the virus.
- We continue to follow our influenza protocol and do not have any inmates in quarantine at this time.
- We have canceled all visits, volunteers, work release, and have closed the lobby to the public.
- Inmates are receiving one free five-minute phone call per week using the inmate phone system.
- We have conducted 24 hearings via video conferencing.
- Inmates' temperatures will be taken at Central Booking and in the Sally Port prior to the inmate coming into the Prison. We will not be turning away any inmates unless they are in respiratory distress.
- All inmate workers will have their temperatures taken prior to the start of the work routine.

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- All inmates moving housing units within the facility will have their temperature taken. We have limited the amount of movement within the housing units.
- If an inmate has a temp of 100.0 that will start the influenza protocol for quarantine.
- All new intakes will be in 7-day quarantine instead of our usual 48-hour quarantine.
- We have identified 4 cells and 2 holding cells for male intake quarantines. We have multiple cells we can use for female intake quarantines.
- 4/5/2020 at 11:00pm we made it mandatory for all staff to wear a cloth face mask. All of our inmate workers have been issued mask to wear as the work around the facility.
- We have increased our cleaning schedules and have placed disinfected supplies on the housing units for the inmates to clean the day room areas, telephones, and kiosk that are located in the housing units.
- Continue to meet with Prime Care and go over protocols for housing a positive case.
- Supplies: \$476.00 to correctional industries for mask, \$1,764.00 to correctional industries for spray bottles, hand sanitizer, soap, and wall dispensers. \$195.00 to Allegheny supply for gloves. US Foods (4month) food supply \$17,000. We received 500 dust mask and 100 cloth masks from the community.
- We continue to monitor our food supply, cleaning supplies, and PPE supplies. We are placing orders daily as things become available.
- Social distancing is greatest struggle.
- Reviewed Mark Taylor's list.

President Judge Doyle comments: The CDC guidelines for correctional facilities states that the Prison needs to address three different areas – operational preparedness, prevention and management.

Abbie replied that all three areas are being addressed.

President Judge Doyle commented the court's concern and directive is to determine whether the facility was addressing the threat of COVID-19 using the CDC guidelines and at this point, she is satisfied with steps being taken.

Comments by the Public Defender .....P.D. Montgomery

Suggest that we need to do a lot more work to get the population down even more at the Prison by spending some money on sentence modifications, bail, house arrest, and bracelets to decrease the population of the Prison to make social distancing easier to achieve.

President Judge Doyle commented that efforts have been made by the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, Adult Parole and Probation Office and the Court to identify people who can safely be released during this emergency.

Report from Adult Parole .....Director Amanda Moore

In agreement with President Judge Doyle's comments. The people that have been released into treatment has helped to reduce the Prison population.

Report from the District Attorney .....D.A. Peter Weeks

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Requested that the commissioners compel the IT department to improve the video conferencing to use in the courts to avoid transporting inmates back and forth from the Prison to the Courthouse.

Controller Stickel commented that it is not just an IT issue but also a facility issue due to limited space at the Prison.

Commissioner Burke commented that the IT staff is working on the video conferencing issue with the District Attorney and Court Administration, and hope to reduce the number of people being transported to and from the Prison to the Courthouse.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the board, Controller Stickel adjourned the meeting at 10:40am.

The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Friday, April 17, 2020 at 10:00am by conference call. Please note the change in date and time.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elizabeth A. Doyle".

President Judge Elizabeth A. Doyle  
Secretary

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From: Mark Taylor [mtaylor911@atlanticbbn.net]  
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2020 8:43 PM  
To: Elizabeth Doyle  
Subject: RE: Prison

Good evening Judge!

I would recommend following the CDC Guidance on Management of Coronavirus Disease in Correctional and Detention Facilities on the CDC Website.

Here are a few other things that you may have already implemented but I highly recommend them.

It should be reinforced to all staff to stay home if they are sick.

Practice full social distancing when off duty.

Self-health assessments before reporting to duty including temperature checks.

If possible have a dedicated isolation area for prisoners suspect for COVID-19 especially those with symptoms.

If possible have the same officers interact with the same prisoners to reduce the risk of other staff becoming infected.

Communicate with hospital or healthcare facility on how they want to receive COVID-19 suspect prisoners. How will they be tested and if not hospitalized what are their quarantine recommendations until test results are confirmed?

Disinfect jail and transport vehicles before and at the end of every shift.

If officers have known exposures it would be wise to have them stay in hotel rather than home to their families. I am currently working on arrangements for this to happen for our first responders.

We provided the prison with five gallons of hand sanitizer today. Handwashing in their environment is so important.

I hope this helps.

Let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to help.

Take care!

Mark Taylor  
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