

Westmoreland County Prison
Board Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2021

Members Present: Sheriff James Albert, Commissioner Sean Kertes, Commissioner Douglas Chew, Commissioner Gina Cerilli, Controller Jeffrey Balzer and District Attorney John Peck

The meeting was called to order by Sheriff Albert.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting was made by Controller Balzer seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

Notice was given of the following executive sessions on January 20th and the 22nd.

Commissioner Kertes made a motion to appoint Commissioner Douglas Chew as the Chairman of the Prison Board, seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

Commissioner Kertes made a motion to appoint Commissioner Cerilli as Vice Chairman of the Prison Board, seconded by Controller Balzer. Unanimous.

Commissioner Kertes made a motion to appoint Jeffrey Balzer as Secretary of the Prison Board, seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

There was no public comment.

The Adult Probation/Parole Report was submitted detailing the monthly statistical data on the Electronic Monitoring Program, Pre-Trial Services and the Institutional Parole Officer events from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. It was noted that the Adult Probation/Parole Office has continued to provide services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The following information was presented to the Prison Board. The total number of offenders placed on Electronic Home Monitoring in 2020 was 572. The bed days saved due to the use of Electronic Home Monitoring in 2020 was 67,999 days. The Electronic Home Monitoring fees collected in 2020 was a decrease from the fees collected in 2019, it is projected that the amount of fees collected in 2021 will increase should the financial effects from the COVID-19 pandemic subside.

The population of the prison today is 496 in-house, 536 total. The average population for December 2020 was 468 in-house and 512 total. This compares to December of 2019 when the average was 627 in-house and 662 total. For January thru December 2020 the average population was 496 in-house and 542 total compared to 615 in-house and 644 total in January thru December 2019.

Average length of stay for December 2020 was 24.67 days as compared to December 2019 which was 20.16 days. For January thru December 2020 the average stay was 56.83 days compared to 42.61 in January thru December 2019.

In December 2020, there were 115 commitments and 128 releases, compared to 319 commitments and 368 releases in December 2019. For January thru December 2020 there have been 2,590 commitments and 2,707 releases compared to 4,696 commitments and 4,679 releases in January thru December 2019.

The rate of recidivism for December 2020 is 53.91% and 57.04% including the 48 & 72 hour detainees as compared to December 2019 which was 46.62% and 52.02% including the 48 & 72 hour detainees. For January thru December 2020 recidivism rate is 49.26% and 52.74% including 48 hour and 72 hour detainees. This compares to January thru December 2019 recidivism rate of 46.62% and including 48 hour and 72 hour detainees, 52.02%.

There were no Rentals collected in December 2020, totaling \$0.00. There were no Locker Revenue collected in December 2020, totaling \$377.00. Fines collected in December 2020 for Clerk of Courts were \$7,814.02, totaling \$109,787.25.

The Warden reported that \$2,106.00 has been collected for video conferencing for December 2020.

In December 2020, 174 total bench warrants have been performed via video conferencing. 18 were performed by Judge Bilik-Defazio, 41 by Judge Feliciani, 47 by Judge Mears, 18 by Judge Krieger, 3 were performed by Judge Silvis, 18 performed by Judge Hathaway, 2 by Judge McCormick, 3 by Judge Walsh, 5 by Domestic Relations, and 19 out of county bench warrants were served. In addition, 206 District Justice hearings were held.

Nutrition Incorporated reported that the December 2020 cost per meal was \$1.18 compared to \$0.99 in December 2019.

For December 2020, we were under the cap by 182 inmates saving \$15,176.98. For the year we are below having saved \$117,893.22.

44.34% of incoming prisoners needed to detox upon arrival compared to 42.88% last month. 46.36% of inmates are currently on psych meds.

Controller Balzer made a motion to go into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Cerilli. Unanimous.

Controller Balzer made a motion to reconvene in public session, seconded by Commissioner Kertes. Unanimous.

Controller Balzer made a motion to terminate Chris Smith and Officer Lawrence Howells seconded by Commissioner Kertes. Unanimous.

Controller Balzer made a motion to accept the resignation of Jeffrey McCreary, Sean McDonald and Anthony Pettinato seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

Wexford H.S.A Resigned her position with Wexford Health, spoke with Carrie Harris from Wexford, He will be overseeing the prisons medical staff until they can hire a new H.S.A.

Received addition monies from GTL. December phone revenue collections were \$53,256.00, Totaling \$207,716.34

Controller Balzer made a motion to continue providing free video visits thru March 30, 2021, seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

Controller Balzer made a motion to accept the amendment to the GTL and to add grievances to the program, seconded by District Attorney Peck. Unanimous.

Nominations for Warden:

District Attorney Peck made a motion to nominate George Lowther for Warden, seconded by Controller Balzer.

No discussion on the motion.

Aye votes – Controller Balzer, District Attorney Peck

Nay votes- Commissioner Cerilli, Commissioner Kertes, Commissioner Chew and Sheriff Albert

Sheriff Albert nominated Bryan Kline for Warden, Seconded by Commissioner Cerilli

Controller Balzer expressed his concerns

Commissioner Kertes gave his opinion on the matter as well

Aye votes- Commissioner Cerilli, Commission Kertes, Commissioner Chew, Sheriff Albert and District Attorney Peck

Nay votes- Controller Balzer

Controller Balzer made a motion that Bryan Kline complete the Correctional Officer training prior to taking position, seconded by District Attorney Peck

Discussion on the matter

Commissioner Kertes amended the motion, he agrees only if Title 37 requires the training.

Discussion on the matter

Commissioner Kertes once again amended the motion that the trainings would be contingent upon Solicitors review of Title 37, seconded by the Sheriff Albert. Unanimous.

Controller Balzer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Cerilli. Unanimous.