

PRISON BOARD MINUTES

December 11, 2024

Board Members Present:

Edward Cernic, Jr., Controller
Thomas C. Chernisky, Commissioner
Linda Rovder Fleming, President Judge
Scott W. Hunt, President Commissioner
Gregory J. Neugebauer, District Attorney
Keith Rager, Commissioner
Don Robertson, Sheriff

Others Present:

Chris Smith, Warden
Craig Descavish, First Deputy Warden
George Rozum, Second Deputy Warden
Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk

Pledge of Allegiance.

Sheriff Robertson called the Meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., in the Jury Room of the Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rager to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on November 13, 2024.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

None.

Presentation and Approval of Invoices:

Controller Cernic presented the following bills and Invoice Status Report for approval:

Prison bills paid after the Meeting held November 13, 2024:

Retirement Fund	\$30,446.89
Retirement Fund	\$31,837.04
UPMC Health Plan	\$90,043.12
	(\$1,441.76)
First National Bank (Visa)	\$237.16
Mainline Newspaper	\$158.49
CamTran	\$691.93
Ebensburg Borough	\$42,230.80
Phoenix Workplace Health	\$247.00
ProDisposal	\$776.11
Wells Fargo	\$300.40
Penelec	\$22,448.49
Ricoh	\$209.00
United Energy	\$729.27
Wells Fargo	\$590.20
Total:	\$219,504.14

Invoice Status Report:

December 6, 2024, 85 Invoices Totaling	\$475,072.10
Canteen Fund Bills Paid after November, 2024, Meeting	\$16,399.89
Canteen Fund Bills to be Paid	\$54,173.43

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to approve the bills and the Invoice Status Report.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Warden's Report:

The Warden requested an Executive Session.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to convene an Executive Session at 10:37 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Chernisky and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to reconvene the Public Meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Chernisky and passed unanimously.

Personnel:

1. Dennis Brady, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective November 14, 2024.

2. Mattson Speed, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective October 29, 2024.

The Prison is currently short staffed by six (6) Full-Time Correctional Officer positions and one (1) Per-Diem Chaplain position. No applications have been received for the Chaplain position.

Warden Smith reported:

1. MAJOR MAINTENANCE/FACILITIES UPDATES:

a. Kronos Time Keeping Software – There was no update. The software is still in the testing phase.

b. Prison Entry Door – The Prison received notification from the manufacturer, on December 2, 2024, that the custom passthrough door has been built and is preparing for shipping. Once it is received, the Prison's Maintenance Department will complete the installation.

2. Due to the nationwide staffing crisis affecting corrections, the Prison continues to be proactive in the hiring and retention of employees. In order to gain some possible new perspective on the issue, Director Greathouse attended a Recruiting, Hiring, and Training Workshop on November 20, 2024, and November 21, 2024. The workshop was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and was presented by Colonel Brenda Dietzman, an international speaker with an extensive history in law enforcement and corrections.

3. During the past month, the Facility moved some personnel offices throughout the institution, including moving Security Captain Kurt Wolford from the front administrative wing to the back of the Prison into a vacant office in Inmate Services. This office was painted, carpeted, and had new network cabling ran for additional video monitors. Moving Captain Wolford to this office gives him unrestricted access to the inmate population directly from his office, greatly broadening his capability to complete investigations.

4. In November, the Prison purchased security wastebaskets, which are flexible silicone with holes in the bottom, for the inmates' cells, mattresses, inmate uniforms, and numerous hygiene products and undergarments. The original cost of these items would have been \$43,721.00. However, through negotiations with the Prison's sales representative, Deputy Rozum was able to reduce this cost to \$26,781.00, saving the inmate canteen fund almost \$17,000.00.

5. Earlier in the year, the Warden secured six (6) Taser 7s, with cartridges and holsters, at no cost, through the inmate phone vendor, ViaPath. Since then, Director Greathouse and CERT Officer Dugan have been certified as instructors on this new Taser model. Over the last several months, all necessary staff have been trained on its use, and during this past week, the IT Department was able to network the Prison's units to the Taser International Database. Now, anytime a unit is powered up, all information related to its usage is downloaded to this database and is available, if needed, after a deployment. Once Deputy Descavish finishes the policy and procedure this week, Officers will begin carrying a Taser on every inmate transport, in addition to a firearm and OC.

Statistical Report:

Report is attached.

November, 2024

Average Daily Population for November, 2024	352
Housing Revenue for November, 2024	\$189,612.00
Year to Date Revenue as of November, 2024	\$2,318,607.00

Food Service Report:

During the month of November, the Prison worked with inmate labor on preparing new and different items on the new menu cycle. They also worked on preparing seasonal items and holiday meals such as the Thanksgiving meal for both population and staff, which consisted of hot sliced turkey, hot sliced ham, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, green beans, croissant rolls, and pumpkin pie.

Food Service Director Callihan also continued working with the Nutrition Group on ways to try to help with rising food costs and shortages.

Medical Report:

Attached.

Training:

The following staff training was completed during the month of November, 2024:

1. Basic Training Academy No. 24-03 concluded, and four (4) Cambria County Cadets completed the class.
2. The Prison hosted a Trauma-Informed Training for Corrections Seminar. There were fifteen (15) attendees, including three (3) Prison staff; Director Greathouse, Jessie Yahner with PrimeCare Medical, and Rachel Pearson with PrimeCare Medical.
3. Director Jessica Greathouse attended a Recruiting, Hiring, Training, and Retention Workshop hosted by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

4. Counselors John Sikora, Megan Bursky, Mary McCoy, Jeremy Smick and Dave Thomas attended a one-day Trauma-Informed Care in the Criminal Justice System Training.
5. Officer Jordan Ford completed twenty-four (24) hours of training in Intake and Property Operations.
6. Officer Jared McCready completed eight (8) hours of training in Prison Laundry Operations and twenty-four (24) hours of training in Prison Kitchen Operations.
7. Officer Vincenzo Scott completed sixteen (16) hours of training in Central Control Operations.
8. Officer Kyle Brawley completed twenty-four (24) hours of training in Intake and Property Operations.
9. Officer Alex Short completed twenty-four (24) hours of training in Intake and Property Operations and eight (8) hours of training in Prison Laundry Operations.
10. Officer Tanya Deyarmin completed sixteen (16) hours of training in Central Control Operations.
11. School tours of the Facility were provided to Portage Area School District and Westmont Hilltop School District, (three (3) tours total).

Misconduct Report:

There was no information to report.

Miscellaneous:

None.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rager to approve the Warden's Report.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed. Judge Fleming abstained.

Adjournment:

Motion was made by Commissioner Chernisky to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk